

After ‘Doomsday’ Sequester Cuts, Only One Person Laid Off; Do You Care?

☒ President Obama told the country that *it* would “add hundreds of thousands of Americans to the unemployment rolls.” And just in case the media, Republicans, or anyone else among the American public thought he was exaggerating, he made it clear that he wasn’t.

“This is not an abstraction,” the president added. “People will lose their jobs.”

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid took the provocative rhetoric a step further, claiming that *it* had “already cut 1.6 million jobs.”

“As many as 40,000 teachers could lose their jobs” because of *it*, said Education Secretary Arne Duncan. “There are literally teachers now who are getting pink slips.”

The “*it*” I’m talking about, of course, is the controversial sequester that kicked in a little over a year ago.

At the time, there was no shortage of politicians fear-mongering the affects of the unorthodox budgetary measure. The American public was being told repeatedly that the \$85.3 billion cut in federal spending would result in nothing short of Armageddon. Criminals would be released back on the street, children wouldn’t receive vaccinations, and senior citizens would starve to death! But it was the massive number of jobs that were *sure* to be lost – those of teachers, firefighters, policeman, and other public servants – that was really being pushed hard both by the administration and many in congress.

Well, as we learned earlier this week when the findings of a

Government Accountability Office report was released, all of those wide-eyed predictions of massive job layoffs fell a bit short. A lot short, actually. In fact, according to the GAO, a grand total of exactly ONE job was lost, as a result of the sequestration. That's right... One.

The revelation would be comical if it wasn't painfully representative of the shameless tactics used so often by so many politicians to scare the hell out of the American public.

Sometimes the goal is to paint the opposition party as a bunch of extremists – people who want to steal women's birth control pills, push senior citizens off of cliffs, and take us back to the days of segregation. Other times, it's to convince the electorate that it just can't live without a monstrous, ever-expanding government apparatus hovering above – one so important to everyone's well-being that no amount of funding should be spared.

At some point, you would think the public would get tired of being played for fools. Unfortunately, far too many among the public are simply quite comfortable in the role.

In reaction to the GAO report, U.S. Senator Tom Coburn from Oklahoma made the following statement: "It is devastating to the credibility of Washington politicians and administration officials who spent months – and millions of dollars – engaging in a coordinated multi-agency cabinet-level public relations campaign to scare the American people."

Coburn added, "Taxpayers expect us to root our predictions in fact, not ideology and spin."

Is that true, though? Do Americans really expect politicians to be honest with them? Is it something they insist upon? Sadly, I've seen little evidence of that.

I don't think anyone truly believes that any of the politicians and officials who engaged in the hair-on-fire,

doomsday rhetoric surrounding the sequestration will pay any kind of political price for what they did. The public will forget about this story by next week. And therein lies the problem.

As a country, we should care when people play off our emotions to spread ridiculous assertions and blatant untruths. We should care when people tell us that healthcare reform will let us keep our health-plans and doctors when they *know* what they're telling us just isn't true. We should care when we're told a false story about how four Americans in Benghazi, Libya were murdered, and we should care about finding out who it was that made up that story.



We should care.

So, when we're told repeatedly that a spending cut equal to only one-half of 1 percent of GDP will layoff hundreds of thousands of people, and instead only lays off one, we should start laying off some of the people who told us that nonsense in the first place. It seems only fair, doesn't it?

Unfortunately, until that kind of thing happens, the demagoguery and dishonesty will live on. And sadly, we still won't care.

A Lot of Dollars and No Sense

Even though everyone knows that canceling White House tours to prove the severity of the Sequester cuts was a scam perpetrated by Obama, it didn't prevent Joe Biden from blowing 460,000 of our tax dollars for one day in London and another \$585,000 on a one-day stopover in Paris.

The arrogance of this administration is seemingly unlimited. When the French revolted against their royals in the 18th century, they did so with less justification than we have. George Washington was offered the kingship of America and he refused the crown. But that hasn't prevented future presidents, as well as vice-presidents, Republicans and Democrats, from behaving like royalty.

That's why it kills me when even conservatives grudgingly agree that presidents deserve to take expensive vacations. Just how hard does anyone think these people are working? There's no heavy lifting involved, and they pretty much work bankers' hours. On top of that, over a billion dollars a year is spent providing them with protection, 24/7 access to chefs, waiters, personal trainers, barbers and beauticians, medical and dental specialists, plus nannies for the kids and the dog.

