

January 29, 2015

Ben Stein wants to know why obama can't tell the truth.

I have been observing President Obama for a few days and a number of questions have occurred to me:

1. In the President's State of the Union address, he bragged about how U.S. oil production has surged thanks to shale drilling. Question for Mr. Obama: Does he not recall that he and his followers have been fighting and harassing the oil companies that are finding and producing all of that oil? Does he believe he deserves any credit at all for acts and successes done by people against whom he has waged war since he was a child? ...

... Now, I think it's just great that he has offbeat African Americans interviewing him at the White House. They are citizens, too. But on the day Yemen falls, this is how he's spending his time? He wants respect as President. Hard to believe he gets it frolicking with this green lipstick creature. Hard to believe he has time for the green lipstick comedienne and not time for reaching a better arrangement with Mr Netanyahu (who is by no means perfect himself). Israel is facing an existential threat from Iran. Sanctions are on the table. This is a huge subject and Netanyahu is coming to town. Can they really not find an hour taken away from Green Lipstick for Mr. Obama to discuss how to prevent a second Holocaust? Or maybe Mr Obama really does think he is a character in a frat house comedy. I guess he sees himself as everything.

But how sad that this delusional little man is our President. And how Mr. Putin must sneer when he considers who he is up against. God help us.

And **Noemie Emery** says he's reality challenged.

... If he dislikes facts, he ignores them and substitutes others, which he finds more attractive.

As he did in the State of the Union last week.

"In Iraq and Syria, American leadership ... is stopping ISIL's advance," the president told us. "Instead of getting dragged into another ground war in the Middle East, we are leading a broad coalition, including Arab nations, to degrade and ultimately destroy this terrorist group."

This isn't true. Two thousand American troops have gone back to the war that Obama claimed he had ended; the Islamic State has extended its hold over Syria; Yemen and Libya, which Obama claimed as showcases for his brand of diplomacy, are going to pieces; Iran is dominant in much of the region (and closer than ever to nuclear status); and Russia is threatening the Soviet Union's former possessions, in Eastern Europe and in Ukraine.

"There's a real world out there he didn't really talk about," said Christopher Matthews. "His projection of success ... is not close to reality," said Andrea Mitchell. When the choir rebels, you know you're in trouble.

"It sounds like the president was outlining a world that he wishes we were all living in, but which is very different than the world you described," Richard Engel informed NBC's Brian Williams. "So there was a general tone, maybe even suspended disbelief, I think, when he started talking about foreign policy. There's not a lot of success stories to be talking about in foreign policy right now." ...

Conrad Black posts on the state of the union.

The president's State of the Union message was in many respects, and as has been much remarked upon, an appalling document. It was verbose, stylistically grating, and largely fraudulent, as it took credit for benign developments that have not occurred and unctuously denounced political practices of which he has been the chief practitioner. ...

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He claimed credit for reduction in oil, gasoline, and other fuel costs, though the reduction is due to the increased production he obstructed and Saudi production increases motivated largely by Obama's failure to take effective action against the Iranian nuclear military program, Iran's support of Hamas and Hezbollah, and Iranian and Russian meddling in Syria. He was taking credit for the success of developments he opposed and the actions of countries motivated by his failure to act.

In domestic affairs, the president gave a menu of blissfully unattainable legislative ideas clearly designed to enable him in his memoirs to claim that he was sandbagged by Republican reactionaries from transforming Jeremiah Wright's racist and exploitive America into a serene, law-abiding, uniformly prosperous commonwealth. He proposed seven days of sick leave for everyone.

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Stephen Hayes reports on a hard hitting speech from the former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency.

Lt. General Michael Flynn, former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, blasted the Obama administration's approach to the War on Terror in a hard-hitting speech to a meeting of intelligence professionals. "The dangers to the U.S. do not arise from the arrogance of American power, but from unpreparedness or an excessive unwillingness to fight when fighting is necessary," Flynn said, in an unsparing critique first reported by the Daily Beast.

The Obama administration doesn't understand the threat, Flynn said, noting that the administration refuses to use "Islamic militants" to describe the enemy.

"You cannot defeat an enemy you do not admit exists," he said.

The administration, he continued, wants "us to think that our challenge is dealing with an undefined set of violent extremists or merely lone-wolf actors with no ideology or network. But that's just not the straight truth."

Flynn left government last summer, a year before scheduled. He did not provide a reason for his early departure, but sources close to Flynn told THE WEEKLY STANDARD that he was forced out after years of making arguments the Obama administration did not want to hear.

Flynn, and many of the analysts who worked for him, consistently reported on the global nature of the jihadist threat and the interconnectedness of the groups driving it. They mapped overlapping

networks of al Qaeda and its offshoots and rejected arguments, pushed primarily by the White House and the CIA, that killing leaders of “core al Qaeda” inevitably meant a diminishing threat. ...

John Hinderaker posts on the self-obsessed prez.

Many commentators have noted how frequently Barack Obama’s speeches focus on himself. It is true: for Obama, no matter the topic, it turns out to be mostly about him.

Earlier today, Obama delivered a farewell speech in New Delhi, wrapping up his trip to India. The speech was only 33 minutes long, and yet...Barack managed to work in references to himself no fewer than 118 times. The folks at Grabiem write:

"Today in New Delhi, the president of the United States delivered an address to the people of India. Topics ranged from Obama’s pride in being the first U.S. president to visit India twice, to the historic nature of his attendance at India’s Republic Day Parade, to his grandfather’s occupation as a chef, to his graying hair, to his daughters ... to his struggles against political critics back home. If this is starting to sound like the president spoke quite a bit about himself, that’s because he did. Somehow in the span of just 33 minutes, Obama referenced himself 118 times. (For those keeping score at home, that’s 3.5 Obama references per minute.)"

During the Cold War, you could count on the American Left marching in lock-step with Russian interests. It's passing strange to see them carrying water for the Russian interest in killing fracking. **The Free Beacon** has a long article on the Russian funds that find there way to groups like the Sierra Club.

