

May 14, 2015

For a treat today we have Hugh Hewitt's interview of Charles Krauthammer. The answers are not as well organized as his writings, but it's good to hear some of the rambling thoughts of Sir Charles.

HH: Charles, tomorrow, I'm talking to your colleague, Kirsten Powers, about her new book, *The Silencing*. There's an entire chapter on the President's obsession with Fox News. But what does, it kind of reached a crescendo yesterday. What did you make of that?

CK: I remember we talked about it last night on *Special Report*, and I suggested that Fox buy a full-page ad touting the fact that Barack Obama is apparently now a constant viewer of Fox News, he's such an expert on it. He said if you watch it all the time, so I'm glad to know that he's joined this vast audience that Fox commands. Look, this is sort of a pathological Obama where you know, he picks up these memes. He doesn't know a damn thing about what's on Fox. The idea that Fox is constantly showing, you know, sponges and leeches, and never shows the waitress trying to make it, it's just sort of the mythological world that he lives in. Or he may be cynical. I mean, he may know it's all nonsense. I mean, I can't tell. I mean, after all, you probably need a psychiatrist to figure that out. But it's either cynical or just hopelessly deluded on this. I would prefer to think he's cynical, because I'd like somebody in the White House who's not delusional. And this is the usual Obama cynicism. It's the media, it's the press, they're underreporting liberal successes. I mean, look, the fact is a war on poverty, the billions poured into helping the poor, which in my 20s I rather supported until in my 30s, the empirical social science evidence began to come out that not only was money poured down the drain, but it was undermining the traditional structures of even the poorest neighborhoods and leading to real terrible pathologies, including helping to accelerate the breakdown of the family. So these are, there's just the empirical social science refuting the liberal nostrums about how to help the poor. But he never engages in an argument. It's all ad hominin. ...

HH: Where do you see this race going? We have a minute to the break.

CK: I think it's very clear, this is analysis, not advocacy. The top tier clearly is Jeb Bush, Scott Walker and Marco Rubio. They've had all pretty good launches. Bush has declines, which makes him, so he's not the runaway frontrunner. I don't even know that he is the frontrunner. But there are three in the top tier. I am sure that either one or two will emerge from the second tier to join them, but that will take time, probably happen at the debates, the way Huckabee joined the top tier in '08 when he came out of nowhere. And I think Cruz would be a candidate for that. I don't think Rand Paul will ultimately be, because as a libertarian, he's got a ceiling that's rather low – high floor, low ceiling. And he's somewhat hurt by the rise of foreign policy as an issue, where I think he's rather weak. ...

Jonathan Tobin posts on the snub the Saudis have sent to the president.

... The Saudis, like the Israelis, know that America's promises about both the nuclear deal and the future of the region are not worth much. The Iranians have been granted two paths to a bomb by the United States. One is by cheating via the easily evaded restrictions in the nuclear pact with little fear of sanctions being snapped back. The other is by patiently waiting for it to

expire while continuing their nuclear research with little interference from a West that will be far more interested in trade than anything else.

That leaves the Saudis thinking they may need to procure their own nuclear option and to flex their muscles, as they have been doing in Yemen. It also sets up the region for what may be an ongoing series of confrontations between Iranian allies and the Saudis and their friends, a recipe for disaster.

Will Obama get the message and change course? That's even less likely than him embracing Netanyahu. An administration that came into office determined to create more daylight between itself and Israel has now embarked on a policy designed to alienate all of America's traditional allies in order to appease a vicious Islamist foe. Anyone who thinks this will turn out well simply isn't paying attention to the same events that have left the Saudis and other U.S. allies thinking they are more or less being left on their own.

Jennifer Rubin posts on the fact nobody trusts this president.

The Post reports: "King Salman of Saudi Arabia, a key ally of the United States, will not attend a summit this week at Camp David called to address security concerns among Persian Gulf nations about a potential nuclear deal with Iran, the Saudi foreign minister said Sunday." To say this is a slight or an insult is to minimize the symbolism of the decision. The Saudi king is telling America and the world: There is nothing President Obama can promise that is worth the trip. Out of all the Gulf states, only two will be sending heads of state.

Jonathan Schanzer of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) says dryly that "the optics of this are bad." Indeed, he tells me that "regardless of how Camp David plays out, one thing is clear: the Gulf states are decidedly uneasy about this Iran deal. And I suspect that there is little Washington can offer that will change this."

You know it's bad when the White House is insisting it isn't: ...

Max Boot has more on the latest embarrassment for President Disaster.

President Obama is in the position of a high-school student who thinks that the cool kids are going to come to his birthday party and starts bragging about it around school, only to have his prized guests opt out at the last minute, leaving him looking considerably embarrassed. The guests in question are the leaders of America's closest Gulf allies. They had been invited to a fence-mending summit at Camp David but only two—the emirs of Qatar and Kuwait—have accepted. All the others have suddenly discovered they have something else urgent to do that weekend. (Haircuts scheduled! Barbecues to attend!) Most embarrassing for Obama, as Jonathan Tobin noted earlier today, is that Saudi King Salman had at first accepted the invitation before declining it.

The administration spinmeisters can put a happy face on this all they want by claiming that they can still negotiate with the lower-level leaders the Gulf countries are sending but there is no doubt that this is a rebuke of the administration for putting Iran first. The Gulf leaders see the U.S. increasingly cozy with the rulers in Tehran, whose imperial designs they regard as a mortal danger, and they are not reticent about signaling their displeasure. Refusing to attend the Camp

David summit is the least of it. Other actions that the Gulfies are taking are more serious—for example launching bombing campaigns against extremists in both Libya and, on a larger scale, in Yemen without asking for America's permission or even bothering to notify us more than a few hours in advance. ...

Speaking of disasters, David Harsanyi posts on the worst of the GOP contenders - Huckabee. Harsanyi tries to understand why he dislikes the Huckster so much.

... Maybe it's the awe-shucks populism that isn't substantively very different from the class-conflict rhetoric we hear from so many on the Left these days. Or maybe it's that everyman Huckabee has been running for one political office or another for the past 25 years – a fact that might escape the attention of anyone listening to the nuggets of blue-collar wisdom found in his speeches and those God, guns, grits, and gravy books he writes.

Since his last run for the presidency, Huckabee has hosted a national radio show and television show, and he's endorsed all sorts of interesting products, including "secret biblical cures for cancer" to, no doubt, some unfortunate and desperate people. Because, Huckabee, like all of those selfish plutocrats he likes to denounce, is out to make a buck.

