

December 19, 2011

**[Charles Krauthammer](#)** answers the president's bin Laden bragging by showing his appeasement of Russia and Iran.

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*However, the bin Laden case was no test of policy. No serious person of either party ever suggested negotiation or concession. Obama demonstrated decisiveness, but forgoing a non-option says nothing about the soundness of one's foreign policy. That comes into play when there are choices to be made.*

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In honor of our bug-out we have three posts by **[Max Boot](#)** on events in Iraq. Here's most of one.

*Those were some pretty astonishing statements that President Obama made after his meeting in Washington with Prime Minister Maliki of Iraq: He [said that](#) "what we have now achieved is an Iraq that is self-governing, that is inclusive and that has enormous potential."*

*Only the last part of that sentence is true: Iraq does have "enormous potential"—both good and bad. It could become another opulent petrostate—or it could revert to a hellish state of civil war. Either is possible at this point because Iraq is only barely "self-governing" and its government is acting in ways that are less "inclusive" all the time—witness Maliki's arrest of more than 600 people on vague charges of "Baathism."*

*Obama's happy talk is seriously at odds with reality—and I'm sure Obama knows it. He is only attempting to put his abandonment of Iraq in the best possible light.*

*In the process he is taking an enormous gamble, not only with the security of Iraq, the United States, and the entire Middle East but also with his own historical reputation. True, the pullout from Iraq is popular today. It won't be so popular a year or two from now if the result of the U.S. pullout is greater instability or tyranny. Obama will then shoulder the bulk of the blame for messing up the end game of a war that he never supported. ...*

**Bart Hinkle** found some hypocrites in Fairfax County.

*You can't get a whole lot more Democratic than Fairfax County, just outside of D.C. Barack Obama carried Fairfax 60-38 against John McCain in 2008. That's 6 percentage points higher than Obama's statewide margin, which Fairfax helped inflate because it is the commonwealth's largest locality: 13.5 percent of Virginians live there. Four years before, George W. Bush carried Virginia with 54 percent of the vote — but not Fairfax, where John Kerry got 53 percent.*

*The county board of supervisors reflects the split as well. Seven of the 10 members are Democrats. That makes its recent stance on state government rather amusing.*

*Each year localities around Virginia draw up their wish lists for the General Assembly session that convenes in January. Virginia is a Dillon Rule state, which means that localities are under the thumb of state government and must go hat in hand to the legislature to get permission to do many things. Fairfax recently completed its wish list for the 2012 session.*

*And what do the supervisors want from Richmond? "I think the simple message is, 'Please try to leave us alone,' " says Supervisor Jeff McKay.*

*How very tea party of them. Perhaps Fairfax should replace its county seal with the Gadsden flag — that yellow banner, popular at tea party rallies, with the coiled snake and the legend, "Don't Tread on Me." ...*

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*Americans, say liberals, cannot be left to their own devices. So it is entertaining to watch a locality where such an ideology defines the political center — Fairfax is a bedroom community for federal bureaucrats — chafe under the very sort of paternalism it otherwise endorses.*

*There's a lesson in that. Even people who benefit from big government love it less when they have to live under it.*

Now that we are heading to energy independence, the liberal left is attacking natural gas; the fuel they used to love. Their real goal is for our country to be weak.

[American.com](http://American.com) has the story.

*Just a few years ago, the liberal Pew Center of Global Climate Change, among many environmental groups, was [heralding natural gas](#) as a “bridge fuel to a more climate friendly energy supply”—an interim step on the transition from fossil fuels to wind and solar. Now, “progressive” environmental groups demonize natural gas, and shale gas in particular, as a [“bridge to nowhere.”](#) What’s the real story behind the flip-flop?*

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*That won’t change the facts in the ground. Natural gas is no longer the bridge to the future. It IS the future—unless “progressives” kill it.*

Indulging in some over-the-top hyperbole, [Richard Salsman](#) points out that “takers” like Gingrich and Obama are attacking the “maker” Romney.

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## Washington Post

### The wages of appeasement

by Charles Krauthammer

*“Ask Osama bin Laden . . . whether I engage in appeasement.”*

— Barack Obama, Dec. 8

Fair enough. Barack Obama didn't appease Osama bin Laden. He killed him. And for ordering the raid and taking the risk, Obama deserves credit. Credit for decisiveness and political courage.