A shadowy Bermudan company that has funneled tens of millions of dollars to anti-fracking environmentalist groups in the United States is run by executives with deep ties to Russian oil interests and offshore money laundering schemes involving members of President Vladimir Putin’s inner circle.

One of those executives, Nicholas Hoskins, is a director at a hedge fund management firm that has invested heavily in Russian oil and gas. He is also senior counsel at the Bermudan law firm Wakefield Quin and the vice president of a London-based investment firm whose president until recently chaired the board of the state-owned Russian oil company Rosneft.

In addition to those roles, Hoskins is a director at a company called Klein Ltd. No one knows where that firm’s money comes from. Its only publicly documented activities have been transfers of \$23 million to U.S. environmentalist groups that push policies that would hamstring surging American oil and gas production, which has hurt Russia’s energy-reliant economy.

With oil prices plunging as a result of a fracking-induced oil glut in the United States, experts say the links between Russian oil interests, secretive foreign political donors, and high-profile American environmentalists suggest Russia may be backing anti-fracking efforts in the United States.

The interest of Russian oil companies and American environmentalist financiers intersect at a Bermuda-based law firm called Wakefield Quin. The firm acts as a corporate registered agent, providing office space for clients, and, for some, “managing the day to day affairs,” according to its website.

As many as 20 companies and investment funds with ties to the Russian government are Wakefield Quin clients. Many list the firm's address on official documentation. ...

Jennifer Rubin advises Scott Walker to resist responding to attacks. Attacks that will come from the right; from goofball GOP candidates like Huckster, Cruz, Paul, Trump, Santorum, etc.

The Post reports: "Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, whose speech to activists in Iowa last weekend drew strong reviews, has taken the first formal step toward a presidential candidacy in 2016, establishing a committee that will help spread his message and underwrite his activities as he seeks to build his political and fundraising networks in the months ahead." Indeed, there is no candidate who helped his cause more or who has more momentum than Walker, which is why he is going to face a pack of lesser candidates nipping at his heels. It is the obvious play, especially for freshman senators with no record, to take on the conservative with an impressive record and support from a wide array of Republicans.

Walker would be smart to resist the urge to "punch down" to engage with lesser candidates or to be pulled into the marshes of the right-wing fever swamp with Sens. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.), former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee, Rick Santorum and others. You can spot their attacks a mile away. ...

It's tough to end the week with lots of items about President Trainwreck. To make up for that, here's **Andy Malcolm** with late night humor.

Meyers: Joe Biden says he can "do a good job as President." And if that doesn't work out, he wants to be an astronaut or a fireman.

Conan: After his State of the Union speech Obama talked with three YouTube celebrities. Right, the president met with a cat, a bear and a water-skiing squirrel.

Meyers: Here's a new drinking game for Obama's State of the Union address. Instead of watching the speech, drink.

American Spectator

Why Can't He Tell the Truth?

Such a success, our president.

by Ben Stein

I have been observing President Obama for a few days and a number of questions have occurred to me:

1. In the President's State of the Union address, he bragged about how U.S. oil production has surged thanks to shale drilling. Question for Mr. Obama: Does he not recall that he and his followers have been fighting and harassing the oil companies that are finding and producing all of that oil? Does he believe he deserves any credit at all for acts and successes done by people against whom he has waged war since he was a child?

2. In his SOTU, Mr. Obama bragged that the USA now has the highest high school graduation rate in its history. Roughly 80 percent of entering high school freshmen now graduate.

Questions: Is Mr. Obama aware that in the city where he gave his speech, Washington, D.C., only about 53 percent of high school students graduate? Is he aware that in this country the high school graduation rate in predominantly black cities is on average roughly twenty percentage points lower than for whites? Is Mr. Obama in possession of any data that shows whether the students who receive those high school diplomas actually know anything useful?

Mr. Obama boasted repeatedly about his successes fighting terrorists, not some of whom, all of whom are Islamists. Questions: Did he at any point use the word "Islamic" or "Islamist" in referring to terrorists in his speech? Why not? Who is he afraid of? Why can't he tell the truth?

Is he aware of the near takeover of the strategically key nation of Yemen by Islamic fanatics? Is he aware of any major setbacks to date for the Islamist terrorists in the Middle East or in Nigeria? If he is, would he make them known? Is there anything stopping the Boko Haram from dominating Nigeria? Is he doing anything to stop them? The Islamic State is presently in the approaches to Baghdad. In what way does this show success in the fight against them?

Five years ago, there were dictators in power through the Middle East. They were awful people but their countries were fairly calm. Now, from Algeria to Pakistan, with the exceptions of Israel and Egypt, much of the Arab world is in chaos and has returned to primitive times in terms of the absence of law.

Question: In what way does this show success for Mr. Obama?

There is now a diplomatic brouhaha about Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, coming to D.C. to address Congress at the invitation of Speaker John Boehner. Mr. Obama is apparently furious that he was not consulted beforehand and was unable to veto the event.

Question: When the President of the United States directly or indirectly calls the Prime Minister of Israel, the only law-abiding democracy in the Middle East "a chicken s--t coward," as Mr Obama did, what kind of behavior does he expect in return?

(By the way, my pal, N. Visser of Alberta, has pointed out something powerful: while Arabs and their courtesans on the left bewail Israeli bullying of the Arabs, has anyone noticed that almost no Arabs in Israel emigrate to the West Bank or Gaza? They know they have it great in law-abiding, free, prosperous Israel. They ain't leaving. I wonder if the European Union has ever thought of that.)

Finally, Mr. Obama is President of the United States. He is not a minstrel in a traveling show. The day after his SOTU, he had over to the White House an enormous supposedly comical online weirdo woman wearing green lipstick, shown frolicking in a bathtub filled with milk and breakfast cereal, to ask him softball questions.

