

October 6, 2013 - obama's SHUTDOWN

It is worthwhile to have a trip down memory lane and compare the latest shutdown with the one in October 2013 when President Poseur was in office. So, we have here for your amusement, a reprise of Pickings for October 6, 2013. And if you follow this link you can have a look at all of the posts during a two week period in that month.

Mark Steyn has wonderful words for the people who shut down the World War Two memorial in DC. Steyn is always making up new words and his tour de force today is his word for the barriers set up by the park service all over our country. Mark calls them Barricades.

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your religious liberty, or the monument to your fallen comrades. The Barricades are such a perfect embodiment of what James Piereson calls “punitive liberalism” they should be tied round Obama’s neck forever, in the way that “ketchup is a vegetable” got hung around Reagan-era Republicans. Alas, the court eunuchs of the Obama media cannot rouse themselves even on behalf of the nation’s elderly warriors. ...

Wesley Pruden found a park service ranger with some sense of decency.

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“It’s a cheap way to deal with the situation,” an angry Park Service ranger in Washington says of the harassment. “We’ve been told to make life as difficult for people as we can. It’s disgusting.”

...

Charles Krauthammer explains how he thinks we got to this.

... The most ubiquitous conventional wisdom is that the ultimate cause of these troubles is out-of-control tea party anarchists.

But is this really where the causal chain ends? The tea party was created by Obama’s first-term overreach, most specifically Obamacare. Today’s frantic fight against it is the echoing result of the way it was originally enacted.

From Social Security to civil rights to Medicaid to Medicare, never in the modern history of the country has major social legislation been enacted on a straight party-line vote. Never. In every case, there was significant reaching across the aisle, enhancing the law’s legitimacy and endurance. Yet Obamacare — which revolutionizes one-sixth of the economy, regulates every aspect of medical practice and intimately affects just about every citizen — passed without a single GOP vote.

The Democrats insist they welcomed contributing ideas from Republicans. Rubbish. Republicans proposed that insurance be purchasable across state lines. They got nothing. They sought serious tort reform. They got nothing. Why? Because, admitted Howard Dean, Democrats didn’t want to offend the trial lawyers.

Moreover, the administration was clearly warned. Republican Scott Brown ran in the most inhospitable of states, Massachusetts, on the explicit promise to cast the deciding vote blocking Obamacare. It was January 2010, the height of the debate. He won. Reid ignored this unmistakable message of popular opposition and conjured a parliamentary maneuver — reconciliation — to get around Brown.

Nothing illegal about that. Nothing illegal about ramming it through without a single opposition vote. Just totally contrary to the modern American tradition — and the constitutional decency — of undertaking major social revolutions with only bipartisan majorities. Having stuffed Obamacare down the throats of the GOP and the country, Democrats are now paying the price.

...

John Steele Gordon posts on Alice in Wonderland comments.

Politicians fudge the truth all the time. And sometimes they flat-out lie. Bill Clinton's infamous, "I did not have sex with that woman," is the modern exemplar of presidential mendacity. At least it was until yesterday, when Barack Obama gave John Harwood of CNBC an interview. One response to a question makes President Clinton's finger-wagging whopper sound like the Gettysburg Address:

'PRESIDENT OBAMA: *John, I think it's fair to say that—during the course of my presidency—I have bent over backwards to work with—the Republican party. And have purposely kept my rhetoric down. I think I'm pretty well known for being a calm guy. Sometimes people think I'm too calm.'*

The mind boggles. This is a president who did not meet with the Republican minority leader in the Senate until a year and a half into his presidency; who excluded Republicans from any part in the shaping of the ObamaCare legislation, and forced it through on a strictly party-line vote; who excluded Republicans from any input on the stimulus bill; who invited Paul Ryan to a conference on health care and then insulted him to his face when Ryan could not reply; who accused Republicans of wanting only to deny health care to 30 million Americans; who called them "bitter clingers," and told his supporters to get in their faces.

