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VOICE OF ESSENTIAL LIBERTY

DIGEST

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THE FOUNDATION

“Here comes the orator! With his flood of words, and his drop of reason.” --Benjamin Franklin

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

Political Football -- Another Obama Speech

The economy added no jobs in August, the first time net job growth has been zero since World War II -- when everyone *had* jobs. Meanwhile, natural disasters plagued the East Coast, adding cost and chaos to the “recovery,” such as it is. However, Barack Obama has been gracious enough to return from vacation at Martha’s Vineyard, golf clubs in tow, to bless the nation with his teleprompted wisdom. In fact, so great is the moment and so deep are his thoughts that the president started a political football game with his request for yet another speech before a joint session of Congress.

It wasn’t that such addresses outside the State of the Union are reserved for occasions such as declarations of war or other grave or serious moments in national history. The problem is that Obama thinks *he* is such an occasion -- that his ideas about job creation are important enough to merit the spotlight. We have long contended that Barack Obama is a case study in narcissistic pathology, so this episode is more typical than surprising.

He isn’t even introducing *new* ideas, either, but recycled and failed ones in the form of more stimulus spending, which is ironic given the new George Mason University study showing that nearly half of all workers “hired” through stimulus money were *already employed*. We suppose now would also be a bad time to mention the \$535 million in stimulus cash lent to solar panel maker Solyn-dra, which is now bankrupt and out of business, having taken 1,100 jobs with it.

The final insult, however, was that Obama chose to address Congress Wednesday, Sept. 7 -- the same night as the long-scheduled GOP presidential debate at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library. Despite gasping and finger wagging even from the president’s allies, the White House immediately whined, “Americans are sick and tired of the partisan bickering.” We wonder why.

House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) suggested that Obama choose a different night, and the White House, reportedly furious at the insult to Obama’s ego, caved. The speech was moved to Thursday, Sept. 8. He even had to move it up to 7 p.m. Eastern to avoid conflicting with opening night for the National Football League. For the record, the New Orleans Saints take on the Super Bowl champion Green Bay Packers at 8:30. Care to guess which event wins the ratings battle?

On Boehner’s action, we’re inclined to agree with columnist and pundit Charles Krauthammer, who said, “I think that the Boehner letter was probably ill-advised because if he had just accepted [the date], the president would just look small for stepping on the debate. Secondly, I think the Republicans could have easily just moved the debate to 9:00, and then had eight people on the stage to gang up on Obama, essentially the biggest response to a presidential speech ever done.”

Obama sent out a fundraising letter Wednesday hinting at the conflict with Congress: “It’s been a long time since Congress was focused on what the American people need them to be focused on,” Obama wrote. “I know that you’re frustrated by that. I am, too.” Indeed, he was so focused that he spent the last few weeks either golfing, campaigning or fundraising.

Meanwhile, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke displayed his keen sense of the obvious when he said last Friday that it’s “clear that the recovery from the crisis has been much less robust than we had hoped.” In fact, he said, “we have learned that the recession was even deeper and the recovery even weaker than we had thought; indeed, aggregate output in the United States still has not returned to the level that it attained before the crisis. Importantly, economic growth has for the most part been at rates insufficient to achieve sustained reductions in unemployment, which has recently been fluctuating a bit above 9 percent.” His solution? More federal spending -- for the time being, anyway.

Aside from the laughable implication that federal spending is ever temporary, The Wall Street Journal notes, “Mr. Bernanke has been Fed Chairman since February 2006 and has presided over 32 months of historically easy

monetary policy in the name of spurring faster growth and avoiding deflation. What we have instead is a mild stagflation -- 1% GDP growth, 9.1% unemployment, and a commodity price bubble that has robbed middle-class real incomes." Despite the "quantitative easing" of pumping \$2.3 trillion more into the banking system, as well as sustained 0 percent interest rates, the economy still hasn't recovered two years after the recession supposedly ended.

This week, GDP growth in the second quarter was revised downward to 1 percent, and 0.4 percent in the first. An Investor's Business Daily review of all recessions after 1945 shows that "...on average, it took just over two fiscal quarters for the economy to recover from a downturn and start expanding again. In contrast, we're eight quarters into the Obama recovery, and the expansion is somewhere off in the distance, with real GDP still \$65.5 billion below the pre-recession peak." The White House itself projects unemployment over 9 percent through 2012 with just 2.6 percent economic growth, and 2011 growth at a meager 1.7 percent.

