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Attachments: JPMorgan's Follies, for All to See Gretchen Morgenson NYT March 16, 2012.pdf; GOP_report_calls_for_sweeping_reforms_to_compete_in_2016_Michael_O'Brien_03_18_2013.pdf; What_Should_the_Republican_Party_Stand_For_Molly_Ball_The_Atlantic_02_26_13.pdf; Bono_The_Good_News_on_Poverty_TED_March_2013.pdf; Bono_bio.pdf; Good_News_Beats_Bad_on_Social_Networks_John_Tierney_March_18_2013.pdf; Cyprus_lawmakers_reject_bank_tax_bailout_in_disarray_Michael_Kambas_&_Karolina_Tagaris_Reuters_Mar_19_2013.pdf; Taxing_Savers_in_Cyprus_NYT_Editorial_March_19_2013.pdf; Why_the_Cyprus_Bailout_Could_Set_Banking_Back_300_Years_Martin_Hutchinson_Monday_Morning_March_19_2013.pdf; Review_American_Winter_-_A_Devastating_Portrait_Of_The_Erosion_Of_The_Middle_Class_Kevin_Jagernauth_The_Playlist_March_18_2013.pdf; Ten_Years_After_NYT_Editorial_March_20_2012.pdf; The_Last_Letter_Tomas_Young_Truth_Dig_Mar_18_2013.pdf; Mistakes_Excuses_and_Painful_Lessons_From_the_Iraq_War_Ezra_Klein_Bloomberg_March_19_2013.pdf; Washington_Post_Editorial_Page_Misses_Iraq_War_Anniversary_Amanda_Terkel_Huff_Post_03_20_2013.pdf; Libya_Two_Years_Later_Jason_Pack_and_Mustafa_Abushagur_Huff_Post_03-20-2013.pdf; Cyprus_rejects_bailout_plan_that_would_make_savers_pay_raising_anxiety_in_euro_zone_Micheel_Bimbaum_&_Howard_Scheider_TWP_March_19_2013.pdf; One_Nation_Under_The_Gun_Deaths_Since_Newtown_GB_Huff_Post_March_03_2013.pdf; GIL_SCOTT_bio.pdf

Dear Friends.....

Being one of the few Americans who opposed the both invasions in Afghanistan and the Bush/Cheney War in Iraq from before day-one, and before then Senator Barack Obama.... And for my friends like my dear friends Rudy, Harvey, Julian and others who thought that I was crazy both times.... On the 10th anniversary this week after the Bush/Cheney war started, events has shown that they were wrong and I was right. Like betting on Red, on the surface that could be seen as 50/50 bet. But from the months before the war started when the Bush/Administration was spinning the speculation that Saddam Hussein was somehow involved with 9/11 and had mobile WMDs, Yellow Cake in Niger to inflict imminent pending mushroom clouds over America.... attacks against Israel and that Americans would be treated as liberators with no downfall or real cost in lives, dollars and other resources..... At that time I called this BS for what it was.... *And today we know that it was Total BS.....*

AND I WAS RIGHT. Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with Al Qaeda or with 9/11. There were no WMDs. The Yellow Cake story was an absolute lie. Iraq has no plans to attack Israel. And no Iraqi terrorist had ever attacked Americans, American installations or America. One of the reasons why I felt so confident that none of Bush/Cheney Administration's accretions were true is because I knew that two years before, Mossad (Israeli Intelligence) extensively interviewed Saddam Hussein's two son-in-laws, including the son-in-law who at one time ran Iraq's weapons development program) when

they both fled to Jordan. Especially when everyone knows, that if Israel had felt Iraq had WMDs, it would have promptly destroyed them with our without America's support or approval.

So when politicians purposely deceive its citizens, government and the international community shouldn't there be a consequence? Especially when these misdeeds lead to the loss of 4500 American military forces lives, 35,000 wounded – many of those will be scarred emotionally or physically for life, (divorces, suicides, broken families are all results of the war), more than 165,000 Iraqi civilian lives, costing American taxpayers more than \$2 trillion (rising potentially to more than \$6 trillion over the next decades), resulting in the destabilization of the entire Middle East and energy costs rising four-fold and benefiting the governments in Russia and Iran.

We did for Iran what they have been trying to do for 40 years, overthrow Saddam. Today, relations between Iraq and Iran, our enemy and threat to the Middle East peace, are better than ever. The spoils of the war, mainly the oil, went to Turkey and Russia, two countries that didn't want us there. Turkey not only did not help but hindered the military part in the war. I have not even mentioned that the weapons of mass destruction that the Bush administration told us not only existed but knew where they were. Are the people better off? Today they are no longer under the bloody hands of Saddam and his death squads, which some say was a good enough reason in itself to topple Saddam. If that was a good enough reason, we should be invading other countries run by tyrants: Iran, Syria, Rwanda, Cambodia, Venezuela, etc. What we did accomplish was we built the most expensive, the largest and the costliest-to-run and most extravagant embassy in the world in the safe confines of the Green Zone. This week, at least 65 Iraqis died in a bombing, last week 28 died. The infrastructure still has part-time electricity and a Third World water system. And the most recent big ugly is the rising abnormally high number of cases of cancer and birth defects in Iraq. In a new op-ed for **Al Jazeera**, Mozghan Savabieasfahani, (*a leading toxicologist at the University of Michigan*), writes that the cancer and birth defect "epidemic" constitutes an "extraordinary public health emergency in Iraq" and that large-scale testing of the environment in the affected cities is of utmost urgency.

