

August 24, 2009

[Mark Steyn](#) gives us an excellent article on political correctness, Islamist-style. One of the anecdotes he relates involves the Yale University Press publishing a book about the Danish Mohammed cartoons, without the cartoons.

...The official explanation was the threat of violence. Not any actual violence, and, as it turns out, not even any actual threats. After Roger Kimball poked around a bit, it emerged that the decision to ban both the Danes and Doré was driven not by editors or publishers at YUP but by the very biggest bigwigs of the university itself. The experts were contacted by “the Office of the President,” no less. On its face, the decision to gut its own reputation for editorial and scholarly integrity seems to owe less to unspecified fears of jihadist nuts blowing up a university bookstore than to a cooler calculation of its strategic interests, including (so Mr. Kimball suggests) continued access to wealthy Muslim benefactors.

Yale has thus provided us with a perfect snapshot of where we’re headed. When I fought back against attempts by the Canadian Islamic Congress to get my writing criminalized north of the border, various American readers wrote to say: “Why bother? Who cares about Canada? We’ve got the First Amendment, and nobody’s going to ban you here.” That’s not how the world works, no matter the fond isolationist illusions of Ron Paul types. Restive European Muslims and unlimited Saudi money can put pressure on American publishers, institutions, and media that will eventually render the First Amendment moot. In Denmark and other countries, craven accommodationists can at least plead that they have incendiary majority-Muslim suburbs with 50 percent youth unemployment. That’s not true of New Haven, where the honchos seem to be using fear of violence as a cover for the appetites of their endowment. In other words, they’re merely posing as contemptible Euroweenies. Which, when you think about it, is even more contemptible.

In 2006, during the original cartoon jihad, a Muslim demonstrator in Toronto spelled it out: “We won’t stop the protests until the world obeys Islamic law.”

It sounded vaguely ridiculous at the time. And yet, without the demographic pressures of Europe, a scholarly publisher in Connecticut now “obeys Islamic law.” Who’s next?

Turns out [Fareed Zakaria](#) recommended the cartoons be censored. What was he thinking? Did he ever hear of a free press?

[Claudia Rosett](#) posts on the release of the Lockerbie terrorist.

...If you’d like to learn more about the freed terrorist, al-Megrahi, and why Gaddafi might be so pleased to have him back, there’s an illuminating article on Forbes.com, written just before al-Megrahi’s release: [“Don’t Let The Lockerbie Bomber Go Free.”](#)

The author, Mohamed Eljahmi, had an older brother, Fathi Eljahmi, who was Libya’s most prominent democratic dissident. I say “was,” because after five solid years of imprisonment by Gaddafi, [Fathi Eljahmi died this past April](#). There was no compassion shown by Gaddafi of any kind. Isolated much of the time, held in filthy conditions, incarcerated for a long stretch in a Libyan “psychiatric” facility, Fathi Eljahmi was deprived of adequate medical care, and blocked from any direct communication with the outside world. He deserved a hero’s salute from both the democratic world and his fellow Libyans, but Gaddafi saw to it that from the day Eljahmi was arrested in 2004 until the day he died in April, 2009, he was never seen or heard in public again. ...

[Thomas Sowell](#) explains that the price of Hope and Change is Freedom.

...The idea that government officials can play God from Washington is not a new idea, but it is an idea that is being pushed with new audacity.

What they are trying to do is to create an America very unlike the America that has existed for centuries — the America that people have been attracted to by the millions from every part of the world, the America that many generations of Americans have fought and died for.

This is the America for which Michelle Obama expressed her resentment before it became politically expedient to keep quiet.

It is the America that Reverend Jeremiah Wright denounced in his sermons during the 20 years when Barack Obama was a parishioner, before political expediency required Obama to withdraw and distance himself.

The thing most associated with America — freedom — is precisely what must be destroyed if this is to be turned into a fundamentally different country to suit Obama's vision of the country and of himself. But do not expect a savvy politician like Barack Obama to express what he is doing in terms of limiting our freedom.

He may not even think of it in those terms. He may think of it in terms of promoting "social justice" or making better decisions than ordinary people are capable of making for themselves, whether about medical care or housing or many other things. Throughout history, egalitarians have been among the most arrogant people.

...

If you can get through the nuttiness and affectations of [Peggy Noonan](#), once and a while a great column pops up.

Looking back, this must have been the White House health-care strategy:

Health care as a subject is extraordinarily sticky, messy and confusing. It's inherently complicated, and it's personal. There are land mines all over the place. Don't make the mistake the Clintons made and create a plan that gets picked apart, shot down, and injures the standing of the president. Instead, push it off on Congress. Let them come up with a dozen plans. It will keep them busy. It will convince them yet again of their importance and autonomy. It will allow them to vent, and perhaps even exhaust, their animal spirits. Various items and elements within each bill will get picked off by the public. Fine, that's to be expected. The bills may in fact yield a target-rich environment. Fine again. Maybe health care's foes will get lost in the din and run out of ammo. Maybe they'll exhaust their animal spirits, too.

Summer will pass, the fight confined to the public versus Congress. And at the end, in the fall, the beauty part: The president swoops in and saves the day, forcing together an ultimate and more moderate plan that doesn't contain the more controversial elements but does constitute a successful first step toward universal health care. ...

Sunday Morning [Rasmussen](#) reported Obama's popularity hit a new low.