Or maybe it's his paternalistic attacks on pop culture, the ones that make him sound like some reincarnated member of the PMRC, that are so off-putting? After all, as governor of Arkansas Huckabee was a zealous Nanny State advocate—passing precedent-setting intrusions into the lifestyles choices of individuals in Arkansas.

It could also be his role as John McCain's hitman in the 2008 primaries, when he attacked Mitt Romney's faith in an effort to dissuade Evangelicals from supporting the Mormon candidate. Focusing on a candidate's belief system, at least from my perspective, is within the bounds of acceptable political debate. But Huckabee's churlish innuendo dropping should have undercut any perception you might have that the cheery former Baptist preacher is anything but your typical politician. ...

Andrew Malcolm was thinking he would pass on commenting on the awful commencement speech delivered at Tuskegee by the president's wife. We were going to leave it alone too, but Malcolm was too good.

... Commencement speeches are relatively easy compositions for writers to put in politicians' mouths. Graduations are happy times. Pols want to be associated with happy times. The publicity-seeking school wants a celebrity to grace the stage to confirm the day's import for the mere cost of an honorary degree.

So, they come. Congratulate the grads. Urge appreciation for supportive families. Offer one or two pieces of free advice that no one will remember. And get out of the way.

Not the Obamas. Not First Lady Michelle Obama. Presidential spouse is an unusual job. Unpaid. Unstructured. Presidential helpmate, privately. Sometimes publicly. So far, only women. (Susan Swain of C-SPAN, by the way, has just published a fascinating book, "First Ladies," profiles of all 44 unique women who've held that position, available in hardback and e-book here.)

While hubby played golf this Mother's Day weekend, Mrs. Obama went to Alabama's Tuskegee University's. Her 3,700 words began in standard form, but quickly became a detailed recounting of American racism including the famed Tuskegee airmen who overcame it seven decades ago.

Then, her address took a turn we've become accustomed to expect more from her husband: The celebration of 500 hard-won graduations became instead a speech more about her. ...

Hugh Hewitt

Charles Krauthammer On President Obama's Fox News' "Tic," And The "Terrible Decision" Israel Must Make

Dr. Charles Krauthammer, whose [Things That Matter has just come out in paperback with a new afterward](#), joined me to begin today's show:

Transcript:

HH: I begin today's show, though, with one of our favorite guests, Dr. Charles Krauthammer of the Fox News All-Stars, of course, the author of Things That Matter, now out in paperback, the astonishing bestseller from last year which sold over a million copies, is now available in paperback. I hope, Charles, you wrote a new forward to this.

CK: Actually, I wrote a kind of epilogue, which is I, there's a new section in the book on the age of Obama, sort of a look back over the six and a half years I pick the columns I'd written about Obama since the hardback came out. And you know, in the hardback, the book as it came out in 2013, there was a column or two about Obama, but he wasn't a central focus, because it was about the last 30 years. So I thought I'd add a section on our beloved current president and how we're going to remember him.

HH: Well, I'm going to be talking about him throughout the program. CNN's Gloria Borger is coming along later, Lanhee Chen from Stanford, Mike Pompeo, Robert O'Brien, who signed in with the Walker campaign. But let's start with President Obama. He was at Georgetown yesterday being interviewed, and he had this, it's a lengthy quote, but you've got to hear it, Charles, or at least the audience does in order to react appropriately.

BO: There's always been a strain in American politics where you've got the middle class, and the question has been who are you mad at if you're struggling, if you're working, but you don't seem to be getting ahead. And over the last 40 years, sadly, I think there's been an effort to either make folks mad at folks at the top, or to make be mad at folks at the bottom. And I think the effort to suggest that the poor are sponges, leeches, or don't want to work, are lazy, you know, or undeserving, got traction. And look, it's still being propagated. I mean, I have to say that if you watch Fox News on a regular basis, it is a constant menu. They will find, like folks who make me mad, and I don't know where they find them, right? They're all like, like I don't

want to work. I just want a free Obama phone or whatever. And that becomes an entire narrative, right, that gets worked up. And very rarely do you hear an interview of a waitress, which is much more typical who's raising a couple of kids, and is doing everything right, but still can't pay the bills. And so if we're going to change how John Boehner and Mitch McConnell think, we're going to have to change how our body politic thinks, which means we're going to have to change how the media reports on these issues, and how people's impressions of what it's like to struggle in this economy looks like, and how budgets connect to that. And that's a hard process, because that requires a much broader conversation than typically we have.

HH: Charles, tomorrow, I'm talking to your colleague, Kirsten Powers, about her new book, *The Silencing*. There's an entire chapter on the President's obsession with Fox News. But what does, it kind of reached a crescendo yesterday. What did you make of that?

CK: I remember we talked about it last night on *Special Report*, and I suggested that Fox buy a full-page ad touting the fact that Barack Obama is apparently now a constant viewer of Fox News, he's such an expert on it. He said if you watch it all the time, so I'm glad to know that he's joined this vast audience that Fox commands. Look, this is sort of a pathological Obama where you know, he picks up these memes. He doesn't know a damn thing about what's on Fox. The idea that Fox is constantly showing, you know, sponges and leeches, and never shows the waitress trying to make it, it's just sort of the mythological world that he lives in. Or he may be cynical. I mean, he may know it's all nonsense. I mean, I can't tell. I mean, after all, you probably need a psychiatrist to figure that out. But it's either cynical or just hopelessly deluded on this. I would prefer to think he's cynical, because I'd like somebody in the White House who's not delusional. And this is the usual Obama cynicism. It's the media, it's the press, they're underreporting liberal successes. I mean, look, the fact is a war on poverty, the billions poured into helping the poor, which in my 20s I rather supported until in my 30s, the empirical social science evidence began to come out that not only was money poured down the drain, but it was undermining the traditional structures of even the poorest neighborhoods and leading to real terrible pathologies, including helping to accelerate the breakdown of the family. So these are, there's just the empirical social science refuting the liberal nostrums about how to help the poor. But he never engages in an argument. It's all *ad hominem*.

HH: That's what makes me, I spent 15 years on the Children and Families Commission out here in California, and Robert Putnam, the Harvard sociologist, who is a man of the left, just wrote this book, *Our Kids*, which documents in great detail everything you just said. The *Times of London* calls him the most influential academic in the world. He's a lefty, right, but he recognizes the devastation brought about by all the wrong policy choices of the 60s on the family in America. It's got nothing to do with Fox News. And by the way, I watch Fox News pretty much every night on *Special Report*. I've never seen one thing slamming, in fact, two-thirds of the people on my church porch every Sunday are actively involved in taking care of the poor. Nobody believes this that is center-right in the country.

