

February 25, 2015

Peter Wehner posts on the presidential penchant for making things up.

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The most obvious is the president’s repeated insistence that militant Islam is utterly disconnected from the Islamic faith. As this much-discussed essay in the Atlantic points out: ...

... Here, then, are three separate examples of the president imposing a false narrative on events. (I could cite many others.) Which makes Mr. Obama a truly post-modern president, in which there is no objective truth but simply narrative. Mr. Obama doesn’t just distort the facts; he inverts them. He makes things up as he goes along. This kind of thing isn’t unusual to find in the academy. But to see a president and his aides so thoroughly deconstruct truth is quite rare, and evidence of a stunningly rigid and dogmatic mind.

The sheer audacity of Mr. Obama’s multipronged assault on truth is one of the more troubling aspects of his deeply troubling presidency.

Michael Barone writes on the presidential penchant for reckless disregard of the law.

... Reckless disregard of the law is an ingrained habit in President Obama’s administration. After six years its legal interpretations have been rejected by unanimous rulings of the Supreme Court more often than in the eight years of George W. Bush’s administration.

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The Constitution’s framers wrote the faithful execution clause because they remembered that King James II claimed and exercised the power to suspend laws passed by Parliament whenever he liked. James was forced to flee England in the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and in 1689 Parliament passed a Bill of Rights declaring “that the pretended power of suspending the laws or the execution of laws by regal authority without consent of Parliament is illegal.” ...

What about the presidential penchant for claiming to have ended the war in Iraq?

Andrew Malcolm has some thoughts.

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Telegraph,UK wonders if, after a celebrity presidency, will our country be ready for someone to do some hard work and display some courage?

He is balding and frankly – even his supporters would concede – a little bit boring. So how has Scott Walker, the governor of the Midwestern state of Wisconsin, suddenly pulled into the front rank of Republican candidates for president?

With neither an instantly recognisable name – like Jeb Bush – nor a balloon-sized ego that craves media attention – like Chris Christie – Mr Walker reached near-parity with Mr Bush in the polls this week in the electorally pacesetting states of Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina.

In an era where politics has become increasingly intertwined with celebrity, Mr Walker, the 47-year-old son of a bookkeeper and a Baptist minister, has ploughed a very different furrow, earning his stripes in the bare-knuckled world of state-level politics, far away from a detached and deadlocked Washington.

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Larry Kudlow posted on what Scott Walker has been saying.

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Noteworthy, Walker argued that when Reagan fired the PATCO air-traffic controllers over their illegal strike, he was sending a message of toughness to Democrats and unions at home as well as our Soviet enemies abroad. Similarly, Walker believes his stance against unions in Wisconsin would be a signal of toughness to Islamic jihadists and Russia's Vladimir Putin.

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Washington Post says drink more coffee and don't sweat the cholesterol.

Contentions

Obama's Multipronged Assault on Truth and Reality

by Peter Wehner

President Obama is fond of invoking the term “narrative,” so it’s worth considering several instances in which he invokes exactly the wrong narrative—the wrong frame—around events.

The most obvious is the president’s repeated insistence that militant Islam is utterly disconnected from the Islamic faith. As this much-discussed [essay](#) in the *Atlantic* points out:

Many mainstream Muslim organizations have gone so far as to say the Islamic State is, in fact, *un-Islamic*. It is, of course, reassuring to know that the vast majority of Muslims have zero interest in replacing Hollywood movies with public executions as evening entertainment. But Muslims who call the Islamic State un-Islamic are typically, as the Princeton scholar Bernard Haykel, the leading expert on the group’s theology, told me, “embarrassed and politically correct, with a cotton-candy view of their own religion” that neglects “what their religion has historically and legally required.” Many denials of the Islamic State’s religious nature, he said, are rooted in an “interfaith-Christian-nonsense tradition.”