[David Limbaugh](#) presents a convincing explanation for Obama's declining poll numbers.

...Surely people can now see that it is no accident that he sat at the feet of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright for 20 years, that his mother was a leftist activist and cultural Marxist, that his main early mentor was radical Frank Marshall Davis, that he was a member of the far-left New Party in Chicago, that his main vocation in life has been street organizing and agitation and that he didn't think the revolutionarily, transformative Warren court was liberal enough.

Since assuming office, Obama has been on a mission to fundamentally alter the social compact between the government and a once powerfully sovereign people.

The litany of his shocks to the system is too voluminous to detail in full, but just consider his calculated takeover of GM, his fraudulently marketed trillion-dollar spending schemes, his cap-and-trade boondoggle, his unilateral declaration of an end to the war on terror, his policy to Mirandize terrorists on the battlefield, his cavorting with terrorist dictators, his soft betrayal of Israel, his ceaseless foreign-soil apologies for America, and his crusade to subsume the health care industry.

These are not tweaks to a glorious constitutional republic, but a frantic effort to undo this republic brick by brick. And the American people have finally gotten wise to what's going on and are mad as hell and aren't going to take it anymore. ...

David Warren discusses global warming junk science, and then turns his attention to a book about some real science.

*...This has been brought home to me with force, by a magnificent little book, recently published by the Friends of Algonquin Park, and just fallen into my hands. It is the first of their new field guide series, on *The Dragonflies and Damselflies of Algonquin Provincial Park and the Surrounding Area* -- an area extending to Ottawa. The reader who wishes to fill his heart with hope, joy, and beauty, will run out immediately and buy this book, whose authors are Colin D. Jones, Andrea Kingsley, Peter Burke, and Matt Holder.*

It was recommended to me, owing to my own love for the Odonates, and all pond life, by a very devout and pious Darwinist of my acquaintance, who has fortunately never read my columns, and who may never speak to me again when he finds that I harbour "designist" heresies.

Indeed, a dragonfly is a wonder of pure brilliant mechanical design -- this little roving eye of nature, that first appears, fully-formed with incredible precision, in the fossil records for more than 300 million years ago. And there is little as unforgettable as to watch a dragonfly emerge from its dead larva skin, and crawl tenuously out on a log -- pale, utterly feeble, and crinkled. And then, before your eyes in the space of minutes, its abdomen extends, its wings fill out, its colouring begins to appear, and a glorious creature takes its first flight, towards the woods. It is a miracle that will help you contemplate the mysteries of Creation and Resurrection.

This Algonquin field guide is something of which Canadians may boast: I have never seen a better insect field guide, nor one so beautifully and intelligently put together. The existence of the growing market it serves is the more inspiring: for in the background of so much ideological, joke science (or "scientism"), real science is reviving, closely allied with art. It is the science of the field, of close and honest observation, of inferences that can be tested and checked. And like all true science, it teaches reverence.

Andy McCarthy posts on Cash for Clunkers.

Compared to the infinite complexity of healthcare and health-insurance, cash-for-clunkers is kindergarten stuff. You trade in your old car for a new one that gets (slightly) better mileage and the government gives you money — between \$3500 and \$4500. How hard is that?

Pretty hard, apparently. The Washington Times reports this morning that this simple, basic Big Gummint program has spun totally out of control: it was clearly not thought through (even a little), it was under-budgeted by 2 or 3 hundred percent (and counting), and it was woefully under-resourced — such that staff have to be hired from the outside or pulled away from other government functions (like running air-traffic control) in order to clear the back-log. Clearing the back-log, by the way, is a 24/7 operation that's also requiring additional budgeting for overtime pay and a training program. ...

...All this from the people who, Mark Steyn reminds us this morning, tell you that the way to control healthcare costs is to set up a huge new entitlement program (even as the ones they've already set up sink deeper into a multi-trillion dollar sea of unfunded liabilities). Why do we trust them to do anything other than the very few things for which you actually need a government? ...

Volokh Conspiracy linked to a coup de grace delivered to a clunker. In this case, a Corvette.

[WSJ Editors](#) write on the clunker program

National Review [Sharia in New Haven](#)

by Mark Steyn

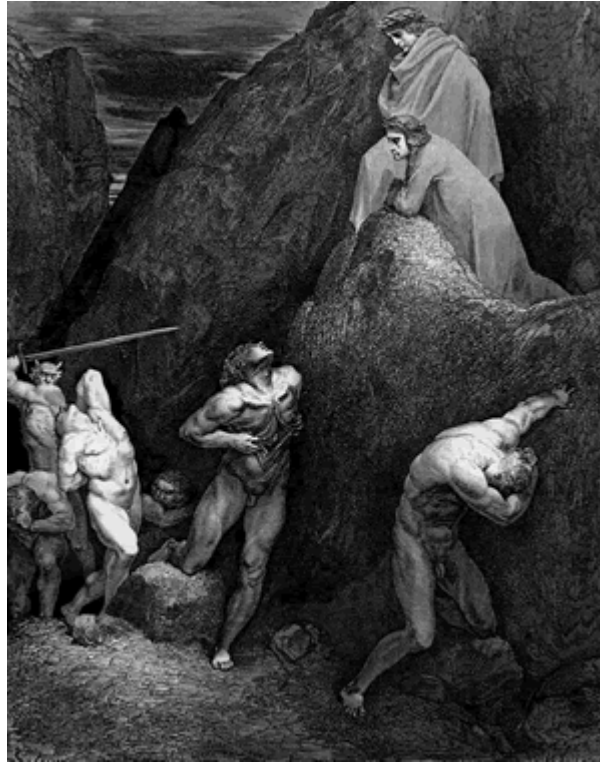
Whenever I write about Europe and demography, I get a lot of mail on the general line of “Oh yeah, Steyn? When will Muslims be 50.01 percent of the population then? 2020? 2030? C'mon, you scaremonger . . .”

