

June 10, 2015

Robert Tracinski, in the Federalist, details what the NY Times has finally learned about the fraud Paul Ehrlich has been running since his book, **The Population Bomb**, was published 40 some years ago. We have taken up the subject of the famous Julian Simon wager that Ehrlich lost 30 years ago before. The last time we did that was in Pickings last February 1st.

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population growth is, historically it has been that the food supply increases at least as fast, if not faster.” ’

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**Kevin Williamson** posts on the NY Times running errands for Democrat operatives. ... *A couple of Times reporters spent Friday morning basking in praise for their “nice scoop” — the less-than-remarkable public knowledge that Marco Rubio was written four traffic tickets over the course of two decades — but, as [Brent Scher of the Washington Free Beacon pointed out](#), neither of the reporters in the byline — Alan Rappeport and Steve Eder — nor the researcher also credited by the Times for the piece — Kitty Bennett — ever accessed the traffic records in question. But somebody did: American Bridge, a left-wing activist group, had pulled the records just before the Times piece appeared, and the Times employed some cagey language, with the relevant sentence beginning: “According to a search of the Miami-Dade and Duval County court dockets. . . .” A search? Yes. Whose search? A piece of the news that apparently is not fit to print.*

*That the New York Times’s political desk is thick with lazy partisans who take their cues — and in some cases, their research — from Democratic interest groups is not a secret, though the Times really ought to have, if not the honesty and the institutional self-respect, then at least the sense of self-preservation (these things do come to light) to disclose that it is being fed opposition research and choosing to publish it as though it were news. ...*

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**Glenn Reynolds** in his USA Today column with more.

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*Yeah, pretty much. To add to the embarrassment, the Times, though it has since [silently corrected](#) the piece, referred to Marco Rubio’s Ford F-150 pickup as a “[sports utility vehicle](#),” displaying the level of automotive literacy expected of Manhattan residents.*

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Instapundit reminds us what a creep Jimmy Carter is and was.

Former President Jimmy Carter spoke recently to an AARP group, telling them, "Americans still have racist tendencies or feelings of superiority to people of color." Nice to hear such pro-American words from a former President.

Carter's other recent gems include an oped last August in which Carter accused Israel of committing war crimes against Palestinians. He also defended Obama's decision to miss the unity rally in Paris after the Charlie Hebdo shootings, saying, "President Obama's just come back from vacation, and I know how it is when you've been gone for a week or two."

The similarities between Carter and Obama are growing day by day— although a poll last summer had Obama beating Carter for the title of "worst President since World War II" by five percentage points. I suspect Obama's lead in that poll would be much higher today.

Craig Pirrong has another go at the Elon Musk windmill.

In one of my periodic Quixotic moments, I tilted at the Cult of Elon Musk. First, I argued that he or someone manipulated the prices of Tesla and Solar City stocks: I stand by that analysis. Second, I argued that the supposed visionary's true genius was for feeding lustily at the taxpayer teat.

It is a testament to my great influence that the Cult of Musk has grown only larger in the two years since I made a run at him. But maybe the spell is breaking. For the LA Times just ran a long article detailing just how much his fortune was picked from our pockets. According to the LAT, Musk companies have raked in \$4.9 billion in various subsidies and tax breaks, give or take.

That's 10 figures, people.

That's bad enough. What's worse is Musk's "defense." It is a farrago of intellectual dishonesty, logical fallacies, condescension, and arrogance.

Musk only replied to the LAT after repeated inquiries, but it is good that the paper persisted. Musk's rationalizations have to be seen to be believed. ...

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## The Federalist

### What the New York Times Didn't Learn from Paul Ehrlich's Population Bomb Fizzle

by Robert Tracinski

The *New York Times* just published an extraordinary “retro report”—a short video paired with an article—[looking back](#) at Paul Ehrlich’s “population bomb” theory, the fear that an uncontrolled human population would outstrip the ability of the Earth to support it.

The *Times* lays out some of the evidence for the theory’s failure, including the fact that the world’s population was about 3.5 billion when Ehrlich first made his apocalyptic prognostications in 1968. It’s 7 billion now, and we haven’t starved, we haven’t run out of resources, and we’re better off than we’ve ever been.

This report wouldn’t be extraordinary anywhere else. In the right-leaning press, it would be considered a pretty mild take on Ehrlich and his crackpot theories. The only thing that makes it extraordinary is that it isn’t in a right-leaning publication but in the citadel of the establishment left.

The video features two particularly good moments. In one of them, Indian development economist Gita Sen explains why Ehrlich’s theories became irrelevant in her country, which was supposed to be the first to starve. Instead, “the Green Revolution came to India with a big bang and a boom in such a rapid way that India has never looked back.” In the other, Stewart Brand, a former disciple of Ehrlich’s, asks: “How many years do you have to not have the world end to decide that it didn’t end because that reason was wrong?”

