

From: Gregory Brown <[REDACTED]>

To: undisclosed-recipients;

Bcc: jeevacation@gmail.com

Subject: Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.... 10/14/12

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Attachments: Iran's_Currency_Collapse_Has_All_the_Markings_of_a_Full-Blown_Crisis_Dr._Kent_Moors_Money_Morning_October_9,_2012.pdf; It's_Not_Just_About_Us_Thomas_Friedman_NYT_October_9,_2012.pdf; The_Self-Destruction_of_the_1Percent_Chrystia_Freeland_NYT_October_13,_2012.pdf; Panetta_Warns_of_Dire_Threat_of_Cyberattack_on_U.S._Elizabeth_Bumiller_NYT_October_11,_2012.pdf; The_Patent_Used_as_a_Sword_Charles_Duhigg_NYT_October_7,_2012.pdf; The_Cacophony_of_Money_Editorial_NYT_October_7,_2012.pdf; Buying_the_Election_Joe_Nocera_NYT_October_8,_2012.pdf; Conspiracy_World_Editorial_NYT_October_9,_2012.pdf; What_Race_Has_to_Do_With_It_Gary_Younge_The_Nation_October_3,_2012.pdf; The_6_Studies_Paul_Ryan_Cited_Prove_Mitt_Romney's_Tax_Plan_Is_Impossible_Matthew_O'Brien_The_Atlantic_Oct_12_12.pdf; Talking_tough_-_without_specifics_-_on_the_Middle_East_Editorial_Board_TWP_October_8,_2012.pdf; Romney_channels_Obama_on_foreign_policy_Eugene_Robinson_TWP_October_8,_2012.pdf; The_Stone_Age_Didn't_End_Why?=WINDOWS-1252?Q?cause_We_Ran_Out_of_Stones=5F?=_Jack_Hazzard=5FThe_Art_of_Teaching_Science_09_15_06.pdf

Dear Friends.....

Since I am an American living in LA, the biggest story this week for me was the Vice Presidential Debate between Joe Biden and Paul Ryan, and although Biden did not clean Ryan's clock to the degree that Mitt Romney did in the Presidential Debate with President Obama, the VP definitely won the debate hands down, evidence by the fact that the opposition's biggest grip was that Vice President Biden smirked and interruptions didn't show Congressman Ryan due respect. Where were the same outrage from these same critics when Congressman Joe Wilson yelled out "You Lie" during President Obama's State of the Union Address. Let's forget who won and loss, because the real issue is the huge divide between the Obama/Biden and Romney/Ryan, as there are fundamental differences between the two parties.

While many in America are consumed with Presidential Politics or who was eliminated on the latest episode of X FACTOR, few Americans noticed that somehow it appears that the Eurozone will avoid coming apart and the Euro collapsing German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Saturday that Greece (*the most serious basket case in Europe*) seemed to be making headway with its reforms and should stick to the agreements it had made but added that the crisis-stricken country should continue to be given more chances. "I have the impression that, step-by-step, we are beginning to see progress there. It's often slower than we had imagined but on this front we should give Greece another chance time and again," she said in a weekly video podcast. WOW..... what a change several months make.....

Overlooked in America (and dismissed by Jack Welsh and other Conservatives), is that things are looking up economically. For the first time in almost four years we had the lowest unemployment rate (7.8%), a huge boost in consumer confidence.... highest in five years, the highest housing starts in five years, lowest foreclosure rate during that same period and almost five million jobs created during the past three years. Obviously this doesn't mean that the country is economically out of the woods, but it is evidence that the country is on the right track to

economic recovery. As for Europe, the fact that the Eurozone didn't and hasn't collapsed is in itself a success..... But as most economist will tell you this may not be true next year... Still when it is a sunny day.... Maybe we should enjoy the sunshine....

Over the past month one of the charges that Romney/Ryan have leveled against President Obama is that he mishandled the attack against the US Consulate in Benghazi that killed Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans. There are 192 countries around the world and the US has 294 Embassies and Consulates across the globe. An embassy is the larger and more important of the two and is described as a permanent diplomatic mission which is generally located in a country's capital city, whereas a consulate is a smaller version of an embassy and is generally located in the larger tourist cities of a country but not the capital. In Germany for instance, the U.S. consulates are in cities like Frankfurt, Hamburg, and Munich, but not in the capital city of Berlin (because the embassy is located in Berlin).

