

Obama Wins – and Loses

✘ Liberals don't really believe America is all that exceptional. But they apparently are convinced that Barack Obama is.

How else to explain his victory? How could any politician win with such a dismal record?

During his entire term unemployment has been chronically high. Economic growth has been chronically low.

A majority of Americans think the country is on the wrong track.

President Obama went on a four year spending binge, racking up more than \$5 trillion dollars in new debt.

Instead of trying to fix the economy he spent the first two years of his presidency trying to get his mug on Mt. Rushmore by shoving ObamaCare down our throats at a time when we can't afford great big entitlements.

By any rational political standard, Barack Obama's first term was anything but a success.

And still he won – not by bringing the country together as he promised, but by dividing us, by stoking envy, by concocting a phony war on women, a phony war on seniors, by running a campaign that tried to convince voters that Mitt Romney was a greedy plutocrat who didn't give a damn about anybody who doesn't own a yacht. It probably worked.

He did it with a coalition of liberals who had no problem ignoring the nation's economic reality; with Americans who don't believe they can make it on their own so they embrace the nanny state; and he won because his faithful followers don't even see him as a politician. To them, he is, as Brent Stephens put it in the Wall Street Journal, "our first cult-

of-personality president.”

Liberals really do see him as a kind of messiah, as conservatives are fond of pointing out. They see him as someone different from all the others who came before him. And there were enough of them who voted to give him a second term.

Romney helped too. After he handily won the first debate he tried to run out the clock. He didn't bring up Benghazi in the foreign affairs debate. He should have. Playing it safe was not safe, as things turned out. Then there was Chris Christie's embrace of President Obama after Sandy hit New Jersey. No, the Republican governor (and keynote speaker at the GOP convention) didn't endorse the president. But it's a safe bet that it came off that way to independents and undecided voters.

But if Barack Obama won, he also lost. If he thinks he inherited a mess when he took office four years ago, wait till he gets a load of the mess he inherited this time around.

Barack Obama's future is in his past. There's a good chance we'll get more economic stagnation, a continuation of the weakest recovery at least since World War II.

And the president – with the aid of his friends in the so-called mainstream media – may have dodged a bullet on Benghazi, but the issue will not go away. It will haunt the president in his second term. He got away with covering up whatever happened until after the election, but now it's after the election.

As for the GOP, the Civil War for the soul of the party is about to break out. I'll write about this in my next column.

In Case You've Forgotten

✘ During Monday's Presidential debate on foreign policy, Governor Romney reminded us of President Obama's apology tour in 2009. As if I could forget it! (By the way, that's President Obama bowing to the King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia although the spin was that he tripped...)

Just in case you've forgotten, here's a sampling of our President's apologies to the world for America.

Just one week after his inauguration, the President chose Arab television, Al Arabiya, to give his first sit-down interview and said "... America was not born as a colonial power," he told the Arab viewing audience – implying we are now. And he regretfully confessed, "We sometimes make mistakes. We are not perfect."

At the G-20 Summit in London, he said, "I would like to think that with my election and the early decisions that we've made, that you're starting to see some restoration of America's standing in the world."

A day later in Strasbourg, he said, "There have been times where America has shown arrogance and been dismissive, even derisive." And further said, "I believe in American exceptionalism, just as I suspect that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism." In other words, no country is truly exceptional.

Apologizing for "certain interrogation practices," he said in that same speech, "I don't believe that there is a contradiction between our security and our values. And when you start sacrificing your values, when you lose yourself,

then over the long term that will make you less secure" implying that we had lost our way.

How about when he spoke in Ankara in April 2009 and said, "The United States is still working through some of our own darker periods in our history."

Then, during the same month, in Trinidad and Tobago, he said, "While the United States has done much to promote peace and prosperity in the hemisphere, we have at times been disengaged, and at times we sought to dictate our terms."

In 2010, the President, apparently embarrassed by our country's exceptionalism, refused to allow our flag to fly in Haiti after its horrific earthquake even though France's, Britain's and Croatia's flags flapped in the wind and even though our contributions dwarfed the rest of the world's.

