

May 18, 2016 - OBAMA'S ASSAULT ON THE POLICE

One of the most damaging legacies of this distressing president will come from his assault on the police. Given an opportunity to address the disintegration of the country's inner city life, he has instead exacerbated this disastrous dysfunction. And the trashing of police started from get go. Here he is opining on the Cambridge arrest controversy of Henry Lewis Gates in 2009; *"I don't know, not having been there and not seeing all the facts, what role race played in that. But I think it's fair to say, number one, any of us would be pretty angry; number two, that **the Cambridge police acted stupidly** in arresting somebody when there was already proof that they were in their own home, and, number three, what I think we know separate and apart from this incident is **that there's a long history in this country of African Americans and Latinos being stopped by law enforcement disproportionately.**" [Heather Mac Donald](#) reviews the record.*

There is no precedent for Barack Obama's relentless attacks on the nation's police officers and criminal-justice system. Simply put, the man twice elected to the country's highest office routinely and repeatedly charges that cops and the courts are awash in systematic racial bias. "Too many young men of color," the president told the Congressional Black Caucus in September 2014, "feel targeted by law enforcement, guilty of walking while black, or driving while black, judged by stereotypes that fuel fear and resentment and hopelessness. We know that, statistically, in everything from enforcing drug policy to applying the death penalty to pulling people over, there are significant racial disparities."

Addressing the nation in November 2014 at a moment of extreme racial tension, after a Missouri grand jury declined to indict Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson for the death of Michael Brown, the president seized the opportunity to accuse the police of discrimination: "The law too often feels like it's being applied in a discriminatory fashion....Communities of color aren't just making these problems up....These are real issues. And we have to lift them up and not deny them or try to tamp them down." ...

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declining precipitously. This decline in enforcement is an understandable and predictable reaction to the vitriol that has been directed against the cops over the last year. Officers across the country tell disturbing stories of being pelted by rocks and water bottles when they try to make an arrest or conduct an investigation in urban areas.

The data are clear: At the same time police are pulling back from discretionary enforcement, violent crime is going up in major cities across the country, as FBI Director James Comey confirmed in an October address at the University of Chicago law school. According to FBI data, in the first six months of 2015, murder rose 45 percent in Baltimore, 58 percent in St. Louis, 50 percent in Oklahoma City, 50 percent in Tulsa, 27 percent in Dallas, 44 percent in Houston, 108 percent in Milwaukee, 51 percent in Louisville, 29 percent in New Orleans, and 12.3 percent in New York City, compared with the first six months of 2014. The Washington Post has found a nearly 17 percent increase in homicides in the 50 largest cities during all of 2015, compared with 2014—the greatest increase in lethal violence in a quarter century. Dozens of children, from Baltimore to Cincinnati to Cleveland, were struck by drive-by shootings in 2015. The bloodbath is continuing in 2016: 120 Chicagoans were shot in the first 10 days of the New Year, 19 of them fatally. ...

... The victims of 2015's violent-crime spike were overwhelmingly black and will continue to be so if policing remains under attack. Blacks gained the most from the crime drop over the last two decades, enjoying a newfound freedom to raise their children in relative safety. But as a result of Obama's delegitimation of policing, urban-dwelling Americans are seeing their communities fall back into criminal squalor and their lives shrink again to the four walls of their homes. Their fundamental civil rights are at risk. Someone needs to speak for them even if their self-appointed leaders will not.

Kyle Smith has more on the administration's disrespect for law-abiding citizens. *It's only May, but I think I've found the euphemism of the year: According to Team Obama, criminals should now be declared "justice-involved individuals."*

The neo-Orwellianism comes to us from the bizarre flurry of last-minute diktats, regulations and bone-chilling threats collectively known to fanboys as Obama's Gorgeous Goodbye.

In another of those smiley-faced, but deeply sinister, "Dear Colleague" letters sent to universities and colleges this week, Obama's Education Secretary John King discouraged colleges from asking applicants whether they were convicted criminals.

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From Front Page Magazine we learn how liberal policies have destroyed black families.

... The calamitous breakdown of the black family is a comparatively recent phenomenon, coinciding precisely with the rise of the welfare state. Throughout the epoch of slavery and into the early decades of the twentieth century, most black children grew up in two-parent households. Post-Civil War studies revealed that most black couples in their forties had been together for at least twenty years. In southern urban areas around 1880, nearly three-fourths of black households were husband- or father-present; in southern rural settings, the figure approached 86%. As of 1940, the illegitimacy rate among blacks nationwide was approximately 15%—scarcely one-fifth of the current figure. As late as 1950, black women were more likely to be married than white women, and only 9% of black families with children were headed by a single parent.

During the nine decades between the Emancipation Proclamation and the 1950s, the black family remained a strong, stable institution. Its cataclysmic destruction was subsequently set in motion by such policies as the anti-marriage incentives that were built into the welfare system. As George Mason University professor Walter E. Williams puts it: “The welfare state has done to black Americans what slavery couldn't do, what Jim Crow couldn't do, what the harshest racism couldn't do. And that is to destroy the black family.” Hoover Institution Fellow Thomas Sowell concurs: “The black family, which had survived centuries of slavery and discrimination, began rapidly disintegrating in the liberal welfare state that subsidized unwed pregnancy and changed welfare from an emergency rescue to a way of life.”

Kevin Williamson turns our attention to the president's economic legacy.

... What can we actually say about Obama administration policies? One is that the so-called stimulus underperformed on one front and failed on another. It may have provided some meaningful stimulus (economists debate the question still) at a cost — there always is a cost — that will remain unknown for the foreseeable future. What it did not do — we have the president's own word on this — is dramatically improve public infrastructure. Indeed, every time the Democrats call for a dramatic new campaign of infrastructure investment, it is an implicit indictment of the failure of previous campaigns. The stimulus mainly operated as a covert bailout for badly governed Democratic cities and states. Recovery and reinvestment? Weak, at best.

The Affordable Care Act is a failure. Again, we have the Democrats' own word on this, as they labor feverishly to keep its least-popular features (such as the taxes that pay for it!) from taking effect. In fact, Obama's would-be successor, Hillary Rodham Clinton, seeks to partly dismantle Obamacare, repealing the so-called Cadillac tax that vexes her public-sector supporters, whose health-care plans are a great deal better than yours. The woefully misnamed Affordable Care Act hasn't been a dramatic job-killer, but there is evidence (from the Congressional Budget Office and other sources) that it creates some headwinds against employment, undercutting the equivalent of 2 million full-time jobs. It hasn't solved the problem of health-care inflation, and probably has made it worse, at a very high cost in terms of actual outlays and economic distortion. ...

More details on the sorry economic legacy from Dan Mitchell.

Let's take a look at President Obama's economic legacy.

The Washington Examiner opines on President Obama's remarkable claim that he saved the world economy.

President Obama...wants to be remembered for...[being]...the savior of the American and global economies. "There are things I'm proud of," he said, citing Obamacare, then added, "Saving the world economy from a Great Depression, that was pretty good."

Not so fast. Looking at the economy's anemic numbers the editors are less than impressed.

Obama will end eight years in office without presiding over a thriving economy of the sort America enjoyed in the past. It also suggests that even the mediocre growth of recent years depended on high oil prices, which have collapsed by more than half. This is the bitter fruit of creationist economics, the erroneous belief that government activity can somehow conjure new wealth and value.

The Wall Street Journal is similarly dour about Obama's economic legacy. ...

Not content to bring our country close to ruin, the president went to Great Britain and interfered in the Brexit vote. Janet Daley of the UK Telegraph asks "why should we take advice from a president who has surrendered the world to chaos?"

... The withdrawal of the US from world leadership – from being what Mr Obama's people refer to disparagingly as "the world's policeman" – has been one of the most dramatic developments on the international stage of the past eight years.

Into the vacuum left by that withdrawal has stepped (or strode) Vladimir Putin, who can't believe his luck. At just the moment when Russian national pride desperately needed a renaissance after the mortifying collapse of the Soviet Union and the infuriating rise of all those Lilliputian upstarts in the old Eastern Bloc, along comes a US president who announces in no uncertain terms that America wants to pull out of the global power game. Make no mistake, this began long before the funk over removing Assad in Syria – which Mr Obama has outrageously blamed on David Cameron's failure to win a parliamentary vote – or the "leading from behind" fiasco in Libya, which Mr Obama also blames on Mr Cameron for having the audacity to think that the US might have been prepared to lead from the front. No, the Obama isolationist doctrine was there from the start: deliberate and consciously chosen.

