

April 22, 2015

Streetwise Professor has some interesting posts on the current occupant. The first is titled "Alfred E. Obama."

Obama reacted in his best Alfred E. Newman "what? me worry?" fashion to Putin punking him by selling S-300 missiles to Iran. Short version: "What took you so long, Vova?":

"President Obama said that he was "not surprised" Russia sold an advanced missile system to Iran in the midst of his negotiations with the Ayatollah to prevent Iran's nuclear facilities from making a bomb. He went even further to say that he expected the deal to happen a lot sooner than it did.

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Another example of the flexibility that Barry promised Vladimir via the whisper to messenger boy Dmitri.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but supposedly the big payoff to the Reset was Russian cooperation on Iran. But apparently Obama believes that the sell-by date of that cooperation has long passed. Or , he doesn't really give a damn about keeping Iran in a box.

And look at what he did there. He totally buys the Russian and Iranian line that these are "defensive weapons", and hence pose no problem: again, "what? me worry?" Is he that stupid? Does he not realize that a strong shield protects those who wield the sword? These AAMs dramatically undercut the credibility of any military response to Iran's developing nuclear weapons: they thereby undercut the credibility of Obama's vaunted deal. (Although that presumes that Obama actually intends to deprive Iran of the bomb. His actions repeatedly cast doubt on that presumption.)

Next Craig Pirrong shared with us two points from a UVA prof comparing Woodrow Wilson to current occupant.

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Second, and relatedly, Leffler emphasized that Wilson hated and despised his domestic opponents, in particular Henry Cabot Lodge. MacMillan related some anecdotes about what she called Wilson's "stupidity" in dealing with the opposition, in particular his very public scorn for the domestic opposition that just intensified their desire to defeat him. She said that Wilson didn't just disagree with Lodge: he believed Lodge was evil, and wouldn't do a deal with the Devil. MacMillan said that [I paraphrase] "Wilson believed if you disagreed with him, there was something morally wrong with you." (This is around the 1:08 mark.) That is, Wilson's refusal to compromise on the League (even though MacMillan claims that many of Lodge's objections were reasonable) stemmed from a visceral hatred and disdain for his political opponents. This refusal to bend (indeed, Wilson instructed Democratic senators to vote against an amended treaty) doomed his beloved League to defeat.

The parallels with Obama are quite apparent. One wonders if the outcome will be as well, that is, whether Obama's disdain for Republicans will doom his beloved Iran deal to defeat.

The last from **Craig Pirrong** today explains why he and Victor Davis Hanson have similar reactions to the current occupant.

... That is, similarly prepared or disposed minds, presented with the same facts, are likely to reach the same conclusion. Hanson and I are both conservatives who have spent our professional lives in the progressive swamps of academia, and who are hence quite familiar with the leftist infatuation with anti-Western movements abroad and disdain (and often hatred) for the United States. Through long exposure, we are well versed in leftist cant. We are both steeped in history, although Hanson is a real historian, and I am just an amateur. We both share a tragic view of man, and a belief that there are historical regularities that connect all ages: this gives us a neuralgia to progressivism (literally understood based on a knowledge of its Hegelian roots) and makes us shake our heads at people like Obama, who quite openly believes that things that happened before he was born, or came of age, are irrelevant (except, of course, if they can be used to shame western culture-the Crusades!-or the US-slavery!-or idealize "the other"-remember the beautiful Caliphate!).

In other words, we are almost destined to see Obama in the same way, and interpret his remarks and actions nearly identically.

Max Boot posts on the negotiating style of the "innocent abroad."

I'm guessing that President Obama, despite his roots in Kenya and Indonesia, has never negotiated for a carpet or anything else in a Middle Eastern bazaar. If his negotiations with Iran are any indication, he is the kind of innocent abroad who pays \$100,000 for a carpet that's worth \$100.

Already his talks with Iran have been characterized by American concession after American concession. Talks that started with the express goal of dismantling the Iranian nuclear program and exporting their stockpile of enriched uranium are ending up with the program wholly intact and the enriched uranium still in Iran, albeit in a diluted form. All that Iran has to do is to promise not to enrich too much uranium or weaponize for the next decade or so and in return the world will, in essence, apply its seal of approval to the Iranian nuclear program.

