



Notable Quotables

A bi-weekly compilation of the latest outrageous, sometimes humorous, quotes in the liberal media

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Slamming Republicans for “Swiftboating” Sgt. Bergdahl

“We’re going to look at the right-wing playbook for the newly-released American POW, a wounded man who isn’t even out of the hospital yet. Swiftboat first; ask questions later...[Sgt. Bowe] Bergdahl, a former POW who’s under treatment now at a military hospital, is being swiftboated by the reflexive anti-Obama machine.”

— Guest host Ari Melber on MSNBC’s *The Last Word*, June 3.



Host Matt Lauer: “Did the White House truly think this was just going to be a celebratory moment, the release of Sergeant Bergdahl? Did they not see any of this backlash coming? Were they caught flat-footed?”

White House correspondent Chuck Todd: “They were caught flat-footed....They did not expect this backlash on Bergdahl himself. I’ve had a few aides describe it to me as, ‘We didn’t know that they were going to swiftboat Bergdahl.’”

— NBC’s *Today*, June 4.

vs.

“No, no. Swiftboating is totally misused here. Swiftboating is when you make up stories, and you misconstrue the evidence from — you don’t like the way that John Kerry opposed the Vietnam war after he got back and turned it into an attack on his service over there. Totally dishonest....Where’s the dishonesty in the portrayal of Bergdahl so far? I haven’t seen it. What’s been misconstrued about him so far?”

— Host Chris Matthews on MSNBC’s *Hardball*, June 4.

Rationalizing the Release of Dangerous Taliban Killers

Washington Post Associate Editor Rajiv Chandrasekaran: “Well, certainly when you release Guantanamo detainees, you’re bound to get some hooting and hollering from the right in this country. It’s only natural....These guys were Taliban leaders, they weren’t al Qaeda leaders.”

Host Chris Hayes: “Yeah, I think that’s an important distinction....The Taliban ran a monstrous regime and tried to kill Americans and succeeded in killing lots of Americans, but they were not al Qaeda and were not plotting explosions in Manhattan or flying planes into buildings.”

— Exchange on MSNBC’s *All In*, June 2.



“This is kind of a phony debate....At the end of a war, prisoner exchanges are common....Either you think that he should have been left to die in Taliban captivity, or there should be a prisoner exchange. You have to choose.”

— MSNBC political analyst Jonathan Alter on *Jansing & Co.*, June 2.

“Do you trade five, you know, [makes air quotes] ‘senior’ Taliban officials or people who’ve been in U.S. custody in Guantanamo for years and years, whose impact on the war, on us, and on our people going forward — aside from what obviously will be a morale boost, I guess, for some part of the Taliban — but whose impact is I think likely to be negligible. They’ve been out of this war and the command structure for a long, long time.”

— *Washington Post* columnist Eugene Robinson on MSNBC’s *Morning Joe*, June 5.

vs.

“‘All five of those guys are exceptionally dangerous,’ says Paul Rester, the former lead interrogator at Joint Task Force Guantánamo. ‘These are men who ran entire regions for the Taliban, they had thousands of fighters under their command. They survived the Soviets, they survived the civil war....We had the best military analysts on the planet look at these guys and recommend against transfer.’”

— Quoted by senior writer Steve Hayes in article for the June 16 *Weekly Standard*, “The Unraveling: How the Obama administration’s story on Bowe Bergdahl and the Taliban fell apart.”

It's Un-American to Criticize Obama's Taliban Swap

“Republicans are using a United States prisoner of war as a political tool in an attempt to make President Obama look bad. That’s the story... [After a clip of Texas Senator Ted Cruz saying the trade sets ‘a very dangerous precedent’] Ted Cruz has zero credibility. He has zero foreign policy experience. He’s a guy from Texas who doesn’t have a clue. All he knows is that he’s got a big name and a big state behind him and he can get on any show he wants. And it’s all pabulum, anything to take down the President. There’s nothing American about Ted Cruz.”

— Host Ed Schultz on MSNBC’s *The Ed Show*, June 2.



“This Republican freak-out over the release of Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, it’s all about one thing and one thing only and that is impeaching President Obama.”

— Schultz two nights later on the same show.

Obama Deal = “Good Sign” for “Taliban’s Future in Running Afghanistan”

“But this is potentially a good sign if you think about the future of Afghanistan. If Bergdahl was held by the Haqqani network, really the most hardened Taliban fighters who operate out of Pakistan, does this pave the way for perhaps a new round of negotiations with the Taliban directly between the United States and the Taliban about the Taliban’s future in running Afghanistan?”

— Host David Gregory to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel talking about the swap of five high-ranking Taliban prisoners for Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl on NBC’s *Meet the Press*, June 1.

Admiring Obama’s Push for “Muscular” Foreign Policy

“President Obama addressed the issue of American involvement in future wars today and the changing threat to this country. He spoke to the graduating cadets at the U.S. Military Academy West Point. As one writer put it, he called for a muscular, if not militaristic, foreign policy for the near future.”