No matter the day or time, another speech isn't going to fix that.

Quote of the Week

"Well, look, we anticipated that the recovery was slowing. The economy is still growing, but it's not growing as fast as it needs to. I've got things right now before Congress that we should move immediately, and I've said so before I went on vacation, and I'll keep on saying it now that I'm back." --Barack Obama in August 2010

On Cross-Examination

"I don't see the point of being a prop for another of the president's speeches asking for more failed stimulus spending and more subsidies for his pet projects. The president needs to stop the speeches, get out of his office and away from all the White House academics and start talking to real people out there. They're the ones who are going to create the jobs, not White House paper-pushers and bureaucrats." --Rep. Joe Walsh (R-IL) on why he plans to skip next week's speech

Essential Liberty

"Little by little, inch by inch, drop by drop, governments both in America and in Europe began taking more and more from people, diminishing the incentive of those on both sides of the transaction -- the taker and the giver. In America, nearly half of wage earners pay not one single dime in federal income taxes. Many of them trudge down

to the local polling place or vote via absentee ballot -- and vote themselves a raise. The Founding Fathers conceived a brilliant document to restrain the federal government and allow maximum freedom for the people to make their own way. It leaves people the power to make their own decisions and to deal with the consequences. Almost before the ink dried, Congress tried to circumvent the Constitution. James Madison, the fourth U.S. president and the 'Father of the Constitution,' warned against using the document -- especially the 'general welfare' clause -- to dispense money, no matter how well-intended or deserved: 'With respect to the words general welfare, I have always regarded them as qualified by the detail of powers (enumerated in the Constitution) connected with them. To take them in a literal and unlimited sense would be a metamorphosis of the Constitution into a character which there is a host of proofs was not contemplated by its creators.' ... As governments take more away from their producing citizens and give it to their nonproducers, growth stagnates and opportunities dry up." --columnist Larry Elder

Also, don't miss Mark Alexander's essay, [The Essential Question in Any Political Debate](#).

Hurricane Irene's Aftermath

Hurricane Irene drew most of the nation's attention last week, as the storm tracked up the East Coast over the course of several days, killing dozens of people and causing significant damage in seven states. In many areas, the flooding continues to wash out roads and homes, and places as far north as Vermont now know what it's like to be in a hurricane zone. The fact that the storm grazed New York City, the unofficial home of the national media, surely enhanced the volume and intensity of the reporting.

Accusations that Irene was over-hyped came quickly once it had cleared the Big Apple. Naturally, that assessment came from media pundits based in New York, which didn't suffer the degree of flooding or damage that was feared. The notion that Irene was overhyped is hyperbole in itself, though looking at the larger picture, Irene wasn't a typical hurricane. While forecasters correctly predicted its track, its intensity at varying points was uncertain. Nevertheless, that lack of intensity was made up for by the flooding, the cost of the damage and the number of people affected. The cleanup of the hurricane will certainly take place off the front pages, as is often the case with disasters that irrevocably change communities and families. This has been the case in our own backyard since April's devastating tornadoes.

The debate over the federal government's role in such disasters will also continue. Barack Obama and many federal and local officials went out of their way to demonstrate publicly their competence and control over the emergency response to Irene. Obama boldly ended his vacation shortly before the hurricane hit the golf course, and he made sure to be the center of attention back in the Beltway. He was no doubt motivated, at least in part, by the specter of Hurricane Katrina and how the failure (real and perceived) to manage that disaster was hung like an albatross around George W. Bush's neck. Obama has assured continuing assistance to hard-hit areas, and now FEMA will be on the hook to shell out more assistance to a wider area.

FEMA has become the federal government's catch-all for handling disasters over the last several years, and, as usual, the pattern is ever-growing government. George H.W. Bush labeled 43 emergency events worthy of FEMA's attention during his presidency, but the number of those declarations has increased steeply with each of his successors. Obama has issued some 360 FEMA declarations since taking office, without taking last week's earthquake or hurricane into account. FEMA has thus become a classic example of federal bureaucracy gone mad. The agency has been over-deployed in situations that could have been more effectively handled by state and local authorities. As a consequence, FEMA is overextended financially, and states are becoming soft in their own preparedness, instead counting on the federal government to bail them out.