I say all of this because.... why would a President or Vice President know the security details of any Embassy let alone a consulate? On top of this if Paul Ryan was this concerned about the Embassy and Consulate security, why did he vote against the \$300 million additional request that the Obama Administration requested in their last budget appropriations? We have serious problems here in America, and Consulate security is not one of them. If you want to attack the president, please attack him on policies and not on BS....

Most of you know I am a big fan of **Bill Moyers** whose show this week included the segment, **Vanishing Glaciers, Then and Now** where he interviewed photographer James Balog who has been risking his life to document the receding of glaciers as climate change begins taking its toll at the earth's extremities. These pairs of images from his new book, *Ice: Portraits of Vanishing Glaciers*, released last month by [Rizzoli](#), show the transformation of glaciers in Switzerland, Canada, Iceland and Greenland since 2006. See link: <http://billmoyers.com/segment/james-balog-on-capturing-our-disappearing-glaciers/> as we should be cognizant of the fact that Climate Change/GlobalWarming is real....

Bill ended this week's show with an essay **Correcting O'Reilly** about how the conservative propaganda machine chooses to ignore facts from big to small to further their propaganda, including that his show **Moyers & Company** is on **NPR** and not on **PBS**, and as such doesn't receive government funding. Or that Jorge Ramos is on **Univision** and not **Telemundo**. But then the other 47% probably looks the same to Mitt Romney and Bill O'Reilly See link: <http://billmoyers.com/segment/bill-moyers-essay-correcting-oreilly/>

Weekend Reading

Recently we have heard from Neocons that President Obama's sanction policies against Iran are not working and that the Administration should be more aggressive. For these Necocons this means starting another war, or at least attacking Iran to bring down the current regime. They cite the reason as that a nuclear armed Iran is unacceptable and will lead to a arms race in the Middle East. They often cite the missed opportunity that they claimed the Obama Administration missed by not backing the opposition last year who were demonstrating against the regime. Thank God that the Obama Administration didn't back them because one of the leaders of this same opposition is a supporter of Iran becoming a nuclear power..... Which the Neocons never mention.

In Dr. Ken Moor's in **Money Morning, Iran's Currency Collapse Has All the Markings of a Full-Blown Crisis**, "So far, the impact of Western sanctions - an EU embargo of oil purchases, European and U.S. restrictions on Tehran's access to international banking, and a new move to intensify the trading restrictions even further - have had a devastating impact. Iran's currency, the rial, has collapsed. Riots have begun. Its government has rapidly lost its authority. And the Iranian economy is unraveling. This has all the markings of a full-blown crisis. It will

have an uncertain impact on the region and the wider oil market. This could get very unpredictable and very nasty."

The sanctions are working and if the Iranian leadership wants to survive they will most likely will have to find a way to abandon their WMD ambitions without losing face. And this can be accomplished without starting another war in the Middle East.

As Thomas Friedman wrote in the **New York Times** this week in his article, ***It's Not Just About Us***, "*Mitt Romney gave a foreign policy speech on Monday that could be boiled down to one argument: everything wrong with the Middle East today can be traced to a lack of leadership by President Obama.*" Obviously Governor Romney skipped his history classes, otherwise he would have remembered that the Palestinian Problem started long before the President was born (and even before his parents were born) when a letter (dated November 2, 1917) from the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to Baron Rothschild (Walter Rothschild, 2nd Baron Rothschild), a leader of the British Jewish community, for transmission to the Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland – called The Balfour Declaration. Most of all, the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians has little to do with America other than that we support Israel and most of its Arab neighbors and therefore it is to our benefit that a sustained peace be reached. More importantly there is the civil war between Sunni Muslims, led by the Saudis, and Shiite Muslims, led by Iran, is blazing as hot as ever and lies at the heart of the civil war in Syria. In addition, we also have a struggle within Sunni Islam between puritanical Salafists and more traditional Muslim Brotherhood activists. And then there is the struggle between all of these Islamist parties — who argue that "Islam is the answer" for development — and the more secular mainstream forces, who may constitute the majority in most Mideast societies but are disorganized and divided. This cannot be solved with sound bites or heavy-handed politics, and politicizing it is not definitely not the solution.