CK: I know. But he's got a tick. I said last night, he's got a tick, and it's curable. I was going to offer to cure it myself, but I'm otherwise occupied. And even though licensed, I don't practice anymore.

HH: All right, let's turn to the second person who might replace him, but he's also a young, dynamic, energetic, charismatic Senator who many people will say doesn't have any executive experience. Marco Rubio gave a speech today at the Council on Foreign Relations, which included this, Charles Krauthammer.

MR: When America has the mightiest Army and Navy and Air Force and Marine Corps and Coast Guard and the intelligence community in the world, the result is more peace, not more conflict. To ensure our strength never falters, we must always plan ahead. It takes forethought to design, and many years to build the capabilities we may need at a moment's notice. So to restore American strength, my first priority will be to adequately fund our military. This would be a priority even in times of peace and stability.

HH: Now Charles, there's substance there, but there's also a contrast in the rhetorical styles of the President, which is discursive and passive voice. Rubio is very fast-paced, very robustly delivered. Nevertheless, they're both going to be first-term senators, if Rubio wins. Is that going to anchor Rubio to the bottom of the pack, or does it matter?

CK: I think it's something that will hurt him. I don't think it will be a major demerit, but it will hurt him and Cruz and Rand Paul. You've got three freshmen Senators. I think Barack Obama is the one who made it popular. Before him, freshmen Senators didn't run for the presidency. I'm not sure it's a great recommendation given how the current freshman Senator has conducted himself in six and a half years. Nonetheless, I don't think it's going to be a major demerit, and that is because they both, I would say all three of them, are rather knowledgeable, energetic and dynamic, each in their own ways. And I think even though generally speaking, if you're running for president, you have a better shot if you're governor than you are as Senator, even a second or third-term Senator, since historically speaking, that's been true in the post-World War II era, even though that is true, I think these guys are, in the end, that's going to wash out, and it will depend on their policies, their performance, their demeanor, how they do in the debates, the absence of gaffes, I mean, all the things that, the game is won on the playing field. It's not won on statistics going into the game.

HH: Walker is in Israel today. Ted Cruz announced a slate of very impressive endorsements in New Hampshire. Those three are ascending, in my view. Jeb Bush has had a rough week because of Fox News. Interestingly enough, Megyn Kelly bled him a little bit on TV.

CK: Yeah.

HH: Where do you see this race going? We have a minute to the break.

CK: I think it's very clear, this is analysis, not advocacy. The top tier clearly is Jeb Bush, Scott Walker and Marco Rubio. They've had all pretty good launches. Bush has declines, which makes him, so he's not the runaway frontrunner. I don't even know that he is the frontrunner. But there are three in the top tier. I am sure that either one or two will emerge from the second tier to join them, but that will take time, probably happen at the debates, the way Huckabee joined the top tier in '08 when he came out of nowhere. And I think Cruz would be a candidate for that. I don't think Rand Paul will ultimately be, because as a libertarian, he's got a ceiling that's rather low – high floor, low ceiling. And he's somewhat hurt by the rise of foreign policy as an issue, where I think he's rather weak.

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HH: I was in D.C. last week, Charles, with one of the great old men of D.C., and I won't name him, talking about the issues that are battering the world. And we were chuckling that the President, President Obama, has done something no other president has done. He has brought together Saudi Arabia and Israel. And in fact, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Jordan are in a de facto alliance. Do you think it would be easier, and do you suspect that it is in the offing following yesterday's New York Times article, where Israel provided the Times all their targeting data on

Hezbollah for Israel and Saudi Arabia and Jordan to take on Iran now before they are nuclear and make the United States choose side?

CK: Well, I don't know that Saudi Arabia and Jordan have the capacity to do it, but they certainly have the capacity to help Israel do it. I don't know whether Israel has the capacity. For example, it doesn't have the refueling capacity that it needs, but that's where the Arabs come in. That's where the Saudis come in. If there were a strike, an Israeli strike on Iran, I would not at all be surprised if the Saudis provided landing facilities for the Israelis, and perhaps even refueling. Remember, in the Entebbe raid, where the Israelis went all the way down to Uganda, they refueled in Kenya on the way down, Kenya being a kind of quasi or at least a covert ally of Israel. On this particular issue, you're right. There is a de facto alliance between the Sunni Arabs and Israel. And if there were to be a strike, I have no doubt that the Gulf Arabs would be helping in one way or another.

HH: Well, this is the most serious question there is, and I've only been thinking about it because of last week and then yesterday's story in the Times, which was truly, Israel telegraphing a punch against Hezbollah, which they believe is inevitable. Do you personally think it's better to have it out with the Iranians now, or to try this bargain with the not-great-Satan, the people who call us the great Satan, because it's one of two choices. It's either, I think, prolonged military conflict, not a short strike like Operation Desert Fox, and not an invasion like Desert Storm, but nevertheless, something in between, or passive acceptance of their nuclear status.

CK: You're talking about Israel or the United States?

HH: The United States.

CK: We are so far down the road of acquiescence that it would be nearly impossible for the U.S. to reverse course unless the Ayatollah puts his foot down and decides that he's not going to do anything with the great Satan, and breaks off negotiations. I think they are not stupid enough to do that. They've been handed the kingdom on a plate, not just a paved road to nuclear weapons either by simply waiting and they'll have it in ten years, or by cheating, which there are no real mechanisms for us to stop or to do anything about if we discover it. So they're going to get there one way or another under this agreement. So why would they want to risk anything by walking out? So unless there's a very improbable walkout, I think they are assured of nuclear capacity. And I think we are assured of a truly catastrophic arms race in the Middle East, where the Saudis are going to go nuclear, the UAE, probably, Egypt, probably Turkey, and if we thought that two-sided deterrence, we and the Soviets for 50 years was difficult, risky and we came within an inch of nuclear war in the Cuban Missile Crisis, imagine what five-sided deterrence is like in a region that's the most unstable in the world. That's what Obama has bequeathed us. But I don't see any other path at the current rate. And I don't know what an American president of either party will be able to do when they're sworn in.

HH: So that leaves the alternative of Israel not waiting for that to happen in concert...