However, the bin Laden case was no test of policy. No serious person of either party ever suggested negotiation or concession. Obama demonstrated decisiveness, but forgoing a non-option says nothing about the soundness of one's foreign policy. That comes into play when there are choices to be made.

And here the story is different. Take Obama's two major foreign policy initiatives — toward Russia and Iran.

The administration came into office determined to warm relations with Russia. It was called “reset,” an antidote to the “dangerous drift” (Vice President Biden's phrase) in relations during the Bush years.

In fact, Bush's increasing coolness toward Russia was grounded in certain unpleasant realities: growing Kremlin authoritarianism that was systematically dismantling a fledgling democracy; naked aggression against a small, vulnerable, pro-American state (Georgia); the drive to reestablish a Russian sphere of influence in the near-abroad and; support, from Syria to Venezuela, of the world's more ostentatiously anti-American regimes.

Unmoored from such inconvenient realities, Obama went about his reset. The signature decision was the abrupt cancellation of a Polish- and Czech-based U.S. missile defense system bitterly opposed by Moscow.

The cancellation deeply undercut two very pro-American allies who had aligned themselves with Washington in the face of both Russian threats and popular unease. Obama not only left them twisting in the wind, he showed the world that the Central Europeans' hard-won independence was only partial and tentative. With American acquiescence, their ostensibly sovereign decisions were subject to a Russian veto.

This major concession, together with a New START treaty far more needed by Russia than America, was supposed to ease U.S.-Russia relations, assuage Russian opposition to missile defense and enlist its assistance in stopping Iran's nuclear program.

Three years in, how is that reset working out? The Russians are back on the warpath about missile defense. They're denouncing the watered-down Obama substitute. They threaten not only to target any Europe-based U.S. missile defenses but also to install offensive missiles in

Kaliningrad. They threaten additionally to withdraw from START, which the administration had touted as a great foreign policy achievement.

As for assistance on Iran, Moscow has thwarted us at every turn, weakening or blocking resolution after resolution. And now, when even the International Atomic Energy Agency has testified to Iran's nuclear ambitions, Russia declares that it will oppose any new sanctions.

Finally, adding contempt to mere injury, Vladimir Putin responded to recent anti-government demonstrations by unleashing a crude Soviet-style attack on America as the secret power behind the protests. Putin personally accused Secretary of State Hillary Clinton of sending "a signal" that activated internal spies and other agents of imperial America.

Such are the wages of appeasement. Makes one pine for mere "drift."

Even worse has been Obama's vaunted "engagement" with Iran. He began his presidency apologetically acknowledging U.S. involvement in a coup that happened more than 50 years ago. He then offered bilateral negotiations that, predictably, failed miserably. Most egregiously, he adopted a studied and scandalous neutrality during the popular revolution of 2009, a near-miraculous opportunity — now lost — for regime change.

Obama imagined that his silver tongue and exquisite sensitivity to Islam would persuade the mullahs to give up their weapons program. Amazingly, they resisted his charms, choosing instead to become a nuclear power. The negotiations did nothing but confer legitimacy on the regime at its point of maximum vulnerability (and savagery), as well as give it time for further uranium enrichment and bomb development.

For his exertions, Obama earned (a) continued lethal Iranian assistance to guerrillas killing Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan, (b) a [plot to assassinate the Saudi ambassador](#) by blowing up a Washington restaurant, (c) the announcement just this week by a member of parliament of Iranian naval exercises to shut down the Strait of Hormuz, and (d) undoubted Chinese and Russian access to a captured U.S. drone for the copying and countering of its high-tech secrets.

How did Obama answer that one?

On Monday, he politely asked for the drone back.

On Tuesday, with Putin-like contempt, Iran demanded that Obama apologize instead. "Obama begs Iran to give him back his toy plane," reveled the semiofficial Fars News Agency.

Just a few hours earlier, Secretary Clinton asserted yet again that "we want to see the Iranians engage. . . . We are not giving up on it."

Blessed are the cheek-turners. But do these people have no limit?

## Contentions

### [Obama's Happy Talk Doesn't Change Iraq Reality](#)

by Max Boot

Those were some pretty astonishing statements that President Obama made after his meeting in Washington with Prime Minister Maliki of Iraq: He [said that](#) “what we have now achieved is an Iraq that is self-governing, that is inclusive and that has enormous potential.”