Most remarkable, however, is Ehrlich’s answer. Yes, he’s still around, the *Times* interviewed him, and they asked him that question. I got the impression it may have been the first time someone prominent has asked Ehrlich to answer this directly, and his guard seems to have been down, probably because he remembers all the puffball coverage he’s gotten from the *New York Times* over the years. So he answered it, and it has to be heard to be believed. He said: “One of the things that people don’t understand is that timing, to an ecologist, is very, very different from timing to an average person.” I wonder, is BS still the same for an ecologist as it is for an average person?

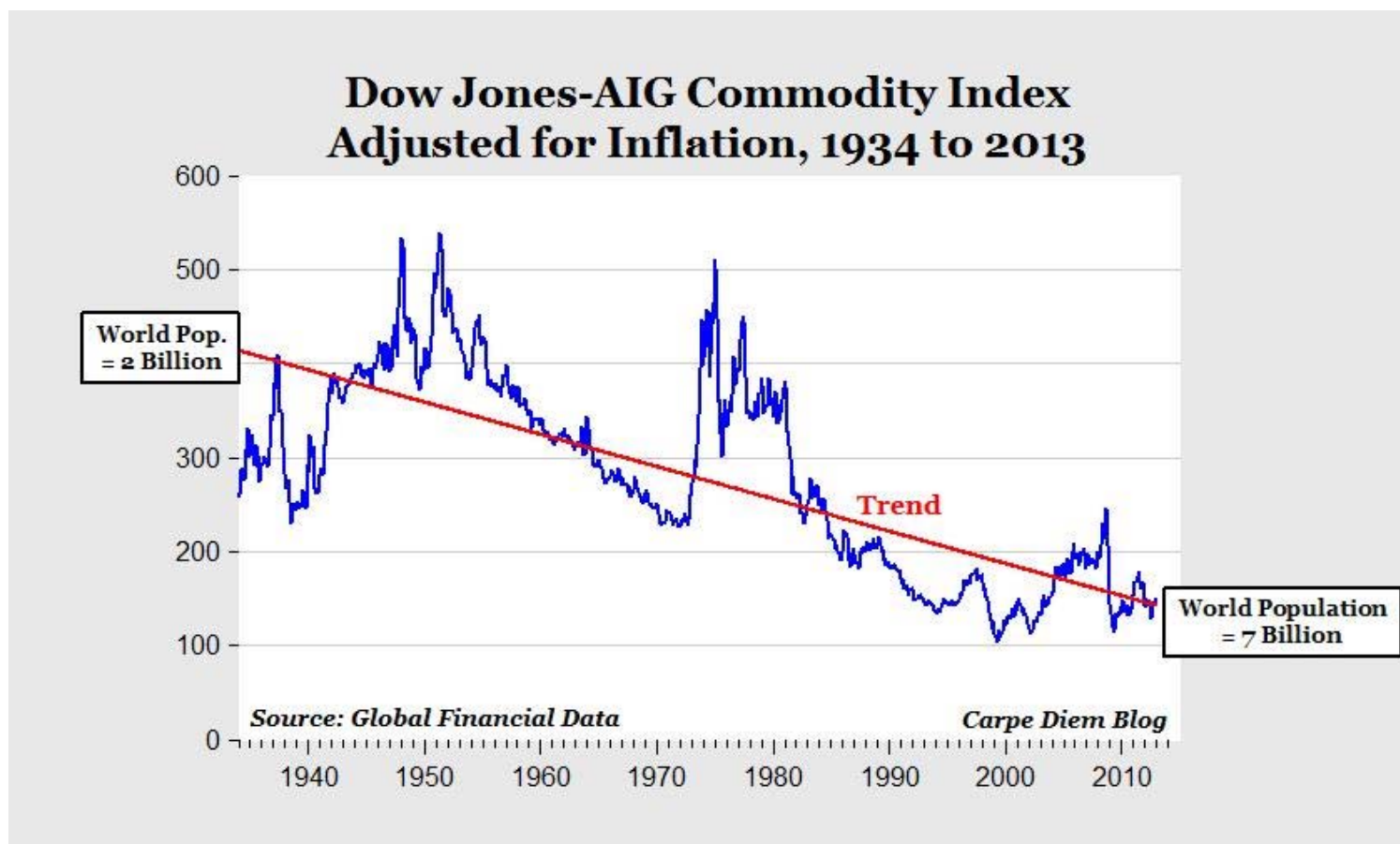
It is such an obviously arrogant, dishonest, evasive answer that the *Times* report features it prominently, and not in a positive way. They captured in one line the sudden realization that Ehrlich is a charlatan who has been conning the highest levels of the culture for years. (Jonathan Last [runs down](#) all of the awards and accolades heaped on Ehrlich as recently as 2012.)