And I usually reply that it's not about hitting 50 percent. It's about the point at which mediating between the Muslim population and the broader population becomes a central and then the dominant feature of the culture. In Northern Ireland, the Loyalists outnumbered the Republicans by two to one more or less, but an arithmetical majority didn't prevent 30 years of, to put it at its mildest, profound destabilization. And once you're in that situation the question becomes: What are you prepared to trade away in an attempt to restabilize?

Ezra Levant, my comrade in Canada's free-speech wars, was hauled in for interrogation by the Alberta “Human Rights” Commission for publishing the famous Danish cartoons of Mohammed. After three years of harassment by a malign alliance of radical Islamists and the multicultural state, he's come to the conclusion that the cartoon crisis has done more damage to North America's “culture of liberty” than 9/11. You can see what he means. In the long run, the ostensibly trivial matter of some undistinguished drawings in an obscure provincial newspaper in a nation way out on the periphery of the horizon may yet prove to be more significant than a direct violent assault on the citadels of American power. September 11 was a bloody provocation that was met with a vigorous display of will: Within a few weeks al-Qaeda's training camps were smashed to smithereens, and its patrons in Kabul had hitched up their robes and fled. The cartoon crisis was a minor, albeit murderous, affair that rippled across the globe to be met by a dismal lack of will by almost every panjandrum of Western civilization, from European Union commissioners to Canada's ghastly “human rights” regime. As the years go by, that seems the more relevant template.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the damage done by Euro-Canadian appeasers, an American institution has now effortlessly outpaced them. Having commissioned a book on the subject of the cartoons, Yale University Press has decided that it will appear without any illustration of said subject matter. The author is not a scaremongering blowhard like Ezra and me but a respected Brandeis University professor, Jytte Klausen. Insofar as I understand the thesis of *The Cartoons That Shook the World*, Professor Klausen argues that the crisis was artificially whipped up for political purposes and that, therefore, one should draw no broader conclusions about Muslim culture and its relationship with the West. You could hardly ask for a more telling comment on that thesis than the publishers' decision to yank the illustrations, including not only the cartoons but other representations of Mohammed, such as Gustave Doré's depiction of the Prophet being disemboweled in Hell. This scene from Dante's *Inferno* has also been visually rendered by, among others, Botticelli, William Blake, Salvador Dalí, and Rodin, all of whose images have been reproduced in hundreds of books. Yet, with nary a thought, Yale has extended the de facto prohibition on new

Mohammedan depictions into a retrospective airbrushing of the historical record. This is an astonishing thing for a scholarly institution to do, especially one whose motto is *Lux et veritas*. In nixing Gustave Doré, they have, in effect, said the entire Western inheritance is up for grabs. Not all of it, not immediately. The *lux* will be dimmed incrementally, bulb by bulb, and, after a while, as what would once have “shook the world” ceases even to be reported, you won’t even notice it.



Mohammed
by Gustave Doré

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The Corner

[Fareed Zakaria, Yale Press, and Censorship](#) [Michael Rubin]

Fareed Zakaria, editor for *Newsweek's* international edition, host for CNN, and member of Yale University's governing body, tells the *Boston Globe* that he was consulted about Yale University Press's publication of a book looking at the Muhammad cartoon crisis in Denmark, and that he recommended censorship of the book:

Fareed Zakaria, editor of the international edition of *Newsweek* and a member of the Yale Corporation, said he advised Yale to drop the images.

"You're balancing issues of the First Amendment and academic freedom, but then you have this real question of what would be the consequences on human life," he said.

This is not only disappointing, but also ironic given his recent *Newsweek* cover essay: "[Learning to Live with Radical Islam](#)," subtitled, "We don't have to accept the stoning of criminals. But it's time to stop treating all Islamists as potential terrorists." In his essay, as Martin Kramer points out, Zakaria writes, "We should mount a spirited defense of our views and values."

It is a sad day when members of the Yale Corporation, the governing body of the university, unabashedly support censorship. The problem is, of course, that it is precisely the most controversial issues which universities must address to remain relevant and to fulfill their research missions.

The other journalist-member of the Yale Corporation is Margaret Warner, who has not yet spoken on the issue.

Rosett Report

[Libyan Grotesqueries](#)

by Claudia Rosett

In the current western mood of coddling terrorists and pandering to tyrants, the perversions by now appear endless. On "compassionate grounds," Scotland has just allowed the terminally ill Libyan terrorist, Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi, to return to Libya. Convicted of murder in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie. Scotland, al-Megrahi was flown home Thursday to a hero's welcome, transported by private jet, and met by Saif Gaddafi, son of Muammar Gaddafi — who along with his international terror sprees in years past has tyrannized Libya for 40 years.