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Obama’s happy talk is seriously at odds with reality—and I’m sure Obama knows it. He is only attempting to put his abandonment of Iraq in the best possible light.

In the process he is taking an enormous gamble, not only with the security of Iraq, the United States, and the entire Middle East but also with his own historical reputation. True, the pullout from Iraq is popular today. It won’t be so popular a year or two from now if the result of the U.S. pullout is greater instability or tyranny. Obama will then shoulder the bulk of the blame for messing up the end game of a war that he never supported.

I hope Obama’s optimism is vindicated. I really do. But there are many troubling signs which suggest that his statements this week could be remembered much as George W. Bush’s proclamation of “Mission Accomplished” is today.

For more see these excellent articles [by K2](#) (that would be Fred and Kim Kagan) and by the *Washington Post* [editors](#).

## Contentions

### [“See No Evil” Attitude Toward Iraq](#)

by Max Boot

There is a sharp counterpoint to the happy talk between President Obama and [Iraqi Prime Minister](#) al-Maliki at the White House. It comes from Deputy Prime Minister Salah al-Mutlaq, a leading Sunni politician who was part of the Iraqiya party which won more votes than al-Maliki’s Dawa party in the last election. In an [interview](#) with CNN, he warns that al-Maliki is becoming a new “dictator”:

“The political process is going in a very wrong direction, going toward a dictatorship,” he said. “People are not going to accept that, and most likely they are going to ask for the division of the country. And this is going to be a disaster. Dividing the country isn’t going to be smooth, because dividing the country is going to be a war before that and a war after that”....

He said U.S. officials, who brokered the power-sharing deal, either “don’t know anything in Iraq and they don’t know what is happening in Iraq, or because they don’t want to admit the reality in Iraq, the failure in Iraq, the failure of this political process that they set in Iraq.”

Perhaps Mutlaq is being hyperbolic; but his words carry weight because of his considerable influence and standing in Iraqi politics. And they reflect the views of other Sunni leaders. Whether they are over-reacting or not doesn't matter: Their words can become a self-fulfilling prophecy if Sunnis decide to once again take up arms against the government. They also serve as a harsh indictment of the Obama administration, which is taking a "see no evil" attitude toward this strategically important country.

## Contentions

### Political Breakdown in Iraq

by Max Boot

Those of us who had been in favor of a continuing U.S. troop presence in Iraq had warned that these forces were a vital stabilizing force in Iraq's turbulent politics. It gives me no pleasure to be proven right. For no sooner have U.S. troops been [withdrawn](#) (the final convoy crossed the Kuwait border yesterday), then Iraqi politics were plunged into a fresh crisis.

Sunni politicians are accusing the domineering Shiite prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, of sending his security forces to arrest their aides and target them. In protest, the Iraqiya coalition, the top vote getter in Iraq's last election, has announced a boycott of parliament. As the Iraq analyst Reidar Vissar [notes](#), rumors are rampant the crisis will escalate because of "unprecedented statements by people close to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki that a move is afoot to withdraw confidence in Deputy Premier Salih al-Mutlak of Iraqiyya (on charges of incompetence) and to bring legal charges against Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi, also of Iraqiyya, for alleged involvement in the recent terror attack against the Iraqi parliament."

Meanwhile, the Sunni-dominated provincial council in Diyala province is [demanding autonomy](#) from Baghdad. Other provinces are threatening to follow suit—demands that have already resulted in clashes between police and Shiite demonstrators in Diyala and could well result in the use of deadly force.

American leaders including Ambassador Jim Jeffrey and [Vice President Biden](#) are reportedly making phone calls to try to mediate the conflict and avert a complete breakdown of politics. But the odds of a breakdown, and a reversion to civil war, are going up by the day—and all because of the premature and irresponsible withdrawal of American military forces.

## Richmond Times-Dispatch

### Democratic Fairfax embraces its inner tea party

by A. Barton Hinkle

You can't get a whole lot more Democratic than Fairfax County, just outside of D.C. Barack Obama carried Fairfax 60-38 against John McCain in 2008. That's 6 percentage points higher than Obama's statewide margin, which Fairfax helped inflate because it is the commonwealth's largest locality: 13.5 percent of Virginians live there. Four years before, George W. Bush carried Virginia with 54 percent of the vote — but not Fairfax, where John Kerry got 53 percent.

