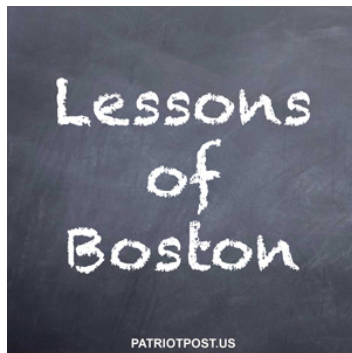




WHAT WE LEARNED FROM BOSTON

"The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave." -- Patrick Henry

Since the bombs exploded in Boston last Monday, the terror attacks have dominated the news cycle. There are some important things to learn from this latest act of jihad against our nation.



1. The media are not only unreliable but also are often part of the problem. The 24-hour info-tainment industry mucked up the details so badly that, nearly two weeks later, the public is still trying to separate fact from fiction. During the pursuit of the suspects, CNN, for example, treated us to panic "reporting" about smells in the air and "canine dogs" barking. But the "Non Compos Mentis" Award goes to CNN's Susan Candiotti, who, we kid you not, observed, "Being in Watertown right now, the streets are empty. It's eerie. It's as though a bomb had dropped somewhere." As Comedy Central's Jon Stewart replied, "It's not so much a metaphor as *what actually happened.*"

Of course, the media bedlam began five minutes after the blasts with talkingheads rushing to blame the Tea Party, the NRA or the Right generally. Yet once it became clear that the perps were two Muslim fanatics, the media suddenly went out of their way to avoid speculating on the cause or wondering whether it made any difference anyway. Suffice it to say, if TV news is your primary information source, caveat emptor!

2. Two demented young men with a simple pressure cooker and some fireworks and BBs successfully shut down a major U.S. city. That's not to diminish the damage they caused or the lives they took, but to point out that the jihadi threat is hard to counter. That didn't stop Joe Biden from brushing off the two brothers as "knock-off jihadis" (as opposed to the real thing, we suppose) and crowing, "If the purpose of terror is to instill fear, you saw none of that in Boston. The only way terrorism wins is if we change our way of life, if we yield. And our message to terrorists is: You cannot break us. You cannot change us. We will never yield. We will not be intimidated."

Except that the city was put under martial law -- people were kept home from work and school and told to "shelter in place." It shows other prospective terrorists what can be accomplished with little planning.

3. Our intelligence apparatus appeared too *big* to nimbly counter the threat. One of the biggest changes to our way of life after 9/11 was the massive growth of the government security bureaucracy. George W. Bush instituted a new cabinet-level Department of Homeland Security tasked with better enabling intelligence gathering and sharing among agencies. "They all worked as they should, as a team," Barack Obama said. If only that were true.

There were clues about Tamerlan Tsarnaev, the older (deceased) brother, as early as 2011, when the Russians passed along a tip about him being "a follower of radical Islam," though the Russians haven't been as cooperative as we'd like in the aftermath. The CIA pushed to add him to a watch list, and the FBI interviewed him, asking if he was a terrorist. He denied it, and they found no "evidence" (presumably *before* he posted jihadist videos online, including a personal pledge to "dedicate my life to jihad"), so the matter died.

Then he spent six months of 2012 in Dagestan, which neighbors his native Chechnya -- famous for its own Muslim extremists -- and that's likely where he learned to make bombs. The FBI claimed his name and date of birth were incorrectly entered, so no flags popped up when he traveled -- except at DHS, where Secretary Janet Napolitano said the "system pinged when he was leaving," though not when he returned. DHS just failed to "ping" the FBI or CIA. Such failure to communicate is part and parcel of oversized government, but we fear the reality could be even worse -- that political correctness and a wrong-headed focus on "[right-wing extremists](#)" has DHS looking for hate in all the wrong places.