The only thing President Obama, the most divisive, partisan president in the history of the republic, has ever bent over backwards to do was to get out of a sand trap. He has kept his rhetoric down only to the extent of not advocating violence against Republicans.

I'm not a psychiatrist, so I don't know whether this is just an utterly cynical remark, made in the knowledge that the lap-dog media will not call him on it, or whether it is an artifact of deep problems in telling reality from fantasy.

History will not treat this man kindly.

David French says the closing of the WW Two memorial is a perfect symbol of government malice.

The mainstream media is in the midst of one of its regular exercises in completely missing a wave of groundswell conservative anger — this time over the closing of the World War II Memorial. It's as if the entire conservative case against the Obama administration's incompetence, malice, and inefficiency was boiled down into one incident. ...

Jonah Goldberg says we're getting a good view of the president's vindictive streak. We call it government by Valerie Jarrett.

... What's unusual is the way Obama sees the government as a tool for his ideological agenda. During the fight over the sequester, Obama ordered the government to make the 2 percent budget cut as painful and scary as possible.

"It's going to be very painful for the flying public," Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood warned Americans.

"The FAA's all-hands furloughs managed to convert a less than 4 percent FAA budget cut into a 10 percent air-traffic control cut that would delay 40 percent of flights," the Wall Street Journal noted at the time.

The Department of Homeland Security announced it might not be able to protect the nation's borders, and in an effort to prove the point summarily released a couple thousand of immigrant detainees, many of them with criminal records.

Obama, the avowed problem solver, set out to create problems for the American people, just to prove how great government is and how crazy Republicans were for wanting to cut spending — much of the money borrowed from China — a little. But don't you dare call him an ideologue!

Now, with the government shutdown and the looming fight over the debt ceiling, Obama's doubling down on this ideologically perverse strategy.

The National Park Service, which has somehow become the unofficial goon squad of American liberalism, reversed course and let American World War II vets visit the WWII memorial in Washington, D.C. This is obviously good news. (I was waiting to see if Steven Spielberg would come out with a new Obama-friendly director's cut of Saving Private Ryan in which the old guy at the end is dragged off in cuffs before he can reach Tom Hanks's grave.)

Still, it cost the government more money to try to keep WWII vets out of an open-air memorial than it would have to just leave it be. In Virginia, the NPS ordered the Claude Moore Colonial Farm to shut down, even though it's privately funded.

Far worse, Obama told CNBC's John Harwood that Wall Street should be far more panicky about Republican efforts to use the debt ceiling to win concessions from the White House. I don't blame Obama for being annoyed with Republicans for trying to use the debt ceiling the exact same way he did when he was a senator. But normally a sitting president doesn't try to talk down the economy just to win a political point. ...

Bloomberg News reports on the strange juxtapositions of what's closed and what's open. For example, grocery stores on Army bases are closed while the golf course used by the president on Andrews Air Force Base is open.

Grocery stores on Army bases in the U.S. are closed. The golf course at Andrews Air Force base is open.

All 128 employees of the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corp. are working, while 3,000 safety inspectors employed by the Federal Aviation Administration are off the job.

The Food and Drug Administration is reviewing new pharmaceuticals. The National Institutes of Health is turning away new patients for clinical trials.

The seeming randomness of the U.S. government's first shutdown in 17 years can be explained in part by anomalies in the spending Congress does and doesn't control. Activities funded by fees from drug, financial-services and other companies are insulated from year-to-year budget dysfunction. The ones that get a budget from Congress get hit. ...

Jewish World Review

Shutdown Simulacrum

Just because it's a phony crisis doesn't mean it can't be made even phonier.

by Mark Steyn

Way back in January, when it emerged that Beyoncé had treated us to the first ever lip-synched national anthem at a presidential inauguration, I suggested in this space that this strange pseudo-performance embodied the decay of America's political institutions from the real thing into mere simulacrum. But that applies to government "crises," too — such as the Obamacare "rollout," the debt "ceiling," and the federal "shutdown," to name only the three current railroad tracks to which the virtuous damsel of Big Government has been simultaneously tied by evil mustache-twirling Republicans.