Dick Cheney said in his documentary he would do it all over again and do it the same way and has absolutely no second thoughts about the actions we took. Dick Cheney is now just a bitter old man trying to save face who has become irrelevant in his own party and his own country. We made a mistake by letting civilians and Gen. Westmoreland with no one to answer to the Vietnam War. We let Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld, Scooter Libby and Gen. Tommy Franks run the Iraq war with no one to answer to. I hope to God we have learned from our mistakes. The history of how the Iraqi war turns out will not be known for years, but I fear history will not be kind to us at all. This past week was the 10th anniversary of the start of the second war in Iraq. ***We were told that we were in imminent danger. We were told that the war would be easy. We were told that most likely it would pay for itself. We were told that life would be better for the average Iraqi as a result. We were told that we would be greeted as liberators. We were told that the war would lead to Iraqis living better. We were told that the new government would seek closer ties to America. We were told that this war would add stability to the entire Middle East,***

NONE OF THIS HAPPEN..... First of all, there are no easy wars..... And as much as I hate drone strikes, why start a war to get one man, even if that man is Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, Muammar Gaddafi, Anastasio Somoza, Idi Amin, Omar al-Bashir, Hitler, Caligula or Nero, when we have the technology to take this one individual or group out. If the international community of nations conclude that a single individual or organization is a serious danger to society – today it has the tools to get rid of that person or group. And as the Arab Spring has proven by the removal of Gaddafi, Mubarak, Ben Ali, Saleh and soon to be ousted Bashar Hafez al-Assad, the people themselves will get rid of their own despots, tyrants and dictators. Therefore as a society, we have to call our mistakes what they are.... MISTAKES.... Otherwise, we are destined to repeat them.... Again.... And again . And to

hear Cheney, Rice, Rumsfeld, Bush and others and especially the mainstream media.... making excuses for a war that should have never happen should not go unnoticed or allowed.

Every so often you come across a film, movie, poem, song, theater piece, talk, action, event or person who touches one's sou. This past week I had the sincere pleasure of watching HBO's documentary **'American Winter,' A Devastating Portrait Of The Erosion Of The Middle Class.** Filmmakers Joe and Harry Gantz make their argument by turning their cameras to Portland, Oregon and tracking the tales of eight families, who all call the state's 211 social services hotline, in dire need of help. And it's eye opening stuff that not only puts a human face on the poverty crisis gripping the country (*in 53 years of recorded history, a new record has been set with 48.5 million Americans living in poverty according to the latest data*) but it also fundamentally shows that if there is no infrastructure in place to help those who are struggling get back on their feet, it's actually worse for the economy. The documentary features interviews with local experts and leaders, including Oregon Center for Public Policy director Chuck Sheketoff and Portland Commissioner Nick Fish. He shared his thoughts about the documentary on his website, saying he felt both pride and shame after watching it. *"Shame because so many middle class families who play by the rules have to choose between paying rent and feeding their children,"* he wrote. *"Pride because we live in a community that believes we are all in this together."*

Using a mix of hard facts and personal stories, **"American Winter"** makes it clear that the structures in place are simply not working. Never mind the fact that it's actually cheaper in the long run to invest in social programs, all it takes is the story of single mother Shanon to illustrate how fast anyone can fall into hardship. When her 12 year-old daughter had to go to the hospital to deal with a serious stomach ailment that includes 5 ulcers (one of which was bleeding), Shanon was forced to take some time off work. Shanon had insurance, but of course, they refused to cover her for the time she was off caring for her daughter, and now she's saddled with a staggering \$49,000 medical bill (with more on the way for ongoing treatment). How can anyone crawl out from under such a burden? And while some might scoff that Shanon is unlucky, that sometimes that's just the way things happen, "American Winter" suggests that the effects pass on to the next generation.

Currently, the single greatest factor determining a young person's future wealth, is how well off their parents were. And if the next generation isn't given a fair shot at upward mobility, how does the country expect have a healthy class of citizens who can participate in the economy? And as venture capitalist Nick Hanauer points out, the deregulated business world and the emphasis on trickle-down economics that currently exists, has failed to live up to its promise. While corporations are raking in record profits, it has simply not translated into the high paying jobs that both politicians and corporate interests have said they would. Instead, we've seen minimum wage stagnate and full time jobs a scarcity, but as Hanauer explains the solution is simple: raise wages and create jobs, and you will enable people to buy products from your company, keep you profitable all while enabling the economy to thrive.

The film shows real life examples of the devastation of the Reagan Administration supply-side trickle-down economics which has enriched the top 2% at the expense of eviscerating the safety-net for the working poor and the incomes of the Middle Class. It also shows that these proud middle-class families who have fallen into hard times for reasons beyond their control, did everything that where suppose to, including college educations, good work histories, saved for a rainy day and raising their families in a warm supportive loving environment. It is a sobering 90 minutes that reinforces those feelings. And even if you arrive skeptically to the documentary, the arguments are too compelling to ignore, for no matter where you stand, the remaining question that lingers is whether or not this

current winter of personal, financial and even spiritual malaise from coast to coast will ever find a thaw. With this said, I strongly urge everyone to see **HBO's *American Winter***.