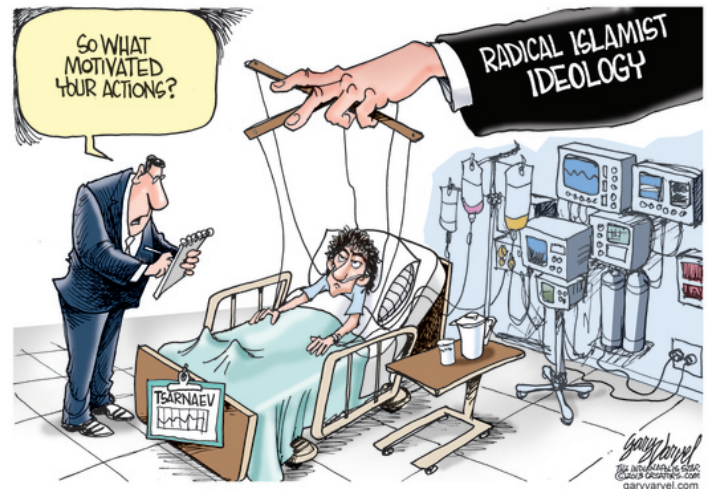
Then again, the Canadians just thwarted a terrorist plot in Quebec, and American Leftists only *hope* to be as politically correct as our northern neighbors.

4. Obama continues to tell the tale that he defeated terrorism. Ever since he "personally" killed Osama bin Laden, the president has been doing victory laps for the successful eradication of al-Qa'ida. Again, if only that were true.

The president's narrative and his ideology are the reasons Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the younger (captured) brother, wasn't classified as an enemy combatant. That classification would have enabled investigators to better determine if these two were "lone wolves" or part of something larger. During questioning, Dzhokhar indicated that the brothers planned to bomb Times Square, but before the FBI finished their 48-hour period of questioning he was Mirandized by a judge and immediately quit talking. No one seems to know who sent the judge, but FBI agents were "stunned" when she showed up.

5. Gun laws didn't stop them. Our friends on the Left might be shocked to learn this, but the two Boston bombers did not legally own the firearms they used in a shootout with police. Dzhokhar is too young for a license, and Tamerlan never bothered applying for one.

In the end, we hope that the deaths of four Americans (three at the Marathon and one security guard later) and the wounding and maiming of scores of others provides the impetus for some in our midst to remove the ideological blinders and start confronting the world as it is: One that is fallen and all too full of evil people.



Government and Politics Immigration Front: Campaigning, Favors and Approvals

Organizing for Action, Barack Obama's permanent campaign wing, is gearing up for a "major day of action" in May to support [comprehensive immigration reform](#). OFA is calling for the president's supporters to contact their congressional representatives and get the word out to friends and colleagues to ensure passage of the measure drafted by the so-called Gang of Eight.

And, of course, the bill itself, like any "comprehensive" legislation that comes out of Congress, is already littered with costly pet projects that are little more than earmarks for Gang members to guarantee their continued support. Among the spoils are an additional 20,000 visas for meat industry workers in Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham's home state of South Carolina and 10,500 extra visas for Irish immigrants in Democrat Sen. Chuck Schumer's New York. Colorado Democrat Michael Bennet gets more flexibility for his state to hire foreign-born ski instructors by categorizing them as professional

athletes, and Florida Republican Marco Rubio can shore up his state's cruise industry with more foreigners to do ship repair and maintenance. A meeting on immigration reform on Capitol Hill Monday overflowed with hundreds of supporters looking to have their stories heard ... and to have their exceptions added to the legislation.

Most, if not all, of these people, and then some, are likely to receive the legal status they seek if the [Deferred Action to Childhood Arrivals program](#) is any indication. Obama's DACA program has approved 99.5 percent of all applications received thus far. Program administrators claim that the approval rate will decline over time, pointing out with no sense of irony whatsoever that a month ago the approval rate was 99.8 percent. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service doesn't seem too concerned with fraud or making mistakes either. Illegal aliens with criminal records and no high school diploma (or equivalent) are not eligible for the program, yet in seven months, of the 269,693 illegal immigrants who have applied, only 1,377 have been turned down.