That’s why it’s so great to see that the mainstream left is finally beginning to face up to this reality.

But there is one big omission in the report: the triumph of Ehrlich’s intellectual antipode, Julian Simon. He isn’t mentioned at all in the video, even though plenty of people who have been influenced by him are still around. (For example, they might have interviewed Matt Ridley, author of *The Rational Optimist* and 2012 [winner](#) of the Julian Simon Memorial Award.) Simon gets only a semi-dismissive mention in the accompanying text.

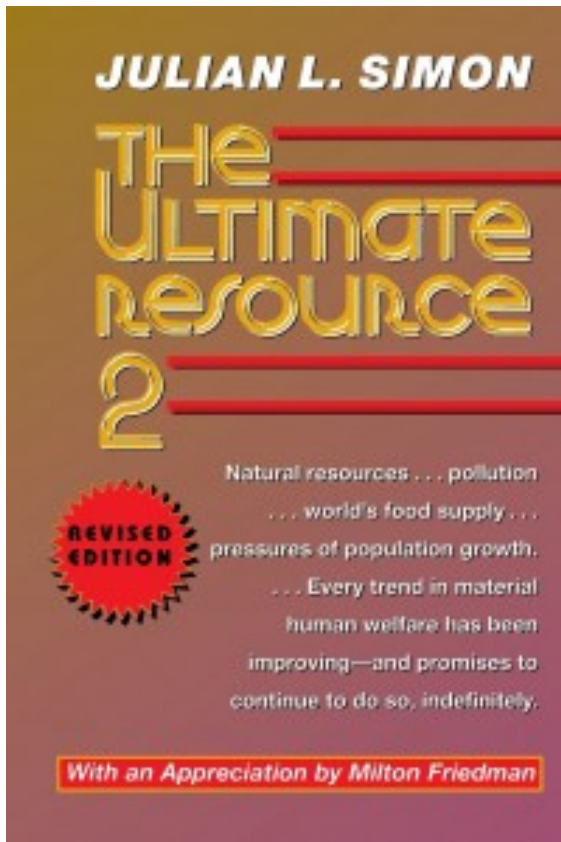
Some preternaturally optimistic analysts concluded that humans would always find their way out of tough spots. Among them was Julian L. Simon, an economist who established himself as the anti-Ehrlich, arguing that “humanity’s condition will improve in just about every material way.” In 1997, a year before he died, Mr. Simon told *Wired* magazine that “whatever the rate of population growth is, historically it has been that the food supply increases at least as fast, if not faster.”

But the story is way more interesting than that. In 1980, Simon and Ehrlich made a [famous bet](#) about the future prices of commodities. If Ehrlich was right and a rising population was burning through the Earth’s resources, this ought to show up in commodities prices. As metals all got scarce, they should become more expensive. Instead, they all got cheaper—as they have done [for the past century](#) while the world’s population has more than tripled—and Simon won the bet handily.



But Simon was Ehrlich’s intellectual antipode in a more profound way. He answered Ehrlich’s great flimflam with his own identification of a great truth. Simon explained that the reason the overpopulation catastrophe never materialized was because human beings create more resources than they use up. The “[ultimate resource](#),” Simon argued, is human thought and ingenuity which is constantly discovering untapped resources and inventing new ways to use them.





This is the real point of the story, and the *Times* never really takes it on board. That's why they still give some credence to Ehrlich's basic theory and imply that it fizzled primarily because population just didn't grow fast enough. As Stewart Brand puts it, "they're not having so many kids, and that's changed the whole story." The video then goes on to praise non-coercive efforts to reduce fertility in developing countries.

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And the *Times* is still committed to an outgrowth of the same apocalyptic theory. It cites British journalist Fred Pearce: "In Mr. Pearce's view, the villain is not overpopulation but, rather, overconsumption. 'We can survive massive demographic change,' he said in 2011. But he is less sanguine about the overuse of available resources and its effects on climate change." Perhaps some day they'll do a look back on the failure of the global warming hysteria—though at this rate, we should expect to see that some time around 2062.

One the other hand, this story is heartening evidence that people can learn from mistakes, no matter how slowly. Stewart Brand is a great standout. While he still gives some credence to population growth as a problem, he also acknowledges that declining population could be an even bigger (and far more likely) problem. "The point at which population peaks at around 9 billion in the 2040s or 50s, the story will not be, oh my god, we've got 9 billion people, how horrible. It will be, oh my god, we're running out of people."