Never fear, though. FEMA's new talking point is meant to comfort and include everyone. "Federal family" is the new buzz phrase for talking about government aid. Family is such a nice word -- except when one remembers that the Mafia is family, too.

Hope 'n' Change: Obama's Busing Program

It turns out that Barack Obama's three-state Midwest bus tour a short time back didn't involve much busing. Obama's administration made a big deal about the bus and how the president would use it to travel from place to place and connect with the American people. In fact, neither the president nor the bus spent much time on America's highways. There were actually two buses, purchased from foreign manufacturers and completely refitted by the Secret Service with the latest defensive technology, and they were flown from one location to the next aboard special Air Force jets. The president flew as well, and he hit the open road only a few miles at a time.

The buses will be reused for presidential candidates and foreign dignitaries in the future, but the cost of the whole operation is absurdly high for these tough economic times. The only necessity for investing in this new secure mode of transport was to present a more accessible image for Obama. It's hard to climb out of the presidential limousine and bemoan the plight of the economy, but in the long run, it would have been a smaller hit to the American taxpayer.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Warfront With Jihadistan: How to Remember 9/11

As September 2011 dawns, we're just days away from the 10th anniversary of Jihadistan's most successful attack against the U.S. to date. On Sept. 11, 2001, nearly 3,000 people were murdered by jihadis in a fanatic attempt to cripple America. On Tuesday, the Obama administration leaked government guidelines for how official observations of the anniversary are to be handled both here and abroad. The guidelines detail what the White House regards as important themes of the day, as well as the low-key tone that observances should take. The foreign guidelines say to present a positive, forward-looking narrative, while also emphasizing the global effort to battle terrorism, rightly noting that the citizens of over 90 countries were killed on 9/11. President George W. Bush once noted the 9/11 attacks were upon not just the U.S. but the entire West and our freedoms. For domestic consumption, the guidelines remind people of the steps that have been taken to prevent another attack, though we're not sure how well that resonates with the flying public.

The administration also suggests that commemorative ceremonies "draw on the spirit of unity that prevailed in the immediate aftermath of the attacks." The irony of this statement has long been lost by many thanks to the media's short-term memory. When Obama was running for president in 2008, he spent precious time during the hard-fought primaries distancing himself from his 20-year association with close Chicago friend and pastor Rev. Jeremiah Wright. Wright's "sermons" and writings have long blamed white America for the plight of black Americans, going so far as to state that on September 11, "America's chickens are coming home to roost." Was it *that* "spirit of unity" to which Obama is referring?

In general, however, the guidelines are not unreasonable, although they do carry something of a "we are the world" PC stench. If nothing else comes from this 10th anniversary, we must remember that the Long War continues, and many brave Americans have paid the ultimate price

for our Liberty, while many others continue to put their lives on the line.

Speaking of the Long War, a U.S. drone strike on Aug. 22 in Pakistan sent al-Qa'ida's second in command, Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, to his waiting virgins. Al-Rahman was al-Qa'ida's operational leader before being promoted to Number 2 following the SEALs' lead poisoning of Osama bin Laden in May. Al-Rahman's death is just the most recent in a string of high-value targets who have been killed since bin Laden's death, which confirms, or at least strongly suggests, that a lot of actionable intelligence was gleaned from the bin Laden compound. Al-Rahman's death is another major blow to al-Qa'ida and comes as U.S. officials have said that a few more high-profile deaths could break al-Qa'ida's back. Let's pray this is so.

Immigration Front: Alabama Law Stayed

This week, the state of Alabama became the latest casualty of our ongoing crisis of federalism. Federal Judge Sharon Lovelace Blackburn stayed the enforcement of Alabama's new illegal immigration law this week, saying she hadn't had enough time for a careful review. The law, which was supposed to go into effect on Sept. 1, is being called the toughest in the nation.

Alabama is the fifth state trying to combat the federal government's lackadaisical handling of the immigration crisis. Similar laws -- which seek only to empower state law enforcement of federal statutes -- have been enacted in Georgia, Utah, Indiana, and, of course, Arizona. The feds' inaction could be construed as ineptness but for the fact that the administration has zealously fought every state effort to pick up the slack. Indeed, Barack Obama's egregious treatment of Arizona exposed his distinctly pro-illegal (future Democrat voter) agenda.