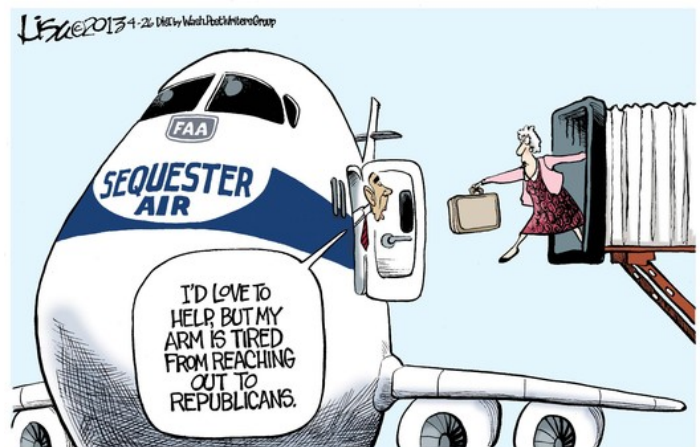
Not so fast, said U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor, who ruled that "DHS does not have discretion to refuse to initiate removal proceedings" when federal law says otherwise. He delayed his own decision until May 6, but it may be that Obama's DREAM is over.

Darn That 'Republican Sequester'

[Commercial flight delays](#) this week at major airports around the country are being blamed on sequestration cuts that have supposedly forced the FAA to furlough air traffic controllers. Just as we warned, the Obama administration is doing its best to make the meager automatic budget cuts appear as painful as possible in an attempt to squeeze every last drop of political capital from the issue -- all to blame the "[Republican sequester](#)."

The FAA was tasked with trimming just over \$600 million from a \$16 billion budget, yet for some reason, that all had to come from cutting hours for air traffic controllers. Obama turned roughly 4 percent cuts into *40 percent* flight delays. Cutbacks in fees

paid to consultants or reductions to other less essential segments of the FAA workforce were not even considered. The White House did say Wednesday that it's willing to consider legislation to fix the FAA problem, and the Senate obliged on Thursday with the House to follow Friday. But for a petulant Obama, the sequester isn't about reducing government spending or fixing what's broken -- it's about sending a political message. Oh, and by the way, while Obama is flying all around the country at huge taxpayer expense, he isn't experiencing any delays. Washington airports managed to escape the delays too.



This Week's 'Alpha Jackass' Award

"We have a situation where this country has been driven by the Tea Party for the last number of years. When I was in school, I studied government and I learned about the anarchists. Now, they were different than the Tea Party because they were violent. But they were anarchists because they did not believe in government in any level and they acknowledged it. The Tea Party kind of hides that. They don't say they're against government, but that is what it all amounts to. They're not doing physically destructive things to buildings and people, directly, but they are doing everything they can to throw a monkey-wrench into every form of government, whether it's local, state or federal. ... Government is not inherently bad; government is inherently good. That's why we have a Constitution and that's what we direct the activities of this government based upon." --Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV)

New and Notable Legislation

Harry Reid introduced New Jersey Democrat Sen. Frank Lautenberg's bill requiring background checks for anyone buying "explosive powder." The requirement might not be limited to only loose gunpowder but could include standard ammunition cartridges. With the Boston bombings fresh in our minds, the Democrats once again don't want to let a good crisis go to waste.

On a related note, the sequester is allegedly forcing the Department of Homeland Security to [cut back on its ammo purchases](#). Congressional Republicans are also starting to take interest in DHS's procurement and stockpiling of so many rounds.

Congress is also considering a new tax on flu vaccines of 75 cents per dose. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that 135 million doses will be used this year, so the tax could rake in \$100 million. "Get your flu shot" would suddenly take on a whole new meaning.

In other legislative news, don't miss Mark Alexander's column on the [Internet sales tax](#).

News From the Swamp: Obama's Underlying Tax Increase

Analysis by the Tax Policy Center of Barack Obama's [budget proposal](#) shows that the tax hikes he proposes will hit most taxpayers, including the middle class. The top 1 percent of taxpayers would pay 86 percent of the higher taxes called for in Obama's budget by 2015, but the tax burden for middle-class households would also steadily rise over the next decade. This, of course, breaks the oft-repeated promise by the president to shelter the middle class from higher taxes. Not that we ever believed him.

A gimmick baked into Obama's proposal would slow the increase of deductions and exemptions compared to inflation, giving them a slightly lower effective value with each passing year. Tax brackets would also be adjusted so that additional income would more rapidly move taxpayers into higher brackets. It has always been the practice of Democrats to raise taxes rather than lower spending, which is why they have yet to produce any substantive deficit or debt

reduction proposals. By creating a higher baseline budget with increased spending, they can fall back on the excuse that taxes have to be raised in order to meet the government's spending "priorities."

