

Why It's Sad to Watch the Bush/Clinton Friendship

☒ On Monday, a large crowd attending the NCAA championship game in Arlington, Texas between Connecticut and Kentucky took a moment to loudly applaud an image displayed on the large video boards inside AT&T Stadium.

It was of former U.S. presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush seated next to each other in one of the luxury boxes, enjoying the game, as well as each other's company.

I've always found the friendship between Bill Clinton and the Bush family to be very endearing. It's something genuine, positive, and quite unlikely in an American political landscape marred by bitter, hyper-partisan animosity.

I enjoy hearing stories of how the Bushes consider Clinton a member of their family, and of how respectful Clinton has been of George H.W. Bush in their travels together. Whenever I look at Bill Clinton and the Bushes together, I don't see a cheap photo op. I see people who have an honest affection for each other, and who treat each other with dignity.

Such imagery is good for the country. What saddens me about the display is that I know it will be a while before we see such presidential camaraderie again.

Things changed in 2008 when Barack Obama was elected as our president. Once the campaigning was over and it was time to move on to leading our country, we quickly found out that President Obama wasn't prepared to take the reins and begin defining himself by his own actions. Instead, he decided to continue campaigning against his predecessor for the next four years, making George W. Bush the scapegoat for all that continued to go wrong and worsen in the country. Instead of taking responsibility for his own presidency and taking the

licks for his own lack of success, Obama held tightly onto his bogeyman, cast himself as a helpless bystander, and successfully stacked his own failures onto the shoulders of the Bush legacy. The strategy went a long way toward winning him a second term in office.

To George W. Bush's immense credit, he's demonstrated a lot of discipline and personal character (far more than his political detractors will ever give him credit for) by remaining silent on the criticism. It's a true testament to the amount of respect he clearly has for the office of the presidency. I think anyone who has observed President Obama's demeanor over the past five years can rest assured that he won't extend the same courtesy, should a Republican take the White House in 2016.

In their rare public dealings, Bush has been pleasant with President Obama in front of the cameras, as we would all expect. I don't think anyone, however, could fathom how he could *personally* respect and befriend a man who has shown him such utter, unprecedented disregard. 

On a side note, I don't see Bill Clinton and President Obama sharing a bond of friendship either. Sure, they've been political allies in recent years because it's mutually beneficial and it helps their party, but the personal animosity between the Clintons and the Obamas is far from a secret in Washington. It of course stems from the 2008 primaries when an heir to the presidency was sidelined and the race card was played. Not to mention that Obama's done his share of throwing Clinton-era policies under the bus as well.

Now, there's no requirement that presidents and former presidents (especially from opposing political parties) *need* to be friends or even respect each other. The country can certainly do just fine without it. But when you see a display like the one that was applauded in Arlington, Texas on Monday, and come to realize that it likely marks the end of an era, it

is indeed a sad thought.

The President Can't Govern

✘ The President's history of negotiations with Republicans has led to the remarkable feat of making Washington DC even more dysfunctional. The President has behaved as if the country is split roughly 80-20 in his favor. Through his negotiations and public pronouncements he has exploited every opportunity where he has had even the slightest advantage. This has led to the Republicans slowly but surely coming to the conclusion that they can't trust him and almost can't work with him. This is the man we have just elected for 4 more years.

Politics is like a sporting event, but governing is more like a business. Much like sports, winning by 1 point (or getting 50.6% of the vote in the recent election) gets the victory. After the campaign the dynamics change almost immediately. The winner needs to start working with the party that he just defeated in order to govern. The rare exception to this rule came in 2009 when Mr. Obama was working with a majority in the House, as well as a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate of his own party. This allowed him to govern without regard to the Republican point of view. This situation lasted for 2 years, and the country received Obamacare as a gift from one party rule. The next election in 2010 was historic in sweeping Republicans back into power in the House, and restored the balance that requires governing like a business.

In a company there are always conflicts between competing ideas or departments. It is through the negotiations over these competing ideas that people learn about their ability to

deal with those who oppose them. Does the person push every advantage they have or do they realize that a win-win on an idea will help the company? Unless someone is fired over the disagreement, these two parties must figure out how to work with each other. This is not that different from the negotiations that must take place in Washington over completely different ideas of how government should work. This is not new, but the inability of the current President to seek win-win scenarios is.

A perfect example of this is the recent negotiations over the fiscal cliff, which occurred at the beginning of the year. This was a scenario where the President had the most leverage, in that, if nothing was resolved every person who paid taxes was going to see an increase. In the run-up to the final deal there were many ideas floated to cut spending. Replacing the sequester with other cuts, changing the rate of increase for entitlements, means testing Medicare, or raising the eligibility age for Social Security were all possible. The President, however, used the fact that he had all of the leverage, and allowed none of it. He made the Republicans swallow hard on a deal that only contained tax increases, extending unemployment, and with zero cuts in spending. He won.

