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The_G.O.P._Platform_Andrew_Rosenthal_NYT_August_21,_2012.pdf;
5_Reasons_Why_the_Ryan-Romney_Economic_Plan_Would_Be_A_Disaster_for_America-Robert_Reich_Huff_Post_08_20_12.pdf;
A_Scorecard_For_This_Summer's_Bank_Scandal_=?WINDOWS-1252?Q?s=5FCurrier_&Groeger=5FProPublica=5F08=5F21=5F12.pdf?=
New_studies_weigh_college_value_and_cost_Justin_PopeAssociated_Press-Aug_20,_2012.pdf;
CBO_sees_worse_economic_wreckage_from_fiscal_cliff_David_Lawder_August_22,_2012.pdf; Guns_and_Drugs_-_Stuck_on_Stupid_Wallace_Ford_Point_of_View_August_20,_2012.pdf;
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How_Goldman_Sachs_Created_the_Food_CrisisPFrederick_Kaufman_Foreign_Policy_April_27,_2012.pdf;
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Dear Friends....

I am starting with Congressman Todd Akin's comments this past weekend on abortion. As Eugene Robinson said in an op-ed, *'Todd Akin's comment brings 'war on women' back to prominence' in The Washington Post* this week; *"At least until Election Day, Republicans were supposed to pretend that their party's alleged "war on women" was nothing but a paranoid fantasy stoked by desperate Democrats. Obviously, Rep. Todd Akin (R-Mo.) didn't get the memo.*

Akin, campaigning to unseat Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) in November, was trying to explain his stance against abortion Sunday when he committed what cannot be dismissed as a mere gaffe. It was an abomination that could only stem from benighted ignorance — and it brings the whole "war on women" thing back into scary focus.

If you think I'm exaggerating, let me quote Akin in full. He was explaining why he opposes abortion even in

cases of rape — and how pregnancy as a result of rape, in any event, isn't something that should overly concern us:

"It seems to me, first of all, from what I understand from doctors, that's really rare. If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down. But let's assume that maybe that didn't work or something. You know, I think there should be some punishment, but the punishment ought to be of the rapist, and not attacking the child."

Whoa."

Robinson's continues..... *"Let's begin with the ignorant and offensive distinction Akin tries to draw between "legitimate rape" and some other kind of rape. He did not elaborate, but I'm pretty sure I know what he means.*

He's obviously talking about what Republicans call "forcible rape." Last year, Akin co-sponsored a bill in the House that would have narrowed the exception that allows Medicaid funds to pay for abortions for women who are raped. The proposed measure would have permitted the use of funds only to end pregnancies resulting from "forcible rape." Paul Ryan, now Mitt Romney's running mate, was another co-sponsor of the measure, which ultimately failed.

The statutory rape of a child by an adult would not fit the definition the House Republicans tried to impose; nor would the rape of a woman who was drugged, say, or who had limited mental capacity. Never mind the fact that, as far as criminal law is concerned, rape is rape. Never mind the fact that all rape, by its very nature, is "forcible."

Akin's assertion about "legitimate" rape is really nothing but an attempt to blame the victim. It stems from the view that the only true victim is a woman who is raped while violently resisting a ski-masked assailant who came in through the bedroom window. Anything short of that, she must have been asking for it."

Yes.... Akin's stupid, sexist remarks were immediately denounced by Romney and other prominent Republicans.

He initially suggested that he misspoke. Misspoke is when you accidentally introduce your vice presidential running mate as the *"next president of the United States."* Misspoke is when your mouth gets ahead of your brain. Misspoke is a politician's way of never having to say he's sorry, the first cousin to the non-apology apology (*"I'm sorry if you were offended"*).

But suggesting that in situations of "legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down" is not misspeaking. It's mis-thinking.

By midday Monday, Akin was in full grovel, appearing on Mike Huckabee's radio show to disavow his remarks without ever managing to explain them.

The Romney campaign followed a similar arc. First came the non-denunciation denunciation. On Sunday night, hours after the story broke, the campaign put out a joint statement by Romney and Paul Ryan mildly saying that they "disagree" with Akin's statement and "a Romney-Ryan administration would not oppose abortion in instances of rape."

Disagreement is when you differ over the proper tax treatment of capital gains income. When an ally comes under assault, the first impulse of politicians of both parties is to circle the political wagons, to concede only as much as politically necessary and not a millimeter more.