Hope 'n' Change: GOP Infighting Over ObamaCare

The laughably named Affordable Care Act is turning out to be anything but. The Department of Health and Human Services spent the funds allotted for implementation and went to Congress looking for more money to set up the exchanges -- \$5.9 billion more, to be exact. With their request rejected, HHS decided to take money from a separate ObamaCare "slush fund" dedicated to "prevention." In response, House Republican leaders devised a plan to stop HHS's attempt to raid this fund by moving \$5 billion to another ObamaCare fund dedicated to insuring those with pre-existing conditions. The thinking behind the plan is that the pre-existing program expires in nine months anyway, so moving funds into it -- and away from HHS hands -- would not only hamper implementation of ObamaCare but, as The Wall Street Journal [put it](#), also force Democrats "to choose between coverage for sick people now versus the HHS money pit."

However, Republican leadership was forced to pull the bill this week after many conservatives refused to back it, fearing it would help save ObamaCare. Several key conservative organizations also lobbied against it. "Fiscal conservatives should be squarely focused on repealing Obamacare, not strengthening it by supporting the parts that are politically attractive," Andy Roth, a vice president of Club for Growth wrote. Of course, we'd also love to see ObamaCare go the way of the dodo, but with Democrats controlling the White House and Senate, it's not going to happen any time soon. Unfortunately, the GOP missed a chance to deal the law a targeted blow.

Meanwhile, ObamaCare is proving so unpopular among Americans that the administration [announced](#) it will spend an additional \$8 million (over and above the \$23 million already planned) in marketing to tell Americans just how much they like it. ObamaCare,

rather than a health care law, turns out to be a you-paid-for-it infomercial.

Economy **Regulatory Commissars: States Seek to Dethrone King Coal**

[Last week](#), we alerted you to a delay from the EPA in finalizing rules for new power plants. It was a slowdown reportedly based on a huge number of public comments, but one that we speculated was intended to allow time to address as many legal challenges as possible. As if on cue, the EPA's tardiness has prompted the attorneys general in a number of states (as well as top counsels in Washington, DC, and New York City) to file a [Notice of Intent to Sue](#), claiming the agency's failure to act "violates the Clean Air Act and harms the health and welfare of our residents." Of course, very few residents of these 10 mainly East Coast states -- New York, Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Vermont, as well as New Mexico, Oregon and Washington -- toil in the coal mines that would be [put out of business](#) by these onerous regulations.

Many of these states are already familiar with battling the EPA in the courtroom over what they consider lax pollution standards that supposedly harm their residents. But since these states have reserved themselves a 180-day window before taking the EPA to court, the question may be made moot in the timeframe allotted. It's likely that enough of a grace period will be allowed that the states will get the stricter standards they want but won't have to endure major changes that could affect the 2014 elections.

Income Redistribution: Another Tale of Loss

Electric car maker Fisker Automotive is hopelessly behind on repaying a \$192 million Department of Energy loan, and while the loss to taxpayers pales in comparison to our national investment in failed solar panel maker Solyndra, the fact is that Fisker isn't bringing the idea of environmentally friendly transport any closer to reality. Touted as a savior to the state of Delaware where its cars were to be produced in a former GM plant outside Wilmington --

retooled, by the way, with [additional millions in taxpayer funding](#) -- Fisker instead ended up building the few models it did produce in Finland because they claimed no interim facilities were available for domestic production. Unfortunately, the cars that retailed at \$103,000 cost \$660,000 in public and private money to produce, according to a [report by PrivCo](#), a financial research firm. "Fisker Automotive will go down as the largest venture capital-backed debacle in U.S. history," said PrivCo CEO Sam Hamadeh. "Ultimately, Fisker proved to be far better at raising money than at making cars."

The demise of Fisker can also be traced to the failure of battery maker A123 -- another [spectacular bankruptcy](#) and loss of taxpayer dollars provided in the vain hope of jump-starting a "green" economy. But with thousands of Fisker cars remaining unsold, it appears those remaining units will become museum pieces and curiosities rather than somebody's mode of transport.