The county board of supervisors reflects the split as well. Seven of the 10 members are Democrats. That makes its recent stance on state government rather amusing.

Each year localities around Virginia draw up their wish lists for the General Assembly session that convenes in January. Virginia is a Dillon Rule state, which means that localities are under the thumb of state government and must go hat in hand to the legislature to get permission to do many things. Fairfax recently completed its wish list for the 2012 session.

And what do the supervisors want from Richmond? "I think the simple message is, 'Please try to leave us alone,' " says Supervisor Jeff McKay.

How very tea party of them. Perhaps Fairfax should replace its county seal with the Gadsden flag — that yellow banner, popular at tea party rallies, with the coiled snake and the legend, "Don't Tread on Me."

That's not the only way in which heavily Democratic Fairfax sounds sympathetic to the tea party rabble. Like those grassroots conservatives in tricorner hats, the county also thinks it is Taxed Enough Already.

Fairfax is one of the richest counties in America. With a median household income in six figures, it comes in second only to the nation's richest county, next-door Loudoun. And yet, as reported recently in *The Washington Post*, the county's wish list "includes other perennial desires: that Northern Virginia taxpayers see more of the money they send to Richmond, for example."

"Overall, the county would be pleased if the Virginia General Assembly would stop using Northern Virginia as its piggy bank," continues *The Post*. Translation: Fairfax does not want to "spread the wealth around," as Barack Obama put it to Joe the Plumber. But wait — Obama says spreading the wealth around is "good for everybody." Does the county disagree?

When asked why he robbed banks, Willie Sutton famously replied that that's where the money is. Same goes for Northern Virginia: The heavily populated, high-income region generates a big chunk of the state's wealth. Where else should legislators look for revenue — Pearisburg (population 2,700, median household income \$40,000)?

What happened to making the rich pay their fair share?

Dig deeper into the county's wish list and you find other gems. It wants more state aid to localities, and opposes any funding cuts ("erosions of the social safety net") that might leave localities on the hook for Medicaid costs. Translation: Let's have lots of health care, paid for by someone else. There's limousine liberalism in a nutshell. As George Mason University's Bryan Caplan once explained, "The wealthy but uncharitable socialist ceases to be a mystery once you understand relative prices. Voluntary charity is costly to the giver, but voting for charity ... is virtually free."

The supervisors also want to prohibit protests at funerals. They support efforts to fight global warming by mandating cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. They want the power to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. They also oppose the push to protect property owners from eminent-domain abuse.

In brief, then, Fairfax officials are eager to order other people about. They just don't want to take any orders from Richmond. Unfortunately, the Dillon Rule says they have to.



Funny thing about that rule. It was named after John Forrest Dillon, an Iowa Supreme Court justice back in the Tammany Hall era who thought little of local government. He believed that "those best fitted by their intelligence, business experience, capacity and moral character" did not generally enter local government. So local governments needed close watching.

That's not wildly different from how much of contemporary liberalism looks at ordinary citizens. In the eyes of contemporary liberalism everyday Americans need the firm guidance of their liberal betters lest they make poor choices or, through their choices, produce results liberals dislike, such as unbridled commerce or economic disparity.

Americans, say liberals, cannot be left to their own devices. So it is entertaining to watch a locality where such an ideology defines the political center – Fairfax is a bedroom community for federal bureaucrats – chafe under the very sort of paternalism it otherwise endorses.

There's a lesson in that. Even people who benefit from big government love it less when they have to live under it.

### **American .com**

#### **[Three factors behind the 'progressive' flip-flop on shale gas, the Left's new Public Enemy #1](#)**

by Jon Entine

Just a few years ago, the liberal Pew Center of Global Climate Change, among many environmental groups, was [heralding natural gas](#) as a "bridge fuel to a more climate friendly energy supply"—an interim step on the transition from fossil fuels to wind and solar. Now, "progressive" environmental groups demonize natural gas, and shale gas in particular, as a "[bridge to nowhere](#)." What's the real story behind the flip-flop?

An investigative piece in Ethical Corporation magazine, "[Who Blew Up the 'Bridge to the Future](#)," examines the troubling truth behind the turnaround.