Just so that you don't think that I am totally partisan, I believe that the Democrats were wrong when the Obama campaign's steadfast — and wrongheaded — refused to distance itself from an inflammatory ad by an Obama-supporting super PAC insinuating that Romney helped contribute to the death of a laid-off worker's wife.

But as Soraya Chemaly wrote in The Huffington Post this week, "Todd Akin's comments are not just a war on women as much as it is a war on critical thinking and democracy in America. It's Not a War on Women, It's a War on Critical Thinking and Democracy." And I would like to add, "CIVILITY."

Although I personally believe that the Republicans play this game the most, but the problem for me is that the Democrats are sliding down the slippery slope of falling in the same civility deficit trap. Please take time to read the **New York Times** editorial, *'New Frontiers of Extremism'* as it suggests that many in the leadership in the

Republican party believe in the same things that Akin and other ultra conservatives except when they become embarrassing on a national level. Echoing this is Andrew Rosenthal's op-ed piece in the **New York Times**, *'The G.O.P. Platform.'*

This week American military deaths passed 2000 - in the eleven year war in Afghanistan. Now, the longest war in America's history And although the military claims that the recent troop surge which now has 80,000 US soldiers in Afghanistan, knowledgeable people say, that at best when American troops leave, they will leave a weak borderline friendly government unable to defend itself against militant opponents. We have to ask why did we go into this war and why is the Obama Administration still backing this disastrous war.

WEEKEND OFFERINGS

If you are like me, you are too busy to keep up with the weekly flow of new bank scandals. Personally, I can remember only 4 or 5 of the latest 'bankster' attempts to out-do the Robber Barons of over a century ago. To help you keep track, a scoreboard is attached, written by Cora Currier and Lena Groeger article, *"A Scorecard For This Summer's Bank Scandals,"* in **ProPublica** this week.

There's not much new on the scoreboard. The financial sector has not even tanked the economies of advanced industrial nations since Q4 2008. Nope, the attached scoreboard only has your garden variety financial sector venality, such as Libor Rate Fixing, Money Laundering, the London Whale's \$6B loss (to date) on can't-miss derivatives gambles, Misleading Credit Card Customers, Conducting Business with Iran by Funneling Money Through US Banks, and, the ever expanding Illegal Foreclosures (with special Support Our Troops F/C for Military personnel - relieving them of the burden of home ownership while on deployment in the Middle East).

Even Steering Minorities to more Costly Loans is included on the list, possibly inadvertently. Isn't it part of a banking franchise to charge poor people more than wealthier people. *Didn't Countrywide's CEO Angelo Mozilo reconfirm that practice when he gave mortgage rate discounts to Senator Dodd, Rep. Frank, Jim Johnson and Franklin Raines, both former CEOs of Fannie Mae. Senator Conrad....*

Please read Frederick Kaufman's article in **Foreign Policy**, *'How Goldman Sachs Created the Food Crisis,'* as it spells out how in 1991 Goldman bankers came up with a new kind of investment product, (*a derivative that tracked 24 raw materials*), from precious metals and energy to coffee, cocoa, cattle, corn, hogs, soy, and wheat. They weighted the investment value of each element, blended and commingled the parts into sums, then reduced what had been a complicated collection of real things into a mathematical formula that could be expressed as a single manifestation, to be known henceforth as the Goldman Sachs Commodity Index (GSCI). They structured GSCI derivative product as *"long only,"* which meant the product was constructed to buy commodities, and only buy. At the bottom of this *"long-only"* strategy lay an intent to transform an investment in commodities (previously the purview of specialists) into something that looked a great deal like an investment in a stock -- the kind of asset class wherein anyone could park their money and let it accrue for decades (along the lines of General Electric or Apple).

Now that the commodity market was made to look more like the stock market, bankers could expect new influxes of ready cash. But the long-only strategy possessed a flaw, at least for those of us who eat. The GSCI did not include a mechanism to sell or *"short"* a commodity and paid no heed to the centuries-old buy-sell/sell-buy patterns of the commodities markets. This imbalance undermined the innate structure of the commodities markets, requiring bankers to buy and keep buying -- no matter what the price. Every time the due date of a long-only commodity index futures contract neared, bankers were required to *"roll"* their multi-billion dollar backlog of buy orders over into the next futures contract, two or three months down the line. And since the deflationary impact of shorting a position simply wasn't part of the GSCI, professional grain traders could make a killing by

anticipating the market fluctuations these "rolls" would inevitably cause. Needless to say these types of derivative products have driven up the prices of commodities at the cost of the market (*producers & users*) players who have a real, physical stake in wheat, corn, soy, coffee, cocoa, cattle and hogs, as well as precious metals, coal, crude, petroleum products, etc. with market makers like Goldman and professional speculators making the lion share of the profits.

