

May 17, 2010

www.MRC.org

Vol. 23; No. 10

Shortsighted Voters Fail to Grasp Obama's Historic Greatness

"Big problems. Big achievements. Big costs. Historians say President Obama's legislative record during a crisis-ridden presidency already puts him in a league with such consequential presidents as Lyndon Johnson and Franklin Roosevelt. But polls show voters aren't totally on board with his achievements, at least not yet, and the White House acknowledges that his victories have carried huge financial and political costs. 'There are always costs in doing big things,' Obama told *USA Today*."

— Opening of May 12 *USA Today* cover story by Susan Page and Mimi Hall, "Will doing 'big things' wind up costing Obama?" The accompanying picture showed a portrait of Abraham Lincoln peering down at President Obama.

Will doing 'big things' wind up costing Obama?

Voters' anxiety clouds his historic successes

By Susan Page and Mimi Hall
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — Big problems. Big achievements. Big costs. Historians say President Obama's legislative record during a crisis-ridden presidency already puts him in a league with such consequential presidents as Lyndon Johnson and Franklin Roosevelt. But polls show voters aren't totally on board with his achievements, at least not yet, and the White House acknowledges that his victories have carried huge financial and political costs. "There are always costs in doing big things."



History book bound? President Obama has peered through a pecked business agenda.

Media Panic: Is Elena Kagan Liberal Enough?

"When she worked for the Clinton administration, Ms. Kagan asked the President to support a ban on all abortions of viable fetuses except when the mother's health was at risk. And some analysts have used that example to show that she may actually shift the Court to the right, compared with Justice Stevens."

— CBS's Maggie Rodriguez to Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL) on the May 11 *Early Show*.

"Who is really most frustrated with the pick? It seems as many liberal groups are upset by this as are conservatives.... On the left, she may not be liberal enough — that's the complaint there. Some progressives say she's too much of a blank slate to know how she stands on any issue."

— Anchor Peter Alexander during the 10am ET hour of *MSNBC Live*, May 11.

"The selection of Solicitor General Elena Kagan to be the nation's 112th justice extends a quarter-century pattern in which Republican presidents generally install strong conservatives on the Supreme Court while Democratic presidents pick candidates who often disappoint their liberal base. Ms. Kagan is certainly too liberal for conservatives, who quickly criticized her nomination on Monday as a radical threat. But much like every other Democratic nominee since the 1960s, she does not fit the profile sought by the left, which hungers for a full-throated counterweight to the Court's conservative leader, Justice Antonin Scalia."

— *New York Times* reporter Peter Baker in a May 11 front-page "news analysis."

Utah Republican "Outrage" = a "Non-Violent Coup"

New York Times columnist David Brooks: "This is a damn outrage, to be honest.... We're in a much better economic place because of the TARP [bailout]. He [Senator Bennett] bravely cast a vote that nobody wanted to really cast and now he's losing his career over that. And it's just a damn outrage."

Washington Post columnist E.J. Dionne: "I agree with David on this.... It's almost a non-violent coup because they denied the sitting Senator even a chance of getting on the primary ballot. And I think the party in the long run risks a backlash among voters who may not be liberal at all, but don't like this kind of politics."

— NBC's *Meet the Press*, May 9, talking about Republican Senator Robert Bennett failing to get enough support at Utah's GOP convention to get on the primary ballot.

"Are you worried at all that the Republican Party is not only growing more hostile to more liberal to moderate Republicans such as yourself, but also conservative Republicans who are shown to, at least shown an ability to work with Democrats?"

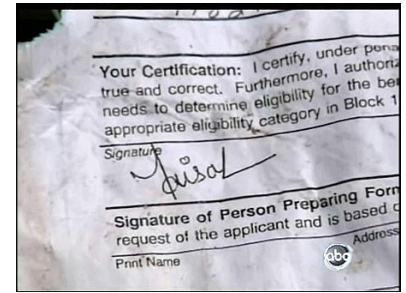
— ABC's Jake Tapper on *This Week*, May 9, asking Rudy Giuliani about Bennett's defeat.



The “Optimistic” Terrorist Wannabe

“Why did someone, with apparently so much to live for, simply decide to throw it all away? Faisal Shahzad seemed to be living the American dream. Wife, two kids, nice house in the suburbs, an immigrant from Pakistan bettering himself through education and hard work.... Even his signature seems to suggest optimism – it appears a heart is dotting the ‘i’ in Faisal....”

– ABC’s Chris Cuomo on the attempted Times Square bomber, May 4 *World News*.



Times Square Bombing = Wall Street’s Fault?

“Did the Economy Make Him Do It?”

“Times Square bombing suspect hit a rough patch during the recession, losing his Connecticut house to foreclosure and selling furniture and used clothes, according to several media outlets.”

– Headline and subheadline on *Newsweek*’s web site, May 6.

“Investigators say a quest for revenge seems to have played some role, but personal financial pressures may also have pushed Shahzad to act. He became a U.S. citizen just a year ago, but he has not realized any American dream. He quit his job, lost his house, and was separated from his family.”

– CBS’s Bob Orr on the May 5 *Evening News*.