CK: I think Israel, if there's going to be a military strike, I think there is zero chance Obama would do it. He's completely committed to this appeasement strategy with Iran. If there's going to be a strike, it will come from Israel. And it will be assisted, covertly, by the Arab states.

HH: And what, in your gut, do you think is the probability of that, Charles Krauthammer?

CK: I really don't know. I mean, it depends, there are two factors. One, does Israel feel it has the capacity to set Iran back three or four years? I don't know. If it doesn't, it won't do it. If it does do

it, is it willing to risk the wrath of the Obama administration? And it's not just the dressing down it'll get. America has protected Israel at the U.N. from the kind of animus it feels. And you know, it could be possible that if Israel were to do this, the Europeans could decide to exercise an embargo over the Israeli economy. Israel is hugely dependent on Europe. Now normally, the U.S. would veto anything of that sort and act as a defender of Israel. I don't think anybody could say with confidence Obama would defend Israel.

HH: I agree with that, but I also think if you war gamed this most serious of subjects out, Israel would only do this with the assistance of the Kingdom and the Jordanians, that that would be a message clearly received in every capital in NATO, and that they might drag the West with them.

CK: Not with Obama as president. I can't see that happening. I think the most likely response is a war of attrition, where Hezbollah launches thousands of, it's got about 10,000 rockets at least, probably much more, against Israel, maybe Hamas, Islamic Jihad, maybe Iran itself, where you get, I mean, really intense conventional warfare as a result. The Israelis have to calculate that as well.

HH: That's what, did you read that New York Times piece yesterday? That's what I thought that was all about.

CK: I didn't see the Times yesterday.

HH: Oh, I would encourage you to go to see it. So if that happens, it's still non-nuclear. It's terrible, it will be horrific in its consequences, but it's non-nuclear. Is that to be preferred to that five-way deterrence, Charles, because at the end of that five-way deterrence is oops, we miscalculated, and a mushroom cloud.

CK: Look, the Israelis are the only country on Earth whose extinction is state policy for several of its neighbors, including one about to go nuclear, the only country on Earth. Milan Kundera, the Czech novelist, once wrote a small country is a country that can disappear and knows it. The only such small country on Earth is Israel. And it is looking at the actual physical prospect of that becoming a possibility if Iran goes nuclear. So it's going to have to make this terrible decision. I don't know which way it will go. I mean, it's really a terrible risk either way. But in part, it'll depend on what they think will be the Obama reaction if they undertake such a mission.

HH: Now Dr. Charles Krauthammer, author of *Things That Matter*, I want to switch over to the European election of last week in the United Kingdom where David Cameron's Tories won an unexpected...I was driving from D.C. to Charlottesville, and back and forth on Sunday, so I listened to six hours of the BBC World Service. And you would have thought Cameron lost, actually, so terrible are the problems he faces with the Scottish National Party. And they were so wringing their hands. I had Liam Fox on yesterday, the leading Atlanticist who is not in the cabinet. What do you make of three elections in a row – the United States in November, Likud in March, and now the Tories in May winning unexpected, unanticipated by the polls, in shockingly big wins?

CK: I would add probably the next French election is going to see the socialists kicked out, so that there'll be, there's a trend there. I mean, it's what Margaret Thatcher says. The reason socialism doesn't work is in the end, socialists run out of other people's money to spend. You know, the alternative policies, what Labour was offering, what the Democrats are offering, which is this dream of sort of equality, redistributionism, people know that in the end, that's not going to work, and they know that they've got to have a growing economy. And you know, I think that

Cameron has done a reasonable job of stabilizing the economy, and the Labourites were promising, you know, to reverse all that and start spending huge amount of debt and all that. And people have a sense instinctively. This can't be right. It's not going to work. I think that's, you know, the basic thing at work, and as a result, you're getting this kind of reaction. But I assure you, Hugh, it's going to swing back three, four, five years from now. It's going to swing the other way. Memories are short in democracies. And the rotation of power is constant.

HH: The last subject, then, becomes the surveillance state, because a massacre was nearly averted in Garland, Texas, last week. There's that odd story about the other Philadelphia train today. We know the jihadi problem. Theresa May in England was warning everyone, the home secretary there, before the election about the jihadi problem there. And yet the 2nd Circuit struck down the collection of metadata, which is actually kind of a passive thing. That used to be something I did at the Department of Justice. What do you think is the result ahead as lone wolves, or actually known wolves as some people like to call them, act on their intentions? There's a reason that a number of military facilities in the United States went to the second level of alert this week. It's because they're being threatened by Islamic State wannabes.

CK: I think if this goes to the Supreme Court, as I suspect it will, this decision will be overturned. The Supreme Court, I think, is far more in a mood to allow these limits to remain where they are rather than constraining them. Look, we have a constant dilemma. We have to constantly adjust the trade-off. Obama at the beginning of his presidency said you know, it's a false choice between security and liberty. Of course, not. It's a constant choice. It has been ever since Hobbes. You've got to make your decision how much you want to sacrifice. I mean, how much indignity do we go through at the TSA, which actually is a farce and a charade. I don't even think it's effective. But assuming it was effective, we make, you know, indignities, taking off our shoes, our belts, whatever, so that we can be physically assaulted in a way, I guess, well, in some cases, or as the man said, don't touch my junk, said if this were no tin this setting, it would be assault. So we're willing to undergo all of this in the name of security. I think it makes sense. The point I want to make is we're going to have to keep adjusting the boundaries every few years in response to the threat level, and in response to what, to how much of our autonomy and liberty we're willing to give up. So I don't think you pass the Patriot Act and you leave it in place for 20 years. You adjust it. I think it's a good thing. You debate it. I suspect we will keep the boundaries as they are now, because of the rising ISIS threat. If in half a decade, ISIS is diminished or gone, I think we'll then, we'll shore them up again, and the NSA will have less power.

HH: Do you, last question, do you expect, though, another mass casualty attack before you and I retire from this business, because I saw the Avengers movie recently, and they actually mimicked the 9/11 attack. It's been 14 years, and I was surprised that they would do so. But that tells me that the rawness of that attack has left the American frontal lobe. What do you think?