Now, I think it's just great that he has offbeat African Americans interviewing him at the White House. They are citizens, too. But on the day Yemen falls, this is how he's spending his time? He wants respect as President. Hard to believe he gets it frolicking with this green lipstick creature. Hard to believe he has time for the green lipstick comedienne and not time for reaching a better arrangement with Mr Netanyahu (who is by no means perfect himself). Israel is facing an existential threat from Iran. Sanctions are on the table. This is a huge subject and Netanyahu is coming to town. Can they really not find an hour taken away from Green Lipstick for Mr. Obama to

discuss how to prevent a second Holocaust? Or maybe Mr Obama really does think he is a character in a frat house comedy. I guess he sees himself as everything.

But how sad that this delusional little man is our President. And how Mr. Putin must sneer when he considers who he is up against. God help us.

Examiner

Liberation theology

Obama is unhinged from reality

by Noemie Emery

It was May 2013 when President Obama first talked about his wish to "go Bulworth." The reference is to a 1998 film in which a compromised senator, having arranged to have himself killed so that his daughter could collect his insurance, is free for the first time in his sad, shabby lifespan to speak his unfettered and luminous mind. The time came for Obama late in 2014, when having lost all he could — both houses of Congress and many state governments — he had no more to lose by losing his bearings and getting lost in a world all his own.

The first sign that he gave of being unmoored from reality was his insistence that the votes that counted in the midterm elections were those not in fact cast by the people who refrained from voting. He seemed to believe they were all in his corner and that their silence spoke volumes on his and his party's behalf. He started to swagger on the theory that if he acted like a winner, people would think that he had won and treat him accordingly.

Did this persuade? "Obama and Democratic candidates were walloped in the November elections, a seismic, un-ignorable event that cast his legislative ambitions in doubt and made Tuesday's pleas for 'truth' and 'better politics' sound sweetly addled," Alexis Simendinger of RealClearPolitics reported. Pat Moynihan told us that "everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts." Obama has freed himself from this manner of tyranny. If he dislikes facts, he ignores them and substitutes others, which he finds more attractive.

As he did in the State of the Union last week.

"In Iraq and Syria, American leadership ... is stopping ISIL's advance," the president told us. "Instead of getting dragged into another ground war in the Middle East, we are leading a broad coalition, including Arab nations, to degrade and ultimately destroy this terrorist group."

This isn't true. Two thousand American troops have gone back to the war that Obama claimed he had ended; the Islamic State has extended its hold over Syria; Yemen and Libya, which Obama claimed as showcases for his brand of diplomacy, are going to pieces; Iran is dominant in much of the region (and closer than ever to nuclear status); and Russia is threatening the Soviet Union's former possessions, in Eastern Europe and in Ukraine.

"There's a real world out there he didn't really talk about," said Christopher Matthews. "His projection of success ... is not close to reality," said Andrea Mitchell. When the choir rebels, you know you're in trouble.

"It sounds like the president was outlining a world that he wishes we were all living in, but which is very different than the world you described," Richard Engel informed NBC's Brian Williams. "So

there was a general tone, maybe even suspended disbelief, I think, when he started talking about foreign policy. There's not a lot of success stories to be talking about in foreign policy right now."

But nevermind. If the facts don't exist, Obama will make up some facts he likes better and even invent some supporters who'll think that they're real. Only 31 million people tuned in to his speech (out of a country of more than 300 million), but in the spirit of Obama's take on the 2014 midterms, the people who didn't might well be the ones who matter. He hears them. He trusts them. And he knows that they're all on his side.

New York Sun

An Orgy of Claptrap Is the Way To Describe State of Union Address

by Conrad Black

The president's State of the Union message was in many respects, and as has been much remarked upon, an appalling document. It was verbose, stylistically grating, and largely fraudulent, as it took credit for benign developments that have not occurred and unctuously denounced political practices of which he has been the chief practitioner.

There was a high point, near the end, when he said: "Surely we can agree that it's a good thing that for the first time in forty years, the crime rate and the incarceration rate have come down together, and use that as a starting point for Democrats and Republicans, community leaders and law enforcement, to reform America's criminal-justice system so that it protects and serves all of us."

Surely the country can, but having said that "we may have different takes on the events in Ferguson and New York," he gave no hint what his take was, and he did not propose anything to accelerate the very modest start that has been made to lower levels of crime and incarceration.

It is a notorious fact and an American shame before the whole civilized world that has been mentioned a number of times in this space, that the American criminal-justice system is a mockery of the country's professed championship of the rule of law and the objective fairness of American justice. The Fifth, Sixth, and Eighth Amendment guarantees of due process, the grand jury (as an assurance against capricious prosecution or an official whitewash), no seizure of property without just compensation, access to counsel (of choice), prompt justice, an impartial jury, and reasonable bail have been shredded and burned, while the Supreme Court has sat as mute as pumpkins.

It is an inexpressible scandal that 99.5% of prosecutions are successful, 97% without trial, because of the hideous deformation of the plea bargain, in which witnesses are threatened with prosecution if they do not, with immunity from charges of perjury, deliver incriminating evidence against a target — whose assets are often frozen in *ex parte* proceedings over false charges of ill-gotten gains — to prevent a serious defense by America's avaricious trial lawyers.

No sane person would dispute the president's evident conviction that there are many wrongs to be righted, but apart from a minor reduction of sentences for some soft-drug offenders, all the over-prosecuted citizens of the carceral state of America have heard from their president on this issue is the sound of one hand clapping.

This, I regret to remind, was the high point of the president's State of the Union message, and it came after a test of the listeners' staying power of nearly an hour, devoted altogether to a rewrite

of recent American history, in which Mr. Obama emerged (unrecognizably) as the pristine champion of successful diplomatic suavity abroad and of nonpartisan virtue at home.

Mr. Obama claimed huge credit for job-creation figures that were very inferior to those of the Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Kennedy-Johnson, Nixon, Reagan, and Clinton years, and claimed that this success was based on the reversal of outsourcing. It wasn't. He took credit for reducing dependence on foreign oil, though his docility before the eco-radicals caused him to fight against much of what has produced the increased domestic production of which he now boasts.