There is something bigger at stake than just a particular failed prediction. Are human beings any good?

He also grasps that there is something bigger at stake than just a particular failed prediction or the destructive policies that come from it. There's a larger worldview. "The concerns about

population,” he notes, “became misanthropic.” I disagree. I think it started out misanthropic. Ehrlich tells the *Times*, “The idea that every woman should have as many babies as she wants is to me exactly the same kind of idea as [that] everybody ought to be permitted to throw as much of their garbage into their neighbor’s back yard as they want.” So babies are like garbage. How lovely. That outlook hasn’t changed. What changed is that Brand began to notice it.

That’s the basic issue involved: are human beings any good? Is a new person just another mouth to feed—or does he have the potential to become someone who [discovers how to feed the world](#)? Do more humans just cause more problems—or do we solve them? Do we only destroy, or do we create? Are human beings good, and if so, shouldn’t we want more of them?

The answer is already pretty clear. Let’s not wait another 47 years to affirm it.

## National Review

### [When Biases Collide](#)

***The media’s liberal bias is compounded by its bias toward trivia***

by Kevin D. Williamson

Sometimes, you really have to give the *New York Times* credit for the sheer amount of reportorial labor it undertakes.

This is not one of those times.

A couple of *Times* reporters spent Friday morning basking in praise for their “nice scoop” — the less-than-remarkable public knowledge that Marco Rubio was written four traffic tickets over the course of two decades — but, as [Brent Scher of the \*Washington Free Beacon\* pointed out](#), neither of the reporters in the byline — Alan Rappeport and Steve Eder — nor the researcher also credited by the *Times* for the piece — Kitty Bennett — ever accessed the traffic records in question. But somebody did: American Bridge, a left-wing activist group, had pulled the records just before the *Times* piece appeared, and the *Times* employed some cagey language, with the relevant sentence beginning: “According to a search of the Miami-Dade and Duval County court dockets. . . .” A search? Yes. *Whose* search? A piece of the news that apparently is not fit to print.

That the *New York Times*’s political desk is thick with lazy partisans who take their cues — and in some cases, their research — from Democratic interest groups is not a secret, though the *Times* really ought to have, if not the honesty and the institutional self-respect, then at least the sense of self-preservation (these things do come to light) to disclose that it is being fed opposition research and choosing to publish it as though it were news. Senator Rubio’s having received a traffic citation approximately once every five years is no less newsworthy because the documentation was gathered by a Democratic activist group.

It is un-newsworthy for completely different reasons.

Four citations, two of them dismissed, since 1997 — that long-ago year when Herself attended her second inaugural as first lady — is the definition of unremarkable. The incidence of his being cited is unremarkable, especially in Florida, which is [notorious for the entrepreneurial spirit of its traffic police](#). The nature of his offenses — failing to come to a complete stop, etc. — is

unremarkable. His handling of the offenses — enduring one of those remedial driving classes in one case, hiring a lawyer to fight the citation in another — is unremarkable. Senator Rubio's car — a beige Buick — is almost comically unremarkable. The only thing remarkable about this episode is that the *Times* seems to have allowed itself to be convinced by partisan operatives that this is remarkable.

The *Times* also considers Mrs. Rubio's driving record, and finds that she has a number of citations and was involved in a fender-bender so minor that no police report was filed.

In the annals of bad political driving, the Rubios do not even merit a footnote. The standard case study was Senator Edward Kennedy, but one of the examples that stands out in my mind is that of George Stephanopoulos — who, when he was running the Clinton White House, managed to get himself arrested for leaving the scene of an accident and driving with an expired license after failing to negotiate a parking space in front of a bar in Georgetown. He popped a bunch of mints; there was no drunk-driving charge. I remember the episode because of one detail: Stephanopoulos was driving an old Honda CRX, which I found disappointing at the time — I'd assumed that senior White House advisers drove better cars.

Whether Mrs. Stephanopoulos — the comedienne Alexandra Wentworth, a sense of humor being needful in her situation — has had any tickets in the past 20 years is not to be gleaned from the pages of the *New York Times*. In fact, the *Time's* interest in the travel habits of the spouses of presidential candidates is a bit . . . *uneven*. Mrs. Rubio's traffic violations are news that's fit to print, but the self-proclaimed newspaper of record has taken scanty interest in the peregrinations of former president Bill Clinton aboard an airplane nicknamed *The Lolita Express*, bearing him to a destination with an even worse nickname — "Pedophile Island" — in the company of Jeffrey Epstein, today a convicted sex offender. There are some aspects to that story that are considerably more interesting than failure to come to a complete stop: Clinton traveled in the company of a pornographic actress (her business is listed in Epstein's records as "massage") and many times in the company of Sarah Kellen who — you'll have to go to [Gawker](#) for this, as the *Times* must yawn — "was believed by detectives in the Palm Beach Police Department, which was the first to start unraveling the operation, to be so deeply involved in the enterprise that they prepared a warrant for her arrest as an accessory to molestation and sex with minors. In the end, she was never arrested or charged, and federal prosecutors granted her immunity in a 2007 non-prosecution agreement that described her as a 'potential co-conspirator' in sex trafficking."

