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THE FOUNDATION

“Public affairs go on pretty much as usual: perpetual chicanery and rather more personal abuse than there used to be.” --John Adams

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

The Campaign Trail: GOP Race Is Still a Race

For a week with no presidential primary contests so far -- South Carolina's is on Saturday -- this week sure saw a lot of action in the GOP field. Two governors dropped out, the frontrunner took a beating, and the challenger took the lead in a South Carolina poll while another woman went public with her grievances against that candidate. Oh, and we learned that certain Iowans can't count. Nothing like another week in politics.

First, the dropouts. Jon Huntsman ended his campaign for the White House on Monday, further winnowing the GOP field. Huntsman, whose most recent government gig was as Barack Obama's ambassador to China, never gained momentum despite (or rather because of) the positive attention he received from the Leftmedia. His record as Utah governor was respectably conservative, but for some reason he spent his time belittling the conservative base with various offensive remarks seemingly *designed* to distance him from the very voters whose support he needed. It worked, and that's why he's going home. He quickly endorsed Mitt Romney, something the latter hasn't been quick to tout.

Rick Perry added his name to the former candidate roster on Thursday, acknowledging that his dismal showings in Iowa and New Hampshire and similar prospects in South Carolina and Florida left him with “no viable path to victory,” as he put it in a gracious concession speech. The conservative Texas governor threw his support behind Newt Gingrich, calling the former House speaker a “conservative visionary who can transform our country.” It's not at all clear, however, that Perry's supporters will rally around Gingrich. What his pullout does is leave Gingrich and Rick Santorum battling for the same conservative votes. Ron Paul, of course, remains a factor, but Perry's withdrawal helps him least of all.

In Iowa, the vote certification process became a certified disaster. Santorum lost to Romney by eight votes on Jan.

3, but it turns out that in a district-by-district tally, he now leads Romney by 34 votes and could ultimately come out ahead. Yet the results from eight precincts are missing and will never be recovered and certified, meaning we'll never know who really won. What we do know is that this episode further highlights the absurdity of Iowa having so much weight at the beginning of the primary process. It also means that if Gingrich can pull off a win in South Carolina, Romney will have truly won only in New Hampshire.

Speaking of Gingrich, his ex-wife -- the second one -- interviewed with ABC to give her side of their divorce story. We'll spare readers the sordid he-said-she-said details here, but suffice it to say that the ugly and hypocritical picture she paints of Newt is coming from a very hurt ex-wife, who also happens to be a sympathetic figure giving a believable account happily exploited by the Leftmedia. But there is little we haven't heard before, and it remains to be seen how it will affect Gingrich's run. For his part, Rick Perry had this to say: “The fact is, there is forgiveness for those who seek God, and I believe in the power of redemption, for it is a central tenet of my own Christian faith.”

Finally, the slate of candidates pursued Romney to release his tax returns. Romney says he will release them in April, and that he paid a tax rate “probably closer to the 15 percent rate than anything,” because most of his income is on investments taxed as capital gains. Contrary to media mythology, however, IRS data show that's still more than 97 percent of Americans pay. Romney doesn't “owe” an explanation for the size of his fortune. However, if he wants to defeat Barack Obama's classist rhetoric, he best get this information on the table now, and frame it in the proper free-enterprise context, though he has failed to do so in any remarks or debates thus far. It creates a problem of perception for a “rich white guy” taking on the president.

That said, the administration's pre-emptive attacks on Romney's record at Bain are ringing hollow. Obama's new Office of Management and Budget director is a Bain alumnus, and Democrats are the recipients of the vast majority of donations from Bain employees.

All in all, the race appears to be more fluid this week than last, and there wasn't even a primary. It's had more than its fair share of twists and turns, so stay tuned for more.

News From the Swamp: SOPA/PIPA Draw Big Opposition

Members of the House and Senate are looking to put the brakes on new Internet anti-piracy legislation that may do more harm than good. The Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) bill in the House, and its Senate companion, the Protect Intellectual Property Act (PIPA), were drawn up to prevent the theft of intellectual property over the web by *foreign* entities. Both bills have strong backing from Hollywood and other media companies, but there is growing concern that they go too far in enforcing their mandate.

The legislation would give the government unchecked power to shut down *domestic* websites alleged to have committed or even enabled online piracy. The ability to illegally distribute someone else's content over the web is a genuine problem, but this legislation would change copyright law so as to hold websites accountable for third-party content posted on their sites through comment forums and the like. Think Facebook or YouTube, and you can understand that these bills are a solution worse than the problem.