As Robert Reich said, "*Mitt Romney hasn't provided details so we should be grateful he's selected as vice president a man with a detailed plan Romney says is "marvelous," "bold and exciting," "excellent," "much needed," and "consistent with" what he's put out. So let's look at the five basic features of this "marvelous" Ryan plan.*" Please see his blog, '*5 Reasons Why The Ryan-Romney Economic Plan Would Be A Disaster for America*' because cutting taxes, raising the defence budget and turning Medicare into a voucher program is not going to grow economy, cut the deficit or reduce healthcare costs without reducing coverage and damaging the country's economy.

At a time of cuts in education please take a read of Justin Poke's article in the **Associated Press**, '*New studies weigh college value and cost*' – the gap between those with a college credential and those without one is growing. The unemployment rate for all four-year graduates is 4.5 percent. For recent graduates, it's 6.8 percent. For recent graduates trying to work with only a high school diploma, it's nearly 24 percent. So when it is asked, "Is college worth it?" That's the cost of college, and that has been rising rapidly. The answer is pretty clear: A degree is worth it, to the tune of \$1.3 million in additional lifetime earnings, a very good return on even an expensive degree.

Today about 40 percent of students leaving school with debt, on the average of \$22,000 and students from families earning between \$40,000 and \$59,000 are saddled with \$6,000 more on average than peers from families earning less than \$40,000. Even though federal grant aid targets the lowest-income students – roughly 90 percent who receive Pell Grants come from families earning under \$50,000. "These kids, even though they have pursued the American dream, they're starting their careers with hugely unequal amounts of student loan debt," that could be the difference of a kid who can take an unpaid internship that would put their career on an upward trajectory. Still, graduating with a moderate amount of student debt is still much better than not graduating. And a college degree is still the best avenue to a higher standard of living and quality of life.

For those of us who grew up reading George Orwell's '*1984*' or saw the movie by the same name directed by Michael Radford about a totalitarian future where society is tyrannized by The Party and its totalitarian ideology. In the story the Oceanian province of Airstrip One is a world of perpetual war, omnipresent government surveillance, and public mind control, dictated by a political system euphemistically named English Socialism under the control of a privileged Inner Party elite that persecutes all individualism and independent thinking as thoughtcrimes. Their tyranny is headed by Big Brother, the quasi-divine Party leader who enjoys an intense cult of personality, but who may not even exist. Big Brother and the Party justify their rule in the name of a supposed greater good.

In March 2002, John M. Poindexter, a former national security adviser to President Ronald Reagan, sat down with Gen. Michael V. Hayden, the director of the National Security Agency. Mr. Poindexter sketched out a new Pentagon program called Total Information Awareness, that proposed to scan the

world's electronic information — including phone calls, e-mails and financial and travel records — looking for transactions associated with terrorist plots. The N.S.A., the government's chief eavesdropper, routinely collected and analyzed such signals, so Mr. Poindexter thought the agency was an obvious place to test his ideas.

He never had much of a chance. When T.I.A.'s existence became public, it was denounced as the height of post-9/11 excess and ridiculed for its creepy name. Mr. Poindexter's notorious role in the Iran-contra affair became a central focus of the debate. He resigned from government, and T.I.A. was dismantled in 2003.

But what Mr. Poindexter didn't know was that the N.S.A. was already pursuing its own version of the program, and on a scale that he had only imagined. A decade later, the legacy of T.I.A. is quietly thriving at the N.S.A. It is more pervasive than most people think, and it operates with little accountability or restraint.

The foundations of this surveillance apparatus were laid soon after 9/11, when President George W. Bush authorized the N.S.A. to monitor the communications records of Americans who analysts suspected had a "nexus to terrorism." Acting on dubious legal authority, and without warrants, the N.S.A. began intercepting huge amounts of information.

