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Like It or Not, “We Are All Socialists Now”

“If we fail to acknowledge the reality of the growing role of government in the economy, insisting instead on fighting 21st-century wars with 20th-century terms and tactics, then we are doomed to a fractious and unifying debate. The sooner we understand where we truly stand, the sooner we can think more clearly about how to use government in today’s world....Whether we like it or not — or even whether many people have thought much about it or not — the numbers clearly suggest that we are headed in a more European direction.”

— Jon Meacham and Evan Thomas in *Newsweek’s* February 16 cover story, “We Are All Socialists Now.”

“Why not just nationalize the banks?...People are angry. There’s so much taxpayer money going into the banks. Why shouldn’t the government — why shouldn’t you just fire the executives who wrecked these banks in the first place and tanked the world’s financial system in the process?”

— ABC’s Terry Moran interviewing President Obama for *Nightline*, February 10.

Applauding Professor Obama’s “Teaching Moment”

“[President Obama took] only thirteen questions over an hour, seemingly treating each question almost as a teaching moment with long and expansive answers.”

— ABC’s Charles Gibson wrapping up a special report on President Obama’s news conference, February 9.

“He got an A on this, Terry....He had the long answers, five-minute mini-essays or speeches all about the economy, able to explain from his perspective how bad the situation is, how we got into this mess and how his stimulus package will fix it.”

— ABC’s George Stephanopoulos critiquing Obama’s performance, February 9 *Nightline*.

Anderson Cooper: “What do you think this President’s staff is saying to him tonight? What would you say to him tonight after this press conference?”

Senior political analyst David Gergen: “Well done. Pour it on....I thought it was a classic and shrewd exercise of presidential power.”

— Exchange on CNN following Obama’s press conference.

“The President showed his analytical mind....He was at his best intellectually. I thought it was a great example of how his mind works....What a mind he has, and I love his ability to do it on television. I love to think with him.”

— MSNBC’s Chris Matthews during live coverage following the press conference.



ABC’s Moran: Too Nice Obama “Got No Honeymoon”

“Mr. President, you got no honeymoon. Not a single Republican vote in the House on your first major piece of legislation....I wonder if, coming into the presidency, maybe you were too nice. If I’m a Republican Senator, or a Republican Congress, I think you’re a very nice guy, but maybe I don’t have enough reason to fear you.”

— ABC’s Terry Moran in an interview with Obama shown on *World News*, February 10.

Mere \$800 Billion In Spending = “Draconian Cuts”

“Senator Nelson, to get the support from even these moderate Republicans, cuts had to be made...You lose \$40 billion in aid to the states, that means states are gonna have to make draconian cuts in jobs, teachers, cops, firemen. You lose the \$16 billion in school construction money. So is it still a real stimulus package? Will it have clout?”

— NBC’s Matt Lauer questioning Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE), February 9 *Today*.

Detecting a Republican “War on Obama”

“The larger question raised by [Senator Judd] Gregg’s about-face, is it a sign that Republicans have no desire for real bipartisanship? Have they, in fact, declared war on President Obama?...Do developments today also speak to something deeper, a war, an insurgency by Republicans against the President, against Democrats in the House and against their agenda?”

— CNN’s Anderson Cooper on *Anderson Cooper 360*, February 12, talking about Senator Gregg’s withdrawal as a nominee for Commerce Secretary.



Scolding Anti-Spending GOP: “Where’s the Bipartisanship?”

“If you add up the House and the Senate we have what, 219 Republicans. All but three of them voted against this plan....216 Republicans seem to have placed a bet on failure. Isn’t that safe to say?”

— NBC’s Matt Lauer to former Bush advisor Karl Rove on *Today*, February 17.

“Congressman, it’s clear that Americans are begging for help with foreclosures. Corporations are begging for bailouts. Can the Republican Party accept that there are situations when large-scale government intervention is necessary?...But everyone opposed it [Obama’s spending package]. Why? Where’s the bipartisanship? Are you afraid of being seen as obstructionist?”

— CBS’s Maggie Rodriguez to Republican congressman Eric Cantor on *The Early Show*, February 16.

GOP Leaders = Geese Who Downed Jet

“It’s hard to take Republican leaders too seriously when they criticize the recovery plans for the economy; it’s sort of like those geese criticizing the evacuation plans for US Airways Flight 1549.”

— *Time*’s Michael Grunwald in the opening sentence of his February 5 article about Obama’s spending package.