In the face of widespread Internet backlash -- numerous websites "blacked out" Wednesday in protest -- several senators did an about-face. So far this week, 16 Republicans and two Democrats, including seven co-sponsors, announced new opposition. Even the Obama administration expressed reservations.

Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), a former cosponsor, said there are "legitimate concerns about the impact the bill could have on access to the Internet and about a potentially unreasonable expansion of the federal government's power to impact the Internet." He urged Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) to "avoid rushing through a bill that could have many unintended consequences." Reid actually listened and postponed the vote. The House is doing likewise.

(For a fascinating "SOPA 101" explanation, go [here](#).)

Hope 'n' Change: Reorganizing for Re-Election

Barack Obama launched his latest effort to bolster his re-election bid this week when he asked Congress for even greater smoke-and-mirror authority to "reorganize" the government. The would-be government organizer is seeking "consolidation authority" for six agencies related to the economy and business, including eliminating the Commerce Department and replacing it with a new unnamed department -- which doesn't get rid of anything. He also plans to make the Small Business Administra-

tion a cabinet-level agency. See, he *does* care about small business! Obviously, Obama realizes that his unprecedented expansion of government through the health care takeover, financial overregulation and an explosion of spending that dampened the economic recovery are contributing to his poor poll numbers, and, therefore, a little tidying up is in order. In reality, his proposal is little more than lipstick on a pig.

New & Notable Legislation

"The House voted Wednesday to reject President Barack Obama's request to raise the federal debt limit by \$1.2 trillion," reports The Wall Street Journal, "a symbolic act designed to let lawmakers oppose the increase while letting it take effect." In August, the White House and Congress reached an agreement under which the debt ceiling automatically rises incrementally. The latest increase requested by the president will kick in despite the House's vote because opponents needed to reach a two-thirds majority in both houses, and failed to do so. The Senate will likely pass the increase.

From the Left: Newsweek Wonders Why You're So Dumb

The latest issue of bird-cage-liner, Newsweek magazine, features a cover story by foul-mouthed faux-conservative pundit Andrew Sullivan entitled, "Why are Obama's Critics So Dumb?" The gist of the piece is that anyone who disagrees with the president must be intellectually inferior. Readers may recall that Sullivan wrote a hit piece during the 2008 presidential campaign suggesting that Sarah Palin's son Trig was actually her daughter Bristol's baby. There was never any proof to substantiate the wild claim, but proof meant nothing to Sullivan then, and neither facts nor sound analysis are stopping him now. This time he gleefully pushes the leftist orthodoxy that Newsweek has embraced since 2008, namely that Obama is above reproach. In fact, Obama as a candidate and president has been featured so many times on the magazine's cover that people now often refer to it as "Obamaweek."

Second Amendment: The 'Fast and Furious' Excuse

More evidence that the "Fast and Furious" weapons scheme was simply a cover for more draconian gun laws came last week as a federal court upheld onerous reporting requirements imposed on nearly 9,000 firearms dealers in four states that border Mexico. These regulations went into effect last July.

We also learned that a similar operation to Fast and Furious was conducted around the same time, and with similar

results -- weapons smuggled into Mexico, where the government lost track of them. Operation White Gun targeted nine members of the Sinaloa drug cartel when it was first rolled out in the fall of 2009. Despite the fact that cartel members were willing to fall into the trap set by ATF agents, however, only three arrests and convictions were made in the case and none of those convicted were among the nine original targets.

Yet the botched operations still had their intended effect of providing a perfect excuse for the new reporting requirements. On the other side, two congressional efforts were made to relieve gun shop owners, and one is still in play. Rep. Denny Rehberg (R-MT) couldn't prohibit the use of funds to enforce the reporting requirements via an appropriations amendment in the House, but Senators Jon Tester (D-MT) and Richard Burr (R-NC) still have a bill pending that would prohibit the Department of Justice from tracking certain gun sales. S.570 is currently languishing in the Senate Judiciary Committee, chaired by socialist Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

ECONOMY

Regulatory Commissars: Keystone Cop Out

Team Yes-We-Can said "No we can't" this week to the Keystone XL pipeline. Well, make that, they kind of, sort of did -- but more on the "no-that-means-yes-maybe" rejection in a moment. First, recall that this is a proposed \$7 billion, 40,000-job-producing pipeline from Canada to Texas refineries and the Gulf of Mexico that would help reduce America's dependence on oil from our Middle East "friends." In typical parliamentary sleight-of-hand that a weary American public has seen too often, the administration through its State Department vassals kicked the can still further down the road on that application. Citing "environmental concerns" by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the rejection nonetheless permits the Canadian firm, TransCanada Pipeline, to reapply after developing alternate routing in Nebraska to remedy "sensitive-habitat" concerns.