(1) Technology: With the discovery around the world of vast reserves of shale gas and advances in fracking technology, natural gas is no longer a diminishing resource. The [International Energy Agency](#) estimates there is quarter of a millennium's worth of cheap shale gas in the world based on current energy consumption. Meanwhile, advances in solar and wind technology have slowed, and they are increasingly seen as fool's gold from a cost/benefit perspective.

(2) Media and NGO Manipulation: Many media organizations who often work hand in hand with hard Left environmental groups—the usually venerable New York Times comes to mind—have taken on the role of advocates, cherry picking questionable studies to promote an anti-fracking narrative. The anti-shale gas mindset has gotten so pervasive that The New York Times' public editor has [twice taken its own reporters to task](#) for [channeling anti-fracking propaganda](#).

(3) Money: While the NYT runs a [front-page exposé](#) of industry support for shale gas exploration and production, it ignores the far more explosive story of the money fueling much of the media coverage and even backing anti-fracking research scientists. The [Park Foundation](#), an environmental philanthropy based in Ithaca, New York and tied to Cornell, has poured more

than \$6 million over the past two years into supporting groups that only provide one side of the shale gas story.

This soft conspiracy is troubling. Perhaps even more concerning, while a range of independent researchers from across the ideological spectrum have found shale gas to be environmentally safer than coal or oil, one Park funded researcher at Cornell, Robert Howarth, who has no previous research background in this area, [reached an opposite conclusion](#), calling natural gas dirtier than coal or oil. Many media outlets, the NYT's in particular, have almost exclusively promoted his study and ignored the consensus research (including by the [Environmental Defense Fund](#) and the [Natural Resources Defense Council](#), and a [sharp rebuttal](#) by Howarth's own colleagues at Cornell.)

The most intriguing question lying ahead is whether politics—the ideological forces lining up against unconventional sources of natural gas—will trump the science. Anti-shale gas advocacy groups are forging bizarre alliances, including with the Russians and the Iranians who thought they were going to corner the gas market in the coming decades.

That won't change the facts in the ground. Natural gas is no longer the bridge to the future. It IS the future—unless “progressives” kill it.

## **Forbes**

### **[Why Do Takers Like Obama and Gingrich Attack Makers Like Romney?](#)**

Despite decades of economic experience and personal familiarity with the logic of market exchange, many people today still sympathize with the myth that free markets left to their own devices are prone to periodic “failures,” breakdowns, or crises, while government intervention, money-printing, and wealth redistribution allegedly “stimulate” an economy or “smooth” the business cycle. Few myths are more harmful, since the precise opposite is true: markets left free (while operating under the rule of law) work very well and create vast wealth, while state spending, taxing, regulating, borrowing and inflating only usurp economic vitality.

A simple and memorable way to keep straight the crucial distinction between “economic power” (the power to produce) and “political power” (the power to coerce) is by a terminological duality – “makers” versus takers” – as incorporated in Edmund Contoski's 1997 book. Despite persistent Marxist claims dating as far back as 1848, these two powers (the economic and political) are in no way synonymous. Indeed, they're antonymous.

Economic power is creative, productive, and voluntary; it offers incentives, gains, rewards. Political power is destructive and involuntary; you must obey it, for it imposes punishments, losses, and penalties. This is no brief for anarchy, as many libertarians insist; it's a case for government limited constitutionally to undertaking its only valid purpose – the protection of individual rights (including property rights) against the initiation of force or fraud (whether from home or abroad) – and whose power is limited to penalizing, incarcerating or destroying real criminals (those who rape, rob, pillage, kill, or defraud), not market makers.

Although this distinction was well-understood by America's founders (especially by Hamiltonian Federalists, who both respected property rights and opposed slavery), although it was incorporated in the original U.S. political system, and although it fostered a 19th Century of fast-spreading abundance and liberty, the distinction is now almost wholly lost on most people. By now we've had a century of premises and policies at odds with those of the original system, so

that now people blithely conflate economic and political power and can't tell the difference between capitalism (a free economy) and corporatism (a mixed economy).

In the first century of U.S. history citizens enjoyed the leadership of genuine statesmen – the wise, temperate, moral, and competent – largely because government was restricted to its only proper function; it was an age hospitable to wealth-makers, while the would-be takers of wealth were effectively handcuffed. In contrast, over the past century of U.S. history Americans have suffered under the corrupt machinations of politicians – the demagogic, hubristic, venal and incompetent – precisely because government's role has been extended far beyond its proper functions into illegitimate ones; the recent age has been hostile to wealth-makers yet lucrative to wealth-takers and pull-peddlers. Today statists reign with impunity and handcuff wealth-makers. Meantime, lengthy political careers are erected by audacious takings – and few people seem bothered by this.