The author, Graeme Wood, adds this:

According to Haykel, the ranks of the Islamic State are deeply infused with religious vigor. Koranic quotations are ubiquitous. “Even the foot soldiers spout this stuff constantly,” Haykel said. “They mug for their cameras and repeat their basic doctrines in formulaic fashion, and they do it all the time.” He regards the claim that the Islamic State has distorted the texts of Islam as preposterous, sustainable only through willful ignorance. “People want to absolve Islam,” he said. “It’s this ‘Islam is a religion of peace’ mantra. As if there is such a thing as ‘Islam’! It’s what Muslims do, and how they interpret their texts.” Those texts are shared by all Sunni Muslims, not just the Islamic State. “And these guys have just as much legitimacy as anyone else.”

President Obama continues to insist the opposite, pretending that what is true is false, and even [suggesting](#) those who are speaking the truth are actually endangering the lives of innocent people. This makes Mr. Obama’s comments offensive as well as ignorant.

But that hardly exhausts the examples of false narratives employed by the president. As [this exchange](#) between Fox’s Ed Henry and White House press secretary Josh Earnest demonstrates, in its statement the White House avoided saying that the 21 Egyptian Christians who were beheaded by members of ISIS were Christian, even though that was the reason they were beheaded. At the same time the president suggested that the murder of three Muslim students at the University of North Carolina was because they were Muslim, when in fact that wasn’t by any means clear when the White House issued its statement. (The shooting appears to have involved

a long-standing dispute over parking.) So when Christian faith is a factor in a massacre, it's denied, and when there's no evidence that the Islamic faith was a factor in a killing, it's nevertheless asserted.

And then there was the shooting in Ferguson, Missouri, in which the president and his attorney general constantly spoke about the shooting of Michael Brown by Officer Darren Wilson as if race was a factor in the shooting. That assertion is fiction. It was an invention, just as it was an invention to suggest, as the president did back in 2009, that the arrest of Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. by Cambridge Police Sgt. James Crowley was racially motivated.

Here, then, are three separate examples of the president imposing a false narrative on events. (I could cite many others.) Which makes Mr. Obama a truly post-modern president, in which there is no objective truth but simply narrative. Mr. Obama doesn't just distort the facts; he inverts them. He makes things up as he goes along. This kind of thing isn't unusual to find in the academy. But to see a president and his aides so thoroughly deconstruct truth is quite rare, and evidence of a stunningly rigid and dogmatic mind.

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Examiner

Barack Obama's 'reckless disregard' of the law

by Michael Barone

Reckless disregard. It's a phrase in legal writing that means "gross negligence without concern for danger to others." And it's a phrase that characterizes much of the attitude toward law of an administration headed by a man sometimes described as a constitutional scholar.

The most recent case in point is the decision by federal district judge Andrew Hanen in Texas enjoining the operation of Barack Obama's order barring prosecution of something like 4 million illegal immigrants.

The administration has a plausible legal argument: the president is ordering immigration authorities to exercise discretion, just as a prosecutor does not bring all possible indictments. In his 123-page opinion Judge Hanen disagrees. "The DHS cannot reasonably claim that, under a general delegation to establish enforcement priorities, it can establish a blanket policy of non-enforcement that also awards legal presence and benefits to otherwise removable aliens.

That tracks with the president's boast that, when he signed the order, "I just took an action to change the law."

But Judge Hanen's decision rests on a narrower ground — that the government, in issuing work permits and authorizing the issuance of driver's licenses, did not follow the rules of the Administrative Procedure Act. The administration will appeal and the outcome must be regarded as uncertain.

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants have had their plans disrupted, and should the administration prevail on appeal their status could still be revised by a later president. Issuing

this order to, belatedly, keep a campaign promise was negligence without concern for the possible danger to others.

Obama has also acted with reckless disregard in administering the Obamacare statute he cites as his greatest domestic achievement. More than three dozen times he has unilaterally ordered non-enforcement of politically problematic provisions.

And the entire structure of the act is in peril because of one of those actions in the *King v. Burwell* case, scheduled for argument in the Supreme Court March 4.

The Obamacare legislation authorizes subsidies to be paid only in states with health insurance exchanges “established by the state.” But Obama’s Internal Revenue Service decided that it would also authorize them in the 36 states which did not establish an exchange but opted for using the federal exchanges authorized by the statute.