If you like me feel inundated by today's television news mixture of shock and awe laced with Lindsey Lohan's latest court appearance, depressing us all, I would like to share musician Bono (*U2 fame*) latest presentation at **TED (*Technology, Entertainment, Design*)** – the non-profit organization formed in 1984 to bring together the world's most fascinating thinkers and doers, who are challenged to give the talk of their lives, passions and experiences, in 18 minutes or less with the goal of inspiring others. Bono's latest talk titled, ***The good news on poverty (Yes, there's good news)*** – Bono, the lead singer of U2, uses his celebrity to fight for social justice worldwide: to end hunger, poverty and disease, especially in Africa. His nonprofit ONE raises awareness via media, policy and calls to action. And in this most recent talk he shares inspiring data that shows the end of poverty is in sight ... if we can harness the momentum.

http://www.ted.com/talks/bono_the_good_news_on_poverty_yes_there_s_good_news.html

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BONO: Starting out before Christ three millennia ago when civilization was just getting started on the banks of the Nile there was a march against inequality and poverty by a group of slaves and Jewish shepherds in search of justice. Cut to our century, same country, same pyramids, another people spreading the same idea of equality with a different book. This time it's called the Facebook. Crowds are gathered in Tahrir Square. They turn a social network from virtual to actual, and kind of rebooted the 21st century. Not to undersell how messy and ugly the aftermath of the Arab Spring has been, neither to oversell the role of technology, but these things have given a sense of what's possible when the age-old model of power, the pyramid, gets turned upside down, putting the people on top and the pharaohs of today on the bottom, as it were. It's also shown us that something as powerful as information and the sharing of it can challenge inequality, because facts, like people, want to be free, and when they're free, liberty is usually around the corner, even for the poorest of the poor -- facts that can challenge cynicism and the apathy that leads to inertia, facts that tell us what's working and, more importantly, what's not, so we can fix it, facts that if we hear them and heed them could help us meet the challenge that Nelson Mandela made back in 2005, when he asked us to be that great generation that overcomes that most awful offense to humanity, extreme poverty, facts that build a powerful momentum.

He then cites a number of examples:

- ➤ Since the year 2000, since the turn of the millennium, there are eight million more AIDS patients getting life-saving antiretroviral drugs. Malaria: There are eight countries in sub-Saharan Africa that have their death rates cut by 75 percent. For kids under five, child mortality, kids under five, it's down by 2.65 million a year. That's a rate of 7,256 children's lives saved each day.
- ➤ The number of people living in back-breaking, soul-crushing extreme poverty has declined from 43 percent of the world's population in 1990 to 33 percent by 2000 and then to 21 percent by 2010. Give it up for that. (Applause) Halved. Halved.
- ➤ Now, the rate is still too high -- still too many people unnecessarily losing their lives. There's still work to do. But it's heart-stopping. It's mind-blowing stuff. And if you live on less than \$1.25 a day, if you live in that kind of poverty, this is not just data. This is everything. If you're a parent who wants the best for your kids -- this rapid transition is a route out of despair and into hope. And if the trajectory continues, look where the amount of people living on \$1.25 a day gets to by 2030. BONO again: Can't be true, can it? That's what the data is telling us. If the trajectory continues, we get to, wow, the zero

zone. For number-crunchers like us, that is the erogenous zone, and it's fair to say that I am, by now, sexually aroused by the collating of data. So virtual elimination of extreme poverty, as defined by people living on less than \$1.25 a day, adjusted, of course, for inflation from a 1990 baseline. We do love a good baseline. That's amazing.

- ➤ Now I know that some of you think this progress is all in Asia or Latin America or model countries like Brazil -- and who doesn't love a Brazilian model? -- but look at sub-Saharan Africa. There's a collection of 10 countries, some call them the lions, who in the last decade have had a combination of 100 percent debt cancellation, a tripling of aid, a tenfold increase in FDI -- that's foreign direct investment -- which has unlocked a quadrupling of domestic resources -- that's local money -- which, when spent wisely -- that's good governance -- cut childhood mortality by a third, doubled education completion rates, and they, too, halved extreme poverty, and at this rate, these 10 get to zero too. So the pride of lions is the proof of concept.

BONO points out that although this trajectory is extremely encouraging, allot can happen to slow down this momentum toward zero. especially inertia. Bono says that we can't get this done if inertia overwhelms momentum. And the is jeopardy is the closer you get, the harder it gets. He says that we know the obstacles that are in our way. And that right now, in difficult times when money is tight, we have to fight for the life-saving programs that alleviate poverty around the world. We have to make politicians understand that cutting programs cost lives.

BONO again says that the biggest disease of all is not a disease. It's corruption. And the best vaccine against corruption is transparency, open data and access to information ant that technology is really turbo-charging this as it is getting harder to hide if you're doing bad stuff. Citing another example: where across Uganda there is 150,000 young people armed with 2G phones, creating a SMS social network exposing government corruption and demanding to know what's in the budget and how their money is being spent.

BONO: *"Look, once you have these tools, you can't not use them. Once you have this knowledge, you can't un-know it. You can't delete this data from your brain, but you can delete the cliched image of supplicant, impoverished peoples not taking control of their own lives. You can erase that, you really can, because it's not true anymore."* He points to Wael Ghonim, who set up the Facebook networks that focused on the grievances of the protesters in Tahir Square in Cairo who said, *"We are going to win because we don't understand politics. We are going to win because we don't play their dirty games. We are going to win because we don't have a party political agenda. We are going to win because the tears that come from our eyes actually come from our hearts. We are going to win because we have dreams, and we're willing to stand up for those dreams."* Wael proved that working together as one (power of the people) is much stronger than the people in power and as a result people living in poverty today..... are doing better than ever.