Then, of course, you have the President in May apologizing to Mexican President Calderon when he said Arizona's Immigration Law was "a misdirected expression of frustration."

Also in May, during talks about human rights with China, of all countries, the State Department raised examples of problems on American soil and cited Arizona's Immigration Law as an example of "racial discrimination."

Was President Obama apologizing for the U.S. bombing of Hiroshima when he sent the U.S. Ambassador to Japan to the 65th anniversary of the attack in August of 2010, something no other President had ever done?

And, let's not forget his backing of the Ground Zero mosque, basically apologizing for the 70% of Americans who oppose the building of it at that location.

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.

Missing in Action: Stimulus Sheriff Joe Biden

☒ Remember when President Obama bragged about Joe Biden's fiscal discipline cred in 2009? "To you, he's Mr. Vice President, but around the White House, we call him the Sheriff," Obama warned government employees. "Because if you're misusing taxpayer money, you'll have to answer to him."

Fast-forward to 2012. Call in the search teams. Since being appointed the nation's stimulus spending cop, Sheriff Joe has taken a permanent donut break. He's AWOL on oversight. In fact, he's been bubble-wrapped, boxed and kept completely out of sight. The garrulous gaffe machine hasn't sat down for a national media interview in five months.

The Democrats' trillion-dollar "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act," however, keeps piling up waste, failure, fraud and debt. Who benefited most? Big government cronies.

According to Investor's Business Daily this week, a new analysis by Ohio State University economics professor Bill Dupor reported that "(m)ore than three-quarters of the jobs created or saved by President Obama's economic stimulus in the first year were in government."

Dupor and another colleague had earlier concluded that the porkulus was a predictable jobs-killer that crowded out non-government jobs with make-work public jobs and programs. Indeed, the massive wealth redistribution scheme "destroyed/forestalled roughly one million private sector jobs" by siphoning tax dollars "to offset state revenue shortfalls and Medicaid increases rather than boost private sector employment."

Will this Keynesian wreckage come up during Thursday night's vice presidential debate? It should be a centerpiece of domestic policy discussion. Nowhere is the gulf between Obama/Biden rhetoric and reality on jobs wider.

Remember: Obama's Ivy League eggheads behind the stimulus promised that "(m)ore than 90 percent of the jobs created are likely to be in the private sector." These are the same feckless economic advisers who infamously vowed that the stimulus would keep unemployment below 8 percent – and that unemployment would drop below 6 percent sometime this year.

Sheriff Joe rebuked the "naysayers" who decried the behemoth stimulus program's waste, fraud and abuse. "You know what? They were wrong," he crowed.

But Biden was radio silent about the nearly 4,000 stimulus recipients who received \$24 billion in Recovery Act funds – while owing more than \$750 million in unpaid corporate, payroll and other taxes. (Cash for Tax Cheats, anyone?)

He had nothing to say about the \$6 billion in stimulus energy credits for homeowners that went to nearly a third of credit-claimers who had no record of homeownership, including minors and prisoners.

And the \$530 million dumped into the profligate Detroit public schools for laptops and other computer equipment that have had little, if any, measurable academic benefits.

And the whopping \$6.7 billion cost per job under the \$50 billion stimulus-funded green energy loan program – which funded politically connected but now bankrupt solar firms Solyndra (\$535 million), Abound Solar (\$400 million), Beacon Power (\$43 million), A123 (\$250 million) and Ener1 (\$119 million).

And the \$1 million in stimulus cash that went to Big Bird and Sesame Street "to promote healthy eating," which created a

theoretical “1.47” jobs. (As Sean Higgins of The Examiner noted, “(T)hat comes out to about \$726,000 per job created.”)

And the hundreds of millions in stimulus money steered to General Services Administrations junkets in Las Vegas and Hawaii, ghost congressional districts, dead people, infrastructure to nowhere and ubiquitous stimulus propaganda road signs stamped with the shovel-ready logo.