Recent political squabbles illustrate the confusions people have. President Obama, who got most of his 2008 campaign funds from millionaires and billionaires on [Wall Street](#) and at hedge funds, and voted for the TARP bailout just a month before winning the presidency, has since only intensified his demagoguery, denouncing “fat cats” while repeatedly playing the “class warfare” card. Mr. Obama's vile strategy seems heartily endorsed by many Americans, for despite his horrendous record of actual governance, most opinion polls this year consistently say that Obama will beat any likely GOP rival in 2012. Mr. Obama himself has accumulated millions, but not really from the private sector; he got them from sales of two badly (and ghost-?) written autobiographies that flew off the shelves only because he sought and won high political office.

Consider next the case of Jon Corzine, an avid Obama ally and fellow class-warrior with a history of both being rich and brow-beating the rich politically. Corzine headed the politically-connected Goldman Sachs, then became a U.S. Senator, then New Jersey's Governor, and then, after a political defeat, re-entered the private sector – political ties and cronies in tow. He headed [MF Global](#) for just 19 months before driving it into bankruptcy; now he declares ignorance about the vanishing of \$1.2 billion in segregated client funds. Corzine's resume reveals him more as a taker than a maker; politically, he always demands more taxes from makers. He could be the poster child for cronyism and corporatism. If what he's suspected of doing at MF Global he really did, he'd be jailed for years. Don't count on it. Corzine leans left, so he'll likely be left free.

Finally, take the case of Newt Gingrich, who despite posing earlier as the sober GOP candidate who'd run a positive campaign and wouldn't trash his GOP rivals, this week chose to trash one of them: Mitt Romney, the only genuine wealth-maker among the entire GOP bunch. For context, note that when Gingrich first won a House seat in 1978 he was making a mere \$10,000 a year; he went on to win nine more terms, the last couple as Speaker of the House (1995-1999). In 1994, the year before he became Speaker, Gingrich reported annual income of \$675,000 a year – or many multiples of his official salary. In 1999 Gingrich was forced to resign from the GOP-controlled House and as Speaker, after being disciplined for wrongdoing (with a lop-sided vote of 395-28) and paying a \$300,000 fine; it was the first time in U.S. history a Speaker was disciplined for ethical wrongdoing.

By the time Gingrich left as Speaker in 1999 – as a so-called public servant - his net worth had grown to astounding \$7.5 million. What possible market value did Gingrich produce to attain such net worth while occupying political office?

Since leaving public office in 1999 Mr. Gingrich has accumulated millions more by peddling his political influence with in-office Republicans, pushing for the destructive policy preferences of pharmaceutical firms, Wall Street banks, [Freddie Mac](#), and the environmentalists. Now Gingrich wants to be president and, according to polls, religious conservatives simply adore him. They don't mind that Gingrich is an inveterate sinner; they're impressed that he so frequently seeks the Christian white-wash/hogwash of "forgiveness." Gingrich is a taker, not a maker – but even worse, as he lacks the decency to refrain from assaulting makers.