But that still isn't enough for the rapacious mullahs. Among other conditions, they are demanding that sanctions be lifted the minute the agreement gets signed. Obama has been insisting that the U.S. would lift sanctions only in stages, as Iranian compliance is verified. But on Friday Obama signaled that he is willing to make preemptive concessions on this issue so as to ensure that a deal gets done by his artificial deadline of the end of June. ...

Scott Johnson of Power Line riffs the foreign policy team.

The Obama administration national security apparatus has to leave a knowledgeable man feeling a little queasy. You've got national security advisor Susan Rice, a knave or a fool with credibility somewhere south of zero. You've got assistant to the president and deputy national security advisor for strategic communications Ben Rhodes. What is this man doing here?

You've got Secretary of State John Kerry, the man whom Obama has entrusted to bring home the bacon in negotiations with his counterpart from Iran. Who will represent the United States?

You've got Director of National Intelligence James Clapper. He seems to be in over his head as he occasionally blurts out the truth. That's a distinction with a difference in this crowd.

You've got Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, an apparently serious man.

You've got Valerie Jarrett, the woman with her finger in every pot. What is she doing here? Even former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates found her tough to take in matters involving national security.

And you've got CIA Director John Brennan. In their recent Wall Street Journal column on the need for a CIA Team B on Iran, former Attorney General Michael Mukasey and Kevin Carroll open with a recitation of some of Brennan's greatest hits, here denominated "gaffes": ...

More on the "negotiator." This time from Jennifer Rubin.

... His blind spot extends outside the negotiating room. When presented with a challenge Obama invokes a false choice: doing what he wants or war! (Sometimes, as in Iraq, the choice is doing something of marginal military utility or hundreds of thousands of troops on the ground.) Danielle Pletka notices, "In Iraq, after engineering the ouster of a once favored prime minister, the only support the administration can muster for the new PM seems to be arms sales and air strikes. (Mind you, not even enough of that...) In Libya, after the NATO effort the US joined ended Muammar Qadhafi's brutal reign, Washington simply washed its hands of Libya. In Syria, where the United States is nominally training the 'moderate Syrian opposition,' the US is languidly conducting airstrikes and occasionally launching a pallet of MREs at the millions of Syrian refugees that have fled to neighboring countries. In Yemen, where Barack Obama's new ally Tehran is seeking to overthrow a US ally in the fight against al Qaeda, the United States is providing intel and logistical support to the Saudis now bombarding . . . the country." In other words, whether it is before or after military action, Obama has no patience for the hard work of knitting alliances, leaving a stay-behind force. providing ongoing support, etc.

In sum, as bad a commander in chief as Obama is, he is a worse negotiator and strategist. ...

John Fund writes on the candidate that worries the defenders of the proposed occupant.

A long parade of presidential contenders presented themselves before a convention of New Hampshire Republicans this weekend. But only one was a former top business executive, and only one was a woman, and they were the same candidate. Carly Fiorina is no doubt getting attention because of her unique background, but more and more people are staying to listen because she has something fresh to say.

"For the first time in U.S. history, we are destroying more businesses than we are creating," Fiorina told her audience in Nashua. "The weight of the government is literally crushing the potential of the people of this nation." Electing standard-issue politicians will no longer do, she said. "Managers are people who do the best they can within the existing system. Leaders are people who do not accept what is broken just because it has been that way for a long time."

Fiorina also seems to relish the role of being the most pointed critic of Hillary Clinton. “She tweets about women’s rights in this country and takes money from governments that deny women the most basic human rights,” she jabbed back in February when a scandal involving the Clinton Foundation surfaced. She contrasts her background as a “problem solver” with Clinton’s record as a professional politician. Her critique of Clinton’s record is withering: “I come from a world where speeches are not accomplishments. Activity isn’t accomplishment. Title isn’t accomplishment. I come from a world where you have to actually do something; you have to produce results.” ...

Streetwise Professor

Alfred E. Obama

by Craig Pirrong

Obama reacted in his best Alfred E. Newman “what? me worry?” fashion to Putin punking him by selling S-300 missiles to Iran. [Short version: “What took you so long, Vova?”](#):

President Obama said that he was “not surprised” Russia sold an advanced missile system to Iran in the midst of his negotiations with the Ayatollah to prevent Iran’s nuclear facilities from making a bomb. He went even further to say that he expected the deal to happen a lot sooner than it did.