In Chrystia Freeland article ***The Self-Destruction of the 1 Percent*** in the **New York Times**, she uses early 14th century Venice, when it was one of the richest cities in Europe as an example of how the elites/oligarchs stifled upward mobility of the underclass in pursuit of self-interest and greed that choked its economic growth that resulted by 1500, Venice's population was smaller than it had been in 1330. In the 17th and 18th centuries, as the rest of Europe grew, the city continued to shrink.

Today in America we see this same type of concentration of wealth. . The economists Emmanuel Saez and Thomas Piketty found that 93 percent of the income gains from the 2009-10 recovery went to the top 1 percent of taxpayers. The top 0.01 percent captured 37 percent of these additional earnings, gaining an average of \$4.2 million per household. While in the 1950s, the marginal income tax rate for those at the top of the distribution soared above 90 percent, a figure that today makes even Democrats flinch. Meanwhile, of the 400 richest taxpayers in 2009, 6 paid no federal income tax at all, and 27 paid 10 percent or less. None paid more than 35 percent.

As Ms Freeland wrote, "It is no accident that in America today the gap between the very rich and everyone else is wider than at any time since the Gilded Age. Now, as then, the titans are seeking an even greater political voice to match their economic power. Now, as then, the inevitable danger is that they will confuse their own self-interest with the common good. The irony of the political rise of the plutocrats is that, like Venice's oligarchs, they threaten the system that created them." I invite you to read her article.....

In 2011 the US Military budget was \$711 billion (4.7% of GDP) while China's military budget was \$143 billion (2% of GDP) and Russia was \$71.9 billion (3.9% of GDP). In fact the US Military spending accounts for 41% of the total \$1,735 trillion worldwide military spending worldwide, not to mention that the US military spending is larger than the next 17 countries combined. I cite these statistics because Romney and his Neocon supporters are

asking for another TWO TRILLION DOLLARS in additional military spending while asking cuts for social programs that help the elderly, poor and children, when Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta warned Thursday that the United States was facing the possibility of a “cyber-Pearl Harbor” and was increasingly vulnerable to foreign computer hackers who could dismantle the nation’s power grid, transportation system, financial networks and government. See the attached article from the **New York Times** by ELISABETH BUMILLER and THOM SHANKER, *Panetta Warns of Dire Threat of Cyberattack on U.S.* Warfare has change dramatically over the past hundred years, as well as our adversaries and their tactics. Another aircraft carrier or stealth fighter aircraft is defenseless against Cyber attacks. As a country we need to reassess defense strategies and redesign polities to combat outside aggression in its new forms. And Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and the Obama Administration is on top of this.....

One of the biggest dangers not only in America but worldwide is companies using patents to hinder their competitors, thus stifling both competition and innovation. Please take a look at the article by CHARLES DUHIGG and STEVE LOHR in the **New York Times**, *The Patent, Used as a Sword*, with hundreds of millions of dollars set aside for lawyers and court fees, instead of research and development. The article starts with the case of Michael Phillips’s company, Vlingo, who had been contacted by a much larger voice recognition firm called Nuance. “I have patents that can prevent you from practicing in this market,” Nuance’s chief executive, Paul Ricci, told Mr. Phillips, according to executives involved in that conversation. Mr. Ricci issued an ultimatum: Mr. Phillips could sell his firm to Mr. Ricci or be sued for patent infringements. When Mr. Phillips refused to sell, Mr. Ricci’s company filed the first of six lawsuits.