Today the US government collects more data than the rest of the governments combined, with little oversight. This scares me and it should scare you too. If this is of interest to you, please take a look at Shane Harris' article in the **New York Times**, '**Giving In to the Surveillance State**,' because Big Brother is here and we don't really know who he is or what he is doing with our information.

Partisanship in America is to the point that even after the debacle of last summer when the Congressional stalemate over raising the nation's debt ceiling which caused the credit rating of the country to be downgraded for the first time in history, the country finds itself in the same situation again. But the ugly secret in the basement is that massive spending cuts and tax hikes due next year will cause even worse economic damage than previously thought if Washington fails to come up with a solution, said by the CBO. See David Lawder's article in **Reuters**, "**CBO sees worse economic wreckage from 'fiscal cliff.'**"

In Keith Bradsher's article in the **New York Times** this week, '**China Confronts Mounting Piles of Unsold Goods**,' he points out that after three decades of torrid growth, China is encountering an unfamiliar problem with its newly struggling economy: a huge buildup of unsold goods that is cluttering shop floors, clogging car dealerships and filling factory warehouses. There is a glut of everything from steel and household appliances to cars and apartments hampering China's efforts to emerge from a sharp economic slowdown. It has also produced a series of price wars and has led manufacturers to redouble efforts to export what they cannot sell at home. The severity of China's inventory overhang has been carefully masked by the blocking or adjusting of economic data by the Chinese government — all part of an effort to prop up confidence in the economy among business managers and investors. With unsold goods are piling up in China at the fastest rate since surveys of inventories began and the country also ramping up auto production even as car sales growth is slowing - *the Chinese economic miracle may be over.*

Problems in China give some economists nightmares, which in the worst case, the United States and much of the world slips back into recession as the Chinese economy sputters, the European currency zone collapses and

political gridlock paralyzes the United States.

China is the world's second-largest economy and has been the largest engine of economic growth since the global financial crisis began in 2008. Economic weakness means that China is likely to buy fewer goods and services from abroad when the sovereign debt crisis in Europe is already hurting demand, raising the prospect of a global glut of goods, falling prices and weak production around the world. Wow.. *How will this affect the rest of the world?*

As the GOP prepares for its National Convention in Tampa, Fla., next week, drafts of the party's platform "call for an audit of Federal Reserve monetary policy and a commission to look at restoring the link between the dollar and gold," according to the **Financial Times**. *"These [issues] were adopted because they are things that Republicans agree on,"* co-chair of the platform committee Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) told the Financial Times. *"The House recently passed a bill on this, and this is something that we think needs to be done."* She is, of course, referring to Rep. Paul's "Audit the Fed" bill, which passed 327-98. The FT report notes that the 2012 "gold commission" is similar to the one created in 1991 by Ronald Reagan's (it ended up deciding against reestablishing a link between U.S. currency and gold ... obviously). Any commission on a return to the gold standard would have to address a host of theoretical, empirical and practical issues. Inflation has remained under control in recent years, despite claims that expansion of the Fed's balance sheet would lead to runaway price rises, while gold has been highly volatile. The price of the metal is up by more than 500 per cent in dollar terms over the past decade. A return to a fixed money supply would also remove the central bank's ability to offset demand shocks by varying interest rates. As any economist can tell you this could mean a more volatile economy and higher average unemployment over time. Unfortunately for the GOP, there are huge policy problems with a gold standard. As Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke pointed out, there isn't enough gold to back the supply of money the economy actually needs. Worse, a gold standard would shackle monetary policy's ability to respond to economic downturns. Interest rates could not be lowered to combat recessions or high unemployment. Instead, they would be driven by the price fluctuations of the gold supply, regardless of the needs of the broader economy. How did this supposedly "crazy" idea make its way back into mainstream politics? **Forget Voodoo Economics because this is Neanderthal Thinking.**

As my friend Wallace Ford says in his **Point Of View** newsletter this week, *"if there was ever a definition for stupidity, it would be the Drugs and Guns policies in the US."* In 2010 – the latest year for which detailed statistics are available - there were 12,996 murders in the US, of those, 8,775 were caused by firearms. During the same year there were only 2 deaths by firearms in Japan. Even after Columbine, Beltway Sniper attacks, Virginia Tech massacre, Tucson shooting, Aurora, Colorado theater shooting and the recent Sikh temple shooting in Oak Creek, Wisconsin and the shooting at the Empire State Building this week in New York that ended with two dead and nine wounded, *(not to mention at least eleven assassination attempts with firearms have been made on U.S. presidents)*, we still can't get politicians to enact stronger gun control laws. And after spending hundreds of billions of dollars fighting the war on illegal drugs, the government drug policy failures are as disastrous as Prohibition. Obviously, these policies or the lack of with firearms, need to be seriously addressed the reign of misery connected to guns and drugs in America or neither will not end.