This week's "shutdown" of government, for example, suffers (at least for those of us curious to see it reduced to Somali levels) from the awkward fact that the overwhelming majority of the government is not shut down at all. Indeed, much of it *cannot* be shut down. Which is the real problem facing America. "Mandatory spending" (Social Security, Medicare, et al.) is authorized in perpetuity — or, at any rate, until total societal collapse. If you throw in the interest payments on the debt, that means two-thirds of the federal budget is beyond the control of Congress's so-called federal budget process. That's why you're reading government "shutdown" stories about the PandaCam at the Washington Zoo and the First Lady's ghost-Tweeters being furloughed.

Nevertheless, just because it's a phony crisis doesn't mean it can't be made even phonier. The perfect symbol of the shutdown-simulacrum so far has been the World War II Memorial. This is an open-air facility on the National Mall — that's to say, an area of grass with a monument at the center. By comparison with, say, the IRS, the National Parks Service is not usually one of the more controversial government agencies. But, come "shutdown," they're reborn as the shock troops of the punitive bureaucracy. Thus, they decided to close down an unfenced open-air site — which oddly enough requires more personnel to shut than it would to keep it open.

So the Parks Service dispatched their own vast army to the World War II Memorial to ring it with barricades and yellow "Police Line — Do Not Cross" tape strung out like the world's longest "We Support Our Troops" ribbon. For good measure, they issued a warning that anybody crossing the yellow line would be liable to arrest — or presumably, in extreme circumstances, the same

multi-bullet ventilation that that mentally ill woman from Connecticut wound up getting from the coppers. In a heartening sign that the American spirit is not entirely dead, at least among a small percentage of nonagenarians, a visiting party of veterans pushed through the barricades and went to honor their fallen comrades, mordantly noting for reporters that, after all, when they'd shown up on the beach at Normandy it too had not been officially open.

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Meanwhile, Republicans offered a bill to prevent the shutdown affecting experimental cancer trials for children. The Democrats rejected it. "But if you can help one child who has cancer," CNN's Dana Bash asked Harry Reid, "why wouldn't you do it?"

"Why would we want to do that?" replied the Senate majority leader, denouncing Miss Bash's question as "irresponsible." For Democrats, the budget is all or nothing. Republican bills to fund this or that individual program have to be rejected out of hand as an affront to the apparent constitutional inviolability of the "continuing resolution." In fact, government by "continuing resolution" is a sleazy racket: The legislative branch is supposed to legislate. Instead, they're presented with a yea-or-nay vote on a single all-or-nothing multi-trillion-dollar band-aid stitched together behind closed doors to hold the federal leviathan together while it belches its way through to the next budget cycle. As Professor Angelo Codevilla of Boston University put it, "This turns democracy into a choice between tyranny and anarchy." It's certainly a perversion of responsible government: Congress has less say over specific federal expenditures than the citizens of my New Hampshire backwater do at Town Meeting over the budget for a new fence at the town dump. *Pace* Senator Reid, Republican proposals to allocate spending through targeted, mere multi-billion-dollar appropriations are not only not "irresponsible" but, in fact, a vast improvement over the "continuing resolution": To modify Lord Acton, power corrupts, but continuing power corrupts continually.

America has no budget process. That's why it's the brokest nation in history. So a budgeting process that can't control the budget in a legislature that can't legislate leads to a government shutdown that shuts down open areas of grassland and the unmanned boat launch on the Bighorn River in Montana. Up next: the debt-ceiling showdown, in which we argue over everything except the debt. The conventional wisdom of the U.S. media is that Republicans are

being grossly irresponsible not just to wave through another couple trillion or so on Washington's overdraft facility. Really? Other countries are actually reducing debt: New Zealand, for example, has a real budget that diminishes net debt from 26 percent of GDP to 17 percent by 2020. By comparison, America's net debt is currently about 88 percent, and we're debating only whether to increase it automatically or with a few ineffectual strings attached.