The interesting wrinkle is that Barack Obama, still firmly beholden to envirofascists, continues proving himself greasier than even the pipeline's oil, by giving Congress the Heisman stiff-arm (more accurately, the stiff finger) on its law requiring him to make a decision on Keystone. Since the rejection *is* technically a "rejection," the Executive Clown Act has technically "decided," fulfilling the letter of the law. However, since the door remains open for reapplication pending development of the alternate route, the rejection is really just semantics, not substance.

In other words, Obama voted "present" yet again.

Of course, this Road Runner-vs-Wile-E-Coyote escape perfectly highlights how Republican leaders in Congress continually demonstrate their keen ability to never blow an opportunity to blow an opportunity. The vain hope that caving on the 60-day "payroll tax holiday" bill in exchange for a bill provision that would force the president to make an up-or-down call on Keystone XL proved once again how pathetically malleable these "leaders" are in Obama's hands. Now if Republicans want to force Obama into a decision on the new application, they will have to do so through yet another bill -- one unlikely to pass through both chambers *and* be signed by the president without more concessions and unchecked Democrat spending, if history is any guide.

All of these antics have underwhelmed a nonplussed Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who will travel to China next month to discuss "Northern Gateway" options to export oil to China in light of continued U.S. stall tactics (so Canadian oil will likely end up in China rather than America). Harper noted that the U.S. should prefer to deal with a "friendly neighbor" to help meet its energy needs and to create thousands of jobs. Meanwhile, it's obvious we're in an election year, as the administration just released a report touting its ardent support for natural gas "fracking" and fossil fuels. Apparently, however, the Hope-&-Changelings have lost their fracking minds, because for the past three years they have done nothing but try to destroy these industries, from \$40 billion tax hikes to EPA over-regulation and meddling to Interior Department foot-dragging on permits. In any case, one thing is for sure: this is yet another Keystone Cop Out.

Quotes of the Week

"[T]he fact is that more people have been put on food stamps by Barack Obama than any president in American history. Now, I know among the politically correct, you're not supposed to use facts that are uncomfortable. ... I believe every American of every background has been endowed by their creator with the right to pursue happiness. And if that makes liberals unhappy, I'm going to continue to find ways to help poor people learn how to get a job, learn how to get a better job and learn some day to own the job." --Newt Gingrich in the debate in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Since Obama's inauguration, the food stamp rolls have increased by 18 million to a total of 46.2 million people. The annual cost in 2011 was \$75.3 billion. The rolls

increased dramatically under George W. Bush as well, but Obama's increase is almost *four times* Bush's rate. The White House characterized Gingrich's assertion as "crazy," but the culture of dependency fostered by this administration is not crazy. It's despicable.

In Thursday night's debate, Gingrich had another zinger: "Why is President Obama for young people being allowed to stay on their parents' insurance until 26? Because he can't get any jobs for them to go out and buy their own insurance. I have an offer to the parents of America: elect us, and your kids will be able to move out because they'll have work."

European Downgrade

After warning 15 of the 17 euro-zone countries of potential downgrades, last week Standard & Poor's dropped debt ratings for nine of these nations, including France, Austria, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. "In our view," S&P said, "the policy initiatives that have been taken by European policy makers in recent weeks may be insufficient to fully address ongoing systemic stresses in the euro zone." In France's case, not only does the dip from triple-A to AA+ mark the second time in fewer than six months that S&P downgraded a major triple-A nation (the U.S. in August marking the first) but it also portends poorly for the euro zone's bailout fund, which is reliant on member nations for its own triple-A rating.

French Prime Minister Francois Baroin tried to downplay the downgrade, announcing, "It is not ratings agencies that dictate French policy. It is clearly [related to] the governance of the euro zone and to its instability." Perhaps. But still, the "from each according to his abilities to each according to his needs" philosophy that's had the stronger euro zone nations propping up the weaker ones falls short when the stronger nations themselves face mounting debt. Also, as The Wall Street Journal points out, none of this is particularly shocking: "Like the U.S. downgrade last summer, the rating changes themselves don't tell the world or the markets anything they didn't already know." What the changes do tell the world, though, is that policy makers still refuse to make the budget decisions required to avoid the nosedive towards economic catastrophe.

Income Redistribution: Fed to Print Even More Money?