Mainstream media is filled these days with stories of how people in these states will be left without insurance if the Court reads the statute as written. Grave predictions are made that multiple deaths will result. That’s advocacy journalism, designed to influence the Court to rule the government’s way. Still, undoubtedly many people will be inconvenienced by the overturning of an administrative ruling they relied on.

But whose fault is that? The Obama Democrats wrote a law that, as you can watch their expert Jonathan Gruber explain on video, was designed to bludgeon the states into setting up their own exchanges. When it became apparent that many wouldn’t, the administration — not Congress — rewrote the law to suit its political convenience.

Reckless disregard of the law is an ingrained habit in President Obama’s administration. After six years its legal interpretations have been rejected by unanimous rulings of the Supreme Court more often than in the eight years of George W. Bush’s administration.

The Court ruled 9-0 that Obama couldn’t make recess appointments when the Senate said it was not in recess. It ruled 9-0 that the government couldn’t decide whom a church could classify as clergy. It ruled 9-0 that the government couldn’t fine landowners \$75,000 a day to appeal an administrative order blocking construction in an alleged wetland.

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There is a continuum between lawful exercise of discretion and unlawful suspension of the law. Time and again, Obama has lurched toward the wrong end of it.

Investor's Business Daily

Obama's convenient confusion about who ended the Iraq war

by Andrew Malcolm

We now know that Barack Obama has very few useful presidential skills. One of them is the guile to appear absolutely, 100% genuinely sincere when he says one thing. And then, just months later, to appear absolutely, 100% genuinely sincere when saying exactly the opposite.

He never declared a red line in Syria; that was someone else. He never said ObamaCare would save Americans \$2,500 per household in healthcare costs.

In the 2012 presidential campaign Obama and [Joe Biden warned voters that](#), if elected, Republican Mitt Romney would attack Syria. Even worse, Biden said, Romney threatened to revive the Cold War by not trusting Russia's President Vladimir Putin.

Turns out, it's the Obama-Biden administration that's bombing Syria now. And judging by Obama's denunciations of and economic sanctions on Putin, Republican Mitt Romney was 100% correct to distrust the former KGB officer.

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Now comes a stunning video (*Scroll down*), capturing Obama's repeated boasts about ending the war in Iraq, followed by.....

Well, we'll let you witness the one-minute video's punch-in-the-nose conclusion yourself. [Follow this link for the video.](#)

Six-hundred-and-ninety-six days remaining.

Telegraph, UK

After Barack Obama's celebrity presidency is America ready for a hard man in the White House?

Scott Walker, the Midwestern state governor with a high school education and a reputation for bashing unions, is emerging as a Republican front-runner

by Peter Foster

He is balding and frankly – even his supporters would concede – a little bit boring. So how has Scott Walker, the governor of the Midwestern state of Wisconsin, suddenly pulled into the front rank of Republican candidates for president?

With neither an instantly recognisable name – like Jeb Bush – nor a balloon-sized ego that craves media attention – like Chris Christie – Mr Walker reached near-parity with Mr Bush in the polls this week in the electorally pacesetting states of Iowa, New Hampshire and South Carolina.

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While rivals like Ted Cruz, the Texas senator and Tea Party darling, were grandstanding around the capital shutting down the Federal government, Mr Walker's pitch is that he was workin' in Wisconsin, bashing the unions, balancing budgets and slashing nearly \$2 billion-worth (£1.3 billion) of taxes.

"If you are not afraid to go big and bold, you can actually get results," Mr Walker told the audience at a major conservative conference in Iowa last month, noting his three election victories in Wisconsin had come in a state that has voted Democrat for president for more than 30 years.

Cutting taxes and regulation to spur growth – as Mr Walker told a dinner of Manhattan's "21" Club last week – is his pitch for bringing a "transformational change" to America.

For many Republicans, sick of Barack Obama's celebrity presidency and the Washington media cabal they feel has unfairly doted on America's first black president, "boring" is actually part of the excitement currently building around the Walker candidacy.

He is the Obama antidote, the ordinary-joe who recently posted a photo of his bathroom sink and a tin of scouring powder on his Twitter feed, revealing that he and his wife, Tonette, were at home. "I'm cleaning the bathrooms & she is cleaning the kitchen," he wrote. "How Romantic ..."