Soon after, Apple and Google stopped returning phone calls. The company behind Siri switched its partnership from Mr. Phillips to Mr. Ricci’s firm. And the millions of dollars Mr. Phillips had set aside for research and development were redirected to lawyers and court fees. When the first lawsuit went to trial last year, Mr. Phillips won. In the companies’ only courtroom face-off, a jury ruled that Mr. Phillips had not infringed on a broad voice recognition patent owned by Mr. Ricci’s company. But it was too late. The suit had cost \$3 million, and the financial damage was done. In December, Mr. Phillips agreed to sell his company to Mr. Ricci. “We were on the brink of changing the world before we got stuck in this legal muck,” Mr. Phillips said. Mr. Phillips and Vlingo are among the thousands of executives and companies caught in a software patent system that federal judges, economists, policy makers and technology executives say is so flawed that it often stymies innovation. In the end Apple announced last year that all iPhones would come with a voice-activated assistant named Siri, capable of answering spoken questions based on Nuance’s technology.

Obviously if you are late to the party you are late to the party but we now have patent mills that patent concepts and not products, which impede innovation and creation. We need to find a way to change this.

Many people claim that they are concerned by the federal budget deficit, but few of these same people appear to be concerned about all of the money going into elections this year. See the **New York Times** Editorial, *The Cacophony of Money* as it denotes that “two-thirds of the \$50 million spent on Mitt Romney’s behalf in Ohio has come from outside “super PACs” and other so-called independent groups, and yet Mr. Romney has lagged behind in all of the major Ohio polls. Hundreds of millions in third-party spending from unlimited checks, much of it from undisclosed donors, has also failed to give Mr. Romney a clear lead in any of the other swing states.” Whether or not Mr. Romney wins or loses the presidential race — this is a problem, as it gives an unfair advantage to anyone or any group who can write a huge cheque.... And if you don’t think that these cheque writers aren’t going to expect something in return I have a bridge for sale in Phoenix. Also take a look at Joe Nocera's article in the **New York Times**, *Buying the Election?.....* As the title speaks for itself....

In the silly season of Presidential Politics there are the kooks like Michele Bachman and Herman Caine and then there are those who are just Not Ready For Prime Time like Rick Perry and Dennis Kucinich and then there are the ridiculous like Donald Trump, but at no time did I ever believe that I would find a sober seasoned executive like Jack Welch among this group until he joined the conspiracy theorists this week suggesting that the Obama Administration changed or manipulated the number by the Bureau of Labor Statistics stating that the employment rate had dropped to 7.8%. See the **New York Times** Editorial, *Conspiracy World*. Along with this, I invite you to read Gary Younge's article in **The Nation**, *What Race Has to Do With It*, as the title speaks for itself. Racism is ugly and although Republicans would like you to believe that America is no longer a racist nation, but this is not the truth evidence when Wally Hudson, chairman of Virginia's Mecklenburg County Republican Committee displayed pictures of Barack Obama as a drug dealer, witch doctor and caveman on his party's Facebook page..... There is little doubt that Racism is alive and real. And the GOP's only response to the fact that that Blacks and Hispanics have overwhelmingly concluded that the Republican Party does not represent their interests – has been to try to stop nonwhite people from voting altogether with punitive voter ID laws. Yes.... Racism in America is alive and well.....

Politics

One of perceived strengths that Paul Ryan is suppose to bring to Romney/Ryan ticket is a reputation as a serious budget wonk , except that the Ryan Budget that Mitt Romney has endorsed employs math that doesn't work, cited in the article by Matthew O'Brien in his article in **The Atlantic**, *The 6 Studies Paul Ryan Cited Prove Mitt Romney's Tax Plan Is Impossible*. The problem is that the "six studies" he said would vindicate the plan's mathematical plausibility..... DON'T..... Romney's tax plan is a three-legged stool that doesn't stand. Here's how it works -- or doesn't. Romney wants to 1) cut tax rates across the board by 20 percent, 2) cut tax expenditures to pay for these tax cuts, and 3) maintain progressively. The problem, as the Tax Policy Center pointed out, is there aren't enough tax expenditures for the rich to pay for all the tax cuts for the rich. Romney's plan only works if he cuts out the tax cuts for the rich, raises taxes on the middle class, or explodes the deficit. In other words, Romney can pick two, and only two, of his tax goals -- what Matt Yglesias of Slate calls the "Romney Trilemma". Please feel free to read the article....