If there is a *Times* reporter willing to press Herself on these facts, he is being kept at a safe distance.

Instead, let's talk about a senator's wife — not the senator himself, but his wife — driving 8 mph over the speed limit.

Or let's talk about sexagenarian sex changes. Every Republican presidential candidate is expected to have a fully fleshed-out view on the question of Bruce Jenner's decision to call himself "Caitlyn" and to spend the remainder of his retirement as a Medicare-eligible man pretending to be a Medicare-eligible woman. Clintons frolicking through an underage-prostitution ring, not on the edges but right in the middle of it? The *Times's* attention to that matter has amounted to very little more than a throwaway line in a Maureen Dowd column, a mention of "sketchy hangers-on in the mold of Ron Burkle and Jeffrey Epstein." That is a remarkably genteel characterization.



The major media apparatus's bias in favor of Democrats is only one of its biases, and maybe not even the most important one, though it will probably seem so to whomever the Republicans nominate in 2016. In the long run, its more important bias is its bias in favor of trivia: The hijinks of the Jenner-Kardashian family, Marco Rubio's wife's traffic citations, Marco Rubio's bottled water, Marco Rubio's thinning hair. But the bias toward trivia is a bias in Herself's favor, too: God help her if the electorate should turn its attention her record as secretary of state, as a senator, as a first lady . . .

## USA Today

### 'New York Times' shows its 'gotcha' colors

by Glenn Reynolds

So Friday's *New York Times* contained an enormous scoop — one so important that it was bylined by two reporters, Alan Rappoport and Steve Eder, *and* a researcher, Kitty Bennett. The scoop? That Marco Rubio had some traffic tickets. Well, actually, only four in 18 years. But the story combined Rubio's driving record with that of his wife so that it could maintain that the couple "had a combined 17 citations."

In other words, Rubio had four, and his wife had 13. Worse yet, we're told, the Rubios had to attend driving school on four occasions.

I have some firsthand experience with this phenomenon. A few years back I was leaving the Palm Beach International Airport on a divided multilane road with interstate signage, going about 50. I got pulled over in a radar trap, where I was informed that the speed limit was 35, though I hadn't seen any signs. Like one or the other of the Rubios, I got the ticket dismissed in exchange for sitting through a Florida traffic school (mine was online).

Also like the Rubios, I was solicited from lawyers who said things such as, "Have you received a traffic ticket? Don't pay it." But because I'm a lawyer myself, I didn't hire them; I just paid the court costs and traffic school fees. Does the *Times* think I'm a scofflaw?

Rappoport, Eder and Bennett's earth-shattering traffic scoop produced rather a lot of mockery from people on the right, and from some on the left. Longtime political correspondent Jeff Greenfield tweeted: "Rubio TrafficTicketGate? This a parody of political journalism gone nuts, right?"

Yeah, pretty much. To add to the embarrassment, the *Times*, though it has since silently corrected the piece, referred to Marco Rubio's Ford F-150 pickup as a "sports utility vehicle," displaying the level of automotive literacy expected of Manhattan residents.

Folks on Twitter mocked the *Times* with the #RubioCrimeSpree hashtag, featuring such other alleged crimes as "Drank milk after the expiration," "Red wine with fish," and my favorite, "Called Chris Matthews, asked him if his refrigerator was running."

Even most of the major newspapers and networks declined to treat the *Times*' story seriously. *Fox News* emphasized the hit-piece style of the story, and *The Wall Street Journal* mocked it; CNN was mum; and *The Washington Post's* Erik Wemple warned the *Times* it is setting itself up for criticism if it doesn't hold other presidential candidates to the same level of scrutiny. Of the major networks, only MSNBC gave the story the time of day.

Well, that's fine. The *Times* did some digging, and the best it could come up with was evidence that, unlike [many politicians](#), Rubio didn't pull strings to make his tickets vanish.