Deliberately prosaic, Mr Walker eschews the wit or snark that lit up the two tech-savvy Obama campaigns – he's so retro he doesn't even use Mr Muscle – but shops at thrift stores and relies on scouring powder and elbow grease to clean his bathroom, just like the rest of working America.

His backstory is short, but compelling. Born to blue-collar roots, Mr Walker quit university and took a job to support his parents and then never returned to complete his degree, his life overtaken by raising a family and pursuing the conviction-politics that took him all the way to the governor's mansion.

And while there are Democrats who have questioned whether America can really have a high school-educated president in the era of the knowledge economy, that might well be underestimating the enduring strength of America's tradition of anti-intellectualism.

The myth of the log-cabin president has always been just that, but outside the educated, urban elites large swathes of America still instinctively extol the virtues of real-world achievement over book-learning, as the widespread frustration with Barack Obama's professorial demeanour attests.

Lastly, essential to any successful US election campaign, Mr Walker also has access to money – both a network of 300,000 small donors compiled from his three election fights, as well as huge potential support from anti-tax Conservative mega-donors like the Koch Brothers.

The question is whether this curious blend of quiet man and red-clawed, fiscal firebrand is a winning package – first in the Republican primary fight and then in a general election contest against Hillary Clinton, the presumed Democrat nominee.

As the polls suggest, Mr Walker has a very decent shot at clearing the first hurdle: as an evangelical Christian and proven budget-cutter he, more than perhaps any other candidate, has the ability to unite both the socially and fiscally conservative wings of a heavily divided Republican party.

It is the second proposition – beating Hillary – that will test not only Mr Walker's broader appeal as a candidate, but also how far Mr Obama, and his own urban coalition of young people, women and ethnic minorities has managed to move the beating heart of America these past seven years.

At the age of 47, Mr Walker is a whole generation younger than Mrs Clinton, and yet paradoxically his Evangelical Christianity, his apparent uncertainty over evolution, his bloody confrontations with the labour unions and his belief in supply-side economics seem to hark back to an altogether earlier era.

Republicans might be nostalgic for Ronald Reagan, but it is far from clear that with the economy recovering and after decades of growth in government spending (under both parties) a majority of Americans will want to follow Mr Walker back to the future in search of a better tomorrow.

Real Clear Politics

What Scott Walker Actually Said

by Larry Kudlow

Yes, believe it or not, Wisconsin governor Scott Walker actually spoke at some length at the dinner this past week where Rudy Giuliani charged that President Obama doesn't love America. All the

hullabaloo went to Giuliani, but in terms of the Republican presidential race, a number of Scott Walker's pointed comments about policy and politicians are not to be missed.

First a word about the dinner itself, which was generously backed by John Catsimatidis. It was the second event sponsored by the Committee to Unleash American Prosperity, a new group founded by Arthur Laffer, Steve Moore, Steve Forbes and myself. Just as the Committee on the Present Danger -- formed by Midge Decter, Norman Podhoretz, and Irving Kristol -- worried about the decline in American foreign policy in the late 1970s, we are worried about the decline in American economic growth over the past 15 years.

Our view is simple: To maximize growth, jobs, opportunity and upward mobility, the U.S. must recapture the first principles of economic growth that were so successful in the 1960s, '80s and '90s. Namely, pro-growth policies should seek a low-rate, broad-based flat tax, limited government spending, the lightest possible economic regulations, sound money and free trade.

Since 2000, the U.S. economy has barely reached 2 percent growth per year. Over the prior 100 years, American growth averaged 3.4 percent annually. To get back to the long-run trend -- which epitomizes the most powerful engine of free-market capitalist prosperity in the history of history -- future growth over the next decade will have to average 4 percent annually.

To advance our policy goals, our committee (still in formation) will be interviewing all the Republican presidential candidates in the months ahead. A few weeks ago we had dinner with Texas governor Rick Perry. This week we welcomed Scott Walker.