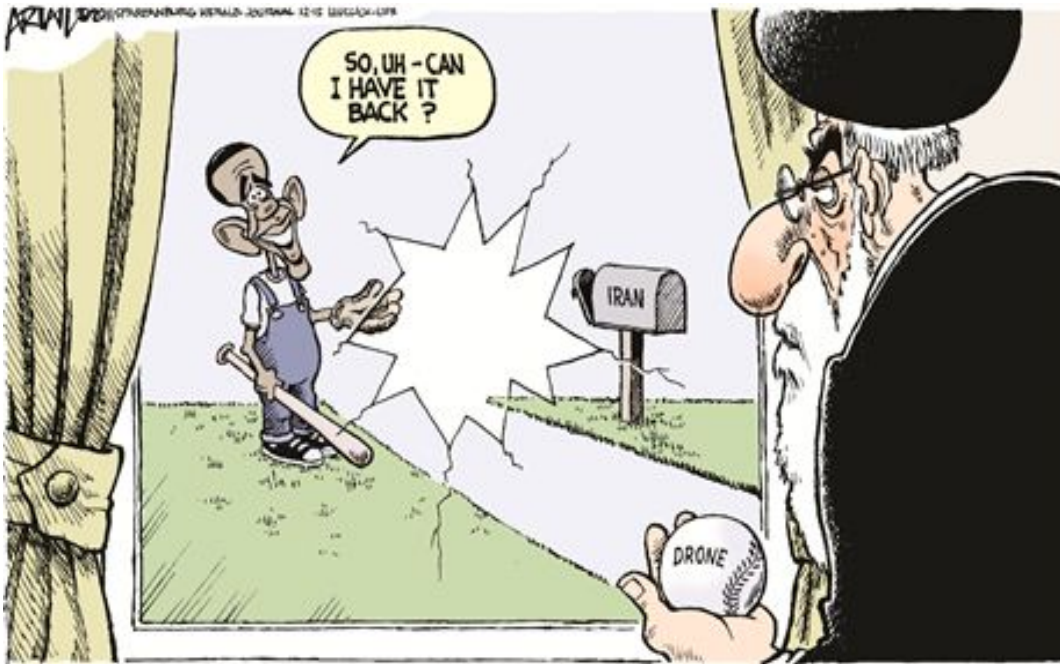
Mitt Romney, in contrast, has been a genuine creator-maker of wealth who earned his millions honestly and productively, first as a management consultant and then as a venture capitalist. After earning graduate-level degrees at Harvard Law and Harvard Business School, for decades he worked for [Boston](#) Consulting Group (BCG) and Bain Capital in Boston. As a venture capitalist he helped finance, grow and restructure under-performing or failing firms, the most famous being Accuride, Brookstone, Domino's Pizza, Sealy Corp, Sports Authority, [Staples](#) and Artisan Entertainment. In some case layoffs were necessary to the process, but on the whole and long-term, Bain-backed firms under Romney made money, grew rapidly and expanded employment.

Romney ran unsuccessfully in 1994 trying to defeat incumbent Senator and liberal icon Ted Kennedy, but was elected Governor of Massachusetts for one term (2003-2007); in December 2005 Romney announced he wouldn't seek re-election because he'd run for the GOP nomination for president in 2007-2008. Mr. Romney's current net worth is estimated at \$50-100 million – and there's no evidence that he made any material sum of money due to his position in elected office (beyond his official salary).

This year Romney has been right to lambaste career politicians, from both parties, and attributing to them much of the blame for America's current sorry state. He is especially justified in criticizing career-long takers like Gingrich. Asked recently whether Gingrich should give back the \$1.6 million he took from Freddie Mac for promoting taxpayer-backed sub-prime mortgages during the George W. Bush years, Romney said yes. He reminded the interviewer that Gingrich himself, in debates, had called for jail terms for those like Rep. Barney Frank and Sen. Chris Dodd who actively enabled Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and thus made possible the residential mortgage debacle, the home-price collapse and the financial crisis of 2008-2009. Yet somehow Gingrich believes himself to be immune from any blame. In retort, he said "If Governor Romney would like to give back all the money he has earned from bankrupting companies and laying off employees during his years at Bain Capital, then I'd be glad to listen to him." In a debate a few days earlier, trying to defend his life as a career politician, Gingrich ridiculed Romney by saying the only reason he too wasn't a career politician is that he failed in 1994 to defeat 32-year incumbent Ted Kennedy in a senatorial race.

That Gingrich would equate his record of taking with Romney's record of making is truly despicable. This is a career-long taker of wealth viciously and shamelessly assaulting a career-long maker of wealth, to the glee and applause of GOP conservatives, Barack Obama and the liberal media alike. This is Newt Gingrich the demagogue, assaulting Mitt Romney the epitome of a good, productive capitalist. Indeed, this is the same smear campaign run against Mitt Romney by Ted Kennedy in 1994. Newt Gingrich is a corrupt, unprincipled power-luster who'll say anything and take any position necessary to attain high office, and if he can't do that, he seeks to take wealth by selling his access to political offices.

Nothing reveals more the deep rot within the GOP itself than the fact that its conservatives-evangelicals so despise wealth-makers like Mitt Romney and so sympathize with wealth-takers like Ted Kennedy, Barack Obama and Newt Gingrich.



*"No texting! No talking! No eating!  
No shaving! No singing! No music! No . . . ."*