“I’m frankly surprised that it held this long given that they were not prohibited by sanctions from selling these defensive weapons,” President Obama said on Friday.

Another example of the flexibility that Barry promised Vladimir via the whisper to messenger boy Dmitri.

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And look at what he did there. He totally buys the Russian and Iranian line that these are “defensive weapons”, and hence pose no problem: again, “what? me worry?” Is he that stupid? Does he not realize that a strong shield protects those who wield the sword? These AAMs dramatically undercut the credibility of any military response to Iran’s developing nuclear weapons: they thereby undercut the credibility of Obama’s vaunted deal. (Although that presumes that Obama actually intends to deprive Iran of the bomb. His actions repeatedly cast doubt on that presumption.)

If defensive weapons as so benign, why doesn’t Barry supply them to Ukraine? Indeed, the defensive weapons (e.g., ATGMs) that Ukraine is pleading for cannot serve the same strategic function as the S-300s supplied to Iran. They are truly useful only in local defense, particularly by an army like Ukraine’s that is hard pressed to hold its own ground, let alone attempt to project power. They can help make a Russian invasion too costly for Putin to undertake, but cannot provide a shield behind which an aggressive power can develop the means to carry out

its expansionist schemes. So Obama should shove Putin's words about the benignity of defensive weapons back in his botoxed face. "What's good for Iran is good for Ukraine, Vlad."

But instead, Obama (and the feckless Europeans) cringe before Russia's freak outs about providing one bandolier, bullet, bayonet or trainer to Ukraine, or stationing one tank in the Baltics. Indeed, the Russians also went ballistic (figuratively) by threatening to go literally ballistic over Nato ABM systems.

Ponder the hypocrisy here. It is a thing to behold. [Russia told Israel to lie back and enjoy it because S-300's are purely defensive](#). But any Nato defensive missiles in Europe have become "[objects of priority \[Russian\] response](#) [i.e., they are now nuclear targets]." (General Dempsey has Obamaitis, apparently, saying that he's "not surprised" by Russia's rhetoric. This guy is becoming a daily embarrassment.)

[Obama also channeled good old Alfred E. when he downplayed Khamenei's insistence that sanctions would be eliminated immediately upon reaching an agreement, and that military sites were completely out of bounds to inspectors:](#)

"It's not surprising to me that the supreme leader or a whole bunch of other people are going to try to characterize the deal in a way that protects their political position," Obama said in a news conference Saturday at the Summit of the Americas in Panama.

Talk about projection! What the hell has Obama been doing in the past three weeks other than "try[ing] to characterize the deal in a way that protects [his] political position"?

Obama is also demonstrating that his vaunted flexibility is not limited to Russia, saying that he is open to "creative" approaches to lifting sanctions early. He claims that he insists on "snapback" capability, but anyone who believes sanctions can be snapped back is out of his bleeping mind. Or is a liar that is "characteriz[ing] the deal in a way that protects his political position." That is, saying anything to protect a deal that he wants, hell or high water.

If Obama is Alfred E. Newman, I am definitely not. Me worry. In particular, me worry that we are bumping against the limits of the amount of ruin in a nation that Adam Smith wrote about.

Streetwise Professor

More Obama & Wilson Parallels

by Craig Pirrong

[Watched a show on CSPAN3](#) (yes, it's an exciting life I lead) involving a discussion of Woodrow Wilson and the Versailles Treaty and the League between Prof. Melvyn Leffler of the University of Virginia, and Oxford's Prof. Margaret MacMillan, author of "The War that Ended Peace: The Road to 1914." Leffler made two points that resonate today, when thinking about Obama. (This discussion is around the 1:05 mark of the video.)

First, Leffler pointed out that Wilson made many compromises in Paris, but adamantly refused to make any compromises with his domestic opposition. Leffler further noted that contemporaries noted the contrast.