POLITICS

Attached please find two articles on the Republican Presidential Platform which draft was just released this week. Andrew Rosenthal's op-ed piece in the **New York Times**, *'The G.O.P. Platform'* and the **New York Times** Editorial, *'What the G.O.P. Platform Represents.'*

The draft reflects that the Republican Party has moved so far to the right *that the extreme is now the mainstream*. The **New York Times** calls it mean-spirited and intolerant and more aggressive in its opposition to women's reproductive rights and to gay rights than any in memory. It accuses President Obama and the federal judiciary of "*an assault on the foundations of our society,*" and calls for constitutional amendments banning both same-sex marriage and abortion.

This platform should hurt Mitt Romney going into the general election, as it hews closely to the views of his running mate, Paul Ryan. Mr. Romney ran far to the right to get the G.O.P. nomination, repudiating the more centrist views on social issues that he once held. He still has a chance now to move back toward the center by amending the G.O.P.'s extremist draft, *but will he take it?* And as the **New York Times** says, "*it will be interesting to see if he seizes it.*"

This week, at the Republican National Convention, delegates won't just be nominating a presidential candidate; they'll be voting on a 60-page policy platform prepared earlier this week in Tampa, Florida, by 112 Republican delegates. The platform, which won't be publicly released until Monday (Politico discovered a draft that was briefly posted online on Friday), has mainly attracted attention so far for its anti-abortion language.

But the committee also tackled pressing foreign-policy questions -- and the debates that ensued speak to the divisions that lurk behind the cohesive worldview the party will present to the nation next week. Sure, non-binding party platforms may have a limited impact on the positions presidential candidates take and the ways Americans vote, but they nevertheless highlight the issues at the center of a party's effort to define its international posture; in this case, the GOP's struggle to reconcile presumptive nominee Mitt Romney's embrace of American exceptionalism with Texas Rep. Ron Paul's considerably more modest vision of American power.

What are the most notable takeaways from this year's platform-drafting process, beyond one eagle-eyed delegate requesting that a reference to "Czechoslovakia," which ceased to exist in 1993, be changed to the "Czech Republic?" Here's a deeper look at what one committee member has called the "most conservative platform in modern history."

Here are the cliff notes:

1. **Israeli-Palestinian conflict:** The GOP Platform sidesteps this by stating that Republicans "*envision two democratic states -- Israel with Jerusalem as its capital and Palestine -- living in peace and security*" -- language that is nearly identical to wording used in the party's 2008 platform, without spelling out a solution and ignoring any of the desires of the Palestinians.
2. **Defense spending:** The Republican pledge to cut government spending has not extended to the military, driving a wedge between Ron Paul supporters, who want to scale back costly foreign adventures, and the Republican base. Romney and Ryan have called for increasing defense spending, though Ryan voted for defense cuts back in 2011. The idea that we can't cut defense spending when the US military budget is larger than the next 24 countries combined (*and 23 of them are not described as enemies*) is ludicrous.
3. **Gays and women in the military:** You would have thought that in 2012 this would not be an issue. But it dismisses the Obama Administration policies "*use of the military as a platform for social experimentation,*" and pushes back against the Obama administration's decision in February to open up more combat positions to women.
4. **Immigration:** The Republican platform, calls for both a "*legal and reliable source of foreign labor through a new guest-worker program*" -- a first for the party's platform -- and embraces hard-line language on immigration. The platform also throws party support behind "*humane procedures to encourage illegal aliens to return home voluntarily*" -- an endorsement of the "*self-deportation*" inane scheme that Romney floated during the primary.
5. **Cuba:** Why is this in any election platform, other than to extend friendship and support to a neighboring country. The GOP's language on Cuba closely mirrors the tough rhetoric the party employed in 2008, to the point of repeating the florid description of Cuba as a "*mummified relic of the age of totalitarianism*". The Castros are old and will die soon and once they are gone Cuba will change..... Like the Chinese, all we have to do is wait.... So why make it an election issue.