Of course, there’s no example of unfettered stimulus squandering more fitting than the one named after Keystone Fiscal Kop Joe Biden himself. Government-funded Amtrak’s Wilmington, Del., station raked in \$20 million in “recovery” money after heavy personal lobbying by the state’s most prominent customer and cheerleader. In return, the station (which came in \$6 million over budget, according to The Washington Times) renamed its facility after Biden.

Bloated costs. Crony political narcissism. Glaring conflicts of interest. Monumental waste. This is the Obama/Biden stimulus legacy bequeathed to our children and their grandchildren. Sheriff Joe and his plundering boss need to be run out of town on a rail.

You May Be a Racist If...

✘ Just about every week I see a headline where someone is calling someone else a racist. It’s boring, tedious, and tiresome. Those that bandy around the “R” word are just intellectually challenged. First, they probably don’t even know the meaning of the word “racist” and, second, it’s much easier to stop a conversation in its tracks by calling someone a name (like many of us probably did on the playground when we were 7 years old) than trying to get your point across in a

coherent, succinct, meaningful dialogue.

Of course you're a "racist" if you don't like President Obama's policies. That's where my reference to boring, tedious and tiresome comes in.

Next, I remember reading years ago some nonsense that it was "racist" to teach students how to balance a checkbook because it wasn't part of their life experience at home. Although I don't, I do know plenty of people who rely on their banks to keep their balances through online banking. But when did simple adding and subtracting become "racist"? Even if you don't have a checking account, you're still buying stuff. If you go to McDonalds and the cashier says, "that'll be \$6.39" and you hand them a \$10 bill, the cashier presses the right buttons and comes up with \$3.61 change. Don't you count the change when it's handed to you? I certainly do.

Currently, there's the big brouhaha going on about Voter IDs. Requiring people to have photo IDs is somehow "racist." I don't get this at all. We carry IDs when we travel on airplanes, we carry IDs in our vehicles, and you even had to have a photo ID to watch Mrs. Obama autograph her book *American Grown: The Story of the White House Kitchen Garden and Gardens Across America*. This summer, Eric Holder, speaking at a NAACP conference said that the Texas voter ID law is "racist" but, yet, it was reported that the NAACP required all media in attendance to present a "government-issued photo I.D. (such as a driver's license) as well as valid media credentials." Does that make Mrs. Obama and the NAACP racist? I don't think so. It makes security a top priority. I don't understand why providing proof of citizenship and that you're a registered voter is racist and not merely insuring that those entitled to vote are voting and those not entitled to vote are not voting. It's that simple.

Then there's the website MEDIAite's report on a Mitt Romney political sign, "Obama's Not Working." Well, to me that's

about as straightforward as it comes. But the far left ignores Mr. Obama's lack of leadership and chooses, instead, to deflect those shortcomings by playing the race card at every opportunity. Here's what they had to say, "The slogan is a multiple entendre, but one of those entendres, intentionally or not, is evocative of a nasty racial stereotype about black men." Can you believe this garbage?

Well, I thought I'd seen enough of the "R" word until my husband recently sent me a link to an article with the headline, "'White Privilege'? Portland Principal Claims PB&J Sandwiches Could Hold Racist Connotations." When I first read it, I actually thought it was a joke. I went to the truthorfiction.com and snopes.com websites to make sure this wasn't made up.

In the article, the principal, Verenice Gutierrez, says that "using the example of a peanut butter sandwich in classroom lessons is technically a problematic and discriminatory move...What about Somali or Hispanic students, who might not eat sandwiches?"

Is this nonsense ever going to end? This is still the United States. If someone living in this country can't wrap their head around the fact that Americans eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, then I have to say politely, "please leave."

Right now, I'm following the adventures of family friends who decided to move to Uganda with their two children to do what I would consider missionary work with a Christian organization. Their children are the only two white students in their classes. They've posted on their website their meals and activities and never once did either the mother or father claim that their village is racist because they're not providing "American"-style food to them. The family has completely immersed themselves in the culture and they're excited to be a part of it all.