My favorite book of the moment is *The Liberty Amendments*, the new bestseller by Mark Levin — not because I agree with all his proposed constitutional amendments, and certainly not because I think they represent the views of a majority of Americans, but because he's fighting on the right battleground. A century of remorseless expansion by the "federal" government has tortured the constitutional order beyond meaning. America was never intended to be an homogenized one-size-fits-all nation of 300 million people run by a government as centralized as France's. It's no surprise that when it tries to be one it doesn't work terribly well.

Washington Times

The cheap tricks of the game

by Wesley Pruden

The games politicians play: [Barack Obama](#) is having a lot of fun using the government shutdown to squeeze the public in imaginative ways. The point of the shutdown game is to see who can squeeze hardest, make the most pious speech and listen for the applause. It's a variation on the grade-school ritual of "you show me yours, and I'll show you mine."

President [Obama](#) is not a bad poker player, but the man with all the chips always starts with the advantage (and he gets all the aces). He has closed [Washington](#) down as tight as he dares, emphasizing the trivial and the petty in making life as inconvenient as he can for the greatest number. It's all in a noble cause, of course. Access to most of the memorials is limited, and often in curious ways. The [Lincoln Memorial](#) is easy to reach, with the streets around it remaining open. But the Martin Luther King [Memorial](#) is made difficult to reach, relegating it, you might say, to the back of the bus. Not very nice.

The [Park Service](#) appears to be closing streets on mere whim and caprice. The rangers even closed the parking lot at [Mount Vernon](#), where the plantation home of [George Washington](#) is a favorite tourist destination. That was after they barred the new World War II [Memorial](#) on the Mall to veterans of World War II. But the government does not own [Mount Vernon](#); it is privately owned by the [Mount Vernon Ladies' Association](#). The ladies bought it years ago to preserve it as a national memorial. The feds closed access to the parking lots this week, even though the lots are jointly owned with the [Mount Vernon](#) ladies. The rangers are from the government, and they're only here to help.

"It's a cheap way to deal with the situation," an angry [Park Service](#) ranger in [Washington](#) says of the harassment. "We've been told to make life as difficult for people as we can. It's disgusting."

The Republicans, fighting with smaller-bore weaponry, keep trying to get some things reopened with carefully targeted legislation. The [Senate](#), under the thumbs of [Sen. Harry Reid](#) and the [White House](#), refuses to budge from the trivial and the petty. It says here that [Harry Reid's](#) critics, and they are legion, should give the guy a break. No man in [Washington](#) is under the

pressure he is, and it doesn't seem quite cricket to do that to an old man, even one who deserves it.

[Harry](#) is at the breaking point, weary from exhausting his thesaurus for synonyms for “arsonist” and “terrorist” and “pillager.” Everyone could see the cracks in his exchange with [Dana Bash](#), a reporter for CNN, who asked why, if he is concerned about children with cancer who are unable to enter clinical trials for new drugs because [Mr. Obama](#) shut down the National Institutes of Health, why stifle Republican attempts to grant a little relief?

“If you can help one child who has cancer, why wouldn't you do it?” the reporter asked.

“Why would we want to do that?” [Mr. Reid](#) snapped back. “I have 1,100 people at Nellis Air Force Base that are sitting home. They have a few problems of their own. This is — to have someone of your intelligence to suggest such a thing maybe means you're irresponsible and reckless.”

Over the next two days, [Mr. Reid](#) tried to take back, change, adjust and recalibrate his remarks. It's all [John Boehner](#)'s fault. The senator cares not just about the National Institutes of Health, but the Centers for Disease Control, too. The senator likes babies. In fact, he's quite a stud. And he thinks [Dana Bash](#) is “a fine reporter.”