Er, except that maybe the *Times* didn't do the digging. *The Washington Free Beacon's* Brent Scher [reported](#) that the *Times* likely got the records from a Democratic opposition research firm, American Bridge. "Records show that each of the citations mentioned by the *New York Times* were pulled in person by American Bridge operatives on May 26, 2015. ... Neither of the reporters, Alan Rappeport and Steve Eder, appeared on the docket records for any of the traffic citations for Rubio and his wife. An additional researcher credited in the *New York Times*, Kitty Bennett, also does not appear on any of the court records."

When Scher asked the *Times* for comment, he got no reply. Instead, the *Times* went to *Politico's* [Dylan Byers](#) to give its side of the story. Byers published [its denial](#) that American Bridge was behind the story. (Scher is [skeptical](#).) I'm not sure what's worse: The possibility that the *Times* just reprinted opposition research from a partisan source (while crediting two reporters and a researcher), or the *Times* thinking on its own that this was a big scoop.

Oh, well. I'm inclined to agree with Jeff Greenfield that this is a parody of a political gotcha story. But if you think that the Rubios are a menace on the road, perhaps you should vote for the senator for president, so that he and his wife will have drivers. Look at Hillary Clinton: Her husband got elected to the White House, and she [hasn't driven a car](#) herself since 1996.

And if *Times* journalists wonder why so many people think they bend over backward for gotcha stories involving politicians they disfavor, well, perhaps they should ponder this example. Everybody else is.

## **Instapundit**

### **ANOTHER ISRAEL AND AMERICA-HATING PRESIDENT:**

Former President Jimmy Carter spoke recently to an AARP group, telling them, "Americans still have racist tendencies or feelings of superiority to people of color." Nice to hear such pro-American words from a former President.

Carter's other recent gems include an oped last August in which Carter accused Israel of committing war crimes against Palestinians. He also defended Obama's decision to miss the unity rally in Paris after the Charlie Hebdo shootings, saying, "President Obama's just come back from vacation, and I know how it is when you've been gone for a week or two."

The similarities between Carter and Obama are growing day by day— although a poll last summer had Obama beating Carter for the title of "worst President since World War II" by five percentage points. I suspect Obama's lead in that poll would be much higher today.

## Streetwise Professor

### [Hey Elon-Put \\*OUR\\* Money Where Your Big Fat Mouth Is](#)

by Craig Pirrong

In one of my periodic Quixotic moments, I tilted at the Cult of Elon Musk. First, [I argued that he or someone manipulated the prices of Tesla and Solar City stocks](#): I stand by that analysis. [Second, I argued that the supposed visionary's true genius was for feeding lustily at the taxpayer teat.](#)

It is a testament to my great influence that the Cult of Musk has grown only larger in the two years since I made a run at him. But maybe the spell is breaking. For the LA Times just ran a long article detailing just how much his fortune was picked from our pockets. According to the LAT, Musk companies have raked in \$4.9 billion in various subsidies and tax breaks, give or take.

That's 10 figures, people.

That's bad enough. What's worse is Musk's "defense." [It is a farrago of intellectual dishonesty, logical fallacies, condescension, and arrogance.](#)

Musk only replied to the LAT after repeated inquiries, but it is good that the paper persisted. Musk's rationalizations have to be seen to be believed.

For one thing, he says he doesn't really need the subsidies:

"If I cared about subsidies, I would have entered the oil and gas industry," said Musk.

. . . .

"Tesla could be profitable right now if we went into low-growth mode and we just served premium buyers," he said. "The reason we are not profitable is because we are making massive investments to create an affordable long-range electric car."

We are making massive investments? What do you mean by "we", paleface?

So fine. You don't care about subsidies. You don't need them.

Then put your money-excuse me, *our* money-where your big fat mouth is and don't cash the checks.

The rest of Musk's defense consists of various incarnations of N wrongs make a right (or, put differently, other people suck at the government teat, why shouldn't I?):

Musk said the subsidies for Tesla and SolarCity are "a pittance" compared with government support of the oil and gas industry.

"What is remarkable about my companies is that they have been successful despite having such a tiny incentive from the government relative to our competitors," Musk told The Times.

. . . .

Tesla, Musk said, competes with a mature auto industry that has seen massive federal bailouts for General Motors and Chrysler.