In his opening, Governor Walker stressed growth, reform, and safety. During the question-and-answer period, he emphasized sweeping Reagan-like tax cuts. And he frequently referred to his successful efforts in Wisconsin to curb public-union power as a means of lowering tax burdens, increasing economic growth and reducing unemployment.

Noteworthy, Walker argued that when Reagan fired the PATCO air-traffic controllers over their illegal strike, he was sending a message of toughness to Democrats and unions at home as well as our Soviet enemies abroad. Similarly, Walker believes his stance against unions in Wisconsin would be a signal of toughness to Islamic jihadists and Russia's Vladimir Putin.

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And in an unmistakable rip at both Jeb Bush and Hillary Clinton, he called for a new generation and fresh faces to turn America back in the right direction.

More specifics: When asked about a sound-money policy, Walker said he was willing to sit down and learn. And on free trade, he needs a much clearer message. But in response to a question about solving middle-class income declines, he insisted that sweeping economic-growth policies aimed at all groups and categories, not just the so-called middle class, is the answer. He also aggressively defended his controversial University of Wisconsin budget cuts, arguing that they would slow tuition hikes and force professors to teach more.

Why did he leave Marquette before graduation? He saw a more attractive position at the Red Cross and wanted to start a political career. Yes, he nearly flunked French. But many folks think that's a political plus. And as National Review editor Rich Lowry has written, 68 percent of Americans do not have a college degree. And many of us believe the time has come for a president without Ivy League credentials.

Can Walker win? Arthur Laffer has known him for years and says he has matured enormously from his days as Milwaukee county executive. Others say he is the only Republican candidate with a record of winning many different elections, from local office, to state assemblyman, to three gubernatorial races in four years.

Walker is a superb retail politician, a trait that will serve him well in the early primaries. He has an uncanny knack of maintaining direct eye contact. At the dinner, rather than rushing out for an early-morning TV call, he insisted on talking to every person in the large crowd surrounding him.

The question now is whether he can develop from a tough state-union buster to a national politician who can modernize Reagan's policies while maintaining the Gipper's upbeat message of optimism and growth.

Washington Post

It's official: Americans should drink more coffee

by Roberto O. Ferdman

When the nation's top nutrition panel released its latest dietary recommendations on Thursday, the group did something it had never done before: weigh in on whether people should be drinking coffee. What it had to say is pretty surprising.

Not only can people stop worrying about whether drinking coffee is bad for them, according to the panel, they might even want to consider drinking a bit more.

The panel [cited minimal health risks](#) associated with drinking between three and five cups per day. It also said that consuming as many as five cups of coffee each day (400 mg) is tied to several health benefits, including a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

"We saw that coffee has a lot of health benefits," said Miriam Nelson, a professor at Tufts University and one of the committee's members. "Specifically when you're drinking more than a couple cups per day."

That's great news if you're already drinking between three and five cups each day, which Nelson and the rest of the panel consider a "moderate" level of consumption. But you know what? You probably aren't, because people in this country actually tend to consume a lot less than that. On average, Americans only drink about one cup of coffee per day, according to data collected by the United States Department of Agriculture. Even when Americans drank the most coffee they ever have, back in 1946, they still only drank two cups a day on average.

Interestingly enough, it isn't just people in the United States who drink less-than-moderate amounts of joe each day. No country in the world downs more than 3 cups each day per capita,

[according to market research firm Euromonitor](#). The country that drinks the most—Netherlands—still falls more than half a cup short of the three cup threshold each day.

Now this doesn't mean that drinking between three and five cups of coffee per day correlates will necessarily make you healthier or stronger. It might. But even if it doesn't, it's unlikely to do anything other than make you more alert and awake.

"I don't want to get into implying coffee cures cancer -- nobody thinks that," Tom Brenna, a member of the committee and a nutritionist at Cornell University, [told Bloomberg on Thursday](#). "But there is no evidence for increased risk, if anything, the other way around."

The decision, which broke the committee's more than 40 years of silence on coffee, was driven by heightened interest in the caffeinated beverage as well as a growing anxiety about potential health risks associated with it, according to Nelson. It remains to be seen whether the Department of Health and Human Services or the Agriculture Department will take the committee's recommendations for coffee intake to heart and include them in the official dietary guidelines update, which is due out later this year. But it's rare for the government agencies to ignore the panel's advice, so it's fair to expect a federal endorsement for drinking coffee—as much as five cups a day no less—to be just around the bend.