There is a different dynamic now in place with the sequester. If nothing is done, spending will be cut, so the leverage is now with the Republicans. Has the President acknowledged that he needs to deal with the republicans, and been humbled by his lack of leverage? No. He has decided that he likes it better when the negotiations are winner-take-all, like an election. This is why in recent weeks, rather than negotiating, he has been campaigning. These campaign stops have been just like an election with staged events, human props, and scare tactics. He is doing this even though the most recent election results show that we are roughly a 50-50 country, and his opponents can't be fired for nearly 2 years.

The President enjoys sports, and as proof we will soon be subjected to the Presidential Bracket with the start of the NCAA Basketball Tournament (a tradition he began). He, however, has almost no experience dealing with coequals in business. He was elected to govern, and he simply can't do it. To come to this conclusion a little over a month into his second four year term is a bit disconcerting. Years from now, perhaps when the looming debt crisis is upon us, people will look back on this time and say that we should have solved the problem of our mounting debt. Perhaps with the passage of time the people will finally point the finger at this President.

Setting the Record Straight

There is no way to even keep track of all the lies and nonsense floating around these days, let alone lay it all to rest. Still, every so often I find I have to make the attempt or I wind up feeling like the worst kind of slacker.

For instance, as a result of the Freeh Report on the horrific events that took place at Penn State, Joe Paterno's reputation will never recover. That is as it should be. For obvious and sleazy reasons, the late football coach decided to turn a blind eye to Jerry Sandusky's brutalizing little children. The problem is that college athletic coaches will continue to be referred to as builders of character and lauded as molders of men, at least so long as their teams continue to win championships.

I'm not suggesting there are no decent human beings in their ranks, but the only way that college coaches attain legendary status is by bending and breaking recruitment rules. After

all, it's difficult enough for professional sports teams to create dynasties, and they have tens of millions of dollars to toss around. But when your entire starting five or starting eleven is gone within a few years, as the team members graduate or simply leave to turn professional, how do you think colleges become basketball and football powerhouses?

And of course when the NCAA finally gets around to doling out punishment for recruiting violations, which generally include cash, cars and sex, it's the colleges that have to endure the punishments. The coaches, with their winning records, simply move on to other schools and for fatter contracts.

But so long as alumni groups filled with perennial juveniles continue to base their financial contributions on the success of college sports teams, nothing will ever change, and folks as sleazy as Joe Paterno will continue to have statues erected in their honor.

On the nonsense front, we have a tree in New Jersey that is attracting thousands of visitors. They're showing up in order to see the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, a Roman Catholic icon of the Virgin Mary, in a 6-inch section of the trunk. Nobody is more respectful of other people's religious beliefs, however far-fetched, than I am, but what are these pinheads thinking?

And when it's not Mary, you have probably noticed, it's her son. Hardly a year goes by that you don't hear about folks seeing what they insist is the face of Jesus in all sorts of inanimate objects. Unfortunately, they don't seem to understand that they are making a mockery of their religion. I mean, do they really believe that when their savior returns to earth, as they believe he will, it will be in the form of a head of lettuce or a rust stain on the side of a garage?

Not too long ago, a North Carolina assemblywoman named Becky Carney accidentally pulled the wrong lever, and her mistake

spelled the difference in an assembly vote that opened the door to oil being extracted through a process known as fracking. Because environmentalists hate fossil fuels with a passion, her vote, as Joe Biden would say, was a big fracking deal. It also served once again to prove that the only time liberals ever vote the right way is by mistake.

By now it's obvious that Obama realizes the only way he can be re-elected is for people to ignore his record and to focus, instead, on Romney's negatives. So it is that Obama is constantly reminding voters that Romney is a rich guy. Fortunately, that's a strategy fraught with problems. For one thing, Obama is a millionaire. So are such left-wing politicians as Nancy Pelosi, Barbara Boxer and Harry Reid. And while it's true that Romney is richer than they are, the Clintons are worth well over a hundred million dollars, while John and Teresa Kerry could buy and sell the Romneys.

In fact, considering how wealth-conscious liberals are, I find it odd that they never held their family fortune against John, Ted or Bobby Kennedy. And that was a fortune built the old-fashioned way, through bootlegging.

When it comes to hypocrisy, probably nothing compares to international groups such as the U.N. and the Global Counterterrorism Forum. The GCF is comprised of 30 nations, co-chaired by the United States and Turkey. Its purpose is to bring together those nations that have suffered terrorist attacks in an attempt to prevent and punish those responsible. The problem is that because Islamic Turkey doesn't like Israel, Barack Hussein Obama and Hillary Clinton have agreed to exclude the Jewish state, in spite of the fact that it has suffered more terrorist attacks and, aside from the U.S., done more to combat terrorism than the other 29 nations combined.