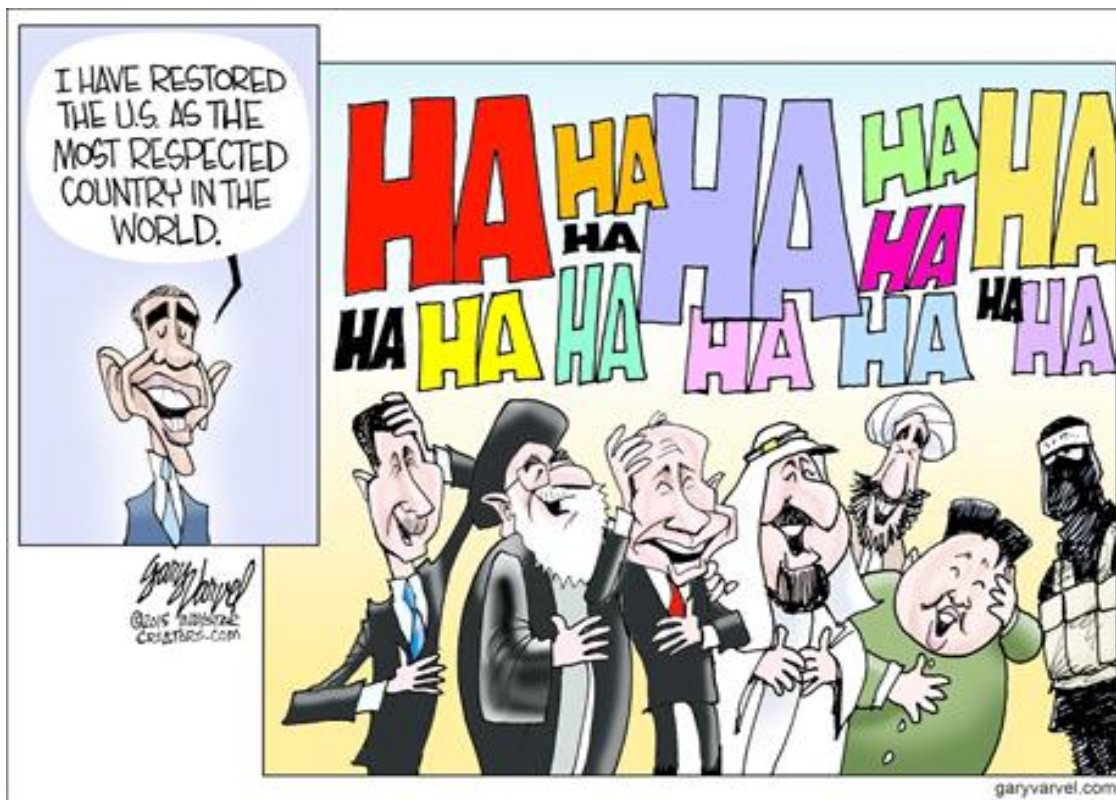
“Tesla and Ford are the only American auto companies not to have gone bankrupt,” Musk said.

SolarCity, he said, is in a nascent industry that must fight entrenched oil and gas interests that have myriad subsidies.

Throwing good money after bad is not good public policy.

Musk cites numerous junk studies to support his case. Some of these are studies of the alleged economic benefits arising from investments in his battery plants, etc. I guarantee, all such studies are garbage based on mythical multipliers and crypto-Keynesian mumbo jumbo. Others are studies of the alleged subsidies of other industries, notably the energy industry. Even taking the numbers at face value, the subsidies of fossil fuels are a pittance on a per BTU or megawatt basis compared to those for renewables. Further, fossil fuels are also heavily taxed directly and indirectly, including by substantial geopolitical and expropriation risks. The study that cites the environmental costs of fossil fuels is particularly susceptible to abuse. And to quote Sonicharm, of the blog Rhymes With Cars and Girls-[also not a Musk fan!](#)-all large calculations are wrong.

Elon Musk is a rent seeker masquerading as a visionary. If he is one-tenth the innovator and genius his fawning fans believe him to be he wouldn't need any subsidies. We should give him the chance to prove it.