In my own experience, I've never traveled in a foreign country and asked for a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. I've eaten whatever is customary in the country in which I'm travelling. End of story. If I wanted to eat PB&J sandwiches my whole life, I wouldn't travel.

But that's not good enough for the folks in Portland, Oregon. Here are children who, I'm presuming, intend to stay in this country and the principal doesn't think they should assimilate and understand that PB&J sandwiches are a way of life here? If I were in a Mexican school, I'd expect to hear about tortillas. IF I were in a Ethiopian school, I'd expect to hear about injera. If I were in a French school, I'd expect to hear about crepes. If you're in America, expect to hear about peanut butter & jelly sandwiches on WHITE bread!

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.

The Presidency Should Not Be a Participation Trophy

✘ There's been a lot of talk about the *participation trophy* in recent years – you know, that prize we hand out to every member of our children's intramural sports team at the end of each season, regardless of how well they play. Many people believe it's become a cultural symbol of how politically-correct we've become as a society. Our fear of hurt feelings has shamed us into rewarding mere participation instead of what we used to reward: Standout achievement.

We do it, of course, because of the affection we have for our children. We want them to be happy. We don't want them to feel bad if their friends receive trophies and they don't. So, our

answer is to reward them based on how well we *wish* they performed, and not how they *actually* performed.

Sure, we know that rewarding mediocre and lackluster efforts isn't good for our kids. It sends them the message that success really isn't all that important, and that underachievement is okay. Yet, it's hard to put a price-tag on a child's smile, so we give in.

I have to wonder if a chunk of the American electorate is approaching the presidential election with a similar mindset.

After all, we've reached a point in the national polls where President Obama no longer seems to be adversely affected by the increasingly poor state of the country. As the economic news gets worse, more Americans leave the workforce, and chaos sweeps across the Middle East, support for his re-election bid hangs tight and even grows a little. It's really quite bizarre. Sure, Obama has a tremendous advantage in an adoring and protective news media at his disposal. It's an advantage that can never be underestimated. But I do think there's something else at play... I think there's a significant portion of the electorate that feels inclined to award the president with a participation trophy known as 're-election'.

Voters have always liked *the idea* of President Obama. From a presentation standpoint, he plays the part quite well. Voters like him personally. They find him friendly, charming, and endearing. He's good at portraying empathy for the common American. There's pride in his historic significance as the first black president. Voters *want* him to be recognized for greatness. The problem is that he hasn't *earned* greatness. By any reasonable analysis of the trouble our country is in, he hasn't even earned an honorable mention.

But that's not what the participation trophy is about. Again, it's about rewarding someone for how we *wish* they performed.

We saw an early example of this back in 2009, when President

Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Despite not having done anything tangible to achieve peace in his first ten months in the oval office, the Nobel Committee gave him a prestigious award for essentially *wanting* peace (which makes him no different than any other sane person). They were, in effect, rewarding a desire instead of achievement.

Unfortunately for Mitt Romney, the electorate doesn't feel the same affection for him that they feel for the president. They don't have that emotional connection with him. In Romney, many of them see someone who has already won enough trophies in life. He's an over-achiever who is responsible for great successes, for which he's reaped the benefits. When you think about it, he's exactly the kind of person that the participation trophy was created to marginalize.

Just like President Obama expressed in his infamous "You didn't build that" speech, there's a tendency by some people to want to downplay the importance of exceptional individuals in order to feel better about themselves. Obama has certainly tapped into that animosity with his class warfare strategy, in order to attract votes. One has to wonder if he's also using it to build a case for why his unexceptional first term shouldn't be held against him in this election.

I'm confident that most Americans, deep down, know that the Obama presidency has not been good for this country, just like most parents know that participation trophies aren't good for their children. A lot of Americans may be uninformed, but they're not blind. But at this point in time, most seem to feel good about awarding Obama simply for being Obama. The question is whether or not that nagging knowledge that he doesn't deserve that award will compel them to change their minds before election day.

After all, this isn't a children's sports league, it's the fate of our country.