Second, and relatedly, Leffler emphasized that Wilson hated and despised his domestic opponents, in particular Henry Cabot Lodge. MacMillan related some anecdotes about what she called Wilson's "stupidity" in dealing with the opposition, in particular his very public scorn for the domestic opposition that just intensified their desire to defeat him. She said that Wilson didn't just disagree with Lodge: he believed Lodge was evil, and wouldn't do a deal with the Devil. MacMillan said that [I paraphrase] "Wilson believed if you disagreed with him, there was something morally wrong with you." (This is around the 1:08 mark.) That is, Wilson's refusal to compromise on the League (even though MacMillan claims that many of Lodge's objections were reasonable) stemmed from a visceral hatred and disdain for his political opponents. This refusal to bend (indeed, Wilson instructed Democratic senators to vote against an amended treaty) doomed his beloved League to defeat.

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Streetwise Professor

[Victor Davis Hanson and the Streetwise Professor: Peas in an Anti-Progressive Pod](#)

by Craig Pirrong

It's kind of spooky that Victor Davis Hanson and I will frequently draw the same conclusions from a particular Obama remark or action, phrase our analysis in similar terms, and do so almost simultaneously. [This VDH piece from April 14](#) and [mine from April 11](#) are a case in point. We both conclude that Obama's foreign policy is driven not by incompetence (though there is that) but instead it is the result of conscious choice based on his beliefs and mindset. VDH and I both attribute Obama's actions to his "romantic" view of Third World nations and revolutionaries, and his belief in America's sins. Our conclusions are based on the same words uttered by Obama, and by same actions that Obama has undertaken.

I am not asserting a causal relationship here. Instead, this is an example of "multiple discoveries", a phenomenon studied by the sociologist Robert Merton, and the Stiglers, *père* George (an economist) *et fils* Stephen (a statistician).

That is, similarly prepared or disposed minds, presented with the same facts, are likely to reach the same conclusion. Hanson and I are both conservatives who have spent our professional lives in the progressive swamps of academia, and who are hence quite familiar with the leftist infatuation with anti-Western movements abroad and disdain (and often hatred) for the United States. Through long exposure, we are well versed in leftist cant. We are both steeped in history, although Hanson is a real historian, and I am just an amateur. We both share a tragic view of man, and a belief that there are historical regularities that connect all ages: this gives us a neuralgia to progressivism (literally understood based on a knowledge of its Hegelian roots) and makes us shake our heads at people like Obama, who quite openly believes that things that happened before he was born, or came of age, are irrelevant (except, of course, if they can be used to shame western culture-the Crusades!-or the US-slavery!-or idealize "the other"-remember the beautiful Caliphate!).

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Contentions

Innocent Abroad: Obama's Iran Disaster

by Max Boot

I'm guessing that President Obama, despite his roots in Kenya and Indonesia, has never negotiated for a carpet or anything else in a Middle Eastern bazaar. If his negotiations with Iran are any indication, he is the kind of innocent abroad who pays \$100,000 for a carpet that's worth \$100.

Already his talks with Iran have been characterized by American concession after American concession. Talks that started with the express goal of dismantling the Iranian nuclear program and exporting their stockpile of enriched uranium are ending up with the program wholly intact and the enriched uranium still in Iran, albeit in a diluted form. All that Iran has to do is to promise not to enrich too much uranium or weaponize for the next decade or so and in return the world will, in essence, apply its seal of approval to the Iranian nuclear program.

But that still isn't enough for the rapacious mullahs. Among other conditions, they are demanding that sanctions be lifted the minute the agreement gets signed. Obama has been insisting that the U.S. would lift sanctions only in stages, as Iranian compliance is verified. But on Friday Obama signaled that he is willing to make preemptive concessions on this issue so as to ensure that a deal gets done by his artificial deadline of the end of June.

According to the [Wall Street Journal](#), Iran could receive from \$30 billion to \$50 billion in frozen oil money as soon as it signs a deal, out of a total of \$100 billion to \$140 billion currently held in frozen offshore accounts. That's a massive bribe to sign on the dotted line.

And that's just what Obama is saying in mid-April. Imagine what will happen after the Iranian negotiators inform Secretary of State Kerry that \$50 billion isn't enough—oh and, they will add (as they have already done), they shouldn't have to make a full accounting of their previous nuclear-weapons work, they shouldn't have to allow inspectors unfettered access, and they shouldn't have to export any enriched uranium. Think Obama will hold the line? Hardly. This is only the beginning of the complete cave-in that the White House is prepared to make in order to get a deal, any deal, the details be damned.