SOMEWHERE  
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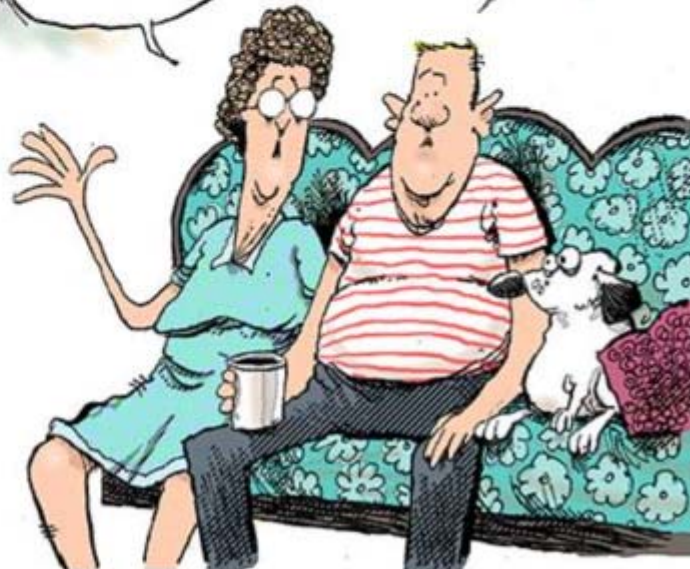
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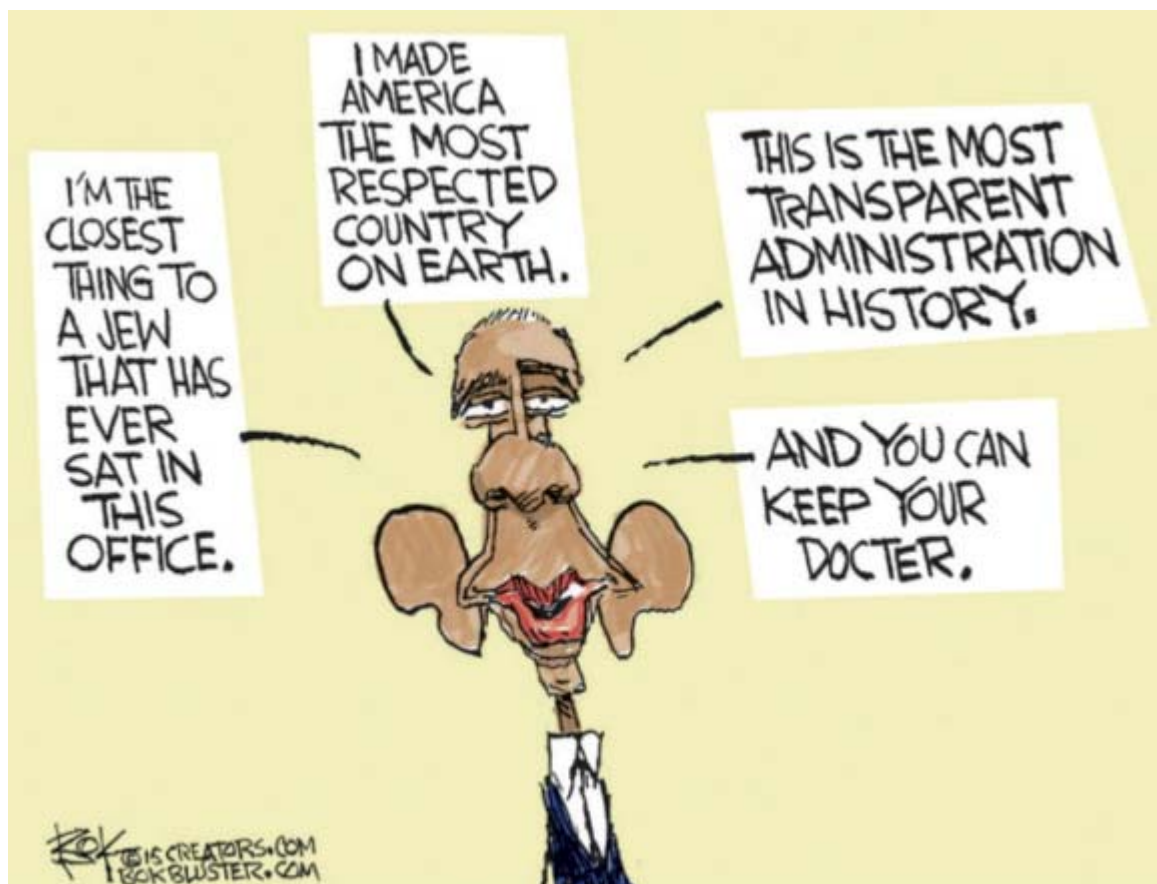
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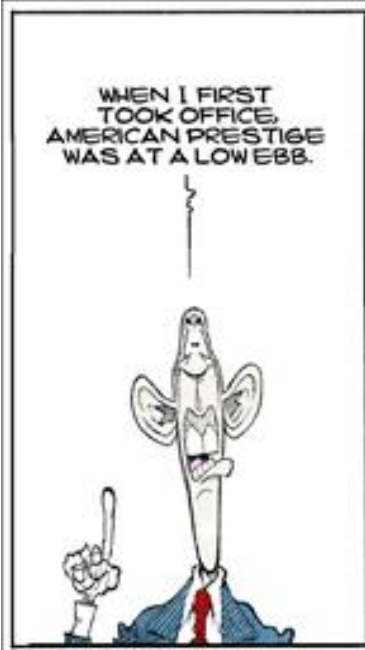
NO, BUT I'M SURE  
THEY'RE SURPRISED  
TO FIND OUT  
THEY **AREN'T**  
ISLAMIC.





I may not be a smart man, but at least I didn't try to argue that the Islamic State isn't Islamic.





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