Washington Post

Cholesterol in the Diet: The Long Slide from Public Menace to No “Appreciable” Effect

by Peter Whoriskey

In one short paragraph, the new report from the nation's top nutrition panel reverses decades of warnings about dietary cholesterol. Long one of the arch-villains of the American diet, cholesterol need no longer be considered a menace to the public health, the group said, as the [Post previously reported](#).

As the panel's report puts it: “Cholesterol is not a nutrient of concern.”

Like few other issues, dietary cholesterol - that is, the kind you consume in eggs and other foods - and the fifty-plus years of debate over its role in heart disease shows the profound difficulties in reaching definitive conclusions about nutrition and the reluctance to withdraw public health warnings.

The level of blood cholesterol should be monitored, experts say, because it has been linked to heart disease. But according to the American Heart Association, research has shown that blood cholesterol levels are determined by heredity or the consumption of foods high in saturated fats.

The idea that *dietary* cholesterol represents a danger goes back at least as far back as 1961, when the American Heart Association warned Americans of the perils of consuming cholesterol-rich foods such as eggs, and liver.

The warning about cholesterol was embraced by the first version of the government's "Dietary Goals" in 1977, and it has remained a fixture in them ever since. Indeed, when new nutritional labels were introduced in 1994, cholesterol was one of the nutrients that was called out.

And as late as last year, the Food and Drug Administration asserted that "Current dietary recommendations continue to recognize the well-established relationship between consumption of cholesterol and its effect on blood cholesterol level."

The cholesterol warnings have been based on the idea that eating cholesterol-rich foods would significantly raise the levels of "bad" cholesterol in the blood, and that phenomenon would in turn lead to heart troubles.

Whatever its merits, the theory had remarkable staying power, hanging on despite years of doubts from prominent scientists.

The flaw in the logic behind the warning is that eating cholesterol doesn't much affect the levels of cholesterol in the blood, at least for humans, scientists have found.

As the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee concluded in its report today: "available evidence shows no appreciable relationship between consumption of dietary cholesterol and [blood] cholesterol."

What is remarkable is how uncertain the science was behind the longstanding warning.

As far back as 1955, Ancel Keys, one of the key researchers in this field, could conclude in the Journal of Nutrition that repeated studies had shown that "cholesterol level [in the blood] is essentially independent of the cholesterol intake over the whole range of natural human diets."

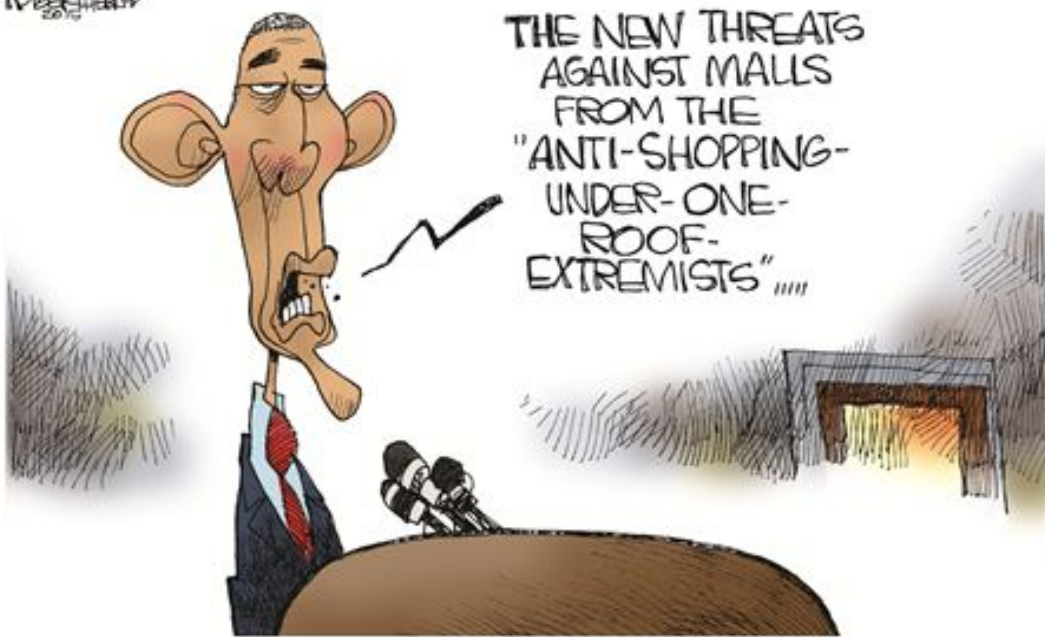
Keys had done repeated studies of the issue. For example, in one experiment, 23 men doubled their cholesterol consumption, another 41 men cut theirs in half. Over four to 12 months, their blood cholesterol levels of both groups failed to show any response to the change, according to Keys.