To justify his premature concessions, Obama claims that the amount of money that the Iranians will receive upon signing the deal won't matter—even if \$50 billion is more than enough to turbocharge the Iranian power-grab across the region. "Our main concern here is making sure that if Iran doesn't abide by its agreement that we don't have to jump through a whole bunch of hoops in order to reinstate sanctions," the president said at a news conference.

This is a reference to Obama's vaunted "snap back" ideas for reimposing sanctions if the Iranians don't meet their obligations. But only a credulous sixth-grader could imagine that in the event that there is some evidence of Iranian cheating (and the evidence inevitably will be murky, incomplete, and subject to debate) that countries such as France and Germany, which are eager to do business with Tehran, much less countries such as China and Russia, which are not only cozy with Tehran but hostile to Western interests in general, will agree to reimpose sanctions.

Obama's comments on Friday, and the *Journal* leak that accompanied them, are further evidence of how the Iranians are taking the president to the cleaners—or more accurately to the bazaar. At this rate he will be lucky to leave the negotiations with the clothes on his back.

Power Line

Brennan's bromides

by Scott Johnson

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You've got Secretary of State John Kerry, the man whom Obama has entrusted to bring home the bacon in negotiations with his counterpart from Iran. Who will represent the United States?

You've got Director of National Intelligence James Clapper. He seems to be in over his head as he occasionally blurts out the truth. That's a distinction with a difference in this crowd.

You've got Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, an apparently serious man.

You've got Valerie Jarrett, the woman with her finger in every pot. What is she doing here? Even former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates found her tough to take in matters involving national security.

And you've got CIA Director John Brennan. In their recent [Wall Street Journal column](#) on the need for a CIA Team B on Iran, former Attorney General Michael Mukasey and Kevin Carroll open with a recitation of some of Brennan's greatest hits, here denominated "gaffes":

Many of CIA Director John Brennan's gaffes over the years have raised eyebrows, but none has suggested the need for a legislative remedy—until the one he launched at Harvard last week.

His past indiscretions have included, in 2010 when he was a counterterrorism adviser at the White House, referring to Jerusalem by its Arabic name, "al Quds"; referring to the "moderate" elements in Hezbollah, the Iran surrogate in Lebanon and a group the U.S. designates a terrorist organization; and insisting that our enemies should not be called "jihadists" because jihad is "a holy struggle, a legitimate tenet of Islam."

There was also the time in 2010 when he derided the notion of a war on terrorism or terror because "terrorism is but a tactic" and "terror is a state of mind."

In the clip below, Brennan refers to Jerusalem as "al Quds." I had forgotten about this. In this and each of the other statements cited Brennan seems to be speaking from a perspective deeply sympathetic to those from whom he is charged to keep us safe. What is he doing here?

Mukasey and Carroll use the statements above as the predicate of an examination of Brennan's latest and perhaps greatest hit:

[I]n an interview last week at Harvard's Institute for Politics, Mr. Brennan said that anyone who both knew the facts surrounding the Obama administration's "framework" agreement regarding the Iranian nuclear program, and said that it "provides a pathway for Iran to a bomb," was being "wholly disingenuous."

Mukasey and Carroll comment: "That was foolish, insofar as it applied to many serious-minded people in and out of government, but it was also dangerous."

Mukasey and Carroll write with considerable tact. Obama and his national security team are clearly willing to say anything in a bad cause. In Brennan's case, however, the man appears to harbor deep personal belief in the statements Mukasey and Carroll call "gaffes."

Right Turn

Obama is a woeful commander but a worse negotiator

by Jennifer Rubin

Adam Garfinkle writes:

"Arms control negotiations between adversaries that fear and distrust each other cannot fundamentally reshape strategic reality absent strenuous and consistent activities outside the negotiating room. They can affect only the tone and timing of how geostrategic realities play out; sometimes, by redirecting competitive energies into unconstrained areas, they can ultimately make things more dangerous, not less. The level and trajectory of political enmity, not the weapons themselves, shape the ambit of possibilities in arms control. It is not foremostly a technical exercise. The result, vividly borne out by the Cold War history of U.S.-Soviet arms control, is that arms control offers few if any security benefits when you desire them most, and only modest benefits when you don't really need them. Arms control is hard to do when it matters, easy when it doesn't. Clearly, the Iran case fits squarely into category number one: hard to get, and potentially counterproductive if you do get it."