It began in his first term as president when he visited Eastern Europe and gave a series of speeches to make the point: the countries that had once required America's protection from a Soviet superpower were now emerging democracies and fledgling free-market success stories. They could take care of themselves militarily in future. The interceptor missiles that had been scheduled to arrive in Poland, courtesy of the US, would not be delivered. Although they had never been intended as any sort of threat against Moscow, Obama still allowed this move to be seen as part of his "reset" of relations with post-Soviet Russia. ...

Commentary

Obama's Assault on the Police

by Heather Mac Donald

There is no precedent for Barack Obama's relentless attacks on the nation's police officers and criminal-justice system. Simply put, the man twice elected to the country's highest office routinely and repeatedly charges that cops and the courts are awash in systematic racial bias. "Too many young men of color," the president told the Congressional Black Caucus in September 2014, "feel targeted by law enforcement, guilty of walking while black, or driving while black, judged by stereotypes that fuel fear and resentment and hopelessness. We know that, statistically, in everything from enforcing drug policy to applying the death penalty to pulling people over, there are significant racial disparities."

Addressing the nation in November 2014 at a moment of extreme racial tension, after a Missouri grand jury declined to indict Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson for the death of Michael Brown, the president seized the opportunity to accuse the police of discrimination: "The law too often feels like it's being applied in a discriminatory fashion....Communities of color aren't just making these problems up....These are real issues. And we have to lift them up and not deny them or try to tamp them down."

In May 2015, in the Bronx, the president asserted: "The law is not always applied evenly in this country. [Young black men] experience being treated differently by law enforcement—in stops and in arrests, and in charges and incarcerations. The statistics are clear, up and down the criminal justice system. There's no dispute."

The negative effect of such rhetoric on the morale of the police, on the perceived legitimacy of the criminal-justice system, and on the atmosphere in which police operate is incalculable. Over and over again, the commander in chief of our armed forces has told the nation's constabulary he views them as constitutional blackguards. Any officer who enforces the law in minority communities is now doing so under a cloud of suspicion that emanates from the highest office of the land. That suspicion cannot help but inhibit the willingness of officers to engage in proactive policing, especially when combined with street-level challenges to police authority.

It is bad enough for a president to undercut the legitimacy of the police and the criminal-justice system. But the most galling aspect of President Obama's crusade against law enforcement is that it rests on falsehood.

Study after study has shown that policing, prosecution, and incarceration are accurate reflections of crime. Arrests match the race of offenders as reported by crime victims; those victims are themselves disproportionately minority. Blacks are actually less likely to be charged with a felony following an arrest than whites, according to a 1994 Justice Department survey of felony cases from the country's 75 largest urban areas. Indeed, criminologists have spent decades trying to prove that black men are "treated differently by law enforcement," as President Obama claims, but they always come up short. Robert Sampson and Janet Lauritsen, among the most liberal members of their profession, have concluded that "large racial differences in criminal offending," not racism, explained why more blacks were in prison proportionately than whites and for longer terms. Michael Tonry, of the same political bent,

concur. "Racial differences in patterns of offending, not racial bias by police and other officials, are the principal reason that such greater proportions of blacks than whites are arrested, prosecuted, convicted, and imprisoned," Tonry wrote in his 1996 book, *Malign Neglect*.

Just how large are those "racial differences in criminal offending"? Huge. Nationally, blacks were charged with 62 percent of all robberies, 57 percent of all murders, and 45 percent of all assaults in the 75 largest U.S. counties in 2009, while constituting roughly 15 percent of the population in those counties. In New York City, whose racial crime rates are typical of large American cities, blacks commit over 75 percent of all shootings and 70 percent of all robberies, though they constitute 23 percent of the city's population. Add Hispanic shootings to black shootings, and you account for over 98 percent of all shootings in New York. Whites, by contrast, commit fewer than 2 percent of all shootings and 4 percent of robberies, though they are 34 percent of city residents.

Obama accuses cops of discriminating against blacks in "stops," otherwise known as stop, question, and frisk. In fact, before it largely gave up the practice, the much-maligned New York Police Department stopped and questioned blacks at a rate lower than their crime rate would predict: just over half of all pedestrian stops made by the NYPD have black subjects, even though blacks commit 75 percent of all shootings and 66 percent of all violent crime.

What President Obama fails to say about law enforcement can be as corrosive as what he does say. In March 2015, the Justice Department issued a 100-page report demolishing the Black Lives Matter narrative about the shooting of Michael Brown. That narrative held that Brown had been shot in cold blood by a racist police officer. After an exhaustive review of forensic evidence and eyewitness accounts, however, Justice concluded that Brown had assaulted Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson and had tried to grab his gun—exactly as Wilson had maintained from the beginning. Wilson reasonably believed that he was facing a lethal threat, the Justice report found. Physical evidence demonstrated that Brown had not been shot in the back.

President Obama could have provided an enormous service to the nation had he embraced the Justice Department findings. Instead, he asserted that the Brown-Wilson encounter was still shrouded in mystery. "We may never know what happened," Obama said during a town hall at South Carolina's Benedict College on March 6, 2015. This claim is irresponsible and false. The Justice Department analysis provides a definitive account of the interaction. The report supports the grand jury's decision not to indict Officer Wilson, as well as the Justice Department's own decision not to bring civil-rights charges against Wilson. And yet Obama implied that only an overly stringent standard of proof in civil-rights proceedings prevented the Justice Department from bringing civil-rights charges against Officer Wilson. In fact, under no standard of proof, no matter how lax, would charges against Wilson be reasonable or justified.

President Obama's failure to back his own Justice Department's exoneration of Officer Wilson proved catastrophic. Michael Brown has continued to be treated as a martyr to police brutality, providing an endless source of fuel to the incendiary Black Lives Matter protest movement. Brown's ongoing martyrdom, however baseless, makes police protection in inner-city communities increasingly fraught and dangerous.

The police play no more important function than maintaining civil order and preventing the wanton destruction of people's property and livelihoods. Yet as a second round of rioting loomed over Ferguson, Mo., after the non-indictment of Officer Wilson, Obama chose to chastise the police in advance for their presumed overreaction to whatever was going to transpire: "I also appeal to the law-enforcement officials in Ferguson and the region to show care and restraint in managing peaceful protests that may occur....They need to work with the community, not

against the community, to distinguish the handful of people who may use the grand jury's decision as an excuse for violence...from the vast majority who just want their voices heard around legitimate issues in terms of how communities and law enforcement interact."

Obama's condescension toward the cops was unjustified: The guardians of law and order didn't fire a single shot during the riots that once again tore apart Ferguson, despite being shot at themselves. Had Obama grasped the seriousness of his responsibilities, he would have confined his remarks to the reasons for not indicting Wilson and thanked the jurors for their service. He could have ended by observing that the U.S. criminal-justice system is unparalleled in its respect for due process and pursuit of the truth.

Policing is political. When officers fail to receive political support, they will shy away from challenged forms of policing. At the present moment, pedestrian and car stops, as well as so-called Broken Windows policing (the enforcement of low-level public-order offenses), are most under attack and declining precipitously. This decline in enforcement is an understandable and predictable reaction to the vitriol that has been directed against the cops over the last year. Officers across the country tell disturbing stories of being pelted by rocks and water bottles when they try to make an arrest or conduct an investigation in urban areas.

The data are clear: At the same time police are pulling back from discretionary enforcement, violent crime is going up in major cities across the country, as FBI Director James Comey confirmed in an October address at the University of Chicago law school. According to FBI data, in the first six months of 2015, murder rose 45 percent in Baltimore, 58 percent in St. Louis, 50 percent in Oklahoma City, 50 percent in Tulsa, 27 percent in Dallas, 44 percent in Houston, 108 percent in Milwaukee, 51 percent in Louisville, 29 percent in New Orleans, and 12.3 percent in New York City, compared with the first six months of 2014. The *Washington Post* has found a nearly 17 percent increase in homicides in the 50 largest cities during all of 2015, compared with 2014—the greatest increase in lethal violence in a quarter century. Dozens of children, from Baltimore to Cincinnati to Cleveland, were struck by drive-by shootings in 2015. The bloodbath is continuing in 2016: 120 Chicagoans were shot in the first 10 days of the New Year, 19 of them fatally.