Around the Nation: When It Rains, Maryland Collects

While Maryland boasts of its moniker "The Free State," a tax based on the amount of "impervious surfaces" on one's property, derisively called a "rain tax," adds to the state's modern-day perception as "The Fee State." This story actually begins in 2010. At that time, Maryland was ordered by the EPA to cough up \$14.8 billion to reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus in Chesapeake Bay. As part of a plan to raise that money, the state resurrected the previously discussed idea of an impervious surface tax, theorizing that runoff from development causes most of the excess pollution that eventually finds its way to Chesapeake Bay, the terminus for practically all of the state's waterways. This law finally passed in 2012 to take effect in July 2013 within the state's nine largest counties and in Baltimore City, which the state considers for legal purposes as its own county.

More interesting than the tax itself, though, is the entities that have been exempted. Naturally, governmental entities don't have to pay the tax, but non-profits and religious entities do, lending new

meaning to the term "holy water." Counties are also free to establish the rate with the understanding that enough will be chipped in from each to pay off the bonds already purchased for the full \$14.8 billion.

The one way homeowners can avoid the tax, estimated to add \$100 or so a year to an average property tax bill, is to install measures to curtail runoff such as rain barrels or conservation landscaping. Of course, since these would have to be visible to the satellite imagery used by the state to determine impervious square footage, good old tried-and-true cisterns are out of the question. We can't rely on homeowners to be honest in their reporting, can we? On the other hand, we surely can count on the state to spend the money collected for the citizens' best interests.

Security **Syria Crosses the 'Red Line'**

Last week Britain and France reported to the UN that they had "credible evidence" of Syrian chemical weapons use, specifically the lethal nerve agent Sarin. U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel corroborated the claims on Thursday, saying U.S. intelligence agencies also have evidence of Sarin but are uncertain about its origin. Given the Syrian military's loss of control of numerous military installations to the rebels, it's not out of the question that some Sarin-filled munitions might have been inadvertently opened after their capture by rebel forces. Sarin is a non-persistent agent, meaning it degrades fairly quickly under exposure to the elements. This would be useful in areas the Syrian military later wished to occupy, raising the distinct possibility of deliberate use by Assad's regime. This possibility is strengthened given that the Sarin was found near the scene of recent urban fighting -- far from any of the regime's major military facilities. If the Syrian military intentionally used Sarin, it will put the Obama administration on the spot, as Obama has said many times that the use of chemical weapons "would be a game-changer."

Administration spokesmen immediately began vacillating, claiming more time was needed and more

evidence required to determine exactly how Sarin was used and by whom. We credit the administration for wanting to get it right, but we note that intelligence is *always* an effort to connect the dots with incomplete evidence and the opportunity for timely action can be lost. If the Assad regime sees its initial use of chemical weapons bringing no immediate and painful consequences, then you can bet more Sarin will soon be on its way to the battlefield.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, doing what he does best, attempted to forestall any action by saying that "any ... claims should be investigated on the spot." As if he didn't know the Syrian regime has been blocking a UN inspection team's access to "the spot." Russia continues to shield the Assad regime from UN action and has also delivered large shipments of military equipment in recent months. Some things never change, and Russian opposition to almost any U.S. position is a given when it comes to Syria. The bottom line is Syria has called Obama's foolish bluff -- what next?

GOP Benghazi Report

"House Republicans have concluded that the Pentagon and U.S. intelligence agencies bear no blame for failing to halt the terrorist assault on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi, Libya, last year, releasing a report Tuesday that said President Obama and the State Department set up the military for failure," [reports The Washington Times](#). Republicans say that Hillary Clinton, then secretary of state, signed off on security cuts that left the compound vulnerable. When then-U.S. ambassador to Libya Gene Cretz requested additional security, Clinton denied it and, according to the report, "ordered the withdrawal of security elements to proceed as planned."

In testimony before the House, Clinton denied her denial. "I didn't see those requests" for additional security, she insisted. "They didn't come to me. I didn't approve them. I didn't deny them."