If you'd like to learn more about the freed terrorist, al-Megrahi, and why Gaddafi might be so pleased to have him back, there's an illuminating article on Forbes.com, written just before al-Megrahi's release: "[Don't Let The Lockerbie Bomber Go Free](#)."

The author, Mohamed Eljahmi, had an older brother, Fathi Eljahmi, who was Libya's most prominent democratic dissident. I say "was," because after five solid years of imprisonment by Gaddafi, [Fathi Eljahmi died this past April](#). There was no compassion shown by Gaddafi of any kind. Isolated much of the time, held in filthy conditions, incarcerated for a long stretch in a Libyan "psychiatric" facility, Fathi Eljahmi was deprived of adequate medical care, and blocked from any direct communication with the outside world. He deserved a hero's salute from both the democratic world and his fellow Libyans, but Gaddafi saw to it that from the day Eljahmi was arrested in 2004 until the day he died in April, 2009, he was never seen or heard in public again.

Gaddafi, however, has been living it up as the “rehabilitated” ruler of Libya. And next month [he is expected to turn up](#) at the opening of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, where on the opening day of the debate, Sept. 23, he is currently listed as the next speaker in line after President Barack Obama. At the same UN gathering, Gaddafi will have even more to celebrate — Libya, in the person of one of Gaddafi’s former foreign ministers, Ali Treki, will take over the 2009-2010 presidency of the UN General Assembly. What’s next for Gaddafi and his henchmen? The Nobel Prize?

Jewish World Review

Whose medical decisions?, Part IV

by Thomas Sowell

The serious, and sometimes chilling, provisions of the medical care legislation that President Obama has been trying to rush through Congress are important enough for all of us to stop and think, even though his political strategy from the outset has been to prevent us from having time to stop and think about it.

What we also should stop to think about is the mindset behind this legislation, which is very consistent with the mindset behind other policies of this administration, whether the particular issue is bailing out General Motors, telling banks who to lend to or appointing "czars" to tell all sorts of people in many walks of life what they can and cannot do.

The idea that government officials can play God from Washington is not a new idea, but it is an idea that is being pushed with new audacity.

What they are trying to do is to create an America very unlike the America that has existed for centuries — the America that people have been attracted to by the millions from every part of the world, the America that many generations of Americans have fought and died for.

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He may not even think of it in those terms. He may think of it in terms of promoting "social justice" or making better decisions than ordinary people are capable of making for themselves, whether about medical care or housing or many other things. Throughout history, egalitarians have been among the most arrogant people.

Obama has surrounded himself with people who also think it is their job to make other people's decisions for them. Not just Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel, his health care advisor who complains of Americans' "over-utilization" of medical care, but also Professor Cass Sunstein, who has written a whole book on how third parties should use government power to "nudge" people into making better decisions in general.

Then there are a whole array of Obama administration officials who take it as their job to pick winners and losers in the economy and tell companies how much they can and cannot pay their executives.

Just as magicians know that the secret of some of their tricks is to distract the audience, so politicians know that the secret of many political tricks is to distract the public with scapegoats.

No one is more of a political magician than Barack Obama. At the beginning of 2008, no one expected a shrewd and experienced politician like Hillary Clinton to be beaten for the Democratic nomination for President of the United States by someone completely new to the national political scene. But Obama worked his political magic, with the help of the media, which he still has.

Barack Obama's escapes from his own past words, deeds and associations have been escapes worthy of Houdini.

Like other magicians, Obama has chosen his distractions well. The insurance industry is currently his favorite distraction as scapegoats, after he has tried to demonize doctors without much success.

Saints are no more common in the insurance industry than in politics or even among paragons of virtue like economists. So there will always be horror stories, even if these are less numerous or less horrible than what is likely to happen if Obamacare gets passed into law.

Obama even gets away with saying things like having a system to "keep insurance companies honest" — and many people may not see the painful irony in politicians trying to keep other people honest. Certainly most of the media are unlikely to point out this irony.

WSJ

[Pull the Plug on ObamaCare](#)

It's the best cure for what ails the Obama presidency.

by Peggy Noonan

Looking back, this must have been the White House health-care strategy:

Health care as a subject is extraordinarily sticky, messy and confusing. It's inherently complicated, and it's personal. There are land mines all over the place. Don't make the mistake the Clintons made and create a plan that gets picked apart, shot down, and injures the standing of the president. Instead, push it off on Congress. Let them come up with a dozen plans. It will keep them busy. It will convince them yet again of their importance and autonomy. It will allow them to vent, and perhaps even exhaust, their animal spirits. Various items and elements within each bill will get picked off by the public. Fine, that's to be expected. The bills may in fact yield a target-rich environment. Fine again. Maybe health care's foes will get lost in the din and run out of ammo. Maybe they'll exhaust their animal spirits, too.

Summer will pass, the fight confined to the public versus Congress. And at the end, in the fall, the beauty part: The president swoops in and saves the day, forcing together an ultimate and more moderate plan that doesn't contain the more controversial elements but does constitute a successful first step toward universal health care.

That's not what happened.

It all got hotter, quicker than the White House expected. The many plans of Congress congealed in the public mind into one plan, and the one plan became a poison pool. The president is now immersed in it.

Here's another thing that didn't work. (I write as if health-care reform or insurance reform or whatever it's called this week is already a loss, a historic botch, because it is. Even if the White House wins, they lose, because the cost in terms of public trust and faith was too high.)