“Shahzad claims he’s angry about U.S. Predator [drone aircraft] attacks on Pakistan. But investigators say financial pressures may have helped his rage. Sources tell CBS News he defaulted on both his mortgage and another \$65,000 equity loan. In video taken just after the FBI’s raid of Shahzad’s Connecticut apartment, shows the 30-year-old Pakistani-American man lived a spartan and seemingly lonely existence. A weight bench that passed for furniture, a collection of art supplies, a largely empty kitchen with a solitary plant on the counter. And in the bedroom, a rumped air mattress on the floor....”

– Orr on the May 6 *Evening News*.

Best Guess: Someone Who Disliked ObamaCare

CBS’s Katie Couric: Law enforcement officials don’t know who left the Nissan Pathfinder behind, but, at this point, the mayor believes the suspect acted alone.”

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg: “If I had to guess, 25 cents, this would be exactly that, somebody-”

Couric, to Bloomberg: “A home-grown?”

Bloomberg: “Home-grown, maybe a mentally-deranged person or somebody with a political agenda that doesn’t like the health care bill or something. It could be anything.”

– CBS *Evening News*, May 3, just a few hours before Faisal Shahzad was arrested at JFK airport.



Real Problem Isn’t Terrorist Bombers, It’s Bigoted Americans

“I mean the thing is that – and I get frustrated and there was part of me that was hoping this was not going to be anybody with ties to any kind of Islamic country, because there are a lot of people who want to use this terrorist intent to justify writing off people who believe in a certain way, or come from certain countries, or whose skin color is a certain way. I mean, they use it as justification for really outdated bigotry.”

– MSNBC daytime anchor Contessa Brewer appearing as a guest on Stephanie Miller’s radio show, May 4.

Oh, No! Illegal Immigrants Now Leaving Arizona

Anchor Katie Couric: “Hundreds of thousands of them [illegal immigrants] now live in Arizona. But as Kelly Cobiella reports, many no longer feel welcome.”

Reporter Kelly Cobiella: “On a dusty block in Phoenix, 15 years of the Quintana family’s possessions are for sale. [to Manuela Quintana] When did you decide to leave? [translating] ‘When the governor signed the immigration law,’ Manuela Quintana says, ‘I knew we had to move.’... The family packed up before dawn today and headed north to Colorado. Manuela says she’s lost hope in this state. She thinks she’ll find it again in another.”

– CBS *Evening News*, May 3.



Blaming “Intolerant” GOP for Crist’s Opportunism

“You listened to the Governor’s announcement I’m sure. Is this a case where he has deserted the party, or once again has your party become so intolerant that it doesn’t have room for moderate voices?”

— NBC’s Meredith Vieira asking Florida Republican Senate candidate Marco Rubio about his rival Charlie Crist’s decision to run as an independent, April 30 *Today*.

“Is this a sign that people, perhaps centrists or moderates like Charlie Crist, have no place in this new emerging Republican Party?”

— Anchor Tamron Hall to former DNC chairman Howard Dean during the 11am ET hour of *MSNBC Live*, April 29.



If You Want to Bash Limbaugh, Call Chris

“And, out on a Limbaugh! We’re issuing a challenge tonight and every night to elected Republicans. Come on *Hardball* please, sir and madam, and tell us you disagree with Rush on anything! Tell us you’ve had it with his distortions, his misrepresentations, his outright falsehoods. We invite you to tell us he’s not the leader of the Republican Party. It’s our standing offer. Come on *Hardball* and tell us Rush isn’t telling the truth.”

— Chris Matthews on MSNBC’s *Hardball*, May 11.

You Know You’re a Republican When...

“Government intrusion, government power is something that really bothers conservatives, unless it’s directed toward people who aren’t white, you know... I would never say, and I have never said because it’s not true, that Republicans, all Republicans are racist. That would be silly and wrong. But nowadays, if you are racist, you’re probably a Republican.”

— HBO’s Bill Maher during the roundtable discussion on ABC’s *This Week*, May 2.

Rather Hilarious: “I’m Independent and My Record Shows That”

“What is the definition of liberal? I myself favor strong military, tight money, and clean water. What does that make me? The greatest bias in mainstream journalism, as people like to call it, both complimentary and derogatory, is that we love a story. I love a story, that — and I’m independent, fiercely independent when necessary. And when you’re independent, when you’re a fighting independent, I’m independent, I’m going to play no favorites, pull no punches. When I go down the street and knock out windows on one side, I’ll knock them out on the other side. I think my record shows that.”

— Ex-CBS *Evening News* anchor Dan Rather responding to a question about the news media having a liberal bias, on *Give and Take*, shown on WNBC’s New York Nonstop digital channel May 16.

Barack Obama: The Secretariat of After Dinner Comedy

Host Joe Scarborough: “The President so easily outperformed Jay Leno, it wasn’t even close. It was like Secretariat against my 17-year-old dog...”

Time editor Richard Stengel: “I think that’s one of the things that undermined Jay’s routine is that it’s like coming after the Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*.”

— Discussing the White House Correspondents’ Dinner, MSNBC’s *Morning Joe*, May 2.



Drunk the Kool-Aid of “Amazing” Obama

“I was at the White House Correspondents’ Dinner and Obama was hilarious, actually. He really like, he — we all drank the Kool-Aid. We were sold. It was amazing.”

— Actress Scarlett Johansson on CBS’s *Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson*, May 5.

Notable Quotables

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May 17, 2010 (Volume 23; No. 10)

Published bi-weekly by the
Media Research Center
325 South Patrick Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
Telephone: (800) 672-1423

For daily updates visit: www.MRC.org