6. **Detention of enemy combatants:** Unable to go to the right of Obama's unexpectedly aggressive national security policies. , The GOP platform committee meeting featured a fascinating conversation about detainee rights and counter-terrorism. Pat Kerby, a delegate from Nevada, offered an amendment opposing the indefinite detention of American citizens under the National Defense Authorization Act. The amendment was ultimately defeated.
7. **National security leaks:** Romney and the Republicans have repeatedly accused the Obama administration of boasting about the killing of Osama bin Laden and opportunistically leaking classified information. Realizing that this was not a vote getter, a Minnesota delegate and Ron Paul supporter took issue with the approach at the platform committee meeting, urging the party to remove an entire section condemning Obama's leaks *"for political purposes."*
8. **Nation-building:** Richard Ford, a delegate from Rhode Island and Ron Paul supporter, proposed that the party add a line in the document declaring, *"the Obama administration has made the mistake of following the failed and dangerous policy of nation-building."* *"Nation-building is a failed policy of the Democrats and we Republicans need to go back to the humble foreign policy of George Bush before 9/11,"* he stated. *"We need to go back to not creating democracies overseas that create Islamic regimes, and go back to the goal of getting our enemies and bringing our troops home as soon as possible."* ***Isn't Nation Building a Bush/Cheney policy creation?***
9. **Foreign aid:** At the committee deliberations, Ford, the Rhode Island delegate, also requested a motion to strike the platform's entire section on international assistance, explaining, as Ron Paul has often argued, that the United States should halt costly and ineffectual foreign aid. The language now reads: Foreign aid should serve our national interest, an essential part of which is the peaceful development of less advanced and vulnerable societies in critical parts of the world. Assistance should be seen as an alternative means of keeping the peace, far less costly in both dollars and human lives than military engagement. The economic success and political progress of former aid recipients, from Latin America to East Asia, has justified our investment in their future. U.S. aid should be based on the model of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, for which foreign governments must, in effect, compete for the dollars by showing respect for the rule of law, free enterprise, and measurable results. Romney, for his part, has expressed disdain for foreign aid in the past, once remarking, *"I happen to think it doesn't make a lot of sense for us to borrow money from the Chinese to go give to another country for humanitarian aid."* Ryan's *"Path to Prosperity"* budget plan doesn't mention international development once and proposes slashing funding for entities such as the State Department and USAID by nearly \$5 billion for fiscal year 2013. ***These guys really don't get it, because as a friend of mine once said, "if you feed your revolutionaries, you will never have to worry about a revolution."***
10. **Internet freedom:** Ron Paul and his son Rand joined a push to defend the Internet from government regulation back in July, and the issue now appears to have made its way into the Republican platform. The section reads, in part: We will resist any effort to shift control away from the successful multi-stakeholder approach of Internet governance and toward governance by international or other intergovernmental organizations. ***Here I agree.....***

If you have the time, please feel free to read the article by Uri Friedman, ***'10 Foreign-Policy Flashpoints in the GOP Platform.'***

Please take a look at ***'Romney's lack of specifics shortchanges the debate on his tax plan'*** by **The Washington Post's** Editorial Board as it takes issue with Glenn Hubbard, dean of the Columbia Business School and an adviser to Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney who faulted **The Washington Post's** editorial published Sunday, headlined ***"Mr. Romney's 'garbage.'*** "

The Washington Post - *"Mr. Romney says he will abolish the estate tax, permanently extend the Bush tax cuts, get rid of capital gains taxes for families earning \$200,000 or less, reduce the corporate tax, eliminate the alternative minimum tax and reduce income tax rates by 20 percent so that, for example, the top bracket will go from 35 percent to 28 percent. He says he can accomplish this reduction in rates without lowering revenue by "broadening the base," or closing loopholes. He hasn't said which loopholes, maybe because the most expensive*

ones are also very popular: Among them are tax breaks for mortgage interest, charitable donations, state and local income tax and employer-provided health care."

The Washington Post - "Mr. Romney's tax reform plan exists," says Mr. Hubbard. "Great: Tell us what it is. Just repeating that it's possible, without explaining how, isn't much of an argument."