CK: I remember thinking, as everybody who lives in Washington and probably New York thought after 9/11, that there was going to be another attack within six months. We were all waiting for the shoe to drop. Six months, 12 months, and I've been surprised that hasn't happened. I think it's in large part because of our vigilance. It is in large part because we made the rational decision of constricting our liberties somewhat to increase our protection. We were unprotected and defenseless. And having done now 15 years, I don't necessarily think that such a second attack is inevitable. I just think we have to maintain our vigilance. And the real threat, there will be lone wolves. There will be sort of Boston Marathon type events. Those are almost impossible to prevent. But the real threat is a rising Iran on the move, on the march, and going nuclear. And imagine if it decides to proliferate its nukes to the worst people on Earth, the insurgents who work for them, their clients, and their proxies. That's what I worry about. It's going to be, we

haven't escaped the time of state terror. We think we have, and it's all sub-state. It is not. And we have to keep that in mind.

HH: Those are the things that truly do matter, and that's the name of Charles' new book, out in paperback, *Things That Matter*, the perfect Father's Day present for everyone who hasn't gotten it already. And for those of us who have, you can give it again, and this time say there's a new afterwards there. Charles Krauthammer, thank you so much.

CK: It's my pleasure, Hugh.

End of interview.

Contentions

Why the Snub? Saudis Know Obama's Replaced Them With Iran

by Jonathan Tobin

If the Obama administration thought it was successful in its half-hearted efforts to make up with Saudi Arabia and other Arab states outraged by its Iran policies, it's got another think coming. On Sunday, [the Saudis told the White House](#) that King Salman would not be attending meetings there or at Camp David this week. Later, Bahrain [said its King Hamad would skip the same meeting](#). The snubs are as pointed as President Obama's recent signals that he has no intention of meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu anytime soon. But while the president has little interest in patching things up with America's sole democratic ally in the Middle East, he was quite interested in making nice with the Saudi monarch. But the Saudis and Bahrain, like the Israelis, are deeply concerned by the U.S. effort to create a new détente with Iran. It's not just that Salman apparently has better things to do than to schmooze with Obama. The president may have thought he could essentially replace the Saudis with Iran as the lynchpin of a new Middle East strategic vision without paying a price. But the Saudis understandably want no part of this. The result will be a region made even more dangerous by the Arabs, as well as the Israelis, coming to the realization that they can't rely on Washington.

The conceit of Obama's strategy rests on more than a weak deal that he hopes will be enough to postpone the question of an Iranian bomb even as it essentially anoints Tehran as a threshold nuclear power. Rather it is predicated on the notion that once Iran is allowed to, in the president's phrase, "get right with the world" and reintegrated into the global economy, it can be counted on to keep peace in a region from which Obama wants to withdraw.

That's why the administration has tacitly allied itself with Iran in the struggle against ISIS in Iraq and, bowed to Tehran's desire to leave its ally Bashar Assad in power in Syria even as they sought to restrain the Islamist regime's Houthi friends in their effort to take over Yemen. But given Iran's desire for regional hegemony, its reliance on terrorist allies like Hezbollah and Hamas as well as Assad's criminal regime, the notion that it is a force for stability is as much a delusion as the idea that it is giving up its quest for nuclear weapons.

Just as important, the Obama foreign policy team was convinced that it could afford to ignore the Saudis' concerns about their intended entente with Iran with as much impunity as it did those of Israel. As one expert quoted in the New York Times said, the Saudis have no

alternative to the U.S. as a superpower ally. But it has not failed to escape their attention that “there’s a growing perception at the White House that the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are friends but not allies, while the U.S. and Iran are allies but not friends.”

Under the circumstances, the Saudis are now prepared to show the president the extent of their disdain. But it may not stop at that.

The Saudis, like the Israelis, know that America’s promises about both the nuclear deal and the future of the region are not worth much. The Iranians have been granted two paths to a bomb by the United States. One is by cheating via the easily evaded restrictions in the nuclear pact with little fear of sanctions being snapped back. The other is by patiently waiting for it to expire while continuing their nuclear research with little interference from a West that will be far more interested in trade than anything else.

That leaves the Saudis thinking they may need to procure their own nuclear option and to flex their muscles, as they have been doing in Yemen. It also sets up the region for what may be an ongoing series of confrontations between Iranian allies and the Saudis and their friends, a recipe for disaster.

Will Obama get the message and change course? That’s even less likely than him embracing Netanyahu. An administration that came into office determined to create more daylight between itself and Israel has now embarked on a policy designed to alienate all of America’s traditional allies in order to appease a vicious Islamist foe. Anyone who thinks this will turn out well simply isn’t paying attention to the same events that have left the Saudis and other U.S. allies thinking they are more or less being left on their own.

Right Turn

Does anyone trust Obama?

by Jennifer Rubin

The Post reports: “King Salman of Saudi Arabia, a key ally of the United States, will not attend a summit this week at Camp David called to address security concerns among Persian Gulf nations about a potential nuclear deal with Iran, the Saudi foreign minister said Sunday.” To say this is a slight or an insult is to minimize the symbolism of the decision. The Saudi king is telling America and the world: There is nothing President Obama can promise that is worth the trip. Out of all the Gulf states, only two will be sending heads of state.

Jonathan Schanzer of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) says dryly that “the optics of this are bad.” Indeed, he tells me that “regardless of how Camp David plays out, one thing is clear: the Gulf states are decidedly uneasy about this Iran deal. And I suspect that there is little Washington can offer that will change this.”

You know it’s bad when the White House is insisting it isn’t: “The official denied that the king’s decision to stay home was a brushoff. ‘There is zero tension,’ the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to comment openly about the summit preparations. ‘In fact, the relationship is as strong as it has been in quite some time. Our understanding is that the Saudis and other [Gulf Cooperation Council] leaders are quite pleased with U.S. positions and the substance of Camp David, including any assistance we are going to provide.’ ” This is bunk, of

course. The Saudis previously announced that if Iran was going to get a free pass to nuclear breakout, then the Saudis would get their own.

Former deputy national security adviser Elliott Abrams spotted this coming a week ago. “As with Emir Sabah, age is a consideration: Salman is 79. But there is more: he became king in January and has not been to the United States in that capacity. Normally, such a visit would be a very big deal: it would be an official or even a state visit, with great fanfare. Does he want to visit the United States for the first time as king in this way – merely as one of a group? And merely as one of a group that will for the UAE and Oman, and perhaps others, not consist of heads of state?” No, and the incompetent Obama team could not figure this out in advance. (“The president should not have announced the ‘summit’ until he had the agreement of the Kuwaiti and Saudi to attend. If they said no, he should have called a meeting of ministers of defense and foreign affairs, perhaps hosted by hosted jointly by Ashton Carter and John Kerry, with himself as the honored guest. Instead, he may host a dinner for GCC heads of state and get only the two of them he would probably least like to have. Bad planning, bad staff work, if it turns out that way.”)