I have a nagging sense that the Administration and its supporters do not entirely grasp this history, or this key point. But, while no one should underestimate the politico-diplomatic desperation of the Administration and its capacity for pusillanimity, even I have a hard time imagining a total collapse of the U.S. position between now and June 30.

We concur and have noted other instances in which President Obama lets our adversary occupy the battlefield (Ukraine, Syria) and then tries in vain to get it back at the bargaining table. He seems oblivious to the possibility that coercion is an integral part of negotiation. Convincing Iran to "trust" us or assigning Western motives (they don't mean that!) is fruitless and simply convinces our opponent we are weak. Likewise, with sanctions and Congress more generally Obama has never attempted to use that as leverage against Iran. Instead, he cites "talking points that come straight out of Tehran," as Sen. [Robert Menendez \(D-N.J.\)](#) put it, and threatens to veto congressional action, just as the administration previously opposed sanctions before relenting.

Rather than maximizing leverage (increasing sanctions, making our military option credible, challenging Iranian proxies in the region), Obama reduced it by keeping sanctions action at bay, convincing no one that he'd ever use force and giving Iran free rein in the region. Match that with serial concessions, and you have not only rotten terms but terms Iran will never be content with; inflexibility pays off when dealing with Obama.

His blind spot extends outside the negotiating room. When presented with a challenge Obama invokes a false choice: doing what he wants or war! (Sometimes, as in Iraq, the choice is doing something of marginal military utility or hundreds of thousands of troops on the ground.) [Danielle Pletka notices](#), "In Iraq, after engineering the ouster of a once favored prime minister, the only support the administration can muster for the new PM seems to be arms sales and air strikes. (Mind you, not even enough of that...) In Libya, after the NATO effort the US joined ended Muammar Qadhafi's brutal reign, Washington simply washed its hands of Libya. In Syria, where the United States is nominally training the 'moderate Syrian opposition,' the US is languidly conducting airstrikes and occasionally launching a pallet of MREs at the millions of Syrian refugees that have fled to neighboring countries. In Yemen, where Barack Obama's new ally Tehran is seeking to overthrow a US ally in the fight against al Qaeda, the United States is providing intel and logistical support to the Saudis now bombarding . . . the country."

In other words, whether it is before or after military action, Obama has no patience for the hard work of knitting alliances, leaving a stay-behind force. providing ongoing support, etc.

In sum, as bad a commander in chief as Obama is, he is a worse negotiator and strategist. He is perhaps simply so desperate for a "win" that he gets in his own way, refuses Congress's cooperation and forgets that "letting the next president deal with a nuclear Iran" is no kind of legacy.

National Review

[Fiorina Has Hillary Defenders Worried](#)

by John Fund

A long parade of presidential contenders presented themselves before a convention of New Hampshire Republicans this weekend. But only one was a former top business executive, and only one was a woman, and they were the same candidate. Carly Fiorina is no doubt getting attention because of her unique background, but more and more people are staying to listen because she has something fresh to say.

"For the first time in U.S. history, we are destroying more businesses than we are creating," Fiorina told her audience in Nashua. "The weight of the government is literally crushing the potential of the people of this nation." Electing standard-issue politicians will no longer do, she said. "Managers are people who do the best they can within the existing system. Leaders are people who do not accept what is broken just because it has been that way for a long time."

Fiorina also seems to relish the role of being the most pointed critic of Hillary Clinton. "She tweets about women's rights in this country and takes money from governments that deny women the most basic human rights," she jabbed back in February when a scandal involving the Clinton Foundation surfaced. She contrasts her background as a "problem solver" with Clinton's

record as a professional politician. Her critique of Clinton's record is withering: "I come from a world where speeches are not accomplishments. Activity isn't accomplishment. Title isn't accomplishment. I come from a world where you have to actually do something; you have to produce results."

David Carney, a veteran New Hampshire political strategist who is neutral in the 2016 race but whose wife works for Fiorina, told the Associated Press: "You see some candidates when they attack a woman come across very badly, but it's not very awkward for Carly. She seems to pull it off very well."

Indeed, well enough that liberals have been piling on Fiorina in an energetic effort to belittle her. Adrienne Elrod, a spokeswoman for a group set up to defend Hillary Clinton, recently called Fiorina "short on substance, with sophomoric one-liners." *The New Republic* noted that Sarah Palin used to be called the GOP's "Queen Bee" and then sneered that "it seems the GOP has finally found a new Queen: Carly Fiorina."