Judge Blackburn is coming under fire for her ruling, and understandably so. In this case, however, we might give her a bit of latitude, given that the Alabama law also requires schools to report the status of their students. The state legislature had to have known that this would be highly contentious and -- quite possibly -- a "deal breaker." In addition, Blackburn, an appointee of President George H.W. Bush, stated, "In entering this order the court specifically notes that it is in no way addressing the merits of the motions." She has promised a ruling by Sept. 28.

Whatever she decides, one thing is clear: The states are tired of Obama's meddling in things he shouldn't (i.e., health care), while being grossly derelict in his other

duties. The federal government needs to re-read its job description, also known as the U.S. Constitution.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Regulatory Commissars: EPA Threatens Coal Plants

It's hardly surprising that the Environmental Protection Agency under Obama is making life miserable for utility providers, but a new catalog of regulations regarding air pollution could spell the end for dozens of coal-fired generating plants and wipe away nearly one-tenth of America's electrical generating capacity. In short, utilities can't install the necessary scrubber systems for cleaning quickly enough to meet EPA's deadlines; these items normally take more than 36 months from design and ordering to installation, assuming new regulations don't send electrical providers back to the drawing board.

EPA head Lisa Jackson seems to be carrying out the administration's economically disastrous agenda such that, in Obama's own words, "electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket." But the president has the power, should he choose to use it, to override Jackson's decision on the basis of the appropriate technology not being developed and a national security interest. Most likely, though, Obama will let the EPA rules take effect in 2012, requiring full compliance 36 months later.

Coal may be the ugly duckling of the energy world, but it's cheap and effective for creating electricity to meet our demands. Taking away a significant portion of capacity certainly won't help the cause and will lead to more blackouts, rolling brownouts and higher rates for consumers -- the last thing America needs for creating jobs, or for the pocketbooks of even the employed.

From the 'Non Compos Mentis' File: Gibson Guitars Strung Up by Feds

Last week two Tennessee factories of the Gibson Guitar Corporation were raided by federal authorities, who seized guitars, office files and pallets of exotic wood used in the manufacture of instruments, including East Indian rosewood. The raid was conducted on the basis of *India's law* that discourages the processing of this wood outside India; the company did not violate any American laws.

Perhaps shedding some light on the matter, though, is that the CEO of Gibson Guitars is a Republican donor. The head of competitor Martin Guitars, which has not yet been raided, is a reliable Democrat donor. That's important because they use the same Indian wood, also certified by the environmentally friendly Forest Stewardship Council.

This controversy brings up another question about over-zealous enforcement. Those who own and collect vintage musical instruments have found that they need scrupulous documentation of their instrument's age, as federal officials crack down on the transport of certain species of wood through the Lacey Act. This law was originally passed way back in 1900, but amendments passed in 2008 by the Democrat-controlled House and Senate now affect the same wood species commonly found in vintage guitars. One musician said, "I don't go out of the country with a wooden guitar," for fear of violating the Lacey Act and risking both the forfeiture of his rare instruments and heavy fines.

Yet as in the case of ExxonMobil's deepwater Gulf of Mexico wells we detailed last week, if a company gets on the wrong side of this administration, no stone will be left unturned in order to hurt their business. The Gibson raid, which forced the company to suspend production temporarily, might be government overreach for no other reason than to punish political enemies.

CULTURE & POLICY

Second Amendment: Fast and Furious Exits

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) is making more moves in the wake of the scandal surrounding Operation Fast and Furious. Last week, we noted that some agents had been given *promotions* following the scandal. This week, acting director Kenneth Melson was moved to the Office of Legal Policy, where, out of the limelight, he will be a senior adviser. U.S. Attorney for Arizona Dennis Burke, who oversaw the legal side of Fast and Furious, also announced his resignation. U.S. Attorney for the District of Minnesota Todd Jones will now assume the role of acting director of the agency, which hasn't had a full-fledged director since 2006.

Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA), chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, vowed that the resignations and deck-chair shuffling wouldn't signal an end to his investigation. This severely misguided and botched program has resulted in some 2,000 guns illegally crossing the border into Mexico and being subsequently lost, as well as numerous deaths by those tools. "While the reckless disregard for safety that took place in Operation Fast and Furious certainly merits changes within the Department of Justice, the Oversight and Government Reform Committee will continue its investigation to ensure that blame isn't offloaded on just a few individuals for a matter that involved much higher levels of the Justice Department," Issa said in a statement. Reckless disregard and blame-shifting pretty much sums up the Obama administration.

Climate Change This Week: Of Science and Myth

If anthropogenic global warming (AGW) alarmists are to be believed, more Hurricane Irene's are on the way. According to The New York Times, many scientists continue to peddle the notion that "hurricanes will get more intense as the planet warms, and they see large hurricanes like Irene as a harbinger." In other words, let's point Irene's finger at global warming -- because, you know, we've never had hurricanes before.

Yet just when we thought we had heard it all about the woes and crises spawned by AGW, a new report now says mental health is also at risk. "[A]s the world warms ... the weather becomes wilder, with big consequences for people's health and well-being," the report notes. So far, however, it seems the only negative mental impact global warming is having is on its proponents. Just last week, Al "It's Not Easy Being Green" Gore likened AGW skeptics to "racists" and said that he and his ilk must "win the conversation" much the way the civil rights debate played out in the 1960s.

Furthermore, Al Gore claimed that skeptics of his mythology -- who collectively have received just a few million from the oil industry in the past 20 years -- are likely to lie to advance their beliefs, while climate alarmists -- who have received an astounding \$50 billion in funding in recent years -- would never do such a thing. Yeah, right.

Meanwhile, a new study by the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) has concluded that the real reason for climate change is not man but the sun. Yep, that big ball of thermonuclear fire actually affects Earth's temperature. Shocking, we know. This is hardly the first study to conclude so, nor is it the first time the media has ignored such a finding. No doubt Gore is prepared to give a strong unscientific rebuttal.

Village Academic Curriculum: Qualified Good

Last week, we reported on a Florida Teacher of the Year who was suspended for posting comments on Facebook that objected to New York's legalization of same-sex marriage earlier this year. He cited "biblical principles" for his opposition. After backing from both the conservative Liberty Counsel and the leftist American Civil Liberties Union, he has been reinstated. The school district will, however, continue to investigate what it's calling "church-state separation violations" in his curriculum. On his school web page, the teacher wrote that the classroom is his "mission field," that he tries to "teach and lead my students as if Lake Co. Schools had hired Jesus Christ

himself” and that he will “teach God’s truth.” The school has a point objecting to such language; however, if it were on the school’s website, it must have gotten tacit approval at some point. It should be noted, too, that an awful lot can depend on one’s interpretation of “God’s truth.”

In other news, the Superintendent of Fresno County (California) Schools has decided that, given the state and county’s financial troubles and high unemployment rate, he would give up almost his entire salary -- for the next three years. He technically retired and agreed to be hired back for just \$31,000, which is \$10,000 less than a first-year teacher, and approximately \$250,000 less than his previous annual salary. Questions of such a large salary aside, his move is an appreciated one in a time when government should be cutting back, not spending exorbitantly. What’s more, he didn’t announce his decision; it was eventually leaked by school board members several days later. Maybe being an ordained Baptist minister has something to do with his decision, though we also suspect his retirement package is quite nice.

And Last...

Leave it to the media in Australia to report something really interesting: “According to a [Boston] newspaper, Mr Obama was charged with driving under the influence and driving to endanger, as well as failing to use a turn signal. He was detained as an illegal immigrant because the US Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement has an

outstanding warrant for him because he was previously ordered to be deported to Kenya.”

No, not *that* Mr. Obama. We’re talking about Onyango Obama, Barack’s long-lost “Uncle Omar.” Had you going there for a minute, though, didn’t we?

Onyango is the relative about whom Barack Obama wrote in his memoir having come to the U.S. from Kenya -- illegally, it seems -- in the 1960s. He’s been more or less on the lam since a 1992 deportation order. Obama’s Auntie Zeituni likewise was discovered living in Boston illegally, but she won the right to stay in the country, and it’s likely that Uncle Omar will, too, if only to pay the thousands of dollars in back taxes he owes the IRS. In fact, now that he’s an unwelcome guest who’s racked up a bunch of debt, he’s officially a card-carrying member of the “federal family.” Besides, word is that he’s only in trouble for having left a beer summit.

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.)