After two unsuccessful attempts by the Federal Reserve to revive the U.S. economy through quantitative easing -- i.e., printing more money -- there is a plan on the table to do it again. As the Fed prepares to fire up the printing

presses, we are reminded of its original plan to save the housing market by keeping interest rates low. The plan was flawed in that it overlooked the sea of uncertainty surrounding the high unemployment rate, taxation and health care reform. To expect people to buy homes in such a climate, regardless of interest rates, is absurdly hopeful; yet the government is willing to continue throwing good money after bad.

Some might say that the federal government does not understand that it is hurting, not helping, Americans when it buries businesses and individuals under mountains of regulatory red tape and oppressive bureaucracy. Others, however, make the case that the current administration knows *exactly* what it's doing: breaking the back of free enterprise to ensure that we are more dependent on the federal government. Throwing cash at us is just another attempt to lull us into complacency.

SECURITY

Department of Military Readiness: Stealth Space Treaty in the Works?

The Obama administration this week appeared to reverse its previous declaration that it would not enter into an EU-proposed "Code of Conduct" for outer space. Just last week Ellen Tauscher, Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, said bluntly, "We're not going along with the Code of Conduct," explaining that it was too restrictive on the United States. This week, however, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the United States will join the Europeans in forming a new Code of Conduct. Clinton didn't specify what changes were required before the United States would sign on, leading many to suspect a new Code of Conduct's fine print might be a backdoor to a cherished liberal dream: "de-weaponizing" space, i.e. preventing the United States from using space for *any* military purpose.

We are cautiously optimistic that the administration will live up to the terms of its own Space Policy, which says *inter alia* the United States shall: "Develop capabilities, plans, and options to deter, defend against, and, if necessary, defeat efforts to interfere with or attack U.S. or allied space systems; Maintain the capabilities to execute the space support, force enhancement, space control, and force application missions; Develop, obtain, and operate space capabilities to support strategic goals, intelligence priorities, and assigned tasks." (The full text of the 2010 Space Policy can be read [here](#).) And we note the Senate is unlikely to ratify any treaty that might include backdoor language or loopholes that could be used to cripple the

military use of space (notwithstanding its 2010 ratification of the abhorrent New Start Treaty). Nonetheless, this is an issue that requires close scrutiny, lest the Obama administration intentionally hamstring U.S. space options in the name of “peaceful use of space.”

Warfront With Jihadistan: Taliban Takeout

Even as the Obama regime continues its withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan, the U.S. military continues to take the fight to the jihadis. Reports surfaced this week that the Pakistani Taliban chief, Hakimullah Mehsud, may have been droned to death by a U.S. missile strike. The claim that Mehsud was sent to his virgins came from officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity. They said that a number of Taliban radio conversations had been intercepted, and in a half dozen of those intercepts the jihadis openly discussed whether Mehsud was killed on Jan. 12 in the North Waziristan tribal area. In the conversations some terrorists confirmed Mehsud was dead while another criticized his comrades for talking openly about it over the radio.

This is not the first time that we have had reports of Mehsud’s death. Two years ago, the U.S. believed that it had killed Mehsud in a drone strike only to have him resurface in Taliban videos in 2010 and 2011. Pakistani Taliban spokesman Ehsanullah Ehsan told reporters that reports of Mehsud’s death were false, saying, “There is no truth in reports about his death. However, he is a human being and can die any time. He is a mujahid and we wish him martyrdom.” Not exactly a ringing endorsement of Mehsud’s undeadness. Still, we do agree with Ehsan and truly hope that this time U.S. forces helped Mehsud attain his “martyrdom.”

TSA Comes Clean ... Sort Of

Last December, we reported that an elderly woman was humiliated by TSA screeners at New York’s JFK airport when they insisted that she pull down her waistband to show her colostomy bag. TSA’s initial response was to deny everything but also claim that agents were just following protocol.

This week, however, the feds finally admitted that their agents went too far. Assistant Homeland Security Secretary Betsy Markey wrote to New York State Sen. Michael Gianaris (D-Queens), “It is not standard operating procedure for colostomy devices to be visually inspected, and [the TSA] apologizes for this employee’s action.” While Markey still maintains that the agents didn’t conduct a strip-search, the woman disagrees. “It’s obvious that

something went wrong, so its nice to see the TSA admit that their procedures were violated,” Gianaris said, “but they’re still falling short of admitting that these women’s dignity was violated.”

CULTURE

Faith and Family: Roe v. Wade Turns 39

Sunday marks the 39th anniversary of the most tragic Supreme Court decision in American history, Roe v. Wade. The primary issue remains the right to life affirmed in our Declaration of Independence -- a right tragically denied to the more than 50 million unborn babies who have been sacrificed on the altar of “choice” since 1973.

It has always been evident to us, scientifically, morally and logically, that life begins at conception. For the last word on the matter, we consult our Creator’s guidebook. The Psalmist wrote, “For You formed my inward parts; you wove me in my mother’s womb.” He then noted, “Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were written all the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them.” *Imago Dei!*

Around the Nation:

OWS Like the Rest of Us -- Broke

Just as they’re exhorted to prepare for a spring series of protests of Republican-sponsored budget cuts, it seems that the 99 percenters of Occupy Wall Street are burning through their cash so quickly that they had to make cuts of their own, electing to freeze spending on new projects but continuing to pay basic expenses. In short, the Occupy movement is facing the very problem that will be vexing the legislators they’re urged to protest against. Funds donated for their use, once in excess of \$700,000, are now down to about \$170,000.

If that isn’t enough to bring a chuckle, consider this: Nancy Pelosi recently claimed “[Democrats] don’t really have much of a connection with the Occupy [protesters.]” Pelosi belongs to the same group -- the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee -- that last fall urged its backers to sign a petition supporting the goals of the Occupy movement.

So in the winter of their discontent, as law enforcement across the country evicts them from their squalid encampments in public squares and cold weather drives all but the hardiest of their group indoors, the Occupy movement is also learning the hard truth that most of the rest of us already know: eventually you run out of other people’s money. Using that fresh cadre of volunteers willing to

spend days or weeks camping out (and doing other less savory things) is motivating groups such as the Democratic Socialists of America to figure out ways to occupy the Occupy movement and use it to hasten the statist utopia of their dreams. Act two is certain to be performed this coming spring, but time will tell if the sequel does as well as the original.

From the ‘Non Compos Mentis’ File: A Change to King’s Legacy

Apparently the cause of civil rights is bigger than one man, *except* when Martin Luther King’s memory is needed to bash the opposition. At an MLK celebration in Columbia, South Carolina, Attorney General Eric Holder blasted Republicans who believe that voting should be added to the list of everyday actions requiring a photo ID. Holder’s Justice Department recently blocked a South Carolina law requiring ID for voters, calling it an unfair burden on minority voters. He also vowed to fight measures he deemed would make voting “less accessible.”

Fellow Obama administration official Valerie Jarrett was more blunt in her criticism of the GOP -- from a church pulpit, no less -- singling out Republicans in Congress for placing the jobs of teachers, firefighters and policemen “in jeopardy.” Rev. Raphael Warnock, the pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church where Jarrett spoke at the Sunday service, added that he anticipated another campaign that would feature “race baiting” by Newt Gingrich and other Republicans against Barack Obama.

Nor was the King Memorial in Washington, DC, exempt from the burnishing of King’s memory. Opened in August, it came under fire for featuring a truncated quotation from its subject: “I was a drum major for justice, peace and righteousness.” In the words of one critic, that made King sound like “an arrogant twit,” because the actual quote was “if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for justice. Say that I was a

drum major for peace. I was a drum major for righteousness. And all of the other shallow things will not matter.”

Interior Department Secretary Ken Salazar ordered the National Park Service to consult with the King Memorial Foundation to consider changing the memorial. However, any change will be difficult given that the quotation is chiseled into the granite monument -- a monument that cost \$120 million to build. Considering the constant changes to King’s legacy to suit the Left’s agenda, the revised quote might be better written on a chalkboard.

And Last...

We’ve recounted how Barack Obama wants to increase the national debt again while feigning an attempt to organize the government more efficiently. We’ve told you about yet another gunrunning operation gone bad and a drastic increase in food stamp recipients since 2009. We’ve told you how the president’s supporters think his detractors are merely dumb. The obvious conclusion is that Obama is in Fantasyland. No, literally, he’s in Fantasyland at Disney World, where he gave a speech Thursday about the economy in general and tourism in particular. Adding to the image of his failing presidency, however, was that his speech in front of Cinderella’s Castle prompted the closure of “Main Street USA.” Our job now is to send him off to retirement, so the rest of us can live happily ever after.

Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus et Fidelis! Nate Jackson for *The Patriot Post* Editorial Team. Read online at <http://patriotpost.us>

(Please pray for our Armed Forces standing in harm’s way around the world, and for their families -- especially families of those fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen, who granted their lives in defense of American liberty.)