Of course, White House rhetoric is far from the only reason we are seeing this reversion to a frightening past. Officers are facing virulent, sometimes violent, resistance to their lawful authority. A mini-riot broke out in Cincinnati in July when the police responded to a drive-by shooting whose victims included a four-year-old girl shot in the head. The target of the mini-riot? Not the shooters but the police, who were trying to enforce outstanding warrants to avert a retaliatory shooting. Officers worry that a cellphone video will not capture the reason for their use of force against a resisting suspect and that their police chief or mayor will lack the spine to rebut unjustified accusations of bias. Overreaching criminal indictments, such as the murder and manslaughter charges issued against six Baltimore police officers following the death of Freddie Gray in April 2015, have also had a chilling effect on policing.

Officers need to know that their lawful use of force will be supported by political leaders. And the public needs to know that political leaders stand with the police when the facts require it. If officers lose their legitimacy in the eyes of the public, they will face increasing levels of resistance, possibly even murderous resistance. Such resistance increases the chances that officers will have to use force against suspects, possibly even lethal force. And should officers have to resort to deadly force against a black suspect to protect their lives or the lives of others, it will only fuel the false narrative against them.

President Obama's undermining of law enforcement is among the most destructive legacies of his administration. Since 2009, his Justice Department has opened an unprecedented 23 civil-rights investigations of police departments on the slimmest of pretexts—going after the Sanford, Florida, police department, for example, following the shooting of Trayvon Martin, even though the gunman, George Zimmerman, was not even a police officer. It has saddled nearly as many police departments with costly and crippling consent decrees, written by attorneys who have never patrolled a housing project, much less at night. In February 2016, in a typical display of bullying, the Justice Department sued the city of Ferguson after that city asked to revise a particularly burdensome consent decree that the Feds were trying to foist on it. Justice had found Ferguson's police department guilty of racism without ever taking into account the city's racial crime rates, an omission typical of its civil-rights consent decrees.

Pace the claims of Black Lives Matter activists and their political and media enablers, police killings of blacks are lower than what black crime rates would predict. In 2015, blacks were 26 percent of civilians killed by the cops; the vast majority of those black victims were armed or otherwise viciously assaulting the officer. Blacks made up 40 percent of all cop-killers over the last decade. They commit over 50 percent of all murders nationally, more murders than are committed by whites and Hispanics combined, even though blacks are only 13 percent of the nation's population.

The Republican presidential hopefuls have a political opportunity here. If they make the restoration of law and order a major campaign theme, they will be speaking not only to a very real problem but also to an issue that resonates with many people who are too cowed to speak up. Republicans could warn about the dangerous erosion of respect for law enforcement, and of the disproportionate threat that that erosion poses to the African-American community. The victims of 2015's violent-crime spike were overwhelmingly black and will continue to be so if policing remains under attack. Blacks gained the most from the crime drop over the last two decades, enjoying a newfound freedom to raise their children in relative safety. But as a result of Obama's delegitimation of policing, urban-dwelling Americans are seeing their communities fall back into criminal squalor and their lives shrink again to the four walls of their homes. Their fundamental civil rights are at risk. Someone needs to speak for them even if their self-appointed leaders will not.

NY Post

[Obama doesn't think rapists, armed robbers, drug dealers are criminals](#)

by Kyle Smith

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Maybe they're right: "Criminals" is an inherently disparaging term that leads to stigmatization and decreased access to Eugene O'Neill seminars. But don't we need to retroactively reconfigure how we think of those unfortunate souls who found themselves pursued by harsh enforcers of restrictive behavioral norms?

When you think about it, Jack the Ripper was merely a "cutlery-involved individual" while Jeffrey Dahmer was simply an "unconventional dietary-options-involved individual."

Colleges generally ask whether applicants have criminal records, and for excellent reason. Parents probably don't want their eager young freshperson daughter Molly living across the hall from a rapist — I mean, sexual-justice-involved individual.

King notes that when you ask college applicants about whether they brutalized, mugged or otherwise committed outrages against their fellow human beings, the ugly specter of "disparate impact" arises. The black crime rate is higher than the white crime rate, so the "Are you a criminal?" question is bound to do injury to blacks, or so goes the reasoning.

Obama is fighting the war for criminals to get closer to you on several fronts. Last month, through the Department of Housing and Urban Development, he went after landlords, threatening them with penalties if they barred criminals from living in their buildings.

In November, Obama unilaterally ordered federal agencies to strike the box asking applicants whether they had committed crimes and referred to criminals as "folks." This would be the same president who on Oct. 25, 2010, referred to Republicans as "enemies" and suggested voters should "punish" them. Convicted rapists? They're just "folks."

It's fair to argue that the criminal justice system, and society as a whole, have a strong interest in rehabilitating criminals in addition to punishing them. And Team Obama argues innocently that (the people they refuse to call) criminals deserve to get their foot in the door before the step where they are asked about their criminal history.

But this is just a step in a long-term strategy pursued by progressives, who love criminals the way little girls love Disney princesses. The goal is to sneak criminals into your apartment building or workplace or campus.

Just glance at the website of one Ban the Box advocacy group, the South Dakota Peace & Justice Center. Its stated goal is to put off questions about criminal behavior until later in the game: "Only during the interview process will a criminal background check be completed if it is relevant or required for the position."

In other words: Enforcers will tell you whether an applicant's criminal background is relevant to a particular gig and order you not to ask about it if they deem it irrelevant.

Yet there is no job on the planet in which your criminal background is automatically irrelevant. Employers can weigh how much importance to assign to which crimes and judge for themselves whether a criminal has reformed.

Bringing up “disparate impact” is a way to change the subject between who you are and what you did. One is about characteristics you were born with; the other is about bad choices you made. One is a terrible reason to discriminate against you; the other isn’t.

King says that there is no evidence that questions about criminal backgrounds have any impact on campus safety. How hard did he look for such evidence? Because I’m pretty sure that one reliable predictor of crime is the presence of criminals.

Colleges find themselves at a point in time where debates about, say, whether rape is spiking on campus (it isn’t) are treated as so imperiling that they require the establishment of alternative “safe spaces” such as the rubber room established at Brown in 2014 and “equipped with cookies, coloring books, bubbles, Play-Doh, calming music, pillows, blankets and a video of frolicking puppies,” [according to the New York Times.](#)

Yet these colleges are now being nudged not to ask a potential student whether he’s a rapist, or an assailant or a heroin dealer, with the implicit threat of the administration’s power to launch civil rights investigations lurking not far behind.

University donors, and parents of matriculating students, should be eager to ask college admissions officers how far they are willing to go to comply with Team Obama’s wishes: Exactly how many convicts are going to be housed in Molly’s dorm?

Front Page

[How The Liberal Welfare State Destroyed Black America](#)

What Democrat voters and political leaders refuse to believe.

by John Perazzo



When President Lyndon Johnson in 1964 launched the so-called War on Poverty, which enacted an unprecedented amount of antipoverty legislation and added many new layers to the American welfare state, he explained that his objective was to reduce dependency, “break the cycle of poverty,” and make “taxpayers out of tax eaters.” Johnson further claimed that his programs would bring to an end the “conditions that breed despair and violence,” those being “ignorance, discrimination, slums, poverty, disease, not enough jobs.” Of particular concern to Johnson was the disproportionately high rate of black poverty. In a famous June 1965 speech, the president suggested that the problems plaguing black Americans could not be solved by self-help: “You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line in a race and then say, ‘you are free to compete with all the others,’” said Johnson.

Thus began modern liberalism's vicious and unrelenting assault on black Americans. Dressed up as “compassion” and “social justice,” this assault took the form of an unprecedented commitment of federal funds to a wide range of measures aimed at redistributing wealth in the United States. Since 1965, more than [\\$22 trillion](#) of taxpayer money (in constant 2012 dollars) has been spent on means-tested welfare programs for the poor.

The economic milieu in which the War on Poverty arose is noteworthy. As of 1965, the number of Americans living below the official poverty line had been declining continuously since the beginning of the decade and was only about half of what it had been fifteen years earlier. Between 1950 and 1965, the proportion of people whose earnings put them below the poverty level, had decreased by more than 30%. The black poverty rate in particular had been cut nearly in half between 1940 and 1960. And in various skilled trades during the period of 1936-59, the incomes of blacks relative to those of whites had more than doubled.