Last week was the 40th annual Conservative Political Action Conference. The three-day gathering held in National Harbor, Maryland, near Washington, D.C., brought a number of GOP all-stars including Mitt Romney, Michele Bachmann, Sarah Palin, Rick Santorum, Newt Gingrich, Allen West, Ann Coulter, Marco Rubio, Rand Paul, Ted Cruz, Scott Walker, Jeb Bush and Donald Trump. As such almost all of the speeches slammed the President, his policies and congressional Democrats with the occasional jab and insult against Republicans, such as New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie who many felt was too cozy with President Obama during the Hurricane Sandy response. Ann Coulter fired off an insult about Gov. Christie, "Even CPAC had to cut back on its speakers this year about 300 pounds." And Christie wasn't the only target of Coulter's insults. She also criticized President Barack Obama and made eyebrow-raising remarks about Sandra Fluke's haircut while addressing birth control and the war on women. "That haircut is birth control enough," Coulter said of Fluke. Perhaps her most extreme criticism was directed at President Bill Clinton. "The keynote speaker at the Democrat National Convention this year was forcible rapist, Bill Clinton,"

Sen. Rand Paul won the **2013 Washington Times-CPAC presidential preference straw poll** Saturday, and Sen. Marco Rubio was a close second, easily outdistancing the rest of the field and signaling the rise of a new generation of conservative leaders who will take the Republican Party into the 2016 election. Mr. Paul won 25 percent of the vote, and Mr. Rubio collected 23 percent. Former Sen. Rick Santorum was third with just 8 percent, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie — who was not invited to speak at the three-day Conservative Political Action Conference — was next with 7 percent, and Rep. Paul D. Ryan, the GOP's vice presidential nominee last year, was fifth with 6 percent. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker collected 5 percent of the vote — good for sixth place. In one surprising result, political newcomer Dr. Ben Carson, a neurosurgeon whose speech at the National Prayer Breakfast earlier this year has become a conservative rallying point, came in seventh in the poll with 4 percent — tied with Sen. Ted Cruz.

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush beseeched a gathering of conservatives in remarkably frank terms on Friday night to change the course of the Republican Party and to become a more diverse, welcoming and understanding party to minorities and low-income Americans. Bush challenged the audience that the GOP should "learn from past mistakes." "All too often we're associated with being 'anti' everything," Bush said. "Way too many people believe Republicans are anti-immigrant, anti-woman, anti-science, anti-gay, anti-worker, and the list goes on and on and on. Many voters are simply unwilling to choose our candidates even though they share our core beliefs, because those voters feel unloved, unwanted and unwelcome in our party." And Bush also threw cold water in the face of conservatives who espouse a strict up-by-the-bootstraps doctrine of individual responsibility, and who ascribe failure only to personal failure. Life, he said, is increasingly more difficult for those who aren't born with built-in advantages. He also faulted the GOP for not caring about large swaths of the country, and said if that attitude remains, the right will forfeit its ability to influence the nation.

But my real problem with CPAC is that there was not one speech that sort to reach out to the other side of the aisle, preferring to vilify Democrats, the President, other Republicans whom they don't feel conservative enough and anyone else who doesn't meet their ideology purity standard. When everyone in the room is only allowed to see red, they miss the fact that there is a spectrum of other colors. The same is true for ideas. And "there are none so blind as those who will not see." John Heywood 1546. I understand rallying the party faithful, but ridiculing and demonizing anyone who disagrees with you is not democracy and nor is it a way to govern. I suggest that politicians forget their parties and put people first. And although most of the speakers urged Republicans not to change but rather to double down on conservative principles with a tenor of nastiness against everyone and every idea that isn't theirs, there was also a glimmer of diversity as a result of the large number of young people reflecting the multiplicity of their generation. I realize that CPAC doesn't represent all Republicans but it is their nastiness and unwillingness to meet halfway that is pushing the government more and more into dysfunctionality.

This week I watch an interesting documentary **"The Oxycontin Express"** on the **Current TV Network**. The film looks at the illegal side of prescription drugs in South Florida, because when all of us think about prescription drug abuse we think of Jimi Hendrix, Elvis Presley, Anna Nicole Smith, Keith Ledger and Michael Jackson but the story of celebrity overdose overshadows a much larger issue, in the United States more people are abusing prescription medication than heroin, cocaine and ecstasy combined. And the drug of choice for a growing number of abusers is Oxycontin which is basically heroin made in a lab, which was developed by a pharmaceutical company to treat people in severe chronic pain, like terminally ill cancer patients but it has now become a part of a booming illicit trade in prescription pills and the heart of which was in South Florida. The source of these

pills isn't some guy on the corner or a Columbia drug lord, it is a growing cottage industry of store-front pain clinics. Doctors offices that legally dispense the drugs or as on police officer described, "drug dealers with degrees." Doctors in Florida prescribe Oxycontin at five times of the national average and the effect of this flood of pills is alarming and is being well felt beyond the Sunshine State's borders.

The film starts with a mother describing her twenty-five year old son who died from an overdose of prescription pills and in the last two months of his life he was legally prescribed 1500 pills by a single doctor – although he had no illness. There was no examinations, MIRs or physical therapy – this doctor was just writing prescriptions for money. As the popularity of prescription drugs has surged the number of deaths caused by pills has also risen dramatically. In Florida pills are involved in 75% of all drug related deaths and on average eleven people die a day from prescription drug overdose. It is estimated that 20 percent of people in the United States have used prescription drugs for non-medical reasons. This is prescription drug abuse. It is a serious and growing problem. At the time of the making of the documentary – of the top 50 doctors dispensing Oxycontin in the United States, all 50 were in the State of Florida and 33 of them were in Broward County.