“Listen, I gave a speech on the [\[Senate\]](#) floor, talking about babies, 30 babies. I have 16 of my own grandchildren, and five children.” So suffer the little children, and they will inherit the kingdom of heaven; they just can't come unto the [Senate](#) while [Harry](#) stands in the door. (If what happens in Las Vegas is supposed to stay in Las Vegas, how did [Harry](#) get out?)

Frustration turned violent Thursday, when a woman rammed her car into a barricade at the [White House](#) and then led 20 police cruisers up Pennsylvania Avenue to take a run at the Capitol. Shots were fired. It was not quite clear what she was mad about, but there's no shortage of prospects. No targets of her rage were hurt, though the cops killed her. It was an unhappy third day of Obamacare.

Washington Post

[Who shut down Yellowstone?](#)

by Charles Krauthammer

The Obamacare/shutdown battle has spawned myriad myths. The most egregious concern the substance of the fight, the identity of the perpetrators and the origins of the current eruption.

(1) *Substance*

President Obama indignantly insists that [GOP attempts to abolish or amend Obamacare](#) are unseemly because it is “settled” law, having passed both houses of Congress, obtained his signature and passed muster with the Supreme Court.

Yes, settledness makes for a strong argument — except from a president whose administration has [unilaterally changed Obamacare five times](#) after its passage, including, most brazenly, [a year-long suspension of the employer mandate](#).

[Article I of the Constitution](#) grants the legislative power entirely to Congress. Under what constitutional principle has Obama unilaterally amended the law? Yet when the House of Representatives undertakes a constitutionally correct, i.e., legislative, procedure for [suspending the other mandate](#) — the individual mandate — this is portrayed as some extra-constitutional sabotage of the rule of law. Why is tying that amendment to a generalized spending bill an outrage, while unilateral amendment by the executive (with a [Valerie Jarrett blog item](#) for spin) is perfectly fine?

(2) *Perpetrators*

The mainstream media have been fairly unanimous in blaming the government shutdown on the GOP. Accordingly, [House Republicans presented three bills](#) to restore funding to national parks, veterans and the District of Columbia government. Democrats voted down all three. (For procedural reasons, the measures required a two-thirds majority.)

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid won't even consider these refunding measures. And the [White House has promised a presidential veto](#).

The reason is obvious: to prolong the pain and thus add to the political advantage gained from a shutdown blamed on the GOP. They are confident the media will do a "GOP makes little Johnny weep at the closed gates of Yellowstone, film at 11" despite Republicans having just offered legislation to open them.

And besides, whence comes the sanctity of the "clean CR," the single bill (continuing resolution) that funds all of government? The Democrats have declared it inviolable — and piecemeal funding, as proposed by the Republicans, unacceptable on principle. On what grounds? After all, the regular appropriations process consists of 12 separate appropriation bills. The insistence on the "clean CR" is just a fancy way to suggest some principle behind the president's refusal to compromise or even negotiate.

(3) *Origins*

The most ubiquitous conventional wisdom is that the ultimate cause of these troubles is out-of-control tea party anarchists.

But is this really where the causal chain ends? The tea party was created by Obama's first-term overreach, most specifically Obamacare. Today's frantic fight against it is the echoing result of the way it was originally enacted.

From [Social Security](#) to [civil rights](#) to Medicaid to [Medicare](#), never in the modern history of the country has major social legislation been enacted on a straight party-line vote. Never. In every case, there was significant reaching across the aisle, enhancing the law's legitimacy and endurance. Yet Obamacare — which revolutionizes one-sixth of the economy, regulates every aspect of medical practice and intimately affects just about every citizen — passed [without a single GOP vote](#).

The Democrats insist they welcomed contributing ideas from Republicans. Rubbish. Republicans proposed that insurance be purchasable across state lines. They got nothing. They sought serious tort reform. They got nothing. Why? Because, admitted Howard Dean, [Democrats didn't want to offend the trial lawyers](#).