Despite these trends, the welfare state expanded dramatically after LBJ's statement. Between the mid-Sixties and the mid-Seventies, the dollar value of public housing quintupled and the amount spent on food stamps rose more than tenfold. From 1965-69, government-provided benefits increased by a factor of 8; by 1974 such benefits were an astounding 20 times higher than they had been in 1965. Also as of 1974, federal spending on social-welfare programs amounted to 16% of America's Gross National Product, a far cry from the 8% figure of 1960. By 1977 the number of people receiving public assistance had more than doubled since 1960.

The most devastating by-product of the mushrooming welfare state was the corrosive effect it had on American family life, particularly in the black community. As provisions in welfare laws offered ever-increasing economic incentives for shunning marriage and avoiding the formation of two-parent families, illegitimacy rates rose dramatically.

For the next few decades, means-tested welfare programs such as food stamps, public housing, Medicaid, day care, and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families penalized marriage. A mother generally received far more money from welfare if she was single rather than married. Once she took a husband, her benefits were instantly reduced by roughly 10 to 20 percent. As a Cato Institute study [noted](#), welfare programs for the poor incentivize the very behaviors that are most likely to perpetuate poverty. Another Cato report [observed](#):

“Of course women do not get pregnant just to get welfare benefits.... But, by removing the economic consequences of out-of-wedlock birth, welfare has removed a major incentive to avoid such pregnancies. A teenager looking around at her friends and neighbors is liable to see several who have given birth out-of-wedlock. When she sees that they have suffered few visible consequences ... she is less inclined to modify her own behavior to prevent pregnancy....

Current welfare policies seem to be designed with an appalling lack of concern for their impact on out-of-wedlock births. Indeed, Medicaid programs in 11 states actually provide infertility treatments to single women on welfare.”

The marriage penalties that are embedded in welfare programs can be particularly severe if a woman on public assistance weds a man who is employed in a low-paying job. As a FamilyScholars.org report puts it: “When a couple's income nears the limits prescribed by Medicaid, a few extra dollars in income cause thousands of dollars in benefits to be lost. What all of this means is that the two most important routes out of poverty—marriage and work—are heavily taxed under the current U.S. system.”

William Galston, who served in the '90s as Deputy Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs, estimated that the welfare system, with its economic disincentives to marriage, was responsible for at least 15% to 20% of the family disintegration in the United States. Libertarian scholar Charles Murray has placed the figure at somewhere around 50%. By Murray's [reckoning](#), the growth and increased liberalization of the “welfare complex” have eroded the traditional ethos of working-class communities that once held people who worked at low-wage jobs, and men who married the mothers of their children, in much higher esteem than unwed parents who became wards of the state.

The results of welfare policies discouraging marriage and family were dramatic, as out-of-wedlock birthrates skyrocketed among all demographic groups in the U.S., but most notably African Americans. In the mid-1960s, the out-of-wedlock birth rate was scarcely 3% for whites, 7.7% for Americans overall, and 24.5% among blacks. By 1976, those figures had risen to nearly 10% for whites, 24.7% for Americans as a whole, and 50.3% for blacks specifically. And today, the numbers stand at 29% for whites, 41% for the nation overall, and 73% for blacks. In other words, the entire country is moving rapidly in the wrong direction, but blacks in particular have reached a point of veritable catastrophe.

The devastating societal consequences of family breakdown cannot be overstated. Father-absent families—black and white alike—generally occupy the bottom rung of America's economic ladder. Regardless of race or ethnicity, the poverty rate for single parents with children is several times higher than the corresponding rate for married couples with children. According to Robert Rector, senior research fellow with the Heritage Foundation, “the absence of marriage increases the frequency of child poverty 700 percent” and thus constitutes the single most reliable predictor of a self-perpetuating underclass. Articulating a similar theme many years ago, Martin Luther King, Jr. said, “Nothing is so much needed as a secure family life for a people to pull themselves out of poverty.”

Children in single-parent households are burdened not only with economic, but also profound social and psychological, disadvantages. For [example](#), youngsters raised by single parents, as compared to those who grow up in intact married homes, are more likely to be physically abused; to display emotional disorders; to smoke, drink, and use drugs; to perform poorly in school; to be suspended or expelled from school; to drop out of high school; to behave aggressively and violently; to be arrested for a juvenile crime; to serve jail time before age 30; and to go on to experience poverty as adults. According to the National Fatherhood Initiative, 60% of rapists, 72% of adolescent murderers, and 70% of long-term prison inmates are men who grew up in fatherless homes. With regard to girls in particular, those raised by single mothers are more than twice as likely to give birth out-of-wedlock, thereby perpetuating the cycle of poverty for yet another generation.

The calamitous breakdown of the black family is a comparatively recent phenomenon,

coinciding precisely with the rise of the welfare state. Throughout the epoch of slavery and into the early decades of the twentieth century, most black children grew up in two-parent households. Post-Civil War studies revealed that most black couples in their forties had been together for at least twenty years. In southern urban areas around 1880, nearly three-fourths of black households were husband- or father-present; in southern rural settings, the figure approached 86%. As of 1940, the illegitimacy rate among blacks nationwide was approximately 15%—scarcely one-fifth of the current figure. As late as 1950, black women were [more](#) likely to be married than white women, and only 9% of black families with children were headed by a single parent.

During the nine decades between the Emancipation Proclamation and the 1950s, the black family remained a strong, stable institution. Its cataclysmic destruction was subsequently set in motion by such policies as the anti-marriage incentives that were built into the welfare system. As George Mason University professor Walter E. Williams puts it: “The welfare state has done to black Americans what slavery couldn't do, what Jim Crow couldn't do, what the harshest racism couldn't do. And that is to destroy the black family.” Hoover Institution Fellow Thomas Sowell concurs: “The black family, which had survived centuries of slavery and discrimination, began rapidly disintegrating in the liberal welfare state that subsidized unwed pregnancy and changed welfare from an emergency rescue to a way of life.”

National Review

[Year Eight of Obama's Recovery](#)

Two ways of judging the president

by Kevin D. Williamson

On the matter of Barack Obama and the performance of the U.S. economy, the aptest metaphor is anatine: We aren't swimming in gold like Scrooge McDuck, and we haven't blasted the beak off our face with a shotgun like Daffy Duck, but instead limp along like what the president is: a lame duck.

Spare me the technicalities about how President Obama isn't officially a lame duck until after the election; we aren't officially in recession, either, but 0.5 percent annualized growth — the most recent figure — is close enough.

How should we judge President Obama's economic record? There are two ways to go about that: First, from the point of view of people who understand at least a little about economics; second, from the point of view of Barack Obama.

We Americans maintain a superstitious, priest-king attitude toward presidents and economies. Just as moral and religious defects in the holy chieftains of old were thought to be the source of droughts and crop failures, we take weakness in the economy to be the result of presidential flaws: He didn't “care about people like us” enough, he followed the wrong policies, listened to the wrong people, etc. That's mainly not true.

The most important factors shaping the economic performance of the United States, or that of any advanced country, isn't policy, but events, from developments abroad to entrepreneurship and innovation at home. The 1990s didn't boom because Bill Clinton pursued a radically different economic agenda from that of Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush: He ran on

“time for a change” but more or less stayed the course, thanks in no small part to Newt Gingrich and the 1994 election. The 1990s boomed because the development of the personal computer and other forms of information technology, supercharged by the growth of the web, launched an extraordinary period of investment, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Bill Gates, Marc Andreessen (whose Netscape browsers brought the web to the masses), the development teams at Ericsson and Nokia, and a few million Americans who invested enthusiastically in everything marked “dot-com” had a lot more to do with the economy of the 1990s than Bill Clinton did. Likewise, the rough spots of that era (such as the Asian currency crisis) weren’t the president’s doing, either.

There is no mystical connection between presidents, GDP growth, employment, and wages.

Policy of course has a non-trivial effect on economic events, but the most important policy choices that affect the economy in the near term don’t come from the White House: They come from Congress, from the courts, and from the Federal Reserve. A lot of what we think of as Reaganomics had relatively little to do with Reagan: Important deregulation efforts (airlines, oil prices, telecommunications, trucking and transit) had been enacted by Congresses before Reagan ever took office; in fact, Reagan pandered to the Teamsters by promising to delay deregulatory efforts pressed by the Jimmy Carter administration. What we used to call “the phone company” was broken up by the courts in 1984 as part of an effort that began years before he took office. Reagan’s tax reforms were enormously important, of course, both in terms of their real financial effects and their long-term psychological effects.