Liberals also point out that while she was the first woman to ever helm a Fortune 20 company, her six-year tenure as the head of Hewlett Packard ended in her firing. "They will say I was let go by my board in 2005 and outsourced some jobs overseas," she tells me. "But I took the company through the worst technology recession in a generation and created jobs on a net basis. As for the outsourcing, California's tax and regulatory climate made it almost impossible not to do that — which is why we have to change it." Fiorina claims that subsequent revelations — that her successor and the board members who fired her were embroiled in an internal spying scandal — help vindicate her tenure.

In fact, it was her experience in California that convinced her of big government's power to destroy people. Fiorina told Glenn Beck that California's current drought is a human-caused environmental disaster. "Despite the fact that California has suffered from droughts for millennia, liberal environmentalists have prevented the building of a single new reservoir or a single new water conveyance system over decades during a period in which California's population has doubled."

She told me that during her 2010 campaign for the U.S. Senate, she met jobless farm workers who were completely broken psychologically after endangered-species rules cut the flow of water to the Central Valley. "It's wrenching to talk to people who can't take care of their own families and face lives of complete dependency," she said.

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She believes she can connect with ordinary voters because her own experience shows how people can rise when they have economic opportunity. She left Stanford University with a degree in medieval history and philosophy and was "completely unemployable." So she worked as a secretary at a real-estate firm until someone saw her potential and she joined a management-training program at AT&T in 1980. She rose to oversee marketing and sales for the largest division of Lucent Technologies before taking over HP in 1999.

It's fashionable now for many Republican candidates to bash "crony capitalism," the interlocking of government and corporate power in entities such as Solyndra or the Export-Import Bank. But Fiorina takes her critique further, saying the country needs a new tax code. "It's not just enough to lower tax rates," she told me. "You have to simplify the 26,000-page tax code and take away the power to grant special favors."

Harkening back to her corporate career, she believes technology can play a “transformative” role because it allows citizens to play a greater watchdog role and keep a check on spending, taxes, and government abuses. “We need to do what Obama talked about in 2008 but backtracked on: more transparency and accountability, putting budgets and legislation online,” she told me.

Some of her ideas may sound fanciful but are worth discussing. “People think I’m joking, but maybe we ought to put every one of those regulations out on the Internet . . . and ask the American people to vote on them,” she told the Heritage Foundation last week. “Five stars, we keep you, one star, you’re gone. Wouldn’t that put interesting pressure on the political process?” If something dramatic isn’t done, the notion of government “of, by, and for the people” will be lost. “What happens when a system is so complicated and so powerful that only the powerful, the wealthy, the well connected can deal with all that?” she asked.

As she gains traction in some early-primary states, Fiorina will no doubt be criticized for a “Carly-come-lately” interest in conservative issues, having barely even voted for most of her adult life. But she insists on her conservative bona fides. Her father was Joseph Sneed, a conservative law professor who served on the liberal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. His daughter says she inherited both his ability to work with those he disagreed with and his “commonsense” views on issues. Her experience running HP convinced her she had to become active in politics.

All well and good, but Fiorina is no doubt a long shot for the GOP nomination. That inevitably leads to questions about whether her real goal is a vice-presidential nomination on a GOP ticket that will probably face Hillary Clinton. Fiorina is no “gotcha feminist,” but she deftly handles such questions. Chris Wallace of Fox News asked her last month: “Would you even consider being the running mate?” Her response was a classic: “Well, when you start asking all the other candidates that question, then maybe we’ll have that conversation.”

What is clear is that Fiorina has attracted enough attention and backing to get in the race in a serious way, and she will have more chances to impress grass-roots activists and voters. Her candor and bluntness, along with her business experience, offer a refreshing contrast with Hillary Clinton. Republicans would be wise to showcase her talents, regardless of how far she herself takes them in the 2016 campaign.



SCARY STORIES IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

IT'S MY
TURN.



MONDALE
1980

IT'S MY
TURN.



DOLE
1996

IT'S MY
TURN.



McCAIN
2008

IT'S MY
TURN
...AGAIN.



CLINTON
~~2008~~ 16