Every big idea that works is marked by simplicity, by clarity. You can understand it when you hear it, and you can explain it to people. Social Security: Retired workers receive a public pension to help them through old

age. Medicare: People over 65 can receive taxpayer-funded health care. Welfare: If you have no money and cannot support yourself, we will help as you get back on your feet.

These things are clear. I understand them. You understand them. The president's health-care plan is not clear, and I mean that not only in the sense of "he hasn't told us his plan." I mean it in terms of the voodoo phrases, this gobbledygook, this secret language of government that no one understands—"single payer," "public option," "insurance marketplace exchange." No one understands what this stuff means, nobody normal.

And when normal people don't know what the words mean, they don't say to themselves, "I may not understand, but my trusty government surely does, and will treat me and mine with respect." They think, "I can't get what these people are talking about. They must be trying to get one past me. So I'll vote no."

In a more beautiful world, the whole health-care chapter could become, for the president, that helpful thing, the teachable moment. The president the past month has been taught a lot by the American people. It's all there in the polls. He could still step back, rethink, say it didn't work, promise to return with something better.

When presidents make clear, with modesty and even some chagrin, that they have made a mistake but that they've learned a lesson and won't be making it again, the American people tend to respond with sympathy. It is our tradition and our impulse.

Such admissions are not a sign of weakness. John F. Kennedy knew this after the Bay of Pigs. He didn't blame his Republican predecessor, Dwight Eisenhower, or the agencies that had begun the invasion's tentative planning under Ike. JFK made it clear he'd learned a great deal, which increased confidence in his leadership. His personal popularity rose so high that he later wryly noted that the more mistakes he made, the more popular he became.

I suspect the American people would appreciate seeing Barack Obama learn from this, and keep going. He's their president. He will be for the next few difficult years, which will no doubt contain moments he will have to lead us through. They also probably wouldn't mind seeing a wry, modest, very human and self-critical stance from a new president who doesn't strut and doesn't swagger but does have a level of 1950s cool, Old Vegas cool, of supreme and confident smoothness that one wouldn't mind seeing ruffled a bit by that old ruffler, reality. Critics of George W. Bush will say here, "Did *he* ever show wry self-criticism?" No, he didn't. And that's why it ended so well for him.

Modern presidents are always afraid to show anything so human as modesty or doubt. They're afraid of the endless cable-news loop of "I think I was wrong, I think I misjudged, I didn't get it right." They're afraid of death by soundbite. Which is understandable. But they should get over it, especially when it comes to a bit of self-criticism, and even a bit of self-doubt. Modesty is one of the prevailing moods of the moment, it's part of where the American people are and have been since at least a year ago when the economy tanked. We all lived through the abundance, made investments, not only financial ones, that turned out good or bad, made mistakes of judgment, and are wondering about the past decade, and its mistakes, and our part in its mistakes.

It shouldn't become a wallow, but there's nothing wrong with self-reflection and trying to learn from everything we did that was wrong, and right. It wouldn't be so bad to see a president echo this.

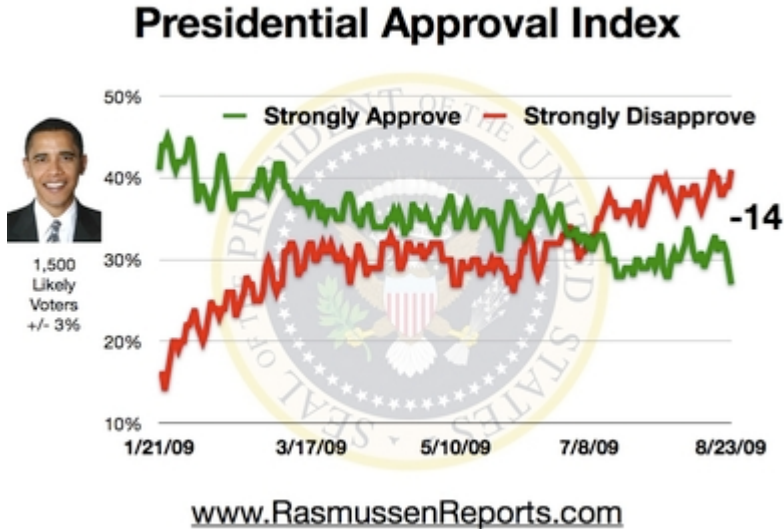
A final factor contributed to the mess of the health-care debate, and that the White House might ponder it. Looking back, what a lucky man President Clinton was to have—to help bring about after his own health-care fiasco—a Congress controlled by the opposite party. What a great and historic team Mr. Clinton and Newt Gingrich were, a popular Democratic president and a determined GOP leader with a solid majority.

Welfare reform, a balanced budget, and a sense the public could have that not much crazy would happen and some serious progress might be made. If Mr. Clinton pressed too hard, Mr. Gingrich would push back. If Mr. Gingrich pressed too hard Mr. Clinton pushed back. Two gifted, often perplexing and always controversial Boomers who didn't even like each other, and yet you look back now and realize: Good things happened there.

Right now Mr. Obama's gift is his curse, a Congress dominated by his party. While the country worries about the economy and two wars, the Democrats of Congress are preoccupied with the idea that this is their moment, now is their time, health care now, "Never let a good crisis go to waste," the only blazingly memorable phrase to be uttered in the new era.