Moreover, the administration was clearly warned. [Republican Scott Brown ran](#) in the most inhospitable of states, Massachusetts, on the explicit promise to cast the deciding vote blocking Obamacare. It was January 2010, the height of the debate. He won. Reid ignored this unmistakable message of popular opposition and conjured a parliamentary maneuver — reconciliation — to get around Brown.

Nothing illegal about that. Nothing illegal about ramming it through without a single opposition vote. Just totally contrary to the modern American tradition — and the constitutional decency — of undertaking major social revolutions with only bipartisan majorities. Having stuffed Obamacare down the throats of the GOP and the country, Democrats are now paying the price.

I don't agree with current Republican tactics. I thought the defunding demand impossible and, therefore, foolish. I thought that if, nonetheless, the GOP insisted on making a stand, it should not be on shutting down the government, which [voters oppose 5-to-1](#), but on the debt ceiling, which [Americans favor 2-to-1](#) as a vehicle for restraining government.

Tactics are one thing, but substance is another. It's the Democrats who have mocked the very notion of settled law. It's the Democrats who voted down the reopening of substantial parts of the government. It's the Democrats who gave life to a spontaneous, authentic, small-government opposition — a.k.a. the tea party — with their unilateral imposition of a transformational agenda during the brief interval when they held a monopoly of power.

That interval is over. The current unrest is the residue of that hubris.

Contentions

[Presidential Delusion](#)

by John Steele Gordon

Politicians fudge the truth all the time. And sometimes they flat-out lie. Bill Clinton's infamous, "I did not have sex with that woman," is the modern exemplar of presidential mendacity. At least it was until yesterday, when Barack Obama gave John Harwood of CNBC [an interview](#). One response to a question makes President Clinton's finger-wagging whopper sound like the Gettysburg Address:

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National Review

[The World War II Memorial Shutdown: A symbol of Government Malice](#)

By David French

The mainstream media is in the midst of one of its regular exercises in completely missing a wave of groundswell conservative anger — this time over the closing of the World War II Memorial. It's as if the entire conservative case against the Obama administration's incompetence, malice, and inefficiency was boiled down into one incident.

1. Government overreach: This was a monument built almost entirely through private donations — now the government pretends the monument belongs to it, and not to the people who donated to build it, not to the vets whose sacrifice it honors, and not to the families of vets and other citizens who want to use it to teach their kids about courage, honor, and sacrifice.

2. Government inefficiency: It doesn't cost money to keep an open-air memorial open. It costs money to put up barricades. It costs money to man the barricades with security. So now we're spending money to "save money"? No, the administration is spending money to punish the public.

3. Government malice: A government run by people of good will — who are true "public servants" — would have immediately reached out to the myriad of private veterans' groups to keep the memorials open during the shutdown — the line of volunteers to man the memorial, provide tours, and keep the bathrooms clean would have stretched around the block. Between the VFW and American Legion, the memorial could be manned and maintained in perpetuity.

It's good the government has relented and opened the memorial to Honor Flights, but what about the vets who come with their families, or the families of vets teaching the next generation? The Honor Flights won the day because they, thankfully, had a public platform to make their case, but not every World War II vet visits the memorial on an Honor Flight. The group rightfully won, but shouldn't a family taking a great-grandfather to D.C. win also?

The president just spoke from a well-prepared stage in Maryland, condemning the shutdown. The money spent on transportation, security, and staging for that event would easily cover the cost of opening our nation's war memorials for several days.

I'm hopeful that the manifest injustice and obvious malice of the memorial closings will be a clarifying moment for the American people. It's not 1995 any longer, and we don't have to depend on the mainstream media to tell the truth. At the ACLJ, we're considering litigation, but litigation will be unnecessary if there is a sufficient — and proper — public response.