Echoing an earlier article: The Republican Party's draft platform plank on foreign policy and defense, which was approved by its platform committee Tuesday, with same old nonsense. It criticizes President Obama for not doubling down on the failed policies of the Bush/Chaney Administration. It blasts China and Russia and asks for more money be given to the military, when we are cutting the safety net for the poor. And like the Democrats it chose to sidestep the Palestinian question in the section about Israel. See Walter Pincus' article in **The Washington Post**, '**GOP plan for foreign policy and defense platform is predictable.**'

Included is David Brooks' op-ed piece in the **New York Times** this week, '**Ryan's Biggest Mistake**' castigating him for voting against the Simpson-Bowles plan which would have simplified the tax code and lowered rates. As he says that it would have capped the size of government. And for deficit hawks, according to the Bipartisan Policy Center, it would have brought the federal debt down from 73 percent of the nation's gross domestic product today, to 67 percent of G.D.P. in 2022. Ryan voted no saying that it was silly to come up with a debt-reduction proposal that didn't fix the single biggest driver of the nation's debt – Medicare. Ryan said, "we're going to have an election in 2012; the country will choose between two different visions; if we Republicans win, we'll be able to reform Medicare our way and reduce the debt our way."

As David Brooks said, "In other words, Ryan was willing to sacrifice the good for the sake of the ultimate. In order to get this ultimate solution, though, Ryan was betting that three things would happen. First, he was betting that Republicans would beat President Obama. Second, he was betting that Republicans would win such overwhelming Congressional majorities that they would be able to push through measures Democrats hate. Third, he was betting that a group of Republican politicians would unilaterally slash one of the country's most popular programs and that they would be able to sustain these cuts through the ensuing elections, in the face of ferocious and highly popular Democratic opposition. To put it another way, Ryan was giving up significant debt progress for a political fantasy. Ryan's fantasy happens to be the No. 1 political fantasy in America today, which has inebriated both parties. It is the fantasy that the other party will not exist. It is the fantasy that you are about to win a 1932-style victory that will render your opponents powerless. Every single speech in this election campaign is based on this fantasy. There hasn't been a speech this year that grapples with the real world — that we live in a highly polarized, evenly divided nation and the next president is going to have to try to pass laws in that context."

In looking for ways to save money and cut the budget, Paul Ryan's push for draconian cuts in Medicaid, food stamps and other programs that aid the needy, will make life much harder for the poor. In March, explaining his cuts in aid for the unfortunate, he declared, "We don't want to turn the safety net into a hammock that lulls able-bodied people into lives of dependency and complacency, that drains them of their will and their incentive to make the most of their lives." More importantly, Ryan's policies would actually increase the deficit. Paul Ryan is considered the modern G.O.P.'s big thinker. but his ideas are unrealistic fantasies inspired by Ayn Rand which was required reading for his new staff and interns. And as Paul Krugman said in an op-ed piece in the **New York Times** this week, "if the Republican ticket wins, Mr. Ryan will surely be an influential force in the next administration — and bear in mind, too, that he would, as the cliché goes, be a heartbeat away from the presidency. So it should worry us that Mr. Ryan holds monetary views that would, if put into practice, go a long way toward recreating the Great Depression."

David Brooks continues, "In the real world, there are almost never ultimate victories, and it is almost never the case (even if you control the White House and Congress) that you get to do what you want. The real world looks a lot like the Simpson-Bowles commission, where you get a diverse group of people who try to make progress in the areas where that is possible and try to sidestep the areas where it is not. When he voted no on the Simpson-

Bowles plan he missed the chance to show that he also has a governing consciousness. He missed the chance to do something good for the country, even if it wasn't the best he or I would wish for."

Peter Orszag article in **The Washington Post** speaks for itself, '*Five myths about Paul Ryan's budget.*'

1. *Paul Ryan's budget would reduce the deficit.*
2. *The Ryan budget would help the middle class.*
3. *Ryan's proposal would cut health-care spending by reforming Medicare.*
4. *Ryan's plan would provide certainty to the markets and the economy.*
5. *If Romney wins, Ryan's budget will be his fiscal blueprint.*

All false.....

I understand the need for strong moral ideology and I respect religions but as Timothy Egan pointed out in his op-ed in the **New York Times** this week, '*The Crackpot Caucus*' - "Take a look around key committees of the House and you'll find a governing body stocked with crackpots whose views on major issues are as removed from reality as Missouri's Representative Todd Akin's take on the sperm-killing powers of a woman who's been raped."