It's not especially pleasurable to see history held hostage to ideological vanity, but it's not the first time. And if they keep it up, they'll help solve the president's problem. He'll have a Republican congress soon enough.

Rasmussen Reports Presidential Approval



Human Events Obama's Brick Wall: The American People by David Limbaugh

President Barack Obama has run into a brick wall: the American people, who cherish their liberty and revere their nation and do not want it remade in Obama's socialist image.

Obama's free-falling poll numbers are not the result of a misinformation campaign from a small sliver of unruly conservative opponents, as the administration wants you to believe. They are a reflection of the public's reaction to Obama's policies and his own comprehensive misinformation campaign to dupe the people into believing America is unsalvageable without fundamental change.

When Obama promised to bring fundamental change to America, most Americans, fortunately for him, did not take him literally. He offered them "hope" at a time when the economy was going south; political partisanship had reached new levels of acrimony, and people were weary of a protracted, albeit successful, war in Iraq. But most voters had no idea just how much change Obama had in mind.

But Obama was dead serious. If it wasn't obvious to trusting people then, it is abundantly so now. He doesn't share the majority's vision of America as the most wonderful experiment in constitutional governance in history. He sees it as a land of plenty, all right -- plenteous inequities, with maldistribution of resources, oppression and imperialism.

Surely people can now see that it is no accident that he sat at the feet of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright for 20 years, that his mother was a leftist activist and cultural Marxist, that his main early mentor was radical Frank Marshall Davis, that he was a member of the far-left New Party in Chicago, that his main vocation in life has been street organizing and agitation and that he didn't think the revolutionarily, transformative Warren court was liberal enough.

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These are not tweaks to a glorious constitutional republic, but a frantic effort to undo this republic brick by brick. And the American people have finally gotten wise to what's going on and are mad as hell and aren't going to take it anymore.

But probably not used to running into much adversity in his adult life, Obama's doubtlessly been thrown for a major psychological loop as he's run into the fierce grass-roots resistance to his radical agenda.

Based on what we can glean from his background, we have to assume he remains in that policy cocoon in which he has been surrounded mostly by radicals who see America through different lenses than most Americans do. He truly believes that America has to change in dramatic ways and that he is the only guy who can make it happen, i.e., "The One."

What, then, is a conflicted messiah to do when he's caught in an inner struggle between his narcissism and his uncompromising ideology and must choose either his desire for personal popularity or his driving compulsion to change this nation into a full-blown socialist state?

Given the enormity of his ego, I'm betting he still thinks he can thread the needle by delivering a command-control economy to a people too ignorant to realize it's not in their best interests and still retain their adulation. He must, because government-run health care is his proverbial hill to die on.

So in the coming days, look for an acceleration of his propaganda campaign to deceive Americans into believing his socialized health plan actually would increase free market choices, that its inevitable rationing and reduced quality of care would actually be increased access for everyone, that the government really wouldn't control the doctor-patient relationship when blueprints for such controls are already in and integral to the proposed legislation, that the plan would provide free health care for everyone at less cost, and that end-of-life counseling instituted by the government under the plan would be purely driven by empathy and compassion rather than a stark, chilling effort to persuade seniors to do their part to unburden the system.

The faux messiah faces the test of his life. Saul Alinsky, the godfather of street organizing, will be watching from the grave to see whether his best student can finally consummate the Marxists' generations-long boast of conquering this nation without having to fire a shot.

We learn from the Copenhagen Post, via Benny Peiser, that the Danish foreign ministry has already cancelled 20,000 overnight hotel reservations for people attending the United Nations Climate Change Conference, upcoming in December. That's 40 million kroner of revenue lost to the hoteliers of Copenhagen, for whom we may grieve. Still, from an environmentalist perspective, think of all the energy savings.

Through the same channel (Peiser's excellent work as an aggregator of media and research items that global warm-mongers could not wish you to read), we, the obsessively well-informed, have also been following an entertaining scandal of "settled science" in the U.K.

It is a tale of dendro-chronology gone strange, as the purveyors of suspicious tree-ring studies, used to justify well-publicized warming scare stories, resist the determined requests of a certain Steve McIntyre to see their raw data.

"They are my data," as Peter M. Brown, then president of the Tree-Ring Society, tried at first to insist. But no, the funny thing is, data collected at the expense of taxpayers, who also pay the collectors' salaries, do not belong to private persons, outside of maybe Russia. The excuses since used to withhold the raw data have degenerated through various assertions of bureaucratic privilege, to the logical equivalent of "the dog ate my homework."

I could go on like this, ridiculing the crazed, Al-Gorey, joke science on which the "climate change crisis" was erected, at huge cost to ourselves, both directly for twisted "research," and indirectly for the destructive government legislation it supports.

But I'm inclined to relent: for the global warm-alarmists are destroying themselves, with chance help from a weak solar cycle. And as I mentioned in my last column on this topic (July 29), full-length books such as Ian Plimer's on Global Warming: The Missing Science, do a more compendious job of exposing the alarmists' false premises and assumptions.

As Napoleon used to say, echoing an ancient Chinese sage, "Never interfere with an enemy who is in the process of committing suicide."

The truth is, despite all the gloom and doom I spread myself, about the decline of western civilization (but at least I have solid proof!) that "nature will take care of it," on many different levels. This is a principle expounded by Delhi trilor (three-wheel) drivers: "A path will emerge." Sometimes, alas, that path leads suddenly to our own extinction, but there are many by-ways off the Road to Hell.