Almost lost this week was Mitt Romney's first major foreign policy speech that he delivered last Monday mostly critiquing of President Obama's handling of the upheavals in the Middle East. Arguing that a fateful struggle is playing out across the region, he said the United States is "*missing an historic opportunity*" because of Mr. Obama's failure to more aggressively support liberal forces against dictators and Islamic extremists. "*It is the responsibility of our president to use America's great power to shape history — not to lead from behind, leaving our destiny at the mercy of events,*" Mr. Romney said.

As **The Washington Post** Editorial Board pointed out in *Talking tough — without specifics — on the Middle East*, the weakness of his speech lay: It was hard to detect what tangible new steps the challenger would take. On Syria, Mr. Romney said he would "*ensure*" that "*those members of the opposition who share our values . . . obtain the arms they need.*" The Obama administration is coordinating some materiel help to the rebels; Mr. Romney hinted that, unlike Mr. Obama, he would support supplying the rebels with anti-aircraft weapons. But he did not mention Turkey's call for the creation of protected zones on Syria's territory — a measure that would be more likely to end the war on terms favorable to the West. Like his economic policies, there is little substance to Romney's foreign policies other than to claim that President Obama is weak and he would be stronger..... And if this enough for you I also have a second bridge for sale in Tucson.

Also, please take a read of Eugene Robinson's article in **The Washington Post**, *Romney Channels Obama on Foreign Policy*..... as the title speaks for itself.... And please take a read of the **New York Times** Editorial *In Search of Answers From Mr. Romney*, because as the Editorial says, "*Americans deserve an intensive, textured and honest discussion on foreign policy. They did not get it on Monday. Mr. Obama should respond, forcefully, to*

Mr. Romney on these issues, even before their next debate on Oct. 16, which will include issues of foreign affairs."

Finally we should discuss the fact that we are seeing and focusing on more distractions than policies evidenced by the fact that Big Bird got more mentions from Romney/Obama Debate than any policies differences. As Dana Milbank wrote in his article in **The Washington Post**, *Forget Big Bird. What about the Snuffleupagus in the room?.....* The threat presented by Romney's budget is not in the few cuts he has specified but in the vastly larger amount of unseen cuts he has yet to identify.

At the Denver debate, Romney said he would eliminate Obamacare (doing so would actually increase the budget deficit, because of related tax hikes) and the public-broadcasting subsidy, which is \$445 million a year — or little more than one one-hundredth of 1 percent of federal spending. But Romney proposes to cut federal spending by trillions of dollars — more than \$5 trillion over the next decade, assuming he follows the sort of blueprint laid out by his running mate, Paul Ryan. That threatens much more than Muppets and monsters. Human lives are at stake.

Another example are the Republican accusations of security failures in Benghazi although Ryan, Rep Darrell Issa and other House Republicans who voted for an amendment in 2009 to cut \$1.2 billion from State operations, including funds for 300 more diplomatic security positions. Under Ryan's budget, non-defense discretionary spending, which includes State Department funding, would be slashed nearly 20 percent in 2014, which would translate to more than \$400 million in additional cuts to embassy security.

Dana Milbank: "In the presidential campaign, Big Bird is a distraction from Romney's real cuts, which he is not yet allowing Americans to see. Obama should be drawing attention to the elephant in the room."

Quote of The Week

The stone age didn't end because the world ran out of stones. The stone age ended because we discovered that there were better tools around than stones... The Saudi Arabian Oil Minister (*see the attached article*)

This Week's Music

This week I am feeling one of my favorite R&B groups, ***The Ohio Players.....***

And for those who don't know The Ohio Players the band formed in Dayton, Ohio in 1959 as the Ohio Untouchables, and initially included members Robert Ward (vocals/guitar), Marshall "Rock" Jones (bass), Clarence "Satch" Satchell (saxophone/guitar), Cornelius Johnson (drums), and Ralph "Pee Wee" Middlebrooks (trumpet/trombone). They were best known at the time as a backing group for Detroit's The Falcons.