He claimed credit for reduction in oil, gasoline, and other fuel costs, though the reduction is due to the increased production he obstructed and Saudi production increases motivated largely by Obama's failure to take effective action against the Iranian nuclear military program, Iran's support of Hamas and Hezbollah, and Iranian and Russian meddling in Syria. He was taking credit for the success of developments he opposed and the actions of countries motivated by his failure to act.

In domestic affairs, the president gave a menu of blissfully unattainable legislative ideas clearly designed to enable him in his memoirs to claim that he was sandbagged by Republican reactionaries from transforming Jeremiah Wright's racist and exploitive America into a serene, law-abiding, uniformly prosperous commonwealth. He proposed seven days of sick leave for everyone.

We'll have to see his bill, but that sounds like seven more holidays, when he should have said full pay for people absent because of sickness, within reason — that is the norm with most employers. His plan for free community-college education: Again, we will want to see how he funds this immense cost, but unless he has the most creative moments of his public life, apart from his talents as a mythmaker, this won't fly either. The president proposed an "infrastructure plan that could create more than thirty times as many jobs per year" as the XL pipeline he opposes (which requires no government financing and should be built). It is a false comparison.

Even more fatuous were: "Let's simplify the [tax] system and let a small-business owner file based on her actual bank statement, instead of the number of accountants she can afford." And: "Let's close the loopholes that lead to inequality by allowing the top 1 percent to avoid paying taxes on their accumulated wealth. [Yes, he said "wealth" and not "income."] We can use that money to . . . pay for child care and . . . college. We need a tax code that truly helps working Americans trying to get a leg up in the new economy."

At best, this smacks of Jimmy Carter's pre-election fulmination in 1976 that "the tax code is a disgrace to the human race." The species has greater embarrassments, but Mr. Carter failed to change it significantly, and he had the excuse of not having yet been elected president when he said that. Whose leg did the current president think he was pulling by imagining that he could smoke a simplified tax code and a wealth tax through a Congress both houses of which are controlled by his opponents, who, though one would never imagine it from his ungracious reflections on the Republicans in his remarks, had just thrashed the president to a pulp, running directly against him, in midterm elections two months before?

All this was a mere sorbet; then came foreign policy. "I believe in a smarter kind of American leadership. We lead best when we combine military power with strong diplomacy; when we leverage our power with coalition building. . . . Around the globe, it's making a difference."

He claimed credit for pioneering the idea that the U.S. should assist local governments in threatened countries in promoting a victory of the civilized local options. But this was the Truman Doctrine in Greece and even Korea, the Nixon Doctrine, including Vietnamization in South Vietnam, and even Reagan's assistance to the Contras in Nicaragua. And it is not consistent with

Obama's somewhat churlish departure from Iraq, which was just as mindlessly abrupt as George W. Bush's plunge into that country, and which helped create the vacuum in which the Islamic State flourished.

But we need not fear: "We're demonstrating the power of American strength and diplomacy. . . . Last year, as we were doing the hard work of imposing sanctions along with our allies, Mr. Putin's aggression, it was suggested, was a masterful display of strategy and strength. . . . Today it is America that stands strong and united with our allies, while Russia is isolated, with its economy in tatters . . . [owing to America's] persistent, steady resolve."

It is completely inappropriate, as well as vain and hazardous, to ridicule a foreign leader in such an address when not at war with him. In fact, the United States fumbled and blustered; the allies milled about like worried sheep; and the Saudi oil-price reductions, provoked by American-led Western feebleness, achieved the conditions Obama exaggerated and claimed for his own account.

As the president who has tried to force the Roman Catholic Church to pay for the most expensive birth-control products to ensure that even its most sexually active employees and students avoid procreating, it was piquant for Mr. Obama to cite Pope Francis in implicit support of his overture to Cuba.

And then, the *ne plus ultra*: If the Congress persists in its ambition to layer in new sanctions if Iran does not agree to an agreement forswearing nuclear weapons, he will veto that.

In furtherance of this, he prevailed upon the beleaguered British prime minister, David Cameron, to lobby U.S. senators against a veto override. The Churchill-Roosevelt, Thatcher-Reagan tradition has fallen to this — a breach of protocol. (So, admittedly, is the Republican leadership's invitation to Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu to address Congress without speaking to the White House, but after the stunts Mr. Obama has pulled, it is hard to become too angry with the Republicans.)

The proposed senatorial action would apply only if these negotiations fail, and Obama fears that this would give the Iranians (but also him) a pretext for the failure of negotiation. But the agreement that is deemed so inviolate reduces Iranian centrifuges only from ten to six times what is necessary for a nuclear application, and promises the delivery of eight tons of nuclear material to the Russians (whose leader Mr. Obama had just denounced as a belligerent incompetent whom he had just outmaneuvered).

If Iran is allowed to achieve even this advanced state, many other countries, including several in the Middle East, will purport to require an equivalent nuclear-threshold condition and Iran will conduct itself with the swagger of a nuclear state, as it would only be about three undetectable months away from a deliverable nuclear weapon. Further, the president purports to regard any agreement as not requiring Senate ratification — which may be correct, and would make the pending bill that he is making threats against the only look Congress will get to have at this very dubious policy of appeasement of Iran.

From here the speech tapers off into jeremiads about global warming, though that phrase has been abandoned by the eco-terrorists in favor of the *blancmange* "climate change," since there has been no appreciable warming in 75 years, though the president claimed otherwise. And then, mercifully, it ended, after an hour sprinkled with acoustically painful invocations of "folks," "kids," and "mom" (he's the president, not Mr. Rogers). The State of the Union cannot be good when its twice-chosen leader summarizes it in such an orgy of claptrap. As Tex Ritter used to sing, during

his unsuccessful campaign for the U.S. Senate from Tennessee in 1970, “God bless America, again.”