When you get right down to it, every day they spend in the White House is the equivalent of an extravagant vacation for normal people.

But most of us are so sheep-like that we have actually bought into the fairy tale that even a president who hasn't come up with a budget in four years is working harder than a grunt in Afghanistan, and desperately needs his R&R.

Like the Shadow of radio fame, Barack Obama clearly has the power to cloud men's minds. But even that fails to explain why Israel's college students treated him like a combination of Mick Jagger and Moishe Dayan when he addressed them during his recent excursion to the Middle East. Until one of the kids heckled him in Hebrew, I found myself wondering if he had brought the young chowderheads along from Harvard or Georgetown.

So although this administration is unable to come up with the chump change required to allow school kids to tour their White House, Joe Biden can waste a million dollars living it up on

the continent and they can pay a schmuck named Samuel Betances a couple of million dollars to promote diversity – by which they, and he, mean anti-white bigotry – to federal employees.

Some people assumed that when I titled my second book of political commentary “Liberals: America’s Termites,” I was merely engaging in name-calling. Well, I wasn’t. At least not entirely. Otherwise, I might have titled it “America’s Skunks” or “America’s Weasels.” I referred to them as termites because, like the nasty little crawly creatures, they have shown an extraordinary ability to take a great stately edifice that has withstood over two centuries of wind, rain, depressions and wars, and bring it crashing down on our collective heads.

Speaking of termites, I don’t want any parks, bridges, buildings or ships, named after politicians, unless they write a personal check to pay for the darn thing. If we’re looking around for people to honor, I suggest we begin honoring honorable people, such as Jonas Salk or Irving Berlin, Mark Twain or Richard Rodgers, people who have actually made enormous contributions to America.

I found it ironic that Obama, who has devoted four years to dividing Americans based on race, wealth and gender, told the Israelis and the Palestinians they should start getting along. This coming from the putz who has spent his entire administration demonizing Republicans, who may have somewhat inhibited his ability to turn this country into Greece, but they never rained missiles down on him and his family. And when I last checked, they hadn’t blown up any school buses or pizza parlors.

I realize that Chuck Hagel isn’t looking to me for advice, but I would still like to suggest that we don’t engage in any more wars unless the U.S. or an actual ally is attacked. But we should never again be involved in siding with one side or the other in a conflict between Arabs or Muslims. As we should

have learned from the overhyped Arab Spring, there's no advantage for us, no matter which side wins. For us, it's just a tragic loss of lives and an immoral waste of money.

A recent poll disclosed that of the ten nations in the world that despise America the most, nine are in the Middle East. And that's after decades of trying to defend these people against the Serbs, Al Qaeda, the Taliban, Hamas and Saddam Hussein. (Lest you not be able to sleep tonight, the tenth was Greece. I don't know why, but perhaps they resent our trying to copy them.)

I'm not suggesting we turn a blind eye to any of these countries that threaten us. I'm merely stating that we never go to war to defend them. I'm all for using special ops to take out the likes of Ahmadinejad, Al Assad, the Iranian mullahs, and to use armed drones to take out other jihadists if they appear to be a threat to Christians or Jews.

So long as we start drilling for our own oil, natural gas and coal, we can go back to ignoring them the way western civilization did for several centuries after their first misguided attempt to conquer and convert the world to their lunacy.

For their part, they can go back to pretending that Mohammad wasn't a blood-thirsty pedophile, and insisting that art, music, literature, science and technology, are the stuff of infidels.

And for my part, I can't help thinking these are the people Obama wants Israelis to get along with when he can't even be civil to the likes of Paul Ryan, Justice Sam Alito and Ted Cruz!

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An Unbalanced President

✘ President Obama has probably repeated the phrase “balanced approach” when talking about budget and deficit solutions, over 100 times at this point. If you just listen to him saying that phrase over and over, you probably think that he is interested in raising some taxes, as well as cutting spending to solve our country’s debt problem. Perhaps he should play the tape back to himself, so that he can be convinced that the country needs a balanced approach to the problem that we find ourselves in. Fresh off getting a deal with Republicans around New Year’s that was exclusively tax increases, you would think that in order to obtain “balance”, spending cuts would be front and center. Instead this unbalanced President seems to have a case of amnesia, or worse, when it comes to the tax increase deal. He wants to act as if it never happened, and start with a “new balance”. The good news is Republicans can remember three months back.

When you want people to come your way in a negotiation, you try your best to be reasonable before the negotiations begin. Talk in generalities, and say things like “I know we can make a deal”. You don’t want to impugn the motives of your adversaries, because it will be that much harder to make a deal. This is vital in a public negotiation in order for all parties to claim victory, and not get resentful of the person they must strike a deal with. Then if discussions break down, you can claim that you were looking for a deal, and were reasonable all throughout the process. This approach allows you to claim credit for being honorable, and if you disparage your opponents, others will understand.

This President takes the exact opposite approach to what should be done. First, he makes his position public. This

leaves little room for compromise without someone looking like they've lost. He then publicly attempts to bully his opponents into changing their stance. If that doesn't work he goes out on the campaign trail to try to get the public to push his agenda. After this scorched earth policy doesn't work, he resigns himself to trying to appear reasonable. This is completely unbelievable to his negotiating partners after they have been raked over the coals. Either he is the worst negotiator to ever sit in the White House, or he is unstable.

This past week there was the reconciliation phase of this reverse negotiation. The news was lit up with Presidential meetings and dinners with Republicans. Did any of those Republicans ask the President during dinner why he accused them of not caring about: children's daycare; women's mammograms; or seniors' healthcare? Did they mention that they didn't appreciate being blamed for the sequester (spending cuts), which was his idea? Did they ask why he demonizes their point of view that less government helps those in need? Probably not. They also probably weren't forced into another tax increase just because they received a nice dinner.

If we combined the agreements over the fiscal cliff and the sequester, there would be no doubt that a balanced accord was reached. Somehow separating these two events by a mere 60 days has created a lack of balance in the President's mind. Mr. Obama is not only dishonest, he is a dishonest broker.

Sun Still Rises After

Sequester So Prez Comes Up With Plan B To Insure Hardship

☒ So what's a president supposed to do when it looks like his credibility is going down the drain because he made up scary stories about how sequester was going to end life as we know it? Come up with Plan B, what else.

First, a few words about Plan A. Remember when the president and his posse told us about how meat inspectors would get furloughed and meat wouldn't get inspected? And how long lines at the airport would get even longer? And how kids wouldn't get educated because teachers would lose their jobs? And how the sun wouldn't come up in the morning? (Okay, I made that one up). All because of sequester?

And remember how he didn't bother to tell us that even after sequester the federal government would still spend billions more this year than last year? Which means – despite what he did tell us – there would be absolutely no cuts in spending ... just cuts in the *increase in spending* ... and really small cuts at that, a few pennies on the dollar.

Then the really bad news kicked in, for the president anyway. The sun came up and no one died because they ate tainted meat and kids didn't get kicked out of school and teachers didn't get laid off and blah blah blah blah blah.

So here's where Plan B comes in. The president had to show us that he really was right about the hardship he predicted, so he flexed his political muscles and did what any great leader of the American people would do: He shut down tours to the White House, just as spring break for little kids was approaching.

Would you expect less from the most powerful man on the planet?

Except just as he looked foolish predicting gloom and doom in the first place, he looked even more foolish when inconvenient facts started emerging – facts about how much money his administration is flushing down the toilet; money that could have been used to keep those White House tours going – for about a billion years!

Thanks to Tom Coburn, the Republican senator from Oklahoma, we learn that taxpayers are funding a government program that studies how cocaine affects the reproductive habits of quail – and not even American quail. We're shelling out \$181,000 to figure out how blow affects *Japanese* quail. This is no joke, and I'm guessing whatever government chucklehead came up with this brilliant idea was high on cocaine himself at the time.

Senator Coburn lays out a number of other incredible examples of government waste in an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal, a column in which he tells us that "Instead of forcing Americans to spend more time in airport screening lines, [Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano] can find savings in the wasteful grant program that gave America an underwater robot for Columbus, Ohio and a BearCat armored-personnel carrier to guard a pumpkin festival in Keene, N.H. (population 23,000). Trimming this \$830 million grant program by just one third could avoid Transportation Security Administration furloughs entirely."