This is the same Turkey, by the way, that was behind the so-called "Gaza Freedom Flotilla" that set out to provoke an armed response by attempting to run the Israeli blockade and

provide Hamas with weaponry.

This is also the same American president and secretary of state, let us not forget, who are always claiming to be Israel's friend and ally, at least when election times roll around. In the meantime, however, these are the same two people who condemn the Israelis for building apartment houses in Jerusalem and for defending themselves against relentless missile attacks.

With friends like these, Israel, as the old saying goes, doesn't have to go looking for enemies.

Finally, for those of us who regard Obama's voice as the biggest drone in America's arsenal, one of the great things about a Romney victory is that it will totally shock the egomaniacal Obama and render him speechless.

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NCAA Native American Mascot Controversy

✘ The world of intercollegiate athletics is an interesting stew to say the least.

It is a mixture of money, a smattering of egocentricity, a dash of concern for the student athlete, a yet smaller dash of perceived concern for said student athlete's actual academic progress towards a degree and then brought together with a healthy dose of public perception and dare I say EVEN MORE MONEY.

Back in 2005, the NCAA decided that it would institute a new rule:

It self-decided (as a PR move I believe) it would strong-arm schools with nicknames or mascots deemed "hostile or abusive"; they would no longer be allowed to keep these nicknames.

This was targeted at colleges and universities that were currently using a Native American derived name and/or symbols.

Most of these schools were small with no strong alumni bases or financial incentive to keep their respective name and made the change without any fanfare.

However, there were plenty of major universities that were presented with a proverbial pickle.

Schools such as Florida State (Seminoles), Utah (Utes), Illinois (Illini), and, to lesser extents, Central Michigan (Chippewa's), Miami of Ohio (Redskins) and North Dakota (Sioux).

The first three schools are traditional football and basketball powerhouses whose revenue annually adds tens of millions to their athletic department coffers as well as hefty sums reaching the NCAA itself.

From the schools above, Miami has changed its name to "Redhawks" with little to no opposition; North Dakota is in the process of dropping "Sioux" after 81 years upon losing its final appeal to the NCAA after many years while Florida State, Utah, Illinois and Central Michigan have kept their names after receiving "waivers" from the NCAA by proving they (currently) have the blessing and written approval of those respective tribes (Seminole, Illini, Ute and Chippewa).

Ironically, these schools (save CMU) produce millions of dollars in athletic revenue through large gate attendance, huge TV contracts and merchandising. Even more "ironic" is the fact that the NCAA actually profits twofold. It is giving the appearance on one hand of being thoughtful, respectful and

politically correct while the other hand is taking fistfuls of dollars looking the other way. If they are going to enact any rule, then it should apply to all schools regardless of their circumstances. If not, then retract it.

The truth (in my opinion and millions of other fan-based polls) is that the NCAA should be involved in other things like policing an ever growing number of student athletes being arrested (some multiple times), making sure progress is made in the classroom and that graduation rates are strong (things it was actually set up to do in the first place).

Schools along with their alumni and communities should be able to decide for themselves what they want to be called. If a school thinks its current nickname is somehow offensive, then let it decide (such as Stanford University did in 1972 all by itself in dropping the nickname "Indians" in favor of "Cardinal").

If a school has a relationship with a certain tribe and they mutually agree that the name is acceptable, again let them decide. But to force schools to do what you want them to do and then go and break this rule yourself (as the NCAA is doing) AND then on top of that, still profit from it, this is ridiculous to say the least.

A final footnote to this article.

One school (the University of Iowa) has even gone a step further in this. They have now decided that they themselves will also police the ranks and will no longer schedule a school to any athletic event that still carries a Native American name and its most recent victim was the University of North Dakota.

Even though again UND is in the process of dropping the "Sioux" nickname, this is still not enough for the Iowa Hawkeye higher-ups. So, a potential track meet between the schools was recently cancelled.

Yet another “irony” is that Iowa plays in the same conference (the wealthy Big 10) as Illinois(Illini) and they meet in every NCAA sanctioned sport, every year.

FYI Iowa “enlightened” brass: the term “Hawkeye” originally appeared in the novel, “The Last of the Mohicans” written by James Fenimore Cooper. In the book, the character named Natty Bumppo is given the word “Hawkeye” as a nickname from the Delaware Indians.

Maybe the university should consider beefing up its own literature and history departments. Talk about hypocrites!!!

Fortunately, I graduated from a university where this was not an issue.

Our mascot was a feisty chicken bred for cock-fighting to entertain soldiers during the American Revolutionary War.

OOPPS, maybe I spoke too soon. Let’s hope the NCAA and PETA don’t read this.....shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh