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VOICE OF ESSENTIAL LIBERTY

DIGEST

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THE FOUNDATION

“[W]ith respect to future debt, would it not be wise and just for that nation to declare in the constitution they are forming that neither the legislature, nor the nation itself can validly contract more debt, than they may pay within their own age.” --Thomas Jefferson

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Congress Is Still Stuck in Neutral on Debt

Five days and counting until the end of the world. At least that's what Democrats would have us believe with regard to the federal debt ceiling. “What we're trying to do is save the world from the Republican budget,” declared House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA). “We're trying to save life on this planet as we know it today.” Well, Pelosi and her tax-and-spend ilk “succeeded” for one more day when the House postponed a vote on Speaker John Boehner's plan of spending cuts and debt-ceiling increase Thursday night. But it was because Boehner (R-OH) couldn't get enough *Republicans* to go along with his plan that it faltered. Even if the plan had passed the House, though, all 53 Senate Democrats had promised to torpedo it in favor of Majority Leader Harry Reid's plan.

Boehner's plan, revised Wednesday to improve its score with the Congressional Budget Office, included projected cuts of \$917 billion over 10 years with no tax increases. Most Republicans got in line behind their leader, hoping to win the battle by offering something to the Senate after the upper chamber defeated Cut, Cap and Balance. Others concluded that the dollar amount stretched over too many years was woefully insufficient, and insisted on passage of a balanced budget amendment. We happen to think both sides are right.

Republicans control just one-half of one branch of the government, and they have to start somewhere. Yet \$22 billion in cuts this year in exchange for \$900 billion more in debt this year is a sorry deal. Trying to sell it by saying that the \$900 billion increase is conditional on \$917 billion in cuts is just Washington math. Even with the deal, the federal debt would rise several trillion over 10 years, meaning the ceiling would need to be raised many more times, including again in 2012.

Reid (D-NV) also has a plan to counter those “radical, right-wing, Tea Party extremists”: Raise the ceiling by \$2.4 trillion now, in exchange for cutting \$2.2 trillion over a decade. That likely would avoid having to address the issue again before next year's presidential election, which President Barack Obama and his fellow Democrats want to avoid at all costs. However, Reid's plan has more than its fair share of accounting gimmicks. For instance, half the “cuts” in his plan are the savings from ending the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. As columnist Charles Krauthammer quipped, “I'm told there's an extra \$10 billion in here of savings from not invading Normandy a second time.”

For his part, Obama has been remarkably silent this week following his speech Monday night, which offered nothing new -- just blame for everyone but him. Perhaps his advisers have concluded that we're all tired of hearing him read from the teleprompter.

Meanwhile, House Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and Assistant Minority Leader Rep. James Clyburn (D-SC) are floating a “14th Amendment solution,” which they say would allow Obama to raise the debt ceiling unilaterally. Section 4 of the 14th Amendment reads, “The validity of the public debt of the United States ... shall not be questioned.” Only a leftist using the “living constitution” could construe such language to mean that the president can unilaterally incur *more* debt, a power still left to Congress. Fortunately, even Obama acknowledges that using the 14th Amendment isn't “a winning argument.”

Besides, even if the nation passes Aug. 2 without a deal, there will still be money to pay the interest on the debt and other vital obligations. We're pretty sure that, despite Nancy Pelosi's dire warnings to the contrary, “life on this planet as we know it today” will continue even without bureaucracies such as the EPA or HUD. The nation managed for two centuries without either one.

Finally, the White House is prodding the three major credit rating agencies to back the Reid plan. It's not just the debt ceiling that could cause a credit downgrade, however. Our long-term trajectory is not sustainable, which is likely why Obama long ago gave up on his demand for a “clean” increase in the debt ceiling -- meaning no spending cuts whatsoever.

What remains to be seen in the coming days is whether Congress can pass a deal -- any deal -- to address the issue, however timidly. Indeed, after being stymied Thursday night, the House turned to the urgent matter of re-naming post offices. The tragedy of it all is that real solutions and fidelity to the Constitution seem far beyond the grasp of so many of our elected representatives.

Essential Liberty

“The national debt-ceiling law should be judged by what it actually does, not by how good an idea it seems to be. The one thing that the national debt-ceiling has never done is to put a ceiling on the rising national debt. Time and time again, for years on end, the national debt-ceiling has been raised whenever the national debt gets near whatever the current ceiling might be. Regardless of what it is supposed to do, what the national debt-ceiling actually does is enable any administration to get all the political benefits of runaway spending for the benefit of their favorite constituencies -- and then invite the opposition party to share the blame, by either raising the national debt ceiling, or by voting for unpopular cutbacks in spending or increases in taxes.” --economist Thomas Sowell

On Cross-Examination

In arguing the debt ceiling issue on the Senate floor, Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) quoted a Wall Street Journal editorial -- specifically the part criticizing “tea-party Hobbits” for wanting too much. It was a reference to J.R.R. Tolkien’s novel “The Lord of the Rings.”

Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) fired back, “I think in reading the books, the hobbits were the heroes. They overcame great obstacles, and I think I’d rather be a hobbit than a troll.”

This Week’s ‘Alpha Jackass’ Award

“To make matters worse, the recession meant that there was less money coming in, and it required us to spend even more.” --Barack Obama in his prime time speech Monday

News From the Swamp: Democrats Love Reagan?

Among all the other shenanigans taking place in Washington, Democrats have now attempted to rewrite history and co-opt Ronald Reagan’s legacy. In their fight to raise the debt ceiling, House Democrats released a television ad with selective clips of a 1982 Ronald Reagan radio address warning of the fiscal disaster that would come from a failure to raise the debt ceiling. Of course they neglected to mention that the 1983 ceiling was \$3 trillion, a bit below the current \$14.3 trillion. Democrats gleefully

point out that Reagan agreed to raise taxes at the time. The tax hike rolled back some of Reagan’s historic 1981 tax cut, and he regretted the decision for the rest of his presidency. Democrats reneged on their promise to cut \$3 spent for every \$1 raised, and instead used the tax revenue to *increase* spending. In other words, they lied. You won’t see *that* in the ad, nor will you hear what Reagan said later in the same speech: “Every time Congress increases taxes, the deficit does not decrease, spending increases.” Democrats would love history to repeat itself.

The debt has quintupled since the Reagan presidency, and since that time Democrats have constantly smeared his legacy. But now, even Obama quotes the former president in his attempt to push his ideological agenda of an all-encompassing federal government. We would rejoice if our friends on the Left had truly come to respect Reagan, but when such comments are weighed against the vitriolic words Obama has used against the GOP in recent weeks, it’s more than apparent that Democrats are adulterating Reagan’s record for their own political gain.

From the Left: Rep. Wu Will Resign, Just Not Soon Enough

Rep. David Wu (D-OR) resigned from office this week after being accused of unwanted sexual advances on the 18-year-old daughter of a longtime political contributor. The 56-year-old Wu refused private calls from House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and New York Democrat Steve Israel to step down when the scandal broke, opting instead to not run for re-election in 2012. Pelosi ever-so-subtly called for an Ethics Committee investigation, and a few senior Democrats put pressure on Wu to quit. He finally relented, but he will remain in Congress long enough to vote on the debt ceiling before walking away with his \$1 million pension.

Pelosi has had ample time to observe Wu’s boorish behavior. During his 2008 re-election campaign Wu’s staff complained of his bizarre antics, including cryptic phone calls and sending around a picture of himself in a full-length tiger costume. In fact, Wu’s congressional career, which began in 1999, is littered with erratic behavior and sexually aggressive incidents with women, some of it under Pelosi’s speakership when she famously railed against the Republicans’ “culture of corruption” and promised to “drain the swamp.” Adding to the American people’s loathing for Congress, Wu is the fourth member of that body to resign during this session because of a sex scandal.

FAA Funding Fight

Last weekend, 4,000 non-essential Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) employees were told not to report to work when the agency's short-term funding extension ran out. The government lost \$30 million in airline tax revenue -- leading to some happy travelers -- and over \$2 billion in construction projects were shut down. Planes still operated as usual, with TSA screeners, air-traffic controllers, and safety inspectors all reporting for work.

Senate Democrats have refused to accept a short-term funding extension passed by the House in April that would provide money to the FAA for two months but would also end subsidies for small airports within 90 miles of a larger airport. The House Republican package also rolls back a Democrat gift to unions passed earlier this session that makes it easier for them to demand collective bargaining. The Senate approved the removal of subsidies in a long-term reauthorization bill in February, but three affected airports are in the home states of Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), Transportation Chairman Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), and Finance Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT), respectively. Those three refused to accept the resolution, but Republicans have remained firm. The FAA bill will have to wait until after the debt fight, and it serves as a timely example of the GOP's ability to remain united on principle.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Warfront With Jihadistan: Ft. Hood Attack Thwarted, Little Rock Jihadi Gets Life

U.S. Army PFC Naser Jason Abdo was arrested this week for allegedly plotting an attack at Fort Hood, Texas -- the same fort attacked by Maj. Nidal Hasan, who murdered 14 people and wounded 32 others there in 2009. When Abdo was arrested, he was in possession of weapons, explosives and jihadist propaganda material, and he told law enforcement officials that he was at Fort Hood "seeking retaliation." Abdo applied "conscientious objector" status to avoid deployment and found a fan base among leftist anti-war groups. A review board recommended that he be separated from the Army, but discharge was delayed because of charges that he had child pornography on his government computer. He went AWOL from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, on July 4.

Naturally, many news outlets declined or waited until the end of the story to mention that Abdo is Muslim. Fewer still have reported that Abdo has mentioned the name of Anwar al-Awlaki, the radical Muslim cleric who inspired Hasan's murderous rampage. As we saw in Norway, all

terrorist attacks are not perpetrated by Muslims, but it's certainly a reasonable generalization to make. Unless, that is, you're a Democrat member of Congress. At a hearing on radical Islam this week, Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) said, "I would like to have a hearing on right-wing extremists, ideologues who advocate violence and advocate, in essence, the terrorizing of certain groups." No doubt *that* would be immensely productive.

In related news, another murderous American traitor, Carlos Bledsoe, a.k.a. Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad, who with clear malice aforethought and premeditation gunned down U.S. Army Private William Long and wounded another in Little Rock, Arkansas in 2009, received a plea-bargained punishment of life in prison. This self-identified jihadi admitted his crimes, including an attempted arson of a rabbi's home and yet another attempted murder at an Army Recruiting Center. Bledsoe avoided a death sentence, prompting one family member of the victims to observe that this murdering dog can now recruit fellow jihadis in prison for the rest of his life.

We can only hope that prosecutors in the U.S. Army don't get cold feet when it comes time to punish accused Fort Hood shooter Nidal Hasan. Treason and first-degree murder are appropriate charges, and death is the appropriate sentence for this traitorous jihadi. Anything less would be a travesty and would send a dangerous message just as it has with Bledsoe.

Justice Delayed But Not Denied: Kerry Ally Stripped of Silver Star

In 1992, Capt. Wade Sanders was awarded the Silver Star for actions in Vietnam years earlier. In 2004, he introduced Democrat presidential nominee John Kerry at that year's convention and was a big supporter throughout the campaign. As we all know, a group of some 200 fellow Swift Boat veterans eventually helped sink Kerry's presidential campaign by blowing up the Vietnam "war hero" facade that the Massachusetts senator had meticulously and misleadingly put forth. Contrary to Kerry's boasting, he committed treason in Vietnam. Sanders was a lead attack dog for Kerry, and he worked to tarnish the Swifties' reputations, slandering them as "Nazi propagandists."

In a case of poetic justice, the Navy recently stripped Sanders of his honor. The Navy's tersely worded statement indicated that "subsequently determined facts and evidence surrounding both the incident for which the award was made and the processing of the award itself" led to the revocation of his Silver Star. Sanders, by the

way, is also serving 37 months for possession of child pornography, and we doubt that helped his case. He claimed it was research for a book he was writing.

Kerry made quite the issue of his military record, using it as both a crutch and a stick throughout his campaign. How ironic that one of his lead witnesses was found to be so wanting in character. Kerry should hope the Navy doesn't come after him, too.

Immigration Front: California DREAMin'

Placing the welcome mat out still farther for illegal immigrants, earlier this week California Democrat Gov. Jerry Brown signed a bill allowing California's "undocumented" population the same tuition rates as other state residents, provided they could prove they attended high school in the state for three years and promised to apply for legal immigration status as soon as they could do so. Once the law takes effect Jan. 1, California will join nearly a dozen states which have passed similar laws. One of those states, Maryland, has seen its recently passed version of the DREAM Act placed on hold thanks to a successful petition drive forcing the bill to referendum in November 2012. It's possible that California citizens could do the same.

Meanwhile, on the federal level, Barack Obama was trying to placate Latino groups that expected their own "hope 'n' change" amnesty program when he took office. Speaking to the National Council of La Raza, a radical Latino rights organization, Obama bemoaned the fact that he had no "dance partner" in the amnesty effort and was simply upholding the law by deporting illegal immigrants. But La Raza regulars would have none of that, saying he could choose not to enforce the laws or create his own through executive power.

At stake for him is the loyalty of a large and rapidly growing constituent group of possible 2012 voters -- particularly in those states which don't vigorously enforce voter ID laws. If aliens face the prospect of a voter identification law with teeth, they may stay home and Obama may lose his grip on power.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Economy Growth Nearly Non-Existent

The Wall Street Journal reports, "The U.S. economy expanded at a slower pace than expected in the spring as consumers cut back on spending, while revisions showed the slowdown since the beginning of the year was much more drastic than previously thought. The Commerce Department Friday said gross domestic product rose at an an-

nualized seasonally adjusted rate of 1.3% in April through June, while first-quarter growth was revised down sharply to a 0.4% rate from the earlier estimate of a 1.9% gain."

Reuters added, "The economy grew less than expected in the second quarter as consumer spending barely rose amid higher gasoline prices, and growth braked sharply in the prior quarter, a government report showed on Friday."

The Washington Post echoed, "The 1.3 percent pace of increase in the gross domestic product, the broadest measure of economic activity, is far lower than many economists estimated."

We just have one question: Why are all these "experts" always surprised by the lousy Obama recovery?

Hope 'n Change: More Employers Axing Health Benefits

"If you like your health care plan, you can keep your health care plan," Barack Obama claimed in August 2009 while on the stump for his signature health care takeover. But in a trend that has gained momentum since the passage of ObamaCare, about one in eight employers are terminating their current health insurance plans, according to a study done on behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business, an advocacy group for the small business community. While most of that subset of businesses won't take away health benefits entirely, they are generally decreasing overall coverage and passing more costs to their employees.

ObamaCare opponents warned that companies would eventually shift the burden to government rather than invest in the available private-sector plans as they became more expensive -- eventually the business of providing health insurance would become unprofitable due to a lack of customers and companies would drop out. In turn, that would leave government to pick up the pieces with a single-payer system -- as was surreptitiously planned all along.

The same survey also found that small business owners believed ObamaCare would result in increased taxes and higher federal deficits, and -- what do you know! -- the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid released a 10-year forecast that confirms those suspicions. According to the forecast, total health care spending is projected to grow by 5.8 percent each year, while it would have grown by 5.7 percent without the law -- this despite Obama's incessant promises that his health care takeover would "bend the cost curve" down.

Income Redistribution: Competing Philosophies

Amidst all the mudslinging and political posturing over the debt ceiling, it's easy to forget what's really at stake. Take the tax issue, which, at its core, is about more than an Aug. 2 deadline or another trillion added to the deficit. It's a philosophical debate about the nature of government that goes to the heart of what it means to live in America (as opposed to, say, Europe or Soviet-era Russia).

To GOP presidential candidate Michele Bachmann, for example, America is a place where everyone has a responsibility to "pull the wagon." The federal government is (or *should be*) limited to the role envisioned by the Founders, and the only revenue it should collect is the amount it needs to provide for funding its enumerated powers. The source of this revenue should come from *all* who live under the umbrella of freedom that America provides, not simply those who make a certain amount of money. "We need to broaden the tax base," Bachmann has said, "so that everyone pays something, even if it's a dollar."

To Barack Obama and his legions of "progressives," however, America is a very different place -- or it will be if he continues with his "fundamental transformation." In Obama Nation, tax revenue is a vehicle for siphoning money from the "wealthy" (a term that has been arbitrarily defined and redefined by the progressive elite) to finance the "empowerment" of the masses.

Since his 2008 campaign, his philosophy has centered on wealth redistribution. Now, in the face of the debt ceiling crisis and a looming re-election campaign, he's trying to backtrack a bit. "This isn't about punishing wealth," Obama said recently, "it's about asking people who've benefitted the most over the last decade to share in the sacrifice." Yet even this statement speaks volumes. First of all, he doth protest too much. Second, his casual reference to people who've "benefitted" from the past decade makes it seem as though these people sat back and watched their bank accounts swell with money given to them by George W. Bush. The fact that most of these people worked extremely hard for their success, and that their success makes the employment of so many others possible, is apparently lost on the community organizer. It seems he would prefer to tax these people into poverty, and have the masses look to the government for salvation.

CULTURE & POLICY

The Other Tragedy in Norway

A tragedy occurred in Norway last weekend, and by now most are familiar with the published details. Anders Beh-

ring Breivik, a 32-year-old native of Norway, went on a shooting spree at a Norwegian island youth camp, killing 68 attendees. Before this, he set off a car bomb outside the office of Norway's prime minister, killing eight. Fortunately, a Norwegian SWAT team eventually wounded and captured the gunman. Unfortunately, however, the murders are not the only tragedy in this story.

The other tragedy is how quickly the Leftmedia threw truth under the bus to ensure boilerplate media placard headlines -- Christians are bad, conservatives are bad, government is good, guns-not-people kill people. While many conservatives assumed early on that it was the work of a Muslim terrorist, when it turned out that the guy was an unhinged, anti-Muslim lunatic, they reported straight. But to hear the Leftmedia version of the massacre, a "Christian fundamentalist with right-wing connections" was responsible for the worst violence in Norway since World War II. The only problem with their theory is that it's wholly unsubstantiated by any of the evidence.

For instance, Breivik plagiarized heavily from "Unabomber" Ted Kaczynski's "manifesto," liberally exchanging the words "multiculturalism" or "cultural Marxism" for "leftism." This is hardly the hallmark of a committed ideologue, Christian or otherwise. It's more like the work of someone too lazy to author an original 1,500-page document (the length of Breivik's tome, à la Kaczynski), but who nonetheless wants to be seen as committed to his cause. And what is that cause, exactly? One might guess it would be attacking Muslims, based on all the "Islamophobia" rhetoric flowing from The New York Times and its ilk, but that guess would be incorrect: Not one Muslim was targeted by Breivik.

Moreover, Breivik's extremely loose definition of "Christian" is bizarre at best. Specifically, he identified himself in his rambling screed as a "cultural conservative Christian," a term he equated roughly with agnosticism -- that is, with the belief that we can't know if there is a "God" or not. That's anything but Christian. As to the "fundamentalist" swipe, this is yet another mainstream media pile-on, labeling a mass-murderer a "Christian," then throwing in that radioactive adjective for good measure.

Naturally, the gun-control mafia was similarly spring-loaded to condemn guns everywhere. However, this argument totally misses the mark: Norway already has some of the toughest gun laws in the world. Had there been another gun somewhere at that island youth camp, Breivik would likely have been dropped well before he gunned

down scores of unarmed innocents. As it was, police did not arrive until almost *an hour* after they received the call for help. In other words, when seconds counted, the police were *many* minutes away.

Finally, we note that for all the deaths involved, the maximum sentence Mr. Breivik can receive under Norwegian law is 21 years, or a little less than three months per murder. Fortunately, the same sense of outrage that registers in the minds of most Americans when they hear these figures is also starting to register among a sizable number of Norwegians. If it brings back the death penalty in Norway, at least some good will have come from this horrible act.

Climate Change This Week: More Phony Science

Last week, we noted a study from the World Wildlife Fund that associated supposed increased drowning rates among polar bears having to swim farther as Arctic sea ice melts due to global warming. We asked skeptical questions about the study itself. Lo and behold, this week, federal wildlife biologist Charles Monnett is under investigation for unspecified “integrity issues” in his research on the subject. Monnett has been placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation. This doesn’t disprove his theory, but it doesn’t help the cause, either.

In other news sure to cause warmists to sweat a bit, Forbes reports, “NASA satellite data from the years 2000 through 2011 show the Earth’s atmosphere is allowing far more heat to be released into space than alarmist computer models have predicted, reports a new study in the peer-reviewed science journal *Remote Sensing*. The study indicates far less future global warming will occur than United Nations computer models have predicted and supports prior studies indicating increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide trap far less heat than alarmists have claimed.” The trouble with computer models is that they forecast what you tell them to forecast. And because climate change fanatics are trying to tilt the scales in their favor, it’s garbage in, garbage out.

Faith and Family: Atheists Attack WTC Cross

It seems unthinkable that anyone could whine that the cross-shaped rubble that rose from the ruins of the World Trade Center constitutes a breach of the over-wrought and badly misunderstood “separation of church and state.” Well, the unthinkable is reality. American Atheists (sporting an unintentionally funny acronym -- AA), self-described as an “organization laboring for the civil liberties of atheists and the total, absolute separation of

government and religion,” filed a lawsuit in New York this week to prevent the display of the World Trade Center Cross at the 9/11 Memorial at Ground Zero. The cross, formed of two intersecting steel beams from the WTC, stood as a symbol of comfort to countless victims and rescuers in the days following the deadly terror attacks. American Atheists, however, claims that the cross “will just be a Christian icon, in the middle of OUR museum,” and they’re vowing the cross’s inclusion “will not happen without a fight.”

According to the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), however, which is filing a friend-of-the-court brief in support of the cross, “[T]his memorial is not only a critical part of 9-11 history, but a constitutionally-sound reminder of the horrors that occurred at Ground Zero nearly a decade ago.” Indeed, 9/11 Memorial president Joe Daniels says, the cross is “an important part of our commitment to bring back the authentic physical reminders that tell the history of 9/11 in a way nothing else could.” As is the case with most atheist organizations, however, for American Atheists, anti-Christian radicalism trumps any sincere interest in historical accuracy.

And Last...

Alex Trebek, the 71-year-old longtime host of the game show “Jeopardy!” suffered an unfortunate injury Tuesday. He snapped his Achilles tendon while chasing a 56-year-old woman who burgled his San Francisco hotel room. We certainly wish him well and a speedy recovery, but we could also hardly help having a bit of fun with the obvious puns from the news. As in, we’ll take Crime-Fighting Game-Show Hosts for \$200. Or under Unfortunate Mythology, Answer: Achilles. Question: Who is the Greek hero for which this pain in my foot is named? As for the perp, she’ll be Headed to Jail for \$500. If found innocent of the charges, however, she can take comfort in knowing that she won’t face Double Jeopardy.

Veritas vos Liberabit -- Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus, et Fidelis! Mark Alexander, Publisher, for *The Patriot Post’s* editors and staff. 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.)