And Kimberly Strassel, in another Journal column, has put together another list detailing how this government wastes billions of our tax dollars. Did you know that the White House employs three calligraphers? Did you know they make a total of \$277,000 a year? How about this: The Environmental Protection agency gave away \$141,000 – fasten your seat belt! – to fund a Chinese study on swine manure. And the National Science Foundation shelled out \$325,000 to build – wait for it

– a robotic squirrel.

Ms. Strassel writes that, “The government gave a \$3700 grant to build a miniature street in West Virginia – out of Legos. It shelled out \$500,000 to support specialty shampoo products for cats and dogs.”

We may not have enough money to let little kids from around the country tour the White House, but we have \$27 million to fund – ready for this? – pottery classes ... *in Morocco!*

There’s more. A lot more. But I’m getting sick just typing up all this stuff. You should be too, unless you’re part of the roughly 50% of Americans who don’t pay any federal income tax – so why should you care, right?

One more thing, about the sequester catastrophe that hasn’t happened. It still might. Barack Obama can make it happen anytime he wants. All he has to do is order his people to shut something else down besides those White House tours. He has the power to make things worse. And he’s just the kind of politician that will do it – and then blame Republicans, calculating that the American people are too dumb to see what he’s doing.

I never thought I’d so much as think this, let alone write it for others to see ... but I miss Jimmy Carter.

A President Who Is Rooting for Chaos

✘ In my last column I said that President Obama was a “deeply cynical man.” I now have second thoughts in light of the

White House warning that because of sequestration we should expect long flight delays and a general disruption in air travel. Unfortunately for Mr. Obama my second thoughts are exactly the same as my first thoughts. *He is a deeply cynical man.*

Mr. Obama is not only out to scare everybody about a tiny cut in the growth of our out-of-control spending – \$85 billion out of a \$3 trillion-plus budget – I think he actually wants long lines at airports, and criminals being set free for lack of money to prosecute them, and massive layoffs and all the rest.

I think he wants the most hardship to the most people so he can secure the most political points. I think he is rooting for chaos because he knows the American people won't blame him, not a majority of them anyway. The Republicans will get the blame and in 2014 he may very well get the House – to go along with the Senate.

You know what that means? It means Mr. Obama would then be able to do whatever he wants and it will be called democracy in action. Higher taxes on success that might discourage investment that would create jobs, more money for green energy that won't produce much energy, more money for early education programs that don't work, a minimum wage that might cost young workers a job, increase in cap-and-trade programs for carbon emissions that might slow the economy and put people out of work, new housing incentives, new manufacturing incentives, new, new, new, more, more, more, money, money, money.

This can only work, as I pointed out in my last column, if there are enough clueless people out there who know nothing about the economy but are certain that they love Barack Obama and will support any idea he comes up with. And there are. We live in the United States of Clueless.

All the president has to tell these low information voters, as Rush Limbaugh calls them to avoid using the word "stupid," is that he's for "compromise" and they swoon. All he has to say

is he wants to close “loopholes” for people who fly around in private jets and buy yachts, and they say “right on, Mr. President.” Except closing those loopholes wouldn’t keep the government going for an hour ... and there’s also that inconvenient fact that whenever big liberal government goes after private jets and yachts it’s the blue collar workers who build them who get hurt a lot more than the “plutocrats” who get around in them.

I also think President Obama doesn’t care one bit about deficits and debts. I think he is a community organizer at heart. He thinks the poor are getting the shaft and the rich have more than they need. His entire philosophy can be summed up in four little words: “Spread the wealth around.” That’s why I’m also convinced that he has absolutely no interest in cutting spending in any serious way.

So will the slobbering love affair last if Barack Obama gets his way and keeps on taxing the successful and spending money we don’t have? Will the love affair last after it becomes obvious that he can tax the rich all he wants and it won’t get us out of the debt and deficit whole that someday will sink the economy?

In the short run, the answer, I think, is yes. Ignorance is a powerful force.

But if the sequester goes into effect and chaos *doesn’t* reign – if the scare tactics are exposed as just that – Mr. Obama will look like the boy who cried wolf. But he’ll get away with that too. For a while.

But if he continues to believe, as he reportedly told House Speaker John Boehner, that “we don’t have a spending problem,” if he continues to minimize our deficit and debt, then the house of cards will come crumbling down as sure as the sun rises in the east. And the people he says he cares about the most will be the ones who are hurt the most.

A president would care about these things. A community organizer ... not so much.