Weekly Standard

Former Defense Intel Chief Blasts Obama

by Stephen F. Hayes

Lt. General Michael Flynn, former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, blasted the Obama administration’s approach to the War on Terror in a hard-hitting speech to a meeting of intelligence professionals. “The dangers to the U.S. do not arise from the arrogance of American power, but from unpreparedness or an excessive unwillingness to fight when fighting is necessary,” Flynn said, in an unsparing critique first reported by the *Daily Beast*.

The Obama administration doesn’t understand the threat, Flynn said, noting that the administration refuses to use “Islamic militants” to describe the enemy.

“You cannot defeat an enemy you do not admit exists,” he said.

The administration, he continued, wants “us to think that our challenge is dealing with an undefined set of violent extremists or merely lone-wolf actors with no ideology or network. But that’s just not the straight truth.”

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One key fight came over the analysis of the documents captured during the raid that killed Osama bin Laden. The CIA was responsible for the first scrub of the collection of more than 1 million documents and retained “executive authority” over the cache when it was completed. But the CIA stopped analyzing or “exploiting” the documents after that first quick and incomplete assessment and the Agency made no attempt to systematically examine and codify all of the intelligence included in the intelligence haul.

Flynn assembled a team at the DIA to do exactly that, but the CIA initially refused to share the documents. After a lengthy bureaucratic battle, DIA analysts were given limited access to the bin Laden documents and undertook an exhaustive exploitation. The documents provided the U.S. government with its best look at al Qaeda and its operations and challenges—from the inside. There were letters between Osama bin Laden and other terrorist leaders, plans for future attacks, details about fundraising successes and failures, descriptions of relationships between al Qaeda and governments in the region. The documents remain unexploited to this day.

Derek Harvey, a senior DIA official and former director of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Center of Excellence at CENTCOM, led the DIA team that exploited the documents. [He recently told TWS](#) that the U.S. government hasn’t “done anything close to a full exploitation.”

“A full exploitation? No. Not even close. Maybe 10 percent,” he said.

The Obama administration is choosing ignorance.

Sources familiar with the documents tell TWS that they include troubling information about al Qaeda’s plans to empower its franchises, new details about the many relationships with Pakistan’s powerful intelligence service and, significantly, support that the group has received over the years from senior figures in the Iranian regime.

In classified analyses based heavily on the documents, the DIA directly challenged the Obama administration’s claims that the threat from al Qaeda was diminished or fading. [Flynn hinted at this](#) in an interview he gave to James Kitfield of *Breaking Defense* shortly after he left government. “When asked if the terrorists were on the run, we couldn’t respond with any answer but ‘no.’ When asked if the terrorists were defeated, we had to say ‘no.’ Anyone who answers ‘yes’ to either of those questions either doesn’t know what they are talking about, they are misinformed, or they are flat-out lying,” Flynn said.

When bin Laden was killed, said Flynn, there was a sense that maybe this threat would go away. We all had those hopes, including me. But I also remembered my many years in Afghanistan and Iraq [fighting insurgents]...We kept decapitating the leadership of these groups, and more leaders would just appear from the ranks to take their place. That’s when I realized that decapitation alone was a failed strategy.”

The arguments that Flynn and his analysts were making were unwelcome in an administration publicly arguing that the threat was diminished and that the wars were over. Those who challenged the administration’s claims were sidelined or, in the case of Flynn, forced out. Several sources described the efforts at the time as a “purge” and warned about the dangers of an administration so unwilling to hear dissenting views.

Today, of course, there is little question that Flynn and his analysts were correct. But the Obama administration isn’t listening. The president gave a State of the Union last week in which he didn’t even mention al Qaeda, in which he awkwardly characterized the enemy as “violent extremists,” and in which he pretended that United States was winning the battle against ISIS.

Ignoring threats doesn’t make them go away. Refusing to accurately identify your enemies doesn’t change their nature. And announcing false victories makes real defeats more likely.

As Flynn put it: “Retreat, retrenchment and disarmament are historically a recipe for disaster.”

Power Line

Our Self-Obsessed President

by John Hinderaker

Many commentators have noted how frequently Barack Obama’s speeches focus on himself. It is true: for Obama, no matter the topic, it turns out to be mostly about him.

Earlier today, Obama delivered a farewell speech in New Delhi, wrapping up his trip to India. The speech was only 33 minutes long, and yet...Barack managed to work in references to himself no fewer than 118 times. The folks at [Grabien](#) write:

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Or once every 17 seconds. Here is the montage: [Follow this link to see the president talking about himself.](#) (If you can stand it.)

One thinks about world leaders who are serious men and women. Does Benjamin Netanyahu, for example, constantly talk about himself in speeches? I would say just about never, let alone once every 17 seconds. The real subject of pretty much every Obama speech is himself: his wonderfulness, his historic importance. The country may be in dire straits and the world may be going up in flames, but at least we enjoy the rare privilege of having Barack Obama as our president!

Washington Free Beacon

Foreign Firm Funding U.S. Green Groups Tied to State-Owned Russian Oil Company

Executives at a Bermudan firm funneling money to U.S. environmentalists run investment funds with Russian tycoons

by Lachlan Markey



Rosneft, owned by the Russian state, is the world's largest oil company

A shadowy Bermudan company that has funneled tens of millions of dollars to anti-fracking environmentalist groups in the United States is run by executives with deep ties to Russian oil interests and offshore money laundering schemes involving members of President Vladimir Putin's inner circle.

One of those executives, Nicholas Hoskins, is a director at a hedge fund management firm that has invested heavily in Russian oil and gas. He is also senior counsel at the Bermudan law firm Wakefield Quin and the vice president of a London-based investment firm whose president until recently chaired the board of the state-owned Russian oil company Rosneft.

In addition to those roles, Hoskins is a director at a company called Klein Ltd. No one knows where that firm's money comes from. Its only publicly documented activities have been transfers of \$23 million to U.S. environmentalist groups that push policies that would hamstring surging American oil and gas production, which has hurt Russia's energy-reliant economy.