President Obama’s term in office was preceded by a housing crisis and a subsequent recession for which he was as much to blame as anyone then in government — which is to say, not very much. The housing and banking policies that resulted in the financial crisis were enacted by politicians of both parties over a span of many decades, from the housing schemes of the 1930s to the creation of Fannie and Freddie to changes in financial practices originating in the Reagan, Bush, and Clinton administrations. Senator Obama did not have much to say about these until after the fact. He is a practically Delphic oracle of hindsight.

President Obama insists — straight-facedly — that in the context of a wrenching financial crisis, the United States under his leadership performed better than any major economy in modern history. That isn’t even close to being true, of course. Obama’s presidency will coincide with a remarkably weak recovery, with GDP essentially treading water. His presidency will be the first in modern times to fail to coincide with at least one year of 3 percent economic growth. It has teetered on the edge of recession, and may very well end in formal recession. (George H. W. Bush was thrown out of office in protest of a recession that had ended before the election; it wasn’t the economy, it was boredom.) Wages remain stagnant, and the rate of work-force participation is worryingly low.

What can we actually say about Obama administration policies? One is that the so-called stimulus underperformed on one front and failed on another. It may have provided some meaningful stimulus (economists debate the question still) at a cost — there always is a cost — that will remain unknown for the foreseeable future. What it did not do — we have the president’s own word on this — is dramatically improve public infrastructure. Indeed, every time the Democrats call for a dramatic new campaign of infrastructure investment, it is an implicit indictment of the failure of previous campaigns. The stimulus mainly operated as a covert bailout for badly governed Democratic cities and states. Recovery and reinvestment? Weak, at best.

The Affordable Care Act is a failure. Again, we have the Democrats' own word on this, as they labor feverishly to keep its least-popular features (such as the taxes that pay for it!) from taking effect. In fact, Obama's would-be successor, Hillary Rodham Clinton, seeks to partly dismantle Obamacare, repealing the so-called Cadillac tax that vexes her public-sector supporters, whose health-care plans are a great deal better than yours. The woefully misnamed Affordable Care Act hasn't been a dramatic job-killer, but there is evidence (from the Congressional Budget Office and other sources) that it creates some headwinds against employment, undercutting the equivalent of 2 million full-time jobs. It hasn't solved the problem of health-care inflation, and probably has made it worse, at a very high cost in terms of actual outlays and economic distortion.

The usual this-'n'-that stuff that the president likes to talk about during State of the Union addresses — green-economy dreams, tax incentives for politically favored businesses, etc. — do not seem to have had much of an effect at all.

We have pursued, with the president's blessing, a wildly inflationary monetary policy (quantitative easing and all that) without wildly inflationary results, at least in terms of general prices. It may be that the idea of "inflation" as a unitary concept is inadequate to the modern global economy, that the general devaluation of the dollar one would expect has been offset by the supply of inexpensive consumer goods and raw materials from around the world and has mainly made itself felt in the steadily rising stock portfolios of the millionaires and billionaires that President Obama enjoys castigating. (The question of asset-price inflation vs. ordinary consumer-good inflation is an interesting one; I do not necessarily agree with everything in this Robert Blumen essay, but it is an interesting discussion.) Generally speaking, the beneficiaries of a bubble are the last to complain about bubble prices.

In a thousand years or so, archaeologists seeking to understand the last days of the Westphalian nation-state will study the works of Robert Higgs the way Hellenists study fragments of Sappho, and it is here that judging President Obama will be much more art than science. To Professor Higgs we owe the term "policy uncertainty" and its nasty big brother, "regime uncertainty." Policy uncertainty refers to the costs inflicted when investors and enterprises are faced with unknown developments in the rules governing their activities; for example, employers making plans about employee benefits, headcounts, compensation, and the distribution of part-time and full-time positions cannot make rational plans if they do not know how the Affordable Care Act is going to affect them, whether they will be exempted from it, whether the National Labor Relations Board will take extraordinary and possibly illegal action against them, etc. Regime uncertainty describes the same problem but in relation to the much more fundamental question of whether and how property rights will be respected. For example: How certain are you that this administration, or a future administration, will not attempt to seize through taxation a portion, and possibly a large one, of your purportedly tax-free retirement savings? How certain are you that the federal government will not attempt to rewrite bankruptcy law and apply it retroactively at the expense of the rights of secured creditors, when politics demands it?

The intelligent answer in both cases is: "Not very."

It is in the matter of such uncertainty that the Obama administration probably will have its longest-lasting and most intensely negative effect. The president's predilection for unilateral executive action and a maximalist interpretation of presidential powers will no doubt be considered precedent by Democratic and Republican successors alike (the greatest hope of a Ted Cruz presidency is that the great constitutionalist would reverse this even though it would diminish the power of his office) and, because executive action inevitably is more unpredictable

and arbitrary than is legislative action, Obama's poison gift of uncertainty will grow, cancerously, long after he has left office. But it is impossible to put a price on that.

That's how Obama stacks up on the first metric.

The second task, evaluating Obama by his own standard, won't take nearly so many words, inasmuch as the streets of this country are not full of automobiles that run on happy thoughts and the lights of our cities are not kept burning bright by the power of unicorn flatulence. The election of Barack Obama did not turn out to be a pivotal moment in human history. He will be remembered as a minor figure, the Al Smith of the early 21st century.

If everything that transpired in these United States up until January 20, 2009, was uniquely and especially the fault of George W. Bush, then there is no dodging responsibility for the weak and muddled current state of affairs. Obama, who must be judged harshly by his own standard, hasn't read his James George Frazer. (Honestly, he doesn't seem to have read much.) If you're going to be a god-man or a priest-king, there's only one way that those careers come to an end: "The scapegoat, upon whom the sins of the people are periodically laid, may also be a human being. . . . The Athenians regularly maintained a number of degraded and useless beings at the public expense; and when any calamity, such as plague, drought, or famine, befell the city, they sacrificed two of these outcast scapegoats."

I wonder if they campaigned for the job, the way our contemporaries do.

Dan Mitchell

[Obama's Miserable Economic Legacy](#)

Let's take a look at [President Obama's economic legacy](#).

The *Washington Examiner* [opines](#) on President Obama's remarkable claim that he saved the world economy.

President Obama...wants to be remembered for...[being]...the savior of the American and global economies. "There are things I'm proud of," he said, citing Obamacare, then added, "Saving the world economy from a Great Depression, that was pretty good."

Not so fast. Looking at the economy's anemic numbers the editors are less than impressed.

Obama will end eight years in office without presiding over a thriving economy of the sort America enjoyed in the past. It also suggests that even the mediocre growth of recent years depended on high oil prices, which have collapsed by more than half. This is the bitter fruit of creationist economics, the erroneous belief that government activity can somehow conjure new wealth and value.

The *Wall Street Journal* is [similarly dour](#) about Obama's economic legacy.

When did Americans decide that 1% or 2% economic growth is acceptable, that puny wage increases are inevitable, and that we should all merely shrug and get used to the country's diminished expectations? ...the first quarter is further evidence of what has been the weakest

economic expansion in the postwar era. ...All of this continues the slow-or-slower pace of this entire expansion that began nearly seven years ago. Each year has had a similar GDP dip, and growth has never exceeded 2.5% (2010). The American economy hasn't grown by more than 3% since 2005 (3.3%), the longest such stretch of malaise that we can find in the Bureau of Economic analysis tables going back to 1930. ...Faster growth is possible, but it will take better policies.

In [a column](#) for *Bloomberg*, Narayana Kocherlakota, looks at what's happened and compares it to what CBO projected would happen.

it's not hard to see why many people are disappointed with the performance of the economy during Obama's time in office. In January 2009, at the beginning of Obama's first term, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office issued a 10-year forecast for the U.S. economy, including such indicators as unemployment, gross domestic product, the budget deficit, government debt and interest rates. ...The unemployment rate has come closest to expectations. ...Elsewhere, the story is less positive. Total income growth in the U.S. has fallen well short of expectations, in both nominal and inflation-adjusted terms. ...the federal budget deficit...still much larger than the CBO forecast in 2009 — as is the ratio of government debt to GDP.

Here's his chart.

Has the U.S. Economy Met Expectations?