The Ohio Untouchables broke up in 1963 with Ward leaving for a solo career, but the core members of the group returned to Dayton and the following year added Gregory Webster (drums) along with Leroy "Sugarfoot" Bonner (guitar), who would become the group's front man. The group added two more singers, Bobby Lee Fears and Dutch Robinson, and became the house band for the New York based Compass Records for Vocalist Helena Ferguson Kilpatrick in 1967 who had just returned from Gershwin's European Tour of Porgy and Bess.

The group disbanded again in 1970. After again reforming with a line-up including Bonner, Satchell, Middlebrooks, Jones, Webster, trumpeter Bruce Napier, vocalist Charles Dale Allen, trombonist Marvin Pierce and keyboardist Walter "Junie" Morrison, the Players had a minor hit on the Detroit-based Westbound label in

1971 with "Pain," which reached the Top 40 of the Billboard R&B Chart. Dale Allen shared co-lead vocals on some of the early Westbound material, although he was not credited on their albums Pain and Pleasure.

The band's first big hit single was "Funky Worm", which reached #1 on the Billboard R&B chart and made the Top 20 on the Billboard Hot 100 in the spring of 1973. It sold over one million copies, and was awarded a gold disc by the R.I.A.A. in May of that year. The band signed with Mercury Records in 1974. By this time, their line-up had changed again, with keyboardist Billy Beck instead of Morrison and Jimmy "Diamond" Williams on drums instead of Webster. On later album releases, they added second guitarist/vocalist Clarence 'Chet' Willis and conga player Robert "Rumba" Jones.

The band had seven Top 40 hits between 1973 and 1976. These included "Fire" (#1 on both the R&B and pop chart for two weeks and one week respectively in February 1975 and another million seller) and "Love Rollercoaster" (#1 on both the R&B and pop charts for one week in January 1976; another gold disc recipient). The group's last big hit was "Who'd She Coo?" a #1 R&B hit in August 1976. It was their only success in the United Kingdom, where it peaked at #43 in the UK Singles Chart in July 1976.

Clarence Satchell (born April 15, 1940) died December 30, 1995 after suffering a brain aneurysm, Ralph Middlebrooks (born August 20, 1939) died in November 1997, and Robert Ward (born October 15, 1938) died at home December 25, 2008. Marshall Jones resides in Jamestown, Ohio.

The Ohio Players – Fire - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y47G-Wa4qfs> and <http://youtu.be/Y47G-Wa4qfs>

The Ohio Players - I Want To Be Free - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CJMoXIlm4o&feature=BFa&list=AL94UKMTqg-9DfY-1T5dveJFU1IXsgb_Do

Ohio Players- Heaven must be like this - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAxsek1ovkA&feature=BFa&list=AL94UKMTqg-9DfY-1T5dveJFU1IXsgb_Do

The Ohio Players Let's Love - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMAX7HYcN0o&feature=BFa&list=AL94UKMTqg-9DfY-1T5dveJFU1IXsgb_Do

Jive Turkey-Ohio Players - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_233gCshw0&feature=BFa&list=AL94UKMTqg-9DfY-1T5dveJFU1IXsgb_Do

Ohio Players- Can You Still Love Me - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGT5iuZwCRY&feature=BFa&list=AL94UKMTqg-9DfY-1T5dveJFU1IXsgb_Do

Ohio Players / Skin Tight - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJl78nYDxK4&feature=BFa&list=AL94UKMTqg-9DfY-1T5dveJFU1IXsgb_Do

Sweet Sticky Thing - Ohio Players - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rJivAkbHYI&feature=BFa&list=AL94UKMTqg-9DfY-1T5dveJFU1IXsgb_Do

Ohio Players - Gone Forever - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omMY3buAswI&feature=BFa&list=AL94UKMTqg-9DfY-1T5dveJFU1IXsgb_Do

Ohio Players "Love Rollercoaster" - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBkVV9xxCHE&feature=related>

I hope that you enjoyed this weekend's offerngs and I wish you a great week....

Sincerely,
Greg Brown

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Gregory Brown
Chairman & CEO
GlobalCast Partners, LLC

US: [REDACTED]
Tel: [REDACTED]
Fax: [REDACTED]
Skype: [REDACTED]