One of them I have bathed in this summer: the extraordinary recovery of broad public interest in field natural history, over the last few decades. (The last such historical trend ended soon after the appearance of Darwin's Origin of Species, which seemed to explain all the miracles of nature away.)

This has been brought home to me with force, by a magnificent little book, recently published by the Friends of Algonquin Park, and just fallen into my hands. It is the first of their new field guide series, on The Dragonflies and Damselflies of Algonquin Provincial Park and the Surrounding Area -- an area extending to Ottawa. The reader who wishes to fill his heart with hope, joy, and beauty, will run out immediately and buy this book, whose authors are Colin D. Jones, Andrea Kingsley, Peter Burke, and Matt Holder.

It was recommended to me, owing to my own love for the Odonates, and all pond life, by a very devout and pious Darwinist of my acquaintance, who has fortunately never read my columns, and who may never speak to me again when he finds that I harbour "designist" heresies.

Indeed, a dragonfly is a wonder of pure brilliant mechanical design -- this little roving eye of nature, that first appears, fully-formed with incredible precision, in the fossil records for more than 300 million years ago. And there is little as unforgettable as to watch a dragonfly emerge from its dead larva skin, and crawl tenuously out on a log -- pale, utterly feeble, and crinkled. And then, before your eyes in the space of minutes, its abdomen extends, its wings fill out, its colouring begins to appear, and a glorious creature takes its first flight, towards the woods. It is a miracle that will help you contemplate the mysteries of Creation and Resurrection.

This Algonquin field guide is something of which Canadians may boast: I have never seen a better insect field guide, nor one so beautifully and intelligently put together. The existence of the growing market it serves is the more inspiring: for in the background of so much ideological, joke science (or "scientism"), real science is reviving, closely allied with art. It is the science of the field, of close and honest observation, of inferences that can be tested and checked. And like all true science, it teaches reverence.

The Corner

Cash-for-clunkers: "No one anticipated ..." [Andy McCarthy]

Compared to the infinite complexity of healthcare and health-insurance, cash-for-clunkers is kindergarten stuff. You trade in your old car for a new one that gets (slightly) better mileage and the government gives you money — between \$3500 and \$4500. How hard is that?

Pretty hard, apparently. The *Washington Times* reports this morning that this simple, basic Big Gummint program has spun totally out of control: it was clearly not thought through (even a little), it was under-budgeted by 2 or 3 hundred percent (and counting), and it was woefully under-resourced — such that staff have to be hired from the outside or pulled away from other government functions (like running air-traffic control) in order to clear the back-log. Clearing the back-log, by the way, is a 24/7 operation that's also requiring additional budgeting for overtime pay and a training program. The *Times* relates:

The U.S. Transportation Department, billions of dollars behind in paying "cash-for-clunkers" rebates, has hired private contractors and solicited volunteers from the Federal Aviation Administration and its own executive ranks to work overtime to clear the backlog. Employees of the FAA's air-traffic-control unit were asked to help, but the Transportation Department stressed Friday that essential safety personnel were not diverted from their duties. A total of 1,200 workers, including about 300 contractors from Citigroup, the financial services giant, are now working seven days a week to review applications and reimburse auto dealers for rebates advanced to customers, officials said. The department tripled its program staff to 1,100 last week, and recently added another 100 headquarters employees....

From the start, the Car Allowance Rebate System, or CARS, proved too popular for its \$1 billion budget and the several hundred employees assigned to the program. Planners who expected to sell 250,000 cars in three months are now deluged with nearly twice that many applications seeking more than \$2 billion in rebates after less than one month. Only 7 percent of the rebates have been paid, leaving many auto dealers out millions of dollars. Dealers were supposed to be repaid within 10 days....

Days after the program began, the Transportation Department had to seek additional funding. So many deals were in the pipeline, officials couldn't be sure when the original funding would be exhausted, and dealers were concerned they would be left holding the bag. Congress approved \$2 billion in additional funding on Aug. 7. "We set up the program in 30 days, which was what Congress gave us," said Jill Zuckman, assistant to Mr. LaHood. "No one anticipated that 250,000 cars would be sold in the first four days. It proved to be more than the people we had available could handle." Dealers exacerbated the problem by making many thousands of deals before final program rules were posted on July 24, she said....

John D. Porcari, deputy secretary of transportation and the former top transit official in Maryland, was training Friday to help process applications this weekend. Mr. LaHood was out of town on business and missed the training session, Ms. Zuckman said.

One reason the department decided to wind down the program Monday is because it couldn't risk exceeding the program's \$3 billion budget while Congress was in recess, she said.

All this from the people who, Mark Steyn reminds us this morning, tell you that the way to control healthcare costs is to set up a huge new entitlement program (even as the ones they've already set up sink deeper into a multi-trillion dollar sea of unfunded liabilities). Why do we trust them to do *anything* other than the very few things for which you actually need a government? How 'bout a deal where we leave healthcare and the auto biz to private industry but ask the government to see if it can at least keep convicted mass-murderers in jail?

[Volokh Conspiracy](#) links to a You Tube short on [The Death Throes of A Corvette](#).

Or go straight to [You Tube](#).