National Review

The Budget Fight and Obama's Vindictive Streak

The president thinks negotiating with his “ideological” opponents on the budget is beneath him.

by Jonah Goldberg

Shutting down the government in an effort to use a budget fight to get rid of Obamacare is not the strategy I would have recommended for the GOP. And while Republicans can be blamed for starting the shutdown, it's increasingly apparent that President Obama and the Democrats deserve the lion's share of blame for not only prolonging it but also making it as painful as possible.

Obama has always had a bit of a vindictive streak when it comes to politics. I think it stems from his Manichaeian view of America. There are the reasonable people — who agree with him. And there are the bitter clingers who disagree for irrational or extremist ideological reasons.

In his various statements over the last week, he's insisted that opponents of Obamacare are “ideologues” on an “ideological crusade.” Meanwhile, he cast himself as just a reasonable guy interested in solving America's problems. I have no issue with him calling Republican opponents “ideologues” — they are — but since when is Obama *not* an ideologue?

The argument about Obamacare is objectively and irrefutably ideological on both sides — state-provided health care has been an ideological brass ring for the Left for well over a century. But much of the press takes its cues from Democrats and sees this fight — and most other political fights — as a contest pitting the forces of moderation, decency, and rationality against the ranks of the ideologically brainwashed.

What's unusual is the way Obama sees the government as a tool for his ideological agenda. During the fight over the sequester, Obama ordered the government to make the 2 percent budget cut as painful and scary as possible.

“It's going to be very painful for the flying public,” Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood warned Americans.

“The FAA's all-hands furloughs managed to convert a less than 4 percent FAA budget cut into a 10 percent air-traffic control cut that would delay 40 percent of flights,” the *Wall Street Journal* noted at the time.

The Department of Homeland Security announced it might not be able to protect the nation's borders, and in an effort to prove the point summarily released a couple thousand of immigrant detainees, many of them with criminal records.

Obama, the avowed problem solver, set out to create problems for the American people, just to prove how great government is and how crazy Republicans were for wanting to cut spending — much of the money borrowed from China — a little. But don't you dare call him an ideologue!

Now, with the government shutdown and the looming fight over the debt ceiling, Obama's doubling down on this ideologically perverse strategy.

The National Park Service, which has somehow become the unofficial goon squad of American liberalism, reversed course and let American World War II vets visit the WWII memorial in Washington, D.C. This is obviously good news. (I was waiting to see if Steven Spielberg would come out with a new Obama-friendly director's cut of *Saving Private Ryan* in which the old guy at the end is dragged off in cuffs before he can reach Tom Hanks's grave.)

Still, it cost the government more money to try to keep WWII vets out of an open-air memorial than it would have to just leave it be. In Virginia, the NPS ordered the Claude Moore Colonial Farm to shut down, even though it's privately funded.

Far worse, Obama told CNBC's John Harwood that Wall Street should be far more panicky about Republican efforts to use the debt ceiling to win concessions from the White House. I don't blame Obama for being annoyed with Republicans for trying to use the debt ceiling the exact same way he did when he was a senator. But normally a sitting president doesn't try to talk down the economy just to win a political point.

Whenever the Bush administration issued terror warnings, Democrats insinuated that it was all a cynical political stunt. But this week, the White House sent out National Intelligence Director James Clapper to whip up fears that national security would be imperiled by a shutdown less than 48 hours old.

When Republicans vote to fund essential or popular parts of the government, the response from Democrats is, in effect, "How dare they?" Nancy Pelosi calls the tactic "releasing one hostage at a time" — as if negotiators normally refuse to have hostages released unless it's all at once.

In the 17 previous government shutdowns since 1977, presidents have worked to avoid them or lessen their impact. Obama has made no such effort out of an ideological yearning to punish his enemies, regardless of the collateral damage.

Bloomberg

[Troops Forage for Food While Golfers Play On in Shutdown](#)

by Jeff Plungis

Grocery stores on Army bases in the U.S. are closed. The golf course at Andrews Air Force base is open.