CBO forecasts for 2015 compared with actual performance

	Forecast	Actual
Unemployment rate	4.9%	5.3%
Nominal GDP growth, percent (2008-15)	33	22
Real GDP growth, percent (2008-15)	20	10
Budget deficit, percent of GDP	1.2	2.5
Government debt, percent of GDP	48	74
Three-month Treasury yield	4.7	0.04

Sources: Congressional Budget Office, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

BloombergView

Last, but not least, Louis Woodhill [shares some numbers](#) that capture Obama's real legacy.

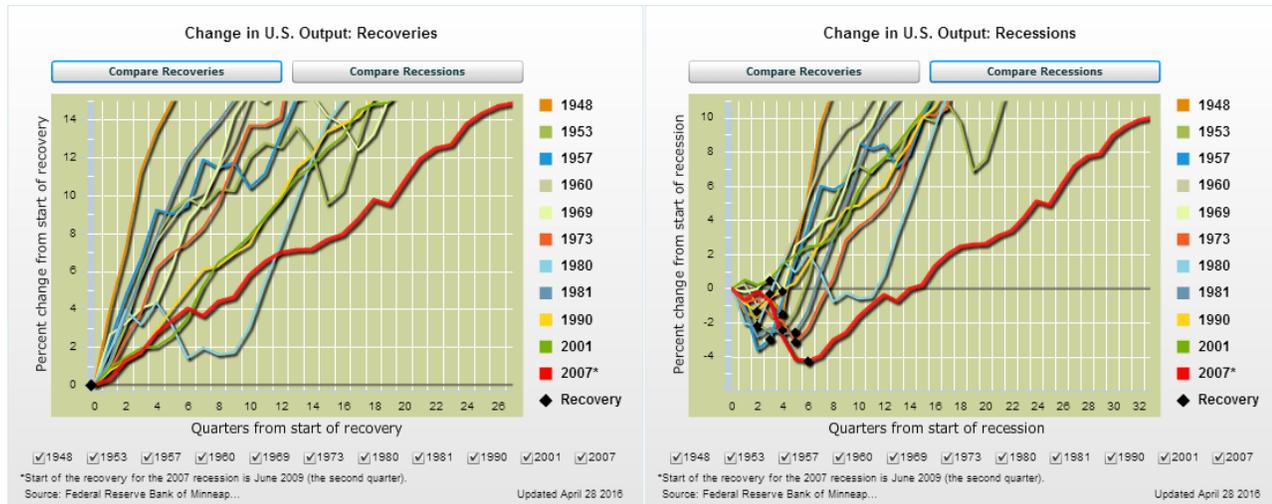
America's elites have largely given up on growth, and are now distracting themselves with academic musings about "secular stagnation." ...assuming 2.67% RGDP growth for 2016, Obama will leave office having produced an average of 1.55% growth. This would place his presidency fourth from the bottom of the list of 39*, above only those of Herbert Hoover (-5.65%), Andrew Johnson (-0.70%) and Theodore Roosevelt (1.41%)

What makes this final comparison so damning is that Obama had the comparative good fortune to enter office in the middle of a recession. Which means, all things equal, that his numbers should look very positive.

Instead, he's managed to compile one of the worst track records.

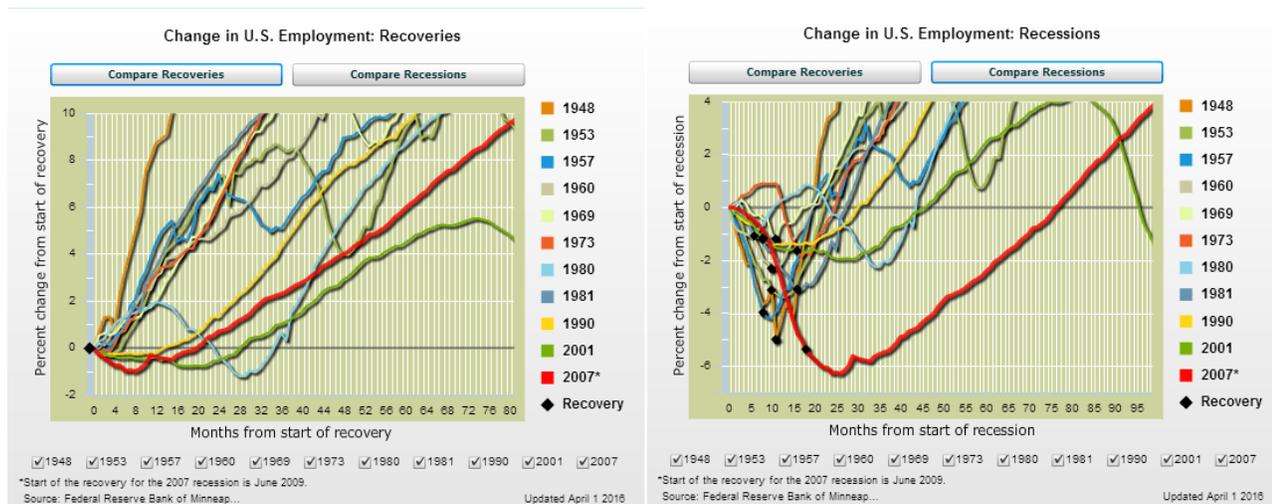
When I do comparisons, I like using the [interactive recession/recovery site](#) of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve, which allows users to compare every recession and recovery since the end of World War II.

Here's how President Obama (red line) ranks on GDP growth.



As you can see, whether your starting point is the beginning of the recovery or the beginning of the recession, Obama is in last place.

He does slightly better on employment. He still has one of the worst records (again, the red line), but he does beat George W. Bush's also-anemic performance on job creation.



By the way, some of you may be wondering why the employment data for Obama is so weak when the unemployment rate has significantly fallen.

The answer is that the unemployment rate doesn't count people [who have given up on finding a job](#), whereas the Minneapolis Fed data counts how many new jobs are being created.

And it's the amount of people productively employed that matters if [we want more economic output](#), so the Minneapolis Fed data is [far more important and revealing](#) than the official unemployment rate numbers.

Unfortunately, Obama and his team haven't figured out (or simply don't care) that [jobs are more likely to be created](#) when government is smaller rather than bigger.

By the way, this analysis presumably won't be very compelling for Obama supporters because they'll simply assert things could have been much worse without his policies.

They may even believe the President's claim that he saved the American economy from a Great Depression.

But they overlook the fact that the economy normally bounces back quickly from a downturn. It was only during the 1930s, when [Hoover](#) and [Roosevelt](#) competed to impose bad policy, that a recession became a depression.

The bad news is that President Obama's policies [haven't helped today's economy](#), but the good news is that his policies are [nowhere near as harmful](#) as the combined statist agendas of Hoover and Roosevelt.

So if we want to learn a lesson on what works, the economy's [very strong boom under Reagan](#) is a good case study. And if you want to go back further, the anti-Keynesian booms after [World War I](#) and [World War II](#) also teach important lessons.

P.S. President Obama is completely correct when he points out that America's economy is generally stronger than European economies. Unfortunately, [he doesn't seem to realize](#) what this implies.

Telegraph, UK

[Why should we take advice from a president who has surrendered the world to chaos?](#)

by Janet Daley

I wonder who in Downing Street briefed Barack Obama's team on the wording of his friendly warning to the British. Somebody obviously pointed out that the population of this country retained a quaint obsession with the Second World War, and would therefore treat any reference to the glorious dead as irreproachable. So the President invoked the European graves of those American servicemen who died to protect – well, what exactly?

“The tens of thousands of Americans who rest in Europe's cemeteries are a silent testament to just how intertwined our prosperity and security truly are.” - *Barack Obama*

I thought it was the democratic values and reverence for national independence that Britain shared with the US. Did Mr Obama have any sense at all that [what he was now urging the](#)

[British electorate to accept](#) was precisely the surrender of those sacred principles of democratically accountable government and self-determination for which the combined American and British forces had made their ultimate sacrifice?

Could this bizarre intervention have been more cynical or wilfully misinformed? In the end, it seemed to come down to trade advantages – to what might once, back in the day, have been called the global interests of US corporate capitalism. Mr Obama even made [specific reference in his article in Friday's Daily Telegraph](#) to the importance of current negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which would reduce barriers to US business interests in the European Union.