Opioids (*such as the pain relievers OxyContin and Vicodin*), central nervous system depressants (*e.g., Xanax, Valium*), and stimulants (*e.g., Concerta, Adderall*) are the most commonly abused prescription drugs. Medications available without a prescription—known as over-the-counter drugs—can also be abused. DXM (*dextromethorphan*), the active cough suppressant found in many over-the-counter cough and cold medications, is one example. It is sometimes abused to get high, which requires taking large and potentially dangerous doses (more than what is on the package instructions).

Opioids

Chemical Name (Brand Name)

Street Names

- Oxycodone (OxyContin, Percodan, Percocet)
happy pills, vikes
- Propoxyphene (Darvon)
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lortab, Lorcet)
- Hydromorphone (Dilaudid)
- Meperidine (Demerol)
- Diphenoxylate (Lomotil)
- Morphine (Kadian, Avinza, MS Contin)
- Codeine
- Fentanyl (Duragesic)
- Methadone

Hillbilly heroin, oxy, OC, oxycotton, percs,

Depressants

Chemical Name (Brand Name)

Street Names

- Barbiturates
yellows, yellow jackets
- Mephobarbital (Mebaral)
- Sodium pentobarbital (Nembutal)
- Benzodiazepines
- Diazepam (Valium)
- Alprazolam (Xanax)
- Triazolam (Halcion)

Barbs, reds, red birds, phennies, tooies,

Candy, downers, sleeping pills, tranks

- Estazolam (ProSom)
- Clonazepam (Klonopin)
- Lorazepam (Ativan)
- Chlordiazepoxide hydrochloride (Librium)
- Sleep Medications A-minus, zombie pills
- Zolpidem (Ambien)
- Zaleplon (Sonata)
- Eszopiclone (Lunesta)

Stimulants

Chemical Name (Brand Name)

Street Names

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dextroamphetamine (Dexedrine, Adderall)
bennies, black beauties, roses, hearts, speed, uppers | Skippy, the smart drug, Vitamin R, |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methylphenidate (Ritalin, Concerta) | |

In order to battle the prescription drug epidemic, the Drug Enforcement Agency is also cracking down nationwide on the distribution of prescribed painkillers. Heavy monitoring of prescription dispensaries, from local pharmacies in small suburban areas to major chains like Walgreens, led to supply restriction and limited what pharmacists could distribute to patients.

As of October 2011, 37 states implemented a prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) to identify possible drug use and/or distribution abuse. A PDMP, which is not regulated by the DEA, collects data regarding the prescriptions dispensed in a given state. Eleven additional states have also executed legislation to implement a PDMP. Moving forward, the challenge for policy and healthcare professionals seems to lie in balancing the monitoring of prescription drugs without infringing on patient privacy and not allowing restrictions to affect those who have legitimate need for medication. Still there is a prescription drug epidemic in American and it is still growing. And like with gun deaths, this trend is not going to change until prescription drugs are better regulated and the doctors who dispense these pills like drug dealers are treated like their "drug dealer" counterparts in Columbia, Mexico and South Central.

One of the big uglies in America is its prison system. We have less than 5% of the world's population and 25% of the prisoners (for two main reasons, the drug war and greed) as we privatized a large part of our prison system making it a huge business with prisoners as customers. America has the highest rate of incarceration in the world, follow by Russia and Rwanda.... We are #1.... and ranking that we should not be proud. 70% of prisoners are clinically considered to be addicts and of those people on 11% are treated for their addiction. There is a great study by Columbia University that Joe Califano did that said that if you treat people behind bars for their addiction, continue out patient, keep them in sober housing and employ them, you will drop their level because the major reason why they continue to engage in criminal behavior is because of their addiction. Today 66% of the people who get out of jail commit another serious felony within three years. Instead of treating them, we put addicts in prisons with some of our badest criminals and expect them to somehow not be affected. And not only are the court system incarcerating poor people who are into drugs, the largest growing part of the prison system right now is immigration detention centers. Because they recognize that these are individuals who don't have a voice, they don't have representation and they're easy money. We are currently spending \$74 billion on the prison complex and only \$600 million of this is going to treatment. We need to move the money from incarceration into treatment to change the paradigm. Our prison system is a moral cancer on our nation, especially since many young boys and girls join gangs to survive both in the streets and in prisons. And the craziest thing out our prison system, is that

nobody works.... We have to put people to work in prison so that they can develop a skill set beyond their criminal past and a new sense of dignity.

THIS WEEK'S READING

This week in the **New York Times** Gretchen Morgenson wrote – *JP Morgan's Follies, for All to See* – the writer provides an overview on the 307-page Senate report detailing last year's \$6.2 billion trading fiasco at JPMorgan Chase that was recently released, suggesting that the Dodd-Frank legislation which was supposed to make our system safe from the kinds of reckless banking activities that brought the economy to its knees if a mirage and as such the financial system, thanks to dissembling traders and bumbling regulators, is at greater risk than you know. Its pages of e-mails, testimony, telephone transcripts and analysis show that traders in the bank's chief investment officer hid money-losing derivatives positions, if only temporarily; that risk limits created by the bank to protect itself were exceeded routinely; that risk models were changed to minimize losses; that bank executives misled investors and the public; and that regulations are only as good as the regulators enforcing them. Remember that this is a report examining JPMorgan Chase, the bank that enjoys the best reputation among its peers. Morgenson: One can only wonder: if JPMorgan Chase traders think nothing of misrepresenting the value of their trades to minimize losses, what are the financial world's lesser players up to?