However the administration chooses to spin this, it’s hard to miss what is going on. “The king’s pretense for not attending the talks is quite transparent,” says FDD’s David Weinberg. “The Saudis said he has to stay home to supervise implementation of the Yemen ceasefire, but the two heirs he is sending in his stead — the defense minister and interior minister — are the two officials most directly in charge of Yemen policy, and that doesn’t seem to be stopping them from leaving the country. Also, the timing of the Yemen ceasefire was known on Friday when Secretary of State Kerry announced that the king would be attending, so that element of the Yemen story can’t have been news to either party.” Moreover, it’s no coincidence others have begged off. “Add to that the announcement out of Manama yesterday that King Hamad of Bahrain will also be staying home, and it becomes very difficult to maintain that their absence is due to anything other than a disagreement over the U.S. reassurance package that had been shaping up behind the scenes,” Weinberg explains.

The decision of the majority of Gulf states not to send heads of state is also a signal to Iran, namely that whatever Obama might agree to, the Gulf states (and Israel, whose views are aligned on the topic) are not going to allow Iran to rule the roost in the Middle East. One reason cited for the king’s absence from the summit is that he needs to be home to oversee the war in Yemen, a concerted Sunni military action against Iran’s Houthi proxies. Yes, fighting back against Iranian aggression is a much more productive use of the king’s time than listening to Obama try to convince them that his Iran appeasement is all for the best.

Contentions

Saudis Show Iran Deal Crackup Has Begun

by Max Boot

President Obama is in the position of a high-school student who thinks that the cool kids are going to come to his birthday party and starts bragging about it around school, only to have his prized guests opt out at the last minute, leaving him looking considerably embarrassed. The guests in question are the leaders of America’s closest Gulf allies. They had been invited to a fence-mending summit at Camp David but only two—the emirs of Qatar and Kuwait—have accepted. All the others have suddenly discovered they have something else urgent to do that

weekend. (Haircuts scheduled! Barbecues to attend!) Most embarrassing for Obama, [as Jonathan Tobin noted earlier today](#), is that Saudi King Salman had at first accepted the invitation before declining it.

The administration spinmeisters can put a happy face on this all they want by claiming that they can still negotiate with the lower-level leaders the Gulf countries are sending but there is no doubt that this is a rebuke of the administration for putting Iran first. The Gulf leaders see the U.S. increasingly cozy with the rulers in Tehran, whose imperial designs they regard as a mortal danger, and they are not reticent about signaling their displeasure. Refusing to attend the Camp David summit is the least of it. Other actions that the Gulfies are taking are more serious—for example launching bombing campaigns against extremists in both Libya and, on a larger scale, in Yemen without asking for America's permission or even bothering to notify us more than a few hours in advance.

[As the New York Times notes](#), the Gulf states and in particular Saudi Arabia are manifesting their independence in other, even more disconcerting ways. For instance the hard-line King Salman is rethinking the opposition displayed by his more liberal predecessor, King Abdullah, toward the Muslim Brotherhood and possibly even toward more extreme and violent Salafists: "In Yemen, King Salman is working with Islah, a Muslim Brotherhood political party, and has warmed relations with [Qatar, a backer of the Brotherhood](#). In March, he received Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, in Riyadh. The two agreed to work together to support the rebels seeking to topple President Bashar al-Assad in Syria, according to Yasin Aktay, the foreign relations chief for Turkey's governing party. Although Mr. Aktay said that only moderate groups received support, many of Syria's most effective fighters are staunch Islamists who often fight alongside the Nusra Front, Al Qaeda's Syrian affiliate, raising the possibility that aid might also empower extremists."

Put another way, because the Obama administration is refusing to do anything to oust Bashar Assad, the Saudis are getting together with the Turks and Qataris to back some of the more fundamentalist Islamist fighters working against the Assad regime—including, it is rumored, the Nusra Front, an Al Qaeda affiliate. This is what happens when the Gulf states lose confidence in America: they start taking matters into their own hands and that means they will increasingly forge a pact with extreme Islamists, possibly even with ISIS, because they see the extremists as the only reliable barrier to the spread of Iranian influence.

This is a catastrophic if wholly predictable development, and it is only the beginning of the fallout from Obama's decision to align so closely with Tehran. The next step in the Sunni pushback is, as the Saudi leadership has loudly and long signaled, for them to acquire their own nuclear weapons. [As the Wall Street Journal reports](#), Saudi Arabia is conveniently next to Jordan which has vast uranium reserves but no money to exploit them. The Saudis could easily fill that gap and develop their own nuclear capacity within a decade, the timeline of the Iranian nuclear deal. Or the Saudis could get nukes even sooner if their friends in Pakistan agree to provide them.

Nothing that President Obama will do or say at the Camp David summit can remotely offset this parlous trend. What America's Arab allies are looking for is an American commitment to resist Iranian designs. Instead all they see is America standing aside while Iran threatens to dominate the region.

The Federalist

Why The Republican Party Doesn't Need Mike Huckabee Right Now — Or Ever

by David Harsanyi

One party making the case for big government is enough

Sometimes, probably because he's such an affable media presence, I forget why I dislike the political version of Mike Huckabee so much.

Maybe it's the awe-shucks populism that isn't substantively very different from the class-conflict rhetoric we hear from so many on the Left these days. Or maybe it's that everyman Huckabee has been running for one political office or another for the past 25 years – a fact that might escape the attention of anyone listening to the nuggets of blue-collar wisdom found in his speeches and those God, guns, grits, and gravy [books](#) he writes.

Since his last run for the presidency, Huckabee has hosted a national radio show and television show, and he's endorsed all sorts of interesting products, including "[secret biblical cures for cancer](#)" to, no doubt, some unfortunate and desperate people. Because, Huckabee, like all of those selfish plutocrats he likes to denounce, is out to make a buck.

Or maybe it's his paternalistic [attacks](#) on pop culture, the ones that make him sound like some reincarnated member of the PMRC, that are so off-putting? After all, as governor of Arkansas Huckabee was a zealous Nanny State advocate— passing precedent-setting intrusions into the lifestyles choices of individuals in Arkansas.

It could also be his role as John McCain's hitman in the 2008 primaries, when he attacked Mitt Romney's faith in an effort to dissuade Evangelicals from supporting the Mormon candidate. Focusing on a candidate's belief system, at least from my perspective, is within the bounds of acceptable political debate. But Huckabee's [churlish innuendo dropping](#) should have undercut any perception you might have that the cheery former Baptist preacher is anything but your typical politician.