On the same day, 38 Degrees – a front group for the more proactive elements in the public sector unions – took out full-page newspaper adverts campaigning against [the adoption of TTIP](#) (“...no trade deal should give corporations more power than people”). If the Labour Left were not in such disingenuous disarray, they could be making a meal of this. In any event, unnamed US trade officials were being ominously quoted as saying that, in the event of Brexit, the UK would come very low on America's list of priorities for new trade agreements.

Then Mr Obama himself abandoned such subtlety in his joint press conference with the Prime Minister. Should the UK go its own way, he said, there would be no trade agreement with the US any time soon. Maybe some time down the line, as he put it, we could work something out. But the UK would be “in the back of the queue” because the US would be dealing with the big boys. So this isn't a warning: it's a threat. Stay in the EU and make way for American competitors, or else.

The iron fist of a message inside that velvet glove of carefully recited claptrap about the special relationship is that Obama's America wants us to stay in the conveniently monolithic, homogeneous trading bloc with which it can most easily do business. In other words, the tentative US economic recovery needs us to sacrifice our country's judicial independence and the primacy of our parliamentary system, just as the US once sacrificed so many of its young military officers for our survival. That's the deal.

But there is no indication, either in Mr Obama's words or his actual foreign policy, that America would now be prepared to make another such sacrifice for its allies. [The withdrawal of the US from world leadership](#) – from being what Mr Obama's people refer to disparagingly as “the world's policeman” – has been one of the most dramatic developments on the international stage of the past eight years.

Into the vacuum left by that withdrawal has stepped (or strode) Vladimir Putin, who can't believe his luck. At just the moment when Russian national pride desperately needed a renaissance after the mortifying collapse of the Soviet Union and the infuriating rise of all those Lilliputian upstarts in the old Eastern Bloc, along comes a US president who announces in no uncertain terms that America wants to pull out of the global power game. Make no mistake, this began long before [the funk over removing Assad in Syria](#) – which Mr Obama has outrageously blamed on David Cameron's failure to win a parliamentary vote – [or the “leading from behind” fiasco in Libya](#), which Mr Obama also blames on Mr Cameron for having the audacity to think that the US might have been prepared to lead from the front. No, the Obama isolationist doctrine was there from the start: deliberate and consciously chosen.

It began in his first term as president when he visited Eastern Europe and gave a series of speeches to make the point: the countries that had once required America's protection from a Soviet superpower were now emerging democracies and fledgling free-market success stories.

They could take care of themselves militarily in future. The interceptor missiles that had been scheduled to arrive in Poland, courtesy of the US, would not be delivered. Although they had never been intended as any sort of threat against Moscow, Obama still allowed this move to be seen as [part of his “reset” of relations with post-Soviet Russia](#).

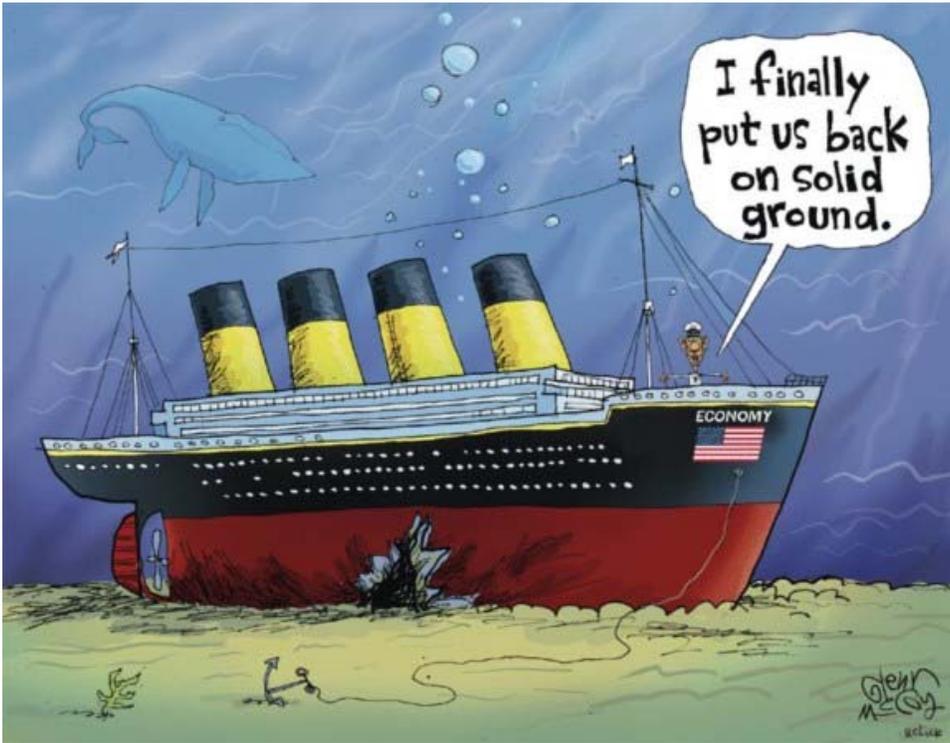
At home, this was presented as a refusal to pay forever for the protection of a Europe that was no longer threatened by aggressive Communism. The disproportionate share of the Nato budget that the US had been stumping up could be better spent on the kind of welfare and health provision that Europeans took for granted.

All this suited Putin’s self-image as a global strongman perfectly. America and the West had definitively won the Cold War, and were now apparently unconcerned that they might lose the peace. Putin saw clearly that no one would stand in his way when he launched his irredentist assault on eastern Ukraine. Not only did he annex Crimea but [the forces he had unleashed shot a civilian airliner out of the sky](#) – which might have been seen as a contemporary sinking of the Lusitania. He went from triumph to triumph, playing hard-faced poker against Washington’s half-hearted attempt at chess. In the Middle East, Obama’s White House scarcely shows any interest now that it is no longer dependent on the region for oil. It can only be roused to do what is minimally required to keep Americans safe from Isil terrorism.

But permitting Russia’s proxy, Assad, to remain in place in Syria, as American inaction does, drives every dissident in the region into the arms of anti-Western extremism, and puts American (and European) security at the mercy of a Russia-Syria alliance. Not to mention the salient fact that Assad’s genocidal tyranny fuelled the migrant rush to the European borders. Was Mr Obama aware of that great success story of EU collaboration, in which an emergency was turned into an international tragedy by bureaucratic incompetence and a complete collapse of cooperative goodwill? The abandonment of border checks inside the EU, combined with the unilateral decision by Germany to encourage mass entry, created a living hell in which organised [people-trafficking on an industrial scale](#) became a fixture of life.

When this referendum began, what seems an eternity ago, I was unsure how I would vote. Membership of the EU on a day-to-day basis is pretty much all gain for me, because I am an affluent professional who benefits from the supply of inexpensive domestic help, willing tradesmen and convenient travel that the EU provides. Unlike those whose wages are being undercut by cheap imported labour, or who cannot afford to buy their own homes because of the pressure on housing from unlimited immigration, I have lost nothing.

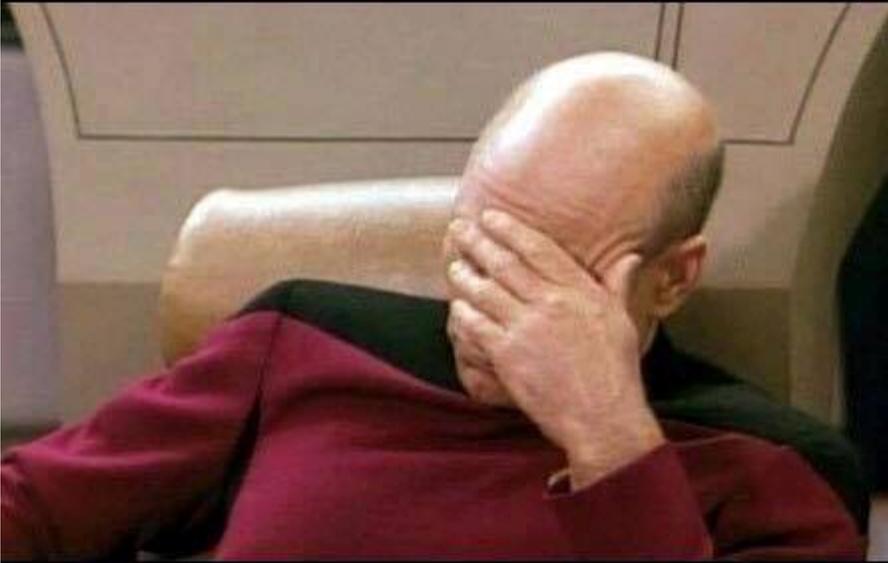
But I believe in democratic legitimacy, which means paying attention to people who do not have my advantages. So should I go for self-interest, or for political principle? Watching this campaign, with its unscrupulous attempts to bully and terrorise a brave and conscientious electorate, has made up my mind. I shall be voting for Leave.