Katie Celebrates “Stimulus” Deal by Giggling with Pelosi

Anchor Katie Couric: “One of the key players in getting this deal approved is the Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi. I talked to her this afternoon as Senate negotiators were announcing the agreement and we spoke right after she had been on the phone with the President. [to Pelosi] Are you surprised how intimately involved he is in the whole process?”

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi: “Quite frankly, yes. I said, ‘Mr. President, neither of us has time for this conversation, especially you,’ because we really, we understand each other. We know where we need to go.”

Couric, smiling: “Can you tell us anything he said to you, like, ‘Get cracking?’”

Pelosi, laughing: “No, never that. We’re always cracking.”

— *CBS Evening News*, February 11.



New York Times: Nicer to Bomb-Thrower Ayers than to Conservative Buckley

“In your new book, *Race Course: Against White Supremacy*, you and your wife, Bernardine Dohrn, describe your long struggle against racism and social injustice. Do you think Obama’s victory has put America on a new course?”

“How did you feel when Obama publicly disowned you, describing you as a guy in his neighborhood who had committed ‘despicable acts’ when he was eight years old?”

“How do you feel when you wake up?”

“You’re weirdly cheerful for a former bomb-thrower.”

— *New York Times Magazine* “Q&A” interviewer Deborah Solomon to former Weather Underground bomber Bill Ayers, February 15.

vs.

“You have made so many offensive comments over the years. Do you regret any of them?”

“You seem indifferent to suffering. Have you ever suffered yourself?”

— Some of Solomon’s questions to the late founder of *National Review*, William F. Buckley, in a July 11, 2004 *New York Times Magazine* interview.

ABC Awed by Obama's Cookies

Fill-in anchor Diane Sawyer: "Today they [the White House] released some photos, a kind of scrapbook, if you will, of the President's journey on the road to the stimulus package. I want to show everybody at home, because there is the President, it's Super Bowl night, and he's serving cookies to congressional leadership in the White House screening room, George?"

George Stephanopoulos: "These are just remarkable, Diane. We've never really seen anything like this before in real time."

—ABC's *World News*, February 16.



Cheney's Wrongness Killed 100,000; It's Time for Him to Leave America

"Well, 100,000 people are dead now because he got it wrong about nuclear weapons before, back in 2001. We have to remember that Dick Cheney was wrong in a way that was lethal....He does seem like a character out of *Dr. Strangelove*."

—MSNBC's Chris Matthews on *Hardball*, February 4.

"Flatly, it may be time for Mr. Cheney to leave this country. The partisanship, divisiveness, and naivete to which he ascribed every single criticism of his and President Bush's delusional policies of the last eight years have now roared forth in a destructive and uninformed diatribe from Mr. Cheney that can only serve to undermine the nation's new President....You, Mr. Cheney, you terrified more Americans than did any terrorist in the last seven years, and now it is time for you to desist, or to be made to desist."

—MSNBC's Keith Olbermann in a "Special Comment" reacting to former Vice President Cheney's warnings about future terrorism, February 5 *Countdown*.

Sarah Palin = "Barbie" Doll

"She's been an astronaut and a rock star. Pop icons Beyonce and Shakira. She's won *American Idol* too. She's even run for President twice. [Over footage of Sarah Palin] Some would argue she also ran for Vice President in 2008."

—ABC's David Wright in a retrospective marking the 50th anniversary of Barbie for *Nightline*, February 16.



"Fair Question," But We're Not in Love with Obama

Fill-in co-host David Gregory: "There is that criticism of the news media that we're somehow cheerleaders for Barack Obama, and then there's a book like this. Does it add to that criticism?"

New York Times Executive Editor Bill Keller: "It's, it's a fair question. You know I think, as a rule, reporters don't fall in love with candidates. They fall in love with stories."

—Exchange on NBC's *Today*, February 16, referring to *Obama: The Historic Journey*, a new book of campaign photos from the *New York Times*.

USA Today's "Helpful" Advice for President Obama

"I would fill the White House with chocolate and gravy (but not together) and mashed potatoes or maybe fill it with root beer. I'd drive through the White House on a boat. We'd make the floor out of mashed potatoes and the house would be filled with mashed potatoes....I'd have a couch made out of pudding that you could eat with a giant spoon. And I'd have a pizza carpet."

—Excerpt from a book of children's letters to Barack Obama published in the February 4 *USA Today*, what reporter Greg Toppo labeled "reams of helpful, bullet-pointed advice" for the new President.

Notable Quotables

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