— Anchor Brian Williams on the May 28 *NBC Nightly News*.

vs.

“I think the speech was literally pointless. He didn’t have a point. It was a defensive speech. It was an answer to the chorus of criticism, even from his side of the aisle, that it’s been a weak, leaderless, rudderless foreign policy, which it has been.”

— Conservative columnist Charles Krauthammer on FNC’s *Special Report*, same night.

NBC Lauds “Historic Victory” of Record High Minimum Wage

“A historic victory for workers in Seattle that could have a big impact nationwide. The Seattle city council passed an ordinance Monday that bumps the minimum wage up to \$15 an hour, the highest in the nation.”

— News anchor Natalie Morales on NBC’s *Today*, June 3. The on-screen headline celebrated: “Landmark Minimum Wage Hike; Seattle’s \$15 an Hour Could Set New Standard.”

Michelle Obama, the Food Police “Gladiator”

“An unlikely gladiator entered an arena today, someone’s who carefully stayed out of the fray until now. First Lady Michelle Obama came out swinging today about an issue close to her heart...”

— Anchor Diane Sawyer on ABC’s *World News*, May 27.

Co-host Charlie Rose: “She, more than anybody else, is keeping the focus on this very important topic.”

Co-host Gayle King: “That’s right. I will never understand the downside to encouraging people to eat healthy.”

— Talking about the same issue on the May 28 *CBS This Morning*.

vs.

“The rules are as poorly devised as they are overly proscriptive, and often the school lunch calorie minimums cannot be satisfied with any combination of the low-calorie Let’s Move-approved foods... Republicans aren’t even trying to repeal this exercise in cuisine central planning. Their fix would let a school apply for a temporary exemption if the standards force the lunch line to run a deficit after six months.”

— From a May 30 *Wall Street Journal* editorial, “The First Lady’s Calories; The new school lunch rules have become a rolling fiasco.”

NSA Leaker: Just Another Disappointed Obama Voter

NBC's Brian Williams: "Did you vote for President Obama?...Did he disappoint you?...You were hoping he would reverse some of the Bush policies. You were quoted as saying you were disappointed that he did not."

Fugitive NSA contractor Edward Snowden: "Well, he said he would....He was a candidate that promised that he would give the public back its seat at the table of government. And he still has time to do so."

— Exchange shown during an NBCNews.com Webcast, May 28.



ABC Hails Hillary: "She Comes Out Swinging" on Benghazi

Fill-in anchor David Muir: "Tonight, more signs Hillary Clinton is mulling a presidential run and is ready to fight back on Benghazi. With a new book coming, *Politico* tonight reporting she's taking on her critics...."

Correspondent Martha Raddatz: "According to the online publication, she comes out swinging. Her anger aimed at congressional Republicans who she accuses of politicizing the tragedy. 'I will not be a part of a political slugfest on the backs of dead Americans,' writes Clinton...."

— ABC's *World News*, May 30.

Don't Worry: Phony Scandals Won't Hurt Hillary the "Master"

Fill-in host Richard Wolfe: "Jonathan, this is a master at work...."

Washington Post editorial writer/MSNBC fill-in host **Jonathan Capehart:** "Right, exactly. This is what good politicians do....All of the stuff, these controversies surrounding Hillary Clinton, they don't have anything to do with Hillary Clinton. They have everything to do with the fact that Republicans are deathly afraid of her getting into the presidential race, and anything that they can do right now to diminish her, to belittle her, to weaken her in the eyes of the American people, they're going to try it. And one of the reasons why these controversies fall apart is because with each one, one is more ridiculous than the one that preceded it."

— MSNBC's *Now with Alex Wagner*, June 5, commenting on Hillary Clinton's interview with *People* magazine.

In NBC's World, It's Controversial to Be Pro-Constitution

Dr. Ben Carson: "I think government in the right way, when it understands what it's supposed to do, is excellent. I would love to have a government that placed the Constitution of the United States at the highest level. And—"

Host David Gregory: "But how does it — there are some people who say that. That's a very highly charged thing to say. Where is the Constitution not placed in the right level today?"

— Exchange on NBC's *Meet the Press* Web-based "Press Pass" segment, June 1.

Evil Conservatives "Selling the Health of the Planet"

"Every time they [the Koch brothers] give a buck to a Republican, they're basically guaranteeing themselves a better tax status, less regulation, and more money, more billions....They're selling the health of planet for their own economic good? Isn't that what they're doing?...They're hurting the planet's health so they can have more money."

— Host **Chris Matthews** to Representative **Chris Van Hollen** (D-MD) and Center for American Progress President **Neera Tanden** on MSNBC's *Hardball*, June 2.

CNN Anchor Thinks First Lady Can Sign Actual Laws

Clip of Michelle Obama: "Nothing is more important than the health and well-being of our children...."

Anchor Carol Costello: "That was Mrs. Obama back in 2010 when she signed the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act into law. Well, now some members of Congress and the food industry want to roll back that initiative...."

— *CNN Newsroom*, May 27.

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