With oil prices plunging as a result of a fracking-induced oil glut in the United States, experts say the links between Russian oil interests, secretive foreign political donors, and high-profile American environmentalists suggest Russia may be backing anti-fracking efforts in the United States.

The interest of Russian oil companies and American environmentalist financiers intersect at a Bermuda-based law firm called Wakefield Quin. The firm acts as a corporate registered agent, providing office space for clients, and, for some, "managing the day to day affairs," according to its website.

As many as 20 companies and investment funds with ties to the Russian government are Wakefield Quin clients. Many list the firm's address on official documentation.

Klein Ltd. also shares that address. Documents filed with Bermuda's registrar of companies list just two individuals associated with the company: Hoskins, Wakefield Quin senior counsel and managing director, and Marlies Smith, a corporate administrator at the firm.

According to documents filed with Bermuda's registrar of companies, Klein Ltd. was incorporated in March 2011 "exclusively for philanthropic purposes," meaning "no part of the net earnings ... inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual."

"The company does not propose to carry on business in Bermuda," the documents stated.

The only publicly available documentation of any business conducted by Klein Ltd. were two Internal Revenue Service filings by the California-based Sea Change Foundation, which showed that Klein had contributed \$23 million to the group in [2010](#) and [2011](#). Klein Ltd. was responsible for more than 40 percent of contributions to Sea Change during those years.

The foundation passed those millions along to some of the nation's most prominent and politically active environmentalist groups. The Sierra Club, the Natural Resource Defense Council, Food and Water Watch, the League of Conservation Voters, and the Center for American Progress were among the recipients of Sea Change's \$100 million in grants in 2010 and 2011.

Neither Wakefield Quin nor Sea Change responded to multiple requests for more information about their relationships with Klein Ltd.

"None of this foreign corporation's funding is disclosed in any way," the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee wrote of the company in a [report](#) last year. "This is clearly a deceitful way to hide the source of millions of dollars that are active in our system, attempting to effect political change."

The Sierra Club, which received nearly \$8.5 million from Sea Change in 2010 and 2011, launched its "Beyond Natural Gas" campaign the following year. The effort has become one of the largest

and best-funded environmentalist campaigns combating fracking and the extraction of natural gas in general.

Sea Change's "skeletal staff quietly shovels tens of millions of dollars out the door annually to combat climate change. And that's pretty much all it does," [noted](#) Inside Philanthropy, which awarded the foundation its "sharpest laser focus in grantmaking" award last year.

Nathaniel Simons and his wife run the foundation and are, except for Klein Ltd., its only donors. Simons, a hedge fund millionaire who [commutes](#) to work across San Francisco Bay aboard a 50-foot yacht, also runs a venture capital firm that [invests in companies](#) that benefit from environmental and energy policies that Sea Change grantees promote.

Simons himself has ties to Klein Ltd. Several Wakefield Quin attorneys are listed as directors of hedge funds that his firm manages, and in which Sea Change has assets.

Senior counsel Rod Forrest was [listed](#) on documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission as a director of two investment funds, Medallion International Ltd. and Meritage Holdings Ltd., in which Sea Change had tens of millions invested while it received money from Klein Ltd.

Simons' company runs the Meritage Fund. The Medallion Fund is run by Renaissance Technologies, the hedge fund management firm run by his father, billionaire and Democratic mega-donor Jim Simons. Both funds listed Wakefield Quin's Hamilton, Bermuda, address on SEC filings.

Wakefield Quin's Hoskins and Smith, as well as a number of other employees of Wakefield Quin, have worked in some capacity for companies or investment funds owned by or tied to Russian state-owned corporations and high-level officials in the country.

Hoskins, Forrest, and another Wakefield employee named Penny Cornell were all [listed](#) as executives of Spectrum Partners Ltd., a fund with [offices](#) in Moscow, Cypress, and Bermuda, Cornell at the address of Wakefield Quin's offices.

According to a performance [report](#) for one of Spectrum Partners' funds, its portfolio consisted of "Russian and CIS [former Soviet state] securities and securities outside of Russia or CIS but having significant economic or business involvement with Russia and/or CIS."

As of 2008, more than half of the fund's holdings were in the oil and gas sectors.

Numerous executives at Wakefield Quin have ties to Russian oil and gas companies, including Rosneft, which is majority-owned by the Russian government and in 2013 became the largest oil company in the world.

Hoskins is the vice president of a London-based company called Marcuard Services Limited, and a member of the firm's board, according to its website.

The company's president, and the chairman of its parent company, Bermuda-based Marcuard Holding Limited, is Hans-Joerg Rudloff. Rudloff is also a former [vice-chairman](#) of the Rosneft's board.

Hoskins is also a [director](#) at a Bermuda-based subsidiary of Russian investment bank Troika Dialog. That firm organized an initial public offering for Timan Oil & Gas, which is run by Russian oligarch Alexander Lebedev.

The Environmental Policy Alliance, which provided the *Washington Free Beacon* with a [copy](#) of an upcoming report on Klein Ltd.'s Kremlin ties, said Wakefield Quin's ties to environmental financiers and Russian oil barons merit closer scrutiny.

"The American public deserves to know whether environmentalists are attacking US energy companies at the behest of a Russian government that would like nothing more than to see their international competition weakened," Will Coggin, a senior research analyst at the EPA, said in an emailed statement.

"In the face of mounting evidence, environmental groups are going to have to start answering hard questions about their international funding sources," Coggin said.

The overlap between executives at firms with ties to Russian oil interests and a multi-million-dollar donor to U.S. environmentalist groups has some experts worried that Russians may be replicating anti-fracking tactics used in Europe to attack the practice in the United States.

"I have met allies who can report that Russia, as part of their sophisticated information and disinformation operations, engaged actively with so-called non-governmental organizations—environmental organizations working against shale gas—to maintain European dependence on imported Russian gas," Anders Fogh Rasmussen, formerly NATO's secretary general, [said](#) last year.