Mostly, though, it's his philosophical outlook.

Yes, [he's the anti-libertarian candidate](#). And I mean "libertarian" in the smallest of small "I" sense. There are a number of policy fights on the center-right of American politics, but there's also a measure of ideological unanimity (even if it is often only theoretical) about the role government— namely, that it should, to some extent, be smaller and less intrusive. There is no conceivable way for Huckabee to make that argument or represent that consensus.

Kasie Hunt of NBC News [asked](#) if Huckabee might be seen as the GOP's Bernie Sanders. Quite the opposite, actually. Sanders advocates a set of purified beliefs that drive contemporary Democratic Party grassroots politics. As a political tool, Sanders can be useful in making Hillary look reasonable (and perhaps even fresher). Huckabee, on the other hand, is what liberals in the media imagine a strong Republican candidate might look like. I mean, what segment of the GOP will Huckabee represent? The social conservative vote is well covered this time around. So is it the [tax-hike](#) faction? The [anti-trade](#) faction? The we-need-more-laws faction? The anti-school choice faction that [believes](#) teachers' unions are doing a great job and No Child Left Behind is "the greatest education reform effort by the federal government" in our lifetime?

Yet, even as Huckabee announced his run and evidence began to emerge on social media that he was going to have a tough gaining traction with any conservative group, he was getting plenty of accolades from the press. Chris Cillizza found Huckabee's vacuous presidential announcement [solid](#). He wrote about it in a piece titled: "Why the Republican Party really needs Mike Huckabee right now."

[So why?](#)

Because even though Huckabee remains outside of the top tier of candidates, he is, by far, the Republicans' best messenger to the middle and lower-middle classes — economic brackets that the party has struggled to win in recent elections.

If we concede Cillizza's contention is true — and there is no evidence that it is; in fact, it's arguable that Republicans are struggling with middle-class voters [any more than Democrats](#) — his piece, and many like it, make the enormous assumption that the GOP can only appeal to these brackets by using the language of the Left.

And if you believe that, then yes, Huckabee is your man. Take this [statement](#) regarding entitlements as an example:

There are some who propose that to save the safety nets, like Medicare and Social Security, we ought to chop off the payments for the people who had faithfully had their paychecks and pockets picked for the politicians, promising them, that their money would be waiting for them when they were old and sick.

A Huckabee presidency, it seems, would feature the "there are some people who propose ..." strawman that you're no doubt familiar with after listening to our president's fine speeches. But who exactly is proposing we chop off payments to people who have faithfully paid into the system for years? There is no mainstream conservative in this country who advocates for Washington to eliminate benefits already promised to citizens. This is the same dishonest argument you hear whenever there's talk of entitlement reform. Almost every plan offers an element of choice, allowing people to voluntarily enter into a new deal with government, or it changes the parameters of entitlements for future generations.

Now, I confess, that if Huckabee was serious about being president rather than simply running a vanity campaign, this sort of thing would matter far more. But the media will almost certainly use Huckabee as an example of how conservatives *should* be talking about poverty, inequality and entitlements, because his rhetoric will often be indistinguishable from what we hear on the Left. But America already has a party tasked with making that case, do we really need two?

IBD

[Please pray for Michelle Obama, who must endure 618 more days as our first lady](#)

by Andrew Malcolm

We were going to deny ourselves the opportunity to comment on Michelle Obama's amazing graduation address this weekend. But after 48 hours of festering, her words demand a response.

It was, in short, an embarrassing event. Here's why:

Commencement speeches are relatively easy compositions for writers to put in politicians' mouths. Graduations are happy times. Pols want to be associated with happy times. The publicity-seeking school wants a celebrity to grace the stage to confirm the day's import for the mere cost of an honorary degree.

So, they come. Congratulate the grads. Urge appreciation for supportive families. Offer one or two pieces of free advice that no one will remember. And get out of the way.

Not the Obamas. Not First Lady Michelle Obama. Presidential spouse is an unusual job. Unpaid. Unstructured. Presidential helpmate, privately. Sometimes publicly. So far, only women. (*Susan Swain of C-SPAN, by the way, has just published a fascinating book, "First Ladies," profiles of all 44 unique women who've held that position, [available in hardback and e-book here.](#)*)

While hubby played golf this Mother's Day weekend, Mrs. Obama went to Alabama's Tuskegee University's. Her 3,700 words began in standard form, but quickly became a detailed recounting of American racism including the famed Tuskegee airmen who overcame it seven decades ago.

Then, her address took a turn we've become accustomed to expect more from her husband: The celebration of 500 hard-won graduations became instead a speech more about her.

(*The [full text of Mrs. Obama's address is here.](#) The [full C-SPAN video of her remarks is here.](#)*)

To hear the first lady tell it, this has been a pretty rough time for her, living in the White House rent-free with her mother. Many sleepless nights. Taking numerous globe-girdling [trips to five-star suites costing taxpayers in excess of \\$44 million.](#)

"As potentially the first African American First Lady, I was also the focus of another set of questions and speculations; conversations sometimes rooted in the fears and mis-perceptions of others. Was I too loud, or too angry, or too emasculating? Or was I too soft, too much of a mom, not enough of a career woman?

"Then there was the first time I was on a magazine cover -- it was a cartoon drawing of me with a huge afro and machine gun. Now, yeah, it was satire, but if I'm really being honest, it knocked me back a bit. It made me wonder, just how are people seeing me.

"Or you might remember the on-stage celebratory fist bump between me and my husband after a primary win that was referred to as a 'terrorist fist jab.' And over the years, folks have used plenty of interesting words to describe me. One said I exhibited 'a little bit of uppity-ism.' Another noted that I was one of my husband's 'cronies of color.' Cable news once charmingly referred to me as 'Obama's Baby Mama.'"

"All of this used to really get to me. Back in those days, I had a lot of sleepless nights, worrying about what people thought of me, wondering if I might be hurting my husband's chances of winning his election, fearing how my girls would feel if they found out what some people were saying about their mom."

Mrs. Obama gave the crowd a long, detailed accounting of how she's addressed the job of first lady, the hard work, speeches, gardening, the congressional meetings, photo ops and dancing on TV shows that she's endured.

"I had the peace of mind of knowing that all of the chatter, the name calling, the doubting -- all of it was just noise. It did not define me. It didn't change who I was. And most importantly, it couldn't hold me back."