Morgenson writes that the hearings on Friday were equally compelling, with Mr. Levin and John McCain, the Arizona Republican who is the subcommittee's ranking minority member, subjecting current and former JPMorgan executives, including Ina Drew, the former head of the chief investment officer, to penetrating and pointed questions. *"Besides the traders who mismarked the book, who should be held accountable for breaching JPMorgan's own internal risk limits and adjusting its risk models?"* Mr. McCain asked of Douglas L. Braunstein, vice chairman at the bank. After Mr. Braunstein cited the significant reductions in compensation of JPMorgan executives as one measure of accountability, Mr. McCain replied: "It's hard for me to accept that serious responsibility was assumed by the top management of JPMorgan especially in light of e-mails that say that these decisions were, according to Ms. Drew, fully discussed and vetted by the top management of JPMorgan." Hoping to understand JPMorgan's practice of relaxing its valuation method on the troubled investment portfolio, Mr. Levin asked of Mr. Braunstein: "Is it common for JPMorgan to change its pricing practices when losses start to pile up in order to minimize the losses?" After a bit of back and forth, Mr. Braunstein said: *"No, that is not acceptable practice."*

RISK limits, intended to protect the bank from losses, were also routinely breached at JPMorgan Chase, the report found. From late 2011 to the first quarter of 2012, Senate investigators saw a huge jump in the number of risk-limit breaches — to more than 170, from 6. Then, in April 2012 alone, risk limits were exceeded 160 times. "Should someone have investigated the risky trading activities that triggered all these breaches?" Mr. Levin asked. Yes, but no one did, the report concluded. The risk limits were either ignored or modified to make the portfolio look better. The Senate report also raises questions about the rigor with which JPMorgan conducted its own investigation into the trading loss. That report was published in January. Mr. Levin cited the internal report's failings in his questioning of Michael Cavanagh, a task force member and co-C.E.O. of JPMorgan's corporate and investment bank. *"You just told us that shifting pricing practices to minimize losses is not acceptable,"* Mr. Levin said. *"Did you say that in your report? Did you say that's what happened?"* *I don't believe we called that out in the report,"* Mr. Cavanagh answered. The report recommends what regulators should do to prevent similar events at other banks. It suggests that regulators should be on the lookout for manipulation of an institution's risk models and should encourage banks to use independent pricing services to ensure the integrity of valuations.

Morgenson says that the true value in this Senate investigation is its spotlight on the ability of bank executives to hide hundreds of millions of dollars in losses and yet survive internal valuation reviews. This *"shows how imprecise, undisciplined, and open to manipulation the current process is for valuing credit derivatives,"* the report said. JPMorgan, don't forget, is the largest derivatives dealer in the world. Trillions of dollars in such instruments sit on its and other big banks' balance sheets. The ease with which the bank hid losses and fiddled

with valuations should be a major concern to investors. As for taxpayers, the Senate report clearly indicates that JPMorgan Chase is too big to regulate. The report found that the bank failed to provide crucial portfolio data to its regulators at the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and that those regulators did not investigate questionable trading at the bank. The overseers accepted the bank's assurances that nothing was amiss. The universal acceptance today is that banks of JPMorgan's size are also too big to be allowed to fail and too big to prosecute. Such banks are too big to regulate and apparently too big to manage. So how much more evidence do we need that banks like JPMorgan are simply too big a risk for taxpayers to bear....

Moving forward, the GOP needs to change, well, everything. That is the gist of the ***Grow and Opportunity Project***, a 100-page report outlining the **Republican National Committee's** recommendations on how to revitalize the party by 2016. RNC chairman Reince Priebus said the report makes it clear that *"there's no one reason we lost" the election. "Our message was weak; our ground game was insufficient; we weren't inclusive; we were behind in both data and digital; our primary and debate process needed improvement."* Specifically, the party needs to make inroads with women, young voters, and minorities, especially Hispanics. The RNC's 100-page report, the ***"Growth and Opportunity Project,"*** culled data from more than 52,000 contacts with voters, party consultants and elected officials, it calls for drastic changes to almost every major element of the modern Republican Party. "When Republicans lost in November, it was a wake-up call. And in response I initiated the most public and most comprehensive post-election review in the history of any national party," Priebus said Monday morning at the **National Press Club**. *"As it makes clear, there's no one reason we lost. Our message was weak; our ground game was insufficient; we weren't inclusive; we were behind in both data and digital; our primary and debate process needed improvement."*

In essence, the report argues for a more data-driven Republican Party in which the RNC assumes increased authority for party-building efforts. The report calls for increased outreach to women, young voters and minorities — especially Hispanics. The document acknowledges the GOP's policy on immigration has become a *"litmus test"* for what will be a key constituency necessary for the party's success in the next four years and beyond. *"We are not a policy committee, but among the steps Republicans take in the Hispanic community and beyond, we must embrace and champion comprehensive immigration reform,"* the report says, nodding at other points to the bipartisan reform efforts currently before Congress. *"If we do not, our Party's appeal will continue to shrink to its core constituencies only."* The report also notes a growing generational divide on the issue of gay rights, calling the issue a "gateway" for young voters deciding whether to align with the GOP. *"We can't grow the party by division and subtraction,"* Priebus said during a question-and-answer session at the press club. *"We can only build it by addition and multiplication."* Its top recurring theme arguably involves building a robust Republican data infrastructure, and applying a commitment to testing and analysis of almost every operation of the RNC, in addition to the obvious social issues.