It is unlikely that the Kremlin is directly involved in doing so in the United States, according to Ron Arnold of the Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise.

"If anybody in Russia is behind all the secretive Bermuda investment house and law firm action, it's most likely some oligarch bidding against U.S. competition," he said in an email.

Arnold, the author of *Undue Influence: Wealthy Foundations, Grant Driven Environmental Groups, and Zealous Bureaucrats That Control Your Future*, said that the opacity of Klein Ltd.'s involvement with the Sea Change Foundation exemplifies attempts to shield the source of donations to such groups.

"In my experience of trying to penetrate offshore money funnels for U.S. leftist foundations and green groups, I have found that Liechtenstein, Panama and Bermuda are the Big Three green equivalents of the Cayman Islands for hedge fund managers—totally opaque and impervious to my specially designed research tools," Arnold said.

Right Turn

[Scott Walker now a target: Get ready for the smears](#)

Walker is rising, so here come the specious attacks.

by Jennifer Rubin

[The Post reports](#): "Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, whose speech to activists in Iowa last weekend drew strong reviews, has taken the first formal step toward a presidential candidacy in 2016,

establishing a committee that will help spread his message and underwrite his activities as he seeks to build his political and fundraising networks in the months ahead." Indeed, there is no candidate who helped his cause more or who has more momentum than Walker, which is why he is going to face a pack of lesser candidates nipping at his heels. It is the obvious play, especially for freshman senators with no record, to take on the conservative with an impressive record and support from a wide array of Republicans.

Walker would be smart to resist the urge to "punch down" to engage with lesser candidates or to be pulled into the marshes of the right-wing fever swamp with Sens. Ted Cruz (R-Tex.), former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee, Rick Santorum and others. You can spot their attacks a mile away.

First, there is the [faction that is so committed to opposing gay marriage](#) and so convinced it represents the voice of the nation that it now spouts off about ignoring the Supreme Court should justices find the 14th Amendment protects gay marriage. Yes, this faction's members do sound like [Southerners preaching the "massive resistance"](#) to Supreme Court rulings on desegregation.

What Walker has said on the subject is the only rational response for a social conservative who disagrees with the constitutionalization of gay marriage: He supports the view that marriage should be [defined as between a man and a woman](#) and defended the state constitutional provision to that effect, but once that position failed [he is obliged to obey the ruling](#) – or the "rule of law" has no meaning. ("For us, it's over in Wisconsin," [he said](#).) Perhaps the real question for the Cruz-Huckabee set is: *What other Supreme Court rulings do you plan on ignoring?* Walker has not yet spoken on whether he would support a constitutional amendment in the event the Supreme Court rules against state bans on gay marriage, but this is a phony issue if ever there was one. Where are the requisite states going to come from to disallow gay marriage underway in more than 30 states?

Second, Walker will no doubt be hounded into joining the Cruz/Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa)/Sen. Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) anti-immigration crusade. He has [defended legal immigration](#) and the positive contribution legal immigrants can make and decried the broken immigration system. When a single sentence was taken out of context, [he also clarified in 2013](#), "I've not said there should be amnesty in this country. I don't believe that. I don't support the legislation being kicked around. What I've said repeatedly is we need to fix the immigration system, but fix the legal system. So if people want to come in this country we should have a legal immigration system" and emphasized we need to "fix the front door" (fix the border) first. Oh, and he's actually to the right of border hawk Gov. Rick Perry insofar as Walker signed a bill [disallowing in-state tuition](#) for illegal immigrants. (I prefer Perry's stance on that, but the notion that Walker is a squish on immigration is false.)

The most ridiculous attack may be that he is insufficiently pro-life. [He made certain that](#) state health care for the poor does not cover abortion, defunded Planned Parenthood and supported legislation to inform women seeking abortion of their options. No wonder he was [such a hit in Iowa](#).

Walker will need to resist the urge to mire in the mud with candidates whose goal is to make everyone else an anathema to "real conservatives." What we saw in Iowa is that Walker has huge support on the right, and efforts to tear him down with specious attacks are not likely to sit well with the right-wing groups and pundits that usually rush to the aid and comfort of Cruz, Huckabee and others.

The result of these attacks — if Walker shows self-discipline — will be to underscore that *he* is now one of the top-tier candidates and *he* actually has an impressive conservative record. Republicans can have a conservative nominee so long as they eschew candidates jousting for the title of "most

unelectable." Truth be told, Walker (along with Perry) is one of the few very conservative candidates whom the establishment Republicans, independents and moderate Democrats could also vote for.

IBD

Late Night Humor

by Andrew Malcolm

Fallon: The RNC released its 2016 presidential primary debate schedule for Republicans with nine debates across the country. As opposed to the Democratic debates, which will just be Hillary staring at her opponents until they burst into flames.

Meyers: A Delta flight from Cleveland to New York Monday had just two passengers. And somehow, they both ended up in middle seats.

Fallon: New research suggests that men who regularly post selfies are more likely to have psychopathic tendencies. While women who regularly post selfies are more likely to be a Kardashian.

Meyers: Here's a new drinking game for Obama's State of the Union address. Instead of watching the speech, drink.

Conan: Nike announced this year it will release self-lacing tennis shoes. By the way, if you're too lazy to lace up your tennis shoes, you're really gonna hate tennis.

Meyers: Someone fired shots at Vice President Joe Biden's Delaware house. The vehicle sped off before Biden could load his finger guns and shoot back.

Fallon: Many are criticizing Obama for not joining dozens of other leaders at that Paris anti-terror march. Which explains why French people are now referring to American Cheese as "Freedom Cheese."

Letterman: Happy Birthday to our old friend Betty White. I'm told firefighters have the cake under control.

Meyers: "American Sniper" made \$90 million last weekend. But director Michael Moore says snipers aren't heroes. I don't know, Michael Moore. But if you're that easy to spot, do you really want to make an enemy out of snipers?

Conan: A new Tiffany's ad features a gay couple. The Tiffany's spokesman says everyone gay or straight should have the right to grossly overpay for jewelry.