WSJ - Editorial **[All Clunkered Out](#)**

The dealers may, or may not, get their money.

The Transportation Department is ending its "cash for clunkers" program today, but the deadline shouldn't pass without recording a few economic and political lessons. To wit, the feds can't even give away money very well.

The \$3 billion plan is being hailed in Washington as a great success because so many Americans sought to get a \$3,500 to \$4,500 check financed by other taxpayers in return for trading in their old car. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood boasts that the program has been wildly popular and provided "a lifeline to the automobile industry, jump starting a major sector of the economy and putting people back to work." But it's hardly miraculous that some Americans would be willing to apply for "free" money to do what they probably would have done eventually anyway.

Meanwhile, the program has proven to be an administrative fiasco, as the central planners at Transportation vastly underestimated how many people would apply, assigned too few people to process applications, and had to scramble to borrow workers from the likes of the Federal Aviation Administration to process claims. Auto dealers have nonetheless told of having to front the money to car buyers as they wait and wait for Uncle Sam to get around to paying them.

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel quoted Brad Schlossmann last week as saying that he had received "no payment whatsoever" on 120 clunker deals at his Milwaukee Honda dealership. Russ Darrow, who owns 15 Wisconsin dealerships, reported having done 400 or so clunker deals and been paid only for a few of them. That story has been repeated from coast to coast. And now that the program is ending in a rush, things could get worse. As buyers sprint to meet the deadline, dealers can't be sure they'll get their paperwork in before the \$3 billion runs out. Some dealers, and even the likes of General Motors, could have to write off clunker credits if they aren't reimbursed.

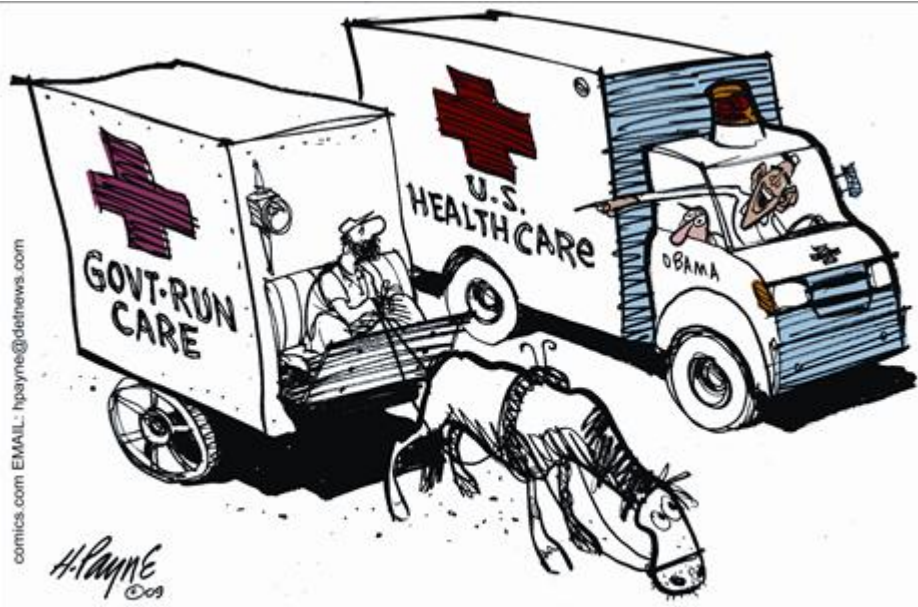
"We do not know how many deals are in the pipeline. We don't know how many dollars are left in the program at this very moment," Ted Smith, president of the Florida Automobile Dealers Association, told the Associated Press this weekend. "That's fundamental to the health of the dealerships that are participating. If you run out of money before you run out of deals, that's not a good situation." Welcome to the vagaries of

politically motivated—and subsidized—sales. The politicians care mainly about getting credit for the giveaway, not if some hapless dealers are left holding worthless paper when the money runs out.

As for helping the auto industry, the proof will be whether Mr. LaHood's jump start to sales is sustainable. The idea that a temporary subsidy program will launch the auto industry onto some new, higher sales and production plane defies logic. More likely, the program will merely have concentrated sales over a shorter period, as buyers either postponed purchases once they learned the program was in the works, or accelerated them to meet the subsidy deadline. The program is another bow to the now-reigning Washington policy illusion that the key to prosperity is force-feeding consumer spending, rather than creating incentives for Americans to invest and take risks.

We keep hearing this is a brave new era of public confidence in the virtues of government planning. But the lesson of cash for clunkers is that if this government can't manage a free lunch, it can hardly be trusted to decide whether you can have a hip replacement, and how much it will pay for it.





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"LET'S TRADE IN OUR CLUNKER FOR THAT BEAUTY!"



Brian San Diego Union-Tribune © 7-26-09 CREATORS.COM



WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON IN YOUR "SKY OFFICE," DEAR?



I WANT TO FINISH THIS DEMAND FOR PAY AND TRAVEL RECORDS FROM THE INSURANCE INDUSTRY BEFORE WE LAND FOR LUNCH IN PARIS.

DEALING WITH GUILT



IT USED TO BE...

FORGIVE ME, FATHER, FOR I HAVE SINNED!



NOW IT'S...

FORGIVE ME, AL, FOR I HAVE LEFT A LARGE CARBON FOOTPRINT!

AND DID YOU PURCHASE A CARBON OFFSET?