Priebus is advised to hire a chief technology officer and digital officer by the end of April, and give them wide latitude to inform aspects of the party from fundraising to media strategy and messaging and beyond. *"Those teams will work together to integrate their respective areas throughout the RNC and provide a data-driven focus for the rest of the organization,"* Priebus said. *"And they will be the new center of gravity within the organization."* The GOP's digital revamp — as with most of the other elements of the report — was prompted by the Obama campaign's far more sophisticated operation in 2012. Many of the reforms proposed by the Growth and Opportunity Project, however, will encounter stiff resistance in corners of the Republican Party and broader conservative movement — because of a deep distrust of the official GOP among the grassroots. Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin encapsulated the sentiment during her speech on Saturday before the **Conservative Political Action Conference**. *"Now is the time to furlough the consultants, and tune out the pollsters, send the focus groups home, and toss the political scripts,"* she said, *"because if we truly know what we believe, we*

don't need professionals to tell us." And some of the report's declarations are sure to ruffle feathers on the Right. The report says bluntly at one point that *"third-party groups that promote purity are hurting our electoral prospects,"* an indirect reference to groups like the **Club for Growth**, which has promoted challenges to Republicans regarded as more electable who are accused of transgressing against conservative principle.

As former Pennsylvania governor Ed Rendell said to Chris Matthews on **Hardball** this week, *"I'm just wondering, why would a political party believe that a new PR strategy would cover up for its policies?"* Continuing, *"It makes no sense at all. First of all, their policies are bankrupt. They're the exact same -- and they haven't changed their policies a bit, Chris. You see Republican state legislators pushing virulent anti-abortion bills that are just clearly unconstitutional, clearly punitive to women, no exceptions for incest and rape, things that voters rejected the last time dramatically. They're still -- they don't get it about income inequality in this country. They're still pushing for budgets that give huge tax breaks to the rich and stick it to poor people, people who are vulnerable. They haven't changed their policies a bit. No packaging, no marketing can change that. And then they've got the additional problem of the CPAC convention, where you've got the wacko factor at work, where every independent voter, moderate Republican, conservative Democrat who looks at that sideshow - - and it was a sideshow..."*

The GOP problem of alienating more and more Americans is not due to mechanics.... as much as it is their message. Think about it, Donald Trump's solution to solve the immigration issue: *"When it comes to immigration, you know that the 11 million illegals, even if given the right to vote -- you know, you're going to have to do what's right, but the fact is, 11 million people will be voting Democratic. Why aren't we letting people in from Europe? I have many friends, many, many friends, and nobody wants to talk this, nobody wants to say it."* Basically he is saying that, WE want to have a country that's specifically aimed at white people and we want to keep it white, and that's the goal of this place, is to be white. The reason why Republicans lost the 2012 election wasn't because people didn't understand they message. In fact, I say the opposite. Black's clearly understood that voter ID laws were being pushed by Republicans to suppress the African American vote. Latinos clearly understood that Romney's self-deportation remedy was not an invitation to citizenship. The elderly clearly understood that voucherizing Medicare will not better healthcare for them. The GOP's advocating cutting Pell Grants did not endear the GOP to the young. And gays should feel at home in the GOP as much as I would be in the Ku Klux Klan. The truth is that Twitter, Facebook and other forms of social media only works..... *when the message is the right message.*

Unlike with mass media where the classic rules for the evening broadcasts and the morning papers, based partly on data (ratings and circulation) and partly on the gut instincts of producers and editors. Wars, earthquakes, plagues, floods, fires, sick children, murdered spouses — the more suffering and mayhem, the more coverage — **BAD NEWS SELLS**. If it bleeds, it leads. No news is good news, and good news is no news — Social Media works on totally different principals. Researchers analyzing word-of-mouth communication — e-mails, Web posts and reviews, face-to-face conversations — found that it tended to be more positive than negative, but that didn't necessarily mean people preferred positive news. To test for that possibility, Dr. Berger looked at how people spread a particular set of news stories: thousands of articles on The New York Times's Web site. He and Katherine Milkman, a Penn colleague, analyzed the *"most e-mailed"* list for six months, controlling for factors like how much display an article received in different parts of the home page. One of his first findings to be reported — which I still consider the most important social-science discovery of the past century — was that

articles and columns in the Science section were much more likely to make the list than nonscience articles. He found that science aroused feelings of awe and made Times readers want to share this positive emotion with others.

Readers also tended to share articles that were exciting or funny, or that inspired negative emotions like anger or anxiety, but not articles that left them merely sad. They needed to be aroused one way or the other, and they preferred good news to bad. The more positive an article, the more likely it was to be shared, as Dr. Berger explains in his new book, ***Contagious: Why Things Catch On.*** “*Stories about newcomers falling in love with New York City,*” he writes, were more likely to be e-mailed than “*pieces that detailed things like the death of a popular zookeeper.*” Debbie Downer is apparently no match for Polly Positive, at least among Times readers. This social consciousness comes into play when people are sharing information about their favorite subject of all: themselves. This is intrinsically pleasurable and activates the brain regions associated with rewards like food, as demonstrated in a study by Diana Tamir and Jason Mitchell of Harvard. In fact, the study showed, it’s so pleasurable that people will pass up monetary rewards for the chance to talk about themselves. Past research into everyday conversation showed that a third of it is devoted to oneself, but today that topic has become an obsession thanks to social media. Rutgers researchers classify 80 percent of Twitter users as “*meformers*” who tweet mainly about themselves.