Fallon: Americans can now legally travel to Cuba as long as the visit falls under 12 categories like family trips, research or humanitarian projects. And Cubans can travel to the U.S. as long as it falls under any of the nine positions on a baseball diamond.

Meyers: A new study says women with large butts produce smarter children. Which means the popular new pickup line is: "Your son must be a genius."

Meyers: Facebook's oldest registered user turned 107 years old today. And so did AOL's youngest.

Conan: A Saudi Arabian prince says the price of oil may never go above \$100 a barrel again. He says it's gotten so bad, he can't afford to buy his wife her own car that she's not allowed to drive.

Fallon: Mitt Romney's ex-running mate Paul Ryan says he will not seek the Republican nomination in 2016. Ryan won't say *WHO* he'll support. He just wants the best man for the job.

Meyers: A Seattle dog knows how to ride the bus to take itself to the dog park without its owner. It sounds cute until you find out the dog's only taking the bus because he has four DUIs.

Conan: A Texas congressman sent a Tweet comparing President Obama to Hitler. Which is ridiculous, because at this point in his career, Hitler had a much higher approval rating.

Meyers: New research suggests the first human conversations may have been about tools. Which means the second human conversation was, "Hey, can I get back those tools you borrowed?"

Conan: A Royal Caribbean passenger fell overboard during a tropical cruise. He was rescued later by a Disney cruise ship. But it was playing the 'Frozen' soundtrack, so he jumped back overboard.

Conan: The FDA has approved a new device to treat obesity. This amazing breakthrough is called a "vegetable."

Conan: The congressman who tweeted that comparison of President Obama and Adolf Hitler has apologized -- to Hitler.

Conan: After his State of the Union speech Obama talked with three YouTube celebrities. Right, the president met with a cat, a bear and a water-skiing squirrel.

Conan: Word that Miley Cyrus has posed naked for a magazine. Now is it just me, or is U.S. News and World Report getting desperate?

Meyers: Liam Neeson said he believes America has too many guns. And nearly all of them were used by Liam Neeson in 'Taken 3.'

Conan: For the first time, "The View" lost in ratings to another daytime show, "The Talk." However, both shows are losing viewers to something called "The Off Button."

Conan: Obama made history in his SOTU, using the words transgender, lesbian and bisexual. It was the part where he was starting to read the Craigslist Personals.

Conan: In South Florida, Shaquille O'Neal was sworn in as a reserve police officer. Personally, I can't wait until he works undercover.

Meyers: Joe Biden says he can "do a good job as President." And if that doesn't work out, he wants to be an astronaut or a fireman.

Conan: Five Disneyland workers have been diagnosed with the measles. Not only that, but nine of the Pirates of the Caribbean tested positive for scurvy.

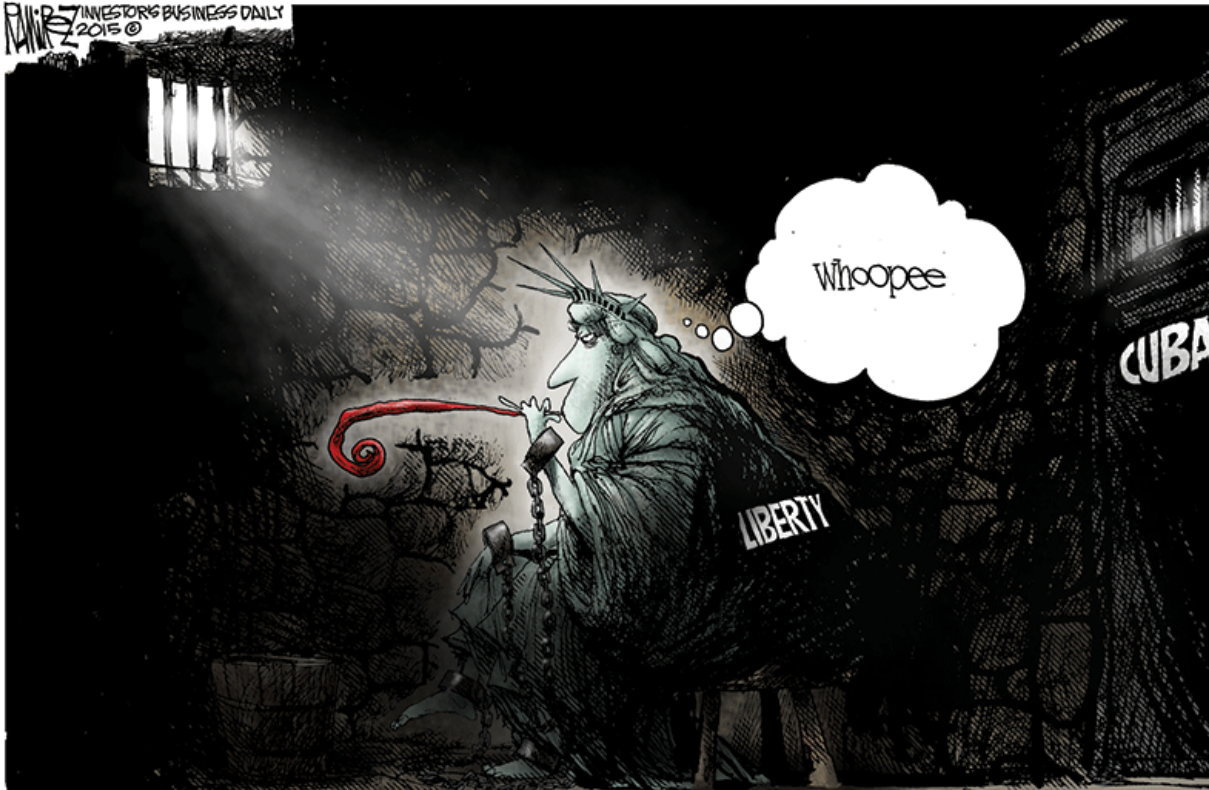


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