From evolution to climate change to elementary fiscal math, many Republicans in power cling to a level of ignorance that would get their ears boxed even in a medieval classroom. Congress incubates and insulates these knuckle-draggers. Republicans in Congress see climate change as a big hoax and almost all of them will tell you that they believe God created humans in the present form just within the last 10,000 years — even though they know that there is a wealth of anthropological evidence to the contrary. These same politicians are pushing to teach "Creation" as a science in our public schools.

Egan asks, "Where do they get this stuff? The Bible, yes, but much of the misinformation and the fables that inform Republican politicians comes from hearsay, often amplified by their media wing." Remember the crazy statement that helped to kill the presidential aspirations of Michele Bachmann? A vaccine, designed to prevent a virus linked to cervical cancer, could cause mental retardation, she proclaimed. Bachmann knew this, she insisted, because some random lady told her so at a campaign event. Fearful of the genuine damage Bachmann's assertion could do to public health, the American Academy of Pediatrics promptly rushed out a notice, saying, "there is absolutely no scientific validity to this statement."

And in an on-air plea for sanity, Joe Scarborough, the former G.O.P. congressman and **MSNBC** host, said, "I'm just tired of the Republican Party being the stupid party." I feel for him. But don't expect the reality chorus to grow. Egan ends his article, "if intelligence were contagious, his party would be giving out vaccines for it." AND HE IS RIGHT.....

This Week's Music Offerings

This week I am feeling three of my favorite musicians some of whom you may not know. Please enjoy....

Rodriguez - It Started Out So Nice - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1dOWdZRXnY&feature=BFa&list=AL94UKMTqg-9BRCJJukNtjnPRK42rCr2fC> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1dOWdZRXnY&feature=share&list=AL94UKMTqg-9BRCJJukNtjnPRK42rCr2fC>

Rodriguez - I Think Of You - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4wIUSM1CHo&feature=related> and

<http://youtu.be/m4wIUSM1CHo>

Rodriguez - Cause - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKFkc19T3Dk&feature=BFa&list=AL94UKMTqg-9BRCJJukNtjnPRK42rCr2fC> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKFkc19T3Dk&feature=share&list=AL94UKMTqg-9BRCJJukNtjnPRK42rCr2fC>

Meshell Ndegeocello - Outside Your Door - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CohuccUbdXM> and <http://youtu.be/CohuccUbdXM>

Me'Shell Ndegéocello - Call Me - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNwrNp458tE&feature=BFa&list=AL94UKMTqg-9DnB04OXmUnMC_N2MgguDVp and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNwrNp458tE&feature=share&list=AL94UKMTqg-9DnB04OXmUnMC_N2MgguDVp

Me'Shell Ndegéocello - Step Into The Projects - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tILLhbVJdMM&feature=BFa&list=AL94UKMTqg-9DnB04OXmUnMC_N2MgguDVp and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tILLhbVJdMM&feature=share&list=AL94UKMTqg-9DnB04OXmUnMC_N2MgguDVp

John Mayer - Free Fallin - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20Ov0cDPZy8> and <http://youtu.be/20Ov0cDPZy8>

John Mayer - Bold As Love - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBoGX9E6-KE&feature=BFa&list=AL94UKMTqg-9ChWODupunUby9628jkaRqK> and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBoGX9E6-KE&feature=share&list=AL94UKMTqg-9ChWODupunUby9628jkaRqK>

Have Fun With These Below

Come travel with me !!!! 



This is pretty good and a cheap way to visit some pretty nice places. Pick out any interesting location around the world and click on it. A page will come up with a photo. In the center is a circle with a triangle. Click on the triangle. Now you will get a full picture. If it's not a full screen, click on the 4 dots in the lower right corner. Now with full screen, place your cursor anywhere on the screen and slowly drag the picture in any direction you want. Left, right, up, down, slow or stop. Try the Egyptian Pyramids in Egypt or Moscow , Kremlin to get started. This is a one e-mail you will want to save. Enjoy.

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

The legitimate object of government, is to do for a community of people, whatever they need to have done, but can not do, at all, or can not, so well do, for themselves -- in their separate, and individual capacities.

Abraham Lincoln -- July 1, 1854

I hope that you enjoyed this week's offerings..... *And wishing you a great week.....*

Sincerely,
Greg Brown

--
Gregory Brown
Chairman & CEO
GlobalCast Partners, LLC