All 128 employees of the [Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corp.](#) are working, while 3,000 safety inspectors employed by the Federal Aviation Administration are off the job.

The Food and Drug Administration is reviewing new pharmaceuticals. The National Institutes of Health is turning away new patients for clinical trials.

The seeming randomness of the U.S. government's first shutdown in 17 years can be explained in part by anomalies in the spending Congress does and doesn't control. Activities funded by fees from drug, financial-services and other companies are insulated from year-to-year budget dysfunction. The ones that get a budget from Congress get hit.

“What’s really happening in America is that the appropriations process has completely failed,” said Elaine Kamarck, a senior fellow in governance at the Brookings Institution in [Washington](#) who worked in the White House during the last shutdown in 1995-96.

This isn’t government according to U.S. civics textbooks. Government is supposed to collect taxes, the president is supposed to propose each year how to spend the money, and Congress has the final say with the constitutional power of the purse.

Passports, Patents

Instead, Congress has had to resort to a so-called continuing resolution -- a catchall bill to keep the government operating on life support while negotiations continue -- in each of the past 16 years.

There have been 93 continuing resolutions passed since 1998, covering operations for as little as 21 days in 1999 to the full years of 2007 and 2011, according to the Congressional Research Service.

Since the standoff between President Bill Clinton and Congress that last shut down most of the government, funding of more functions has shifted to means outside the appropriations process, Kamarck said.

Passport applications are paid for by fees. The FDA is funded through assessments on companies like [Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. \(BMY\)](#) and [Pfizer Inc. \(PFE\)](#) The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, which has said it can operate for at least four weeks, has been funded by user fees since 1993. The Federal Highway Administration is funded by taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel, not income taxes, so its 2,914 employees are on the job.

Wildlife Refuges

Other agencies can keep operating with multiyear funding or reserves. Visitor centers and public facilities at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service refuges are closed, while construction and land acquisition continues because those activities have long-term funding. The Saint Lawrence Seaway agency is using a revolving account containing \$12.8 million to stay fully operational.

Closures can seem arbitrary as agencies define what’s necessary for life, health, safety and safeguarding of property.

While many functions at Army bases continue, commissaries in the U.S. are closed, forcing troops and their families to shop at local stores that cost about 30 percent more, Lieutenant General Raymond Mason, the service’s deputy chief of staff for logistics, said yesterday at a House hearing.

“For the soldiers and their families, that’s very difficult,” Mason said.

The Andrews Air Force Base golf course is funded through user fees and that’s why it remains open, said Air Force Captain Lindy Singleton, chief of public affairs for the 11th Wing at Andrews.

JetBlue's Plane

In [Rock Creek Park](#), the urban forest in Washington where Theodore Roosevelt used to ride his horse, cars made their morning commute along a well-traveled parkway while hikers were prohibited to walk.

Numbers of furloughed employees vary dramatically from [agency to agency](#). The Agriculture Department is furloughing 84 percent of its staff, while the Veterans Affairs Department is keeping 96 percent of its workers on the job.

In the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 38 percent of the 4,113 employees are still on the job, including those that provide water, fight fires or are building roads or bridges. Suspended activities include payments of financial assistance to needy individuals, and to vendors providing foster care.

The shutdown of FAA aircraft-certification activities prevented [JetBlue Airways Corp. \(JBLU\)](#) from taking delivery yesterday of its first Airbus A321 jetliner, the airline said. The plane is stranded at a factory in [Germany](#).

The U.S. Census Bureau has kept nine employees in [Indiana](#) on the job for three days to print furlough notices and send them out.

"The reason you're seeing such irregular things is because everyone knows it's going to have to end," Kamarck said. "They also know that when it ends the government is going to pay its bills, one way or the other."



**WHY ARE THERE 800,000 NON-ESSENTIAL
GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES?!**

Unbiased America

**I don't always negotiate with
terrorists**

**But when I do, I prefer
Iranians to Republicans**

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