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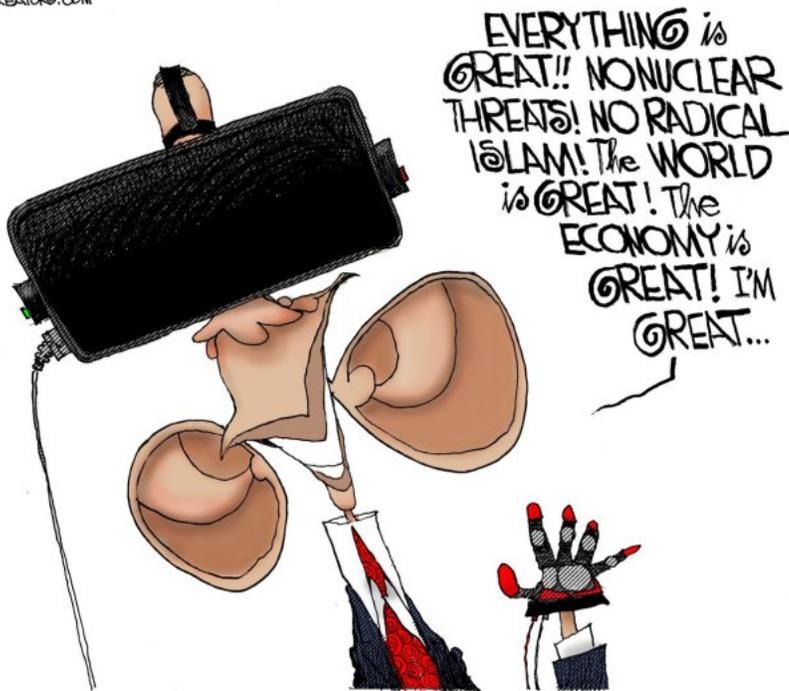


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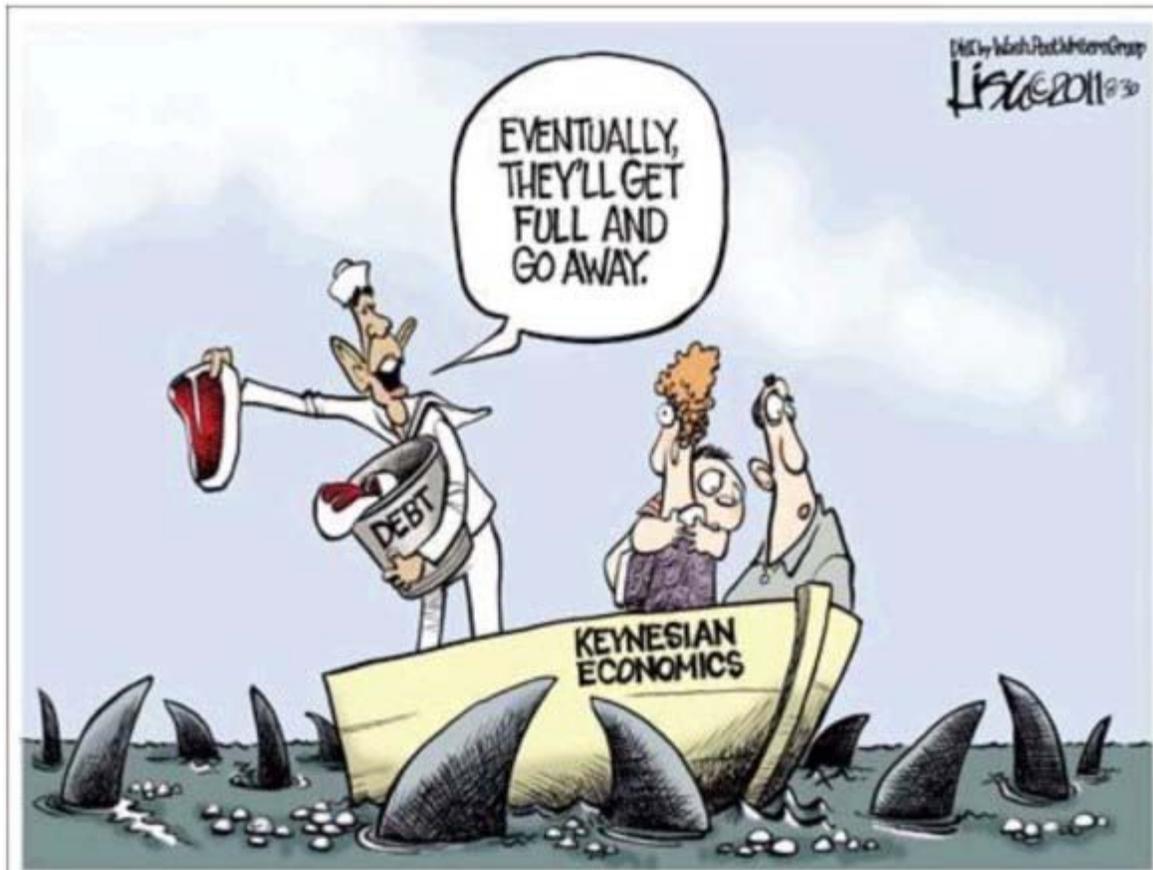
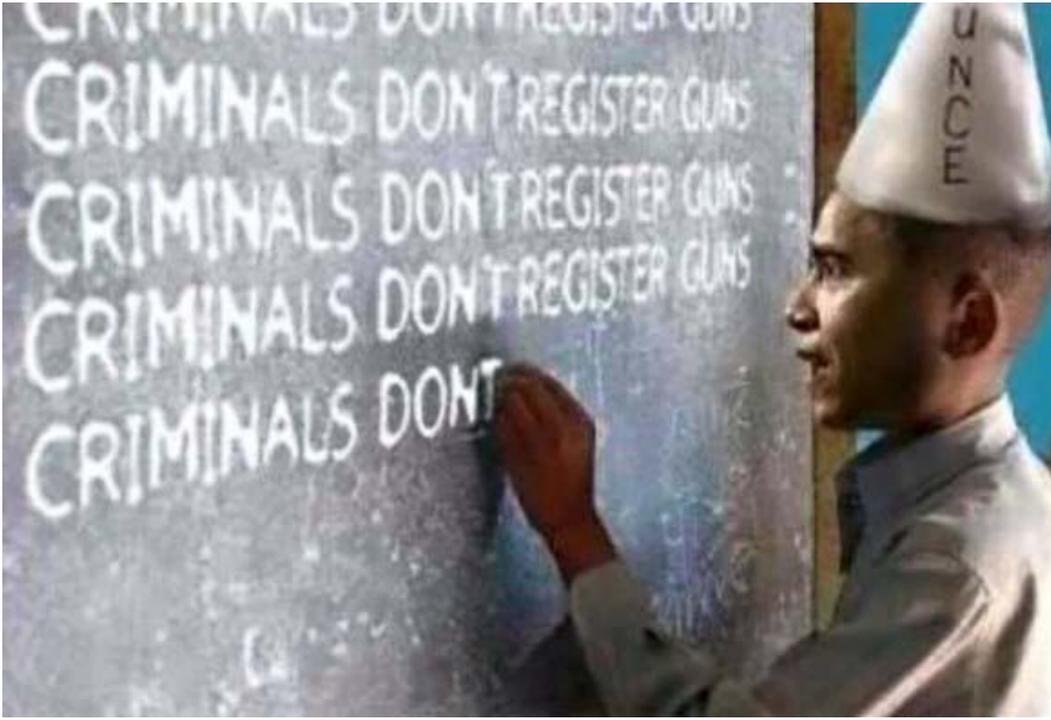
HEY KIDS! STARE AT THIS PHOTO OF PRESIDENT OBAMA TANGO DANCING RECENTLY IN ARGENTINA FOR 60 SECONDS AND THEN QUICKLY LOOK AT A BLANK SHEET OF PAPER. YOU WILL SEE HIS STRATEGY FOR FIGHTING GLOBAL ISLAMIC TERRORISM!



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