In 1977, as a Senate committee was published the first set of dietary guidelines - which called for limiting cholesterol- three on the committee objected, noting that the Canadian government had recently concluded that "a diet restricted in cholesterol would not be necessary."

"Because of these divergent viewpoints, it is clear that science has not progressed to the point where we can recommend to the general public that cholesterol intake be limited to a specific amount," according to the letter from Senators Charles Percy(R-Illinois), Richard Schweiker(R-Pennsylvania) and Edward Zorinsky(D-Nebraska).

The recommendation nevertheless made it into the final publication. "I can't tell you why previous committees did not deal with this," said Marian Neuhouser, a member of the current panel.

the cartoonist



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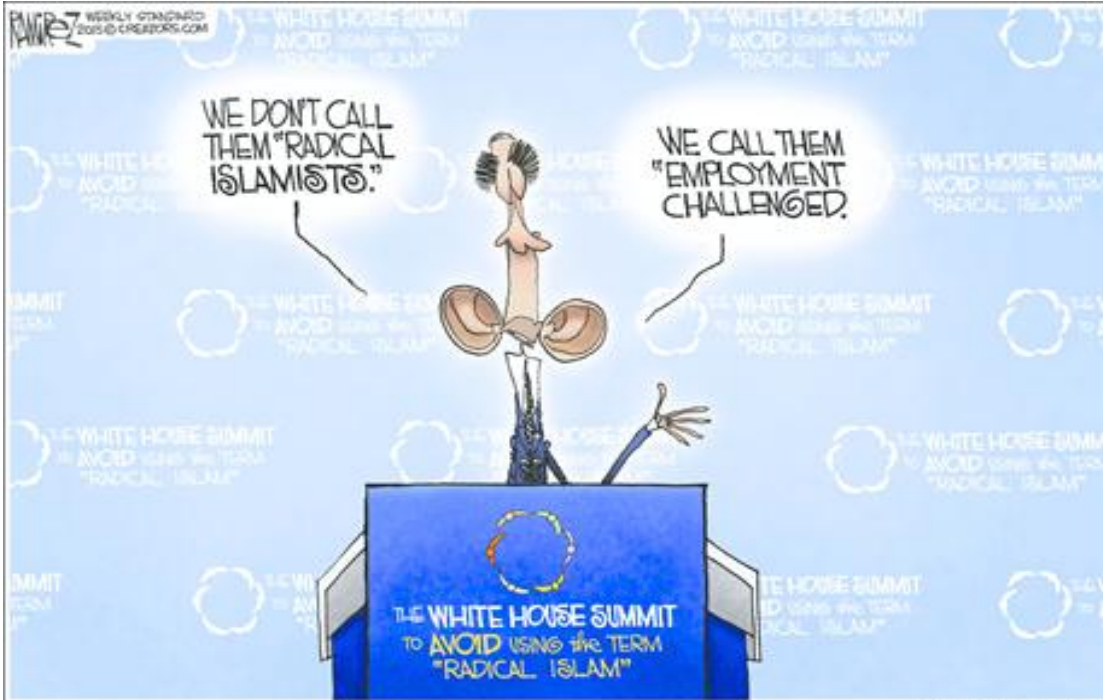
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