But the first African-American first lady also had a warning for her largely black audience, a warning about remaining American racism and discrimination that she says she has personally experienced.

"The road ahead is not going to be easy. It never is, especially for folks like you and me..."

People "will make assumptions about who they think you are based on their limited notion of the world. And my husband and I know how frustrating that experience can be.

"We've both felt the sting of those daily slights throughout our entire lives -- the folks who crossed the street in fear of their safety; the clerks who kept a close eye on us in all those department stores; the people at formal events who assumed we were the 'help' -- and those who have questioned our intelligence, our honesty, even our love of this country."

"Our *entire* lives"? If anyone crossed the street recently to avoid Mrs. Obama, it's because her large entourage of armed men and women steered them there. As for store clerks watching her, might that have some connection to fame?

When the first lady went into a Target store in 2011, she claimed another shopper asked her to lift something down from a top shelf. Mrs. Obama interpreted this as a racially-motivated assumption she was merely a store employee, not that her five-foot-eleven-inch stature made it easier. The kinds of awful things so common in her mind in modern America.

"I know," the president's wife asserted about the perils of American life, "that these little indignities are obviously nothing compared to what folks across the country are dealing with every single day -- those nagging worries that you're going to get stopped or pulled over for absolutely no reason; the fear that your job application will be overlooked because of the way your name sounds; the agony of sending your kids to schools that may no longer be separate, but are far from equal."

The one-time lawyer with the Ivy League education then painted a gloomy outlook for the excited graduates. "All of that is going to be a heavy burden to carry. It can feel isolating. It can make you feel like your life somehow doesn't matter."

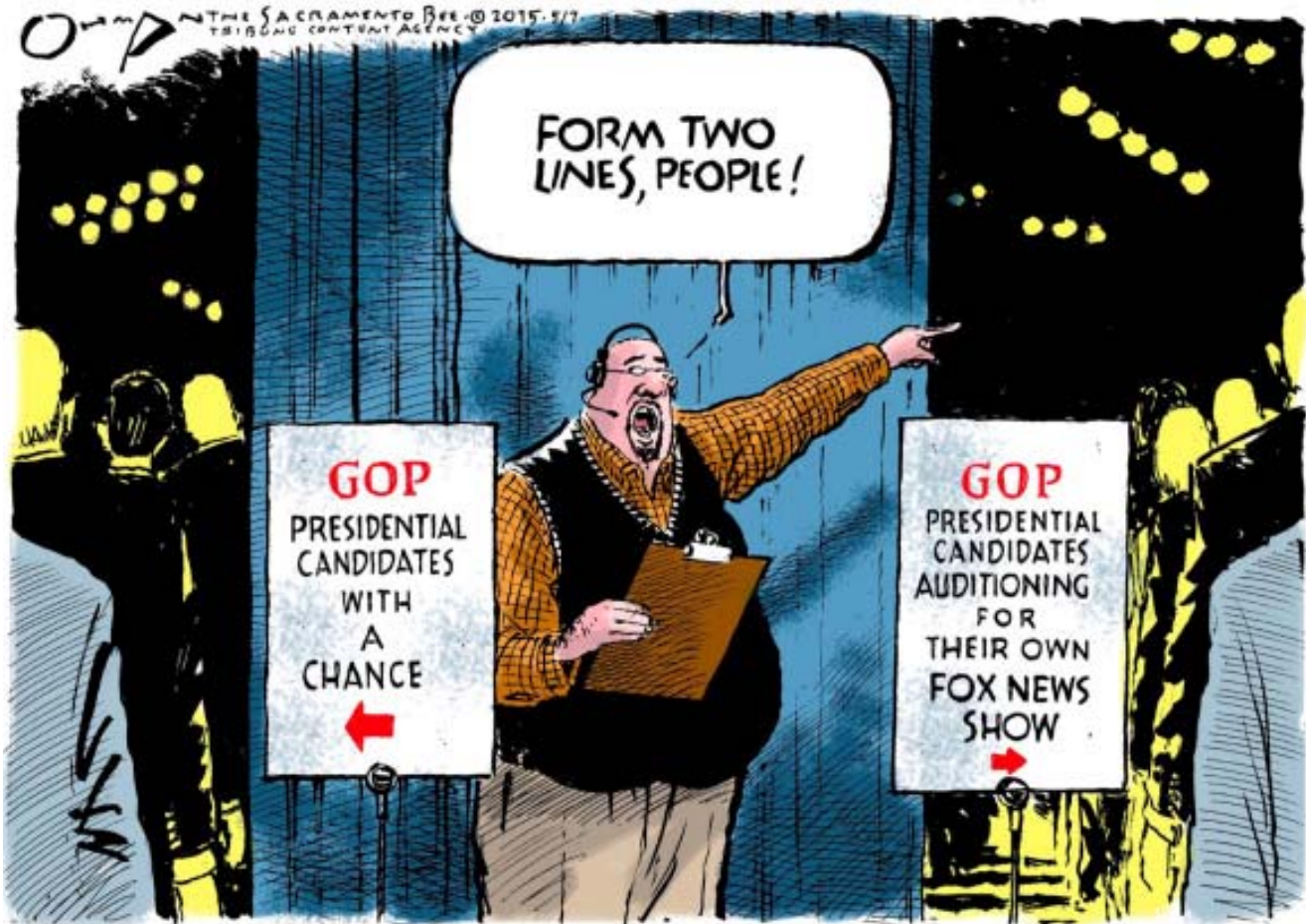
"But, graduates, today, I want to be very clear that those feelings are not an excuse to just throw up our hands and give up. Not an excuse. They are not an excuse to lose hope. To succumb to feelings of despair and anger only means that in the end, we lose."

There is, it's worthwhile to note, another way to peruse the historic Obama experiences: Here is an imperfect but wondrous nation of some 315 million people that has in modern times made more progress addressing its racial legacy than likely any other land. It is a country that afforded both Obamas (and millions of others) a wonderland of opportunities.

It is a country that on the basis of absolutely no relevant experience whatsoever, nothing but mere hope, awarded its highest office to the first black man ever, her husband. Not once, but twice.

Yes, about seven million fewer voters chose Obama the second time, compared to 11.4 million more votes in his predecessor's second election.

And now, more of Obama's countrymen of all backgrounds disapprove of his job performance than approve. But that's not racism. That's realism.





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KIM JONG-UN EXECUTES
MAN FOR SLEEPING DURING
A MEETING.