Furthermore, the GOP report alleges that the White House altered talking points in the aftermath of the attack in Benghazi so as to eliminate references to al-

Qa'ida or related groups. As we've said from the beginning, that certainly fits Obama's running narrative -- which insists that he has "decimated" our jihadi foes and has them "on the run." But really, in Clinton's words, "[What difference does it make?](#)"

TSA Reconsiders Knife Policy

Last month, the administrator of the Transportation Security Administration, John Pistole, floated the trial balloon of letting airline passengers once again carry small knives on board as well as sports equipment like golf clubs and baseball bats. It now appears that trial balloon has sprung a leak. The TSA announced that implementation of the new policy, which was to go into effect this week, will instead be delayed. The allegedly temporary delay is supposedly needed to allow time for feedback from an advisory committee composed of aviation industry members, consumers and law enforcement officials. Seems like it might have been a good idea to seek out those opinions first, but who are we to question TSA wisdom?

Pistole's original proposal drew fire from flight attendant unions and the federal air marshals, as well as some airlines and members of Congress, who said that any kind of knife could be a dangerous weapon in the hands of the wrong passengers. That's true enough, but pens and CDs (if snapped in half) are currently allowed on board and could also be dangerous weapons. But once again, the government is focusing on a material object, rather than profiling and seeking out criminals. Sound familiar?

Culture

Department of Military Correctness: No Bible Verses on Scopes

With the many dangers and enemies our troops face daily, it's a comfort to know that at least one danger is being permanently eliminated by directive of the U.S. Army. And what is that danger? Why, a biblical inscription that a riflescope vendor etched into the serial numbers of some U.S. Army scopes. These particular scopes, manufactured by Trijicon, reference passages in John 8:12 and 2 Corinthians 4:6, appearing at the end of the scope serial numbers as "JN8:12" and "2COR4:6."

Clearly, in this day and age such an "outrage" couldn't be allowed to stand. Instructions for removing the "offensive" material read, "The biblical verse (JN8:12) must be removed utilizing a Dremel type tool and then painted black." After scraping off the verses, soldiers were instructed to use black paint to ensure the verses were totally covered. Army spokesman Matthew Bourke said, "The vendor etched those inscriptions on scopes without the Army's approval. Consequently, the modified scopes did not meet the requirement under which the contract was executed." Bourke further said the vendor agreed to remove all Bible references on future deliveries. Thank God our troops will no longer have to ride into battle and face death with such horrifying words so close to them.

Speaking of political correctness run amok, Fox News' Todd Starnes [reports](#), "The U.S. Military has blocked access to the Southern Baptist Convention's website on an unknown number of military bases because it contains 'hostile content' -- just weeks after an Army briefing labeled Evangelical Christians and Roman Catholics as examples of religious extremism." Of course, the SBC is the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

Faith and Family: Boy Scouts Consider New Policy

The Boy Scouts of America decided on a proposal to send to the organization's 1,400 voting members in May. Essentially, BSA is seeking to admit openly homosexual youth, while (temporarily) maintaining a ban on homosexual leaders. "If approved, the resolution would mean that 'no youth may be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone,'" says public relations director Deron Smith. "The BSA will maintain the current membership policy for all adults." This is different from an earlier proposition that would have handed the decision to local units. The organization decided against the earlier proposal based on the findings of a Scout survey that received mixed results.

In short, the Scouts are giving in to pressure. Instead of standing strong on their values against those

seeking to redefine sex roles, they're attempting to find the middle ground where there is no middle ground. Regardless of whether the policy change pertains to youth or leaders, this proposal is a train wreck waiting to happen, and it will ultimately hurt every member of the Boy Scouts community. While the final decision lies with the members holding the vote, we encourage the Scouts not to back down in the midst of adversity -- a principle the BSA has taught since its inception.

And Last...

All five living former and current presidents plus thousands of others gathered Thursday for the dedication of the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas. The library provides an opportunity to look back at Bush's legacy, though speaking for himself, Bush said before the opening, "History will ultimately judge." Indeed, his approval rating is already equal again to Obama's. In his remarks, Bush choked up when he concluded, as Ronald Reagan did before him, "I will always believe that our nation's best days lie ahead." Whatever may be said about his record -- and we certainly had our disagreements -- George W. Bush is a good, decent, faithful man who loves his

country. And in these dark days, we hope he's right about our future.

We leave you with a picture that calls for a caption contest. The actual AP caption was, "President Barack Obama shares a laugh with former first lady Barbara Bush." Shares a laugh? You be the judge.



Semper Vigilo, Fortis, Paratus et Fidelis!
Nate Jackson for *The Patriot Post* Editorial Team