The result is even more Polly Positivity, and not just because people are so adept at what psychologists call self-presentation: pointing out one’s own wonderfulness. While people have always said nice things about themselves in traditional conversations and saved the nastier comments for others, today they’re more diligent in spreading the word through written media like e-mail, Facebook and Twitter. “In most oral conversations, we don’t have time to think about exactly the right thing to say,” Dr. Berger explains. “*We fill conversational spaces by saying what’s top of mind. But when you write something, you have the time to construct and refine what you say, so it involves more self-presentation.*” Experiments have shown that people say more positive things when they’re talking to a bigger audience, rather than just one person — a result that helps explain the relentlessly perfect vacations that keep showing up on Facebook. For more information please feel free to read John Tierney’s article in the **New York Times** — ***Good News Beats Bad on Social Networks.***

Although overshadowed by the financial problems in Spain Italy and Greece, few people took notice about the financial problems in Cyprus other than the Cypriots and their bankers. So when the major banks tried to force a tax on saving accounts in Cyprus’s banks as a condition for a European bailout, it was overwhelmingly rejected. EU countries said before the vote that they would withhold 10 billion euros (\$12.9 billion) in bailout loans unless depositors in Cyprus, including small savers, shared the cost of the rescue; the European Central Bank had threatened to end emergency lending assistance for teetering Cypriot banks, which were hard hit by the financial crisis in neighboring Greece. Stunned by the backlash, euro zone finance ministers urged Nicosia on Monday to avoid taxing accounts below 100,000 euros, and instead increase the levy on big accounts, which have always been unprotected by the state deposit guarantee. One of the problems with this solution is that Cyprus is a tax haven for rich people from other European nations as well as rich Russian, causing Cypriot Finance Minister Michael Sarris flew to Moscow on Tuesday to seek Russian financial assistance.

Newly elected President Nicos Anastasiades has continued to resist raising the levy on big deposits - many held by rich Russians - fearing for the island's business model and reputation as an offshore financial haven. He asked the EU for more aid during a telephone conversation with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Monday. Some Cypriots hope they could instead get aid from Russia, which has bailed out Cyprus in the past. Many Russians keep their money in Cyprus and operate businesses from there. Government spokesman Christos Stylianides said Anastasiades might also

speak to Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has called the deposit levy "unfair, unprofessional and dangerous". Russian authorities have denied that the Kremlin might offer more money, possibly in return for a future stake in Cyprus's large but as yet undeveloped offshore gas reserves, which have raised the island's strategic importance. An influx of Russian money and influence since the collapse of the Soviet Union has led some Brussels officials to complain privately that Cyprus acts at times as a "*Trojan donkey*" for Moscow inside the European Union since it joined in 2004. Stunned Cypriots emptied cash machines over the weekend and banks are to remain shut on Tuesday and Wednesday to avoid a bank run. The island's stock exchange also suspended trading for another two days. (\$1 = 0.7760 euros).

The big ugly is that if this can happen in Cyprus with 800,000 people, (where Russians hold approximately half of Cyprus' \$90 billion deposits, more than five times its \$17 billion GDP), it can happen everywhere. One reason is bank leverage. From leverage ratios of \$4-5 of assets to \$1 of capital in the 1920s, banks leveraged themselves ad infinitum, having leverage ratios of \$10-12 of debt to \$1 of capital in the 1970s, and up to \$30 of assets to \$1 of capital in 2008. Even today, after deleveraging, J.P. Morgan Chase, in many ways the most solid of the big banks, had assets of \$2,359 billion at the end of 2012 and tangible equity of only \$146 billion -- or a ratio of 16.2 to 1. As recently as 2010, JPM's leverage was 19.3 to 1. At these levels, the dangers that kind of leverage is beyond obvious.

Should bank insurance lose its trust, given their current absurd levels of leverage (which are of course encouraged by Ben Bernanke's money printing) investors/depositors won't be able to rely on the banks not to go bust. And when savers no longer have a solid place in which to put their money, we will have undone the financial revolution of the last 300 years, and returned to a world in which Samuel Pepys didn't trust the local goldsmith, so buried most of his wealth in the back garden. Needless to say, that won't do much for small business - the entire flow of finance will seize up altogether. In the greater scheme of things Cyprus is a tiny part of the greater problem, because by just leveling a 15% one-time tax on its large depositors would raise the 5.8 million euros that the EU is demanding. But the real solution is to make the big international lenders accountable and stop politicians from imposing punitive policies on people who had the least to do in creating the problem.

This week the **New York Times** in an Editorial – ***Taxing Savers in Cyprus*** – Any tax on smaller accounts would set a terrible precedent. Savers in other troubled economies like Italy, Spain and Greece are now justifiably worried that their deposits may someday also be stripped of protection. European leaders have said that taking money from Cypriot bank deposits is a singular event, but this assurance will ring hollow in light of their poor track record in dealing with the euro crisis. The plan has now given savers in Spain, Italy and other countries incentive to withdraw money from their national banks or move it out of the country if they have offshore accounts. Imposing a bigger tax on deposits of more than 100,000 euros would not have the same ripple effect on confidence. A large percentage of those deposits belong to Russian businessmen, some of whom have reportedly laundered money through the island's banks. These sophisticated investors were well aware of the risks they were taking by putting their money in offshore accounts, and Cyprus should not try to protect them at the expense of local depositors.

Cypriot officials created this catastrophe by relying on a lightly regulated banking industry to drive up its growth rate while encouraging foreigners to use the island as a tax haven. European officials also deserve blame for not requiring more capital in euro-zone banks and for not anticipating the consequences of lowering the value of Greek bonds. They should not add to those mistakes with a punitive package that is disastrously counterproductive. More importantly, these huge European Banks who in good times act as Masters of the Universe are the co-creators of this catastrophe, taking huge salaries and bonuses during the good times, so if anyone should have a tax levied on their wealth it

should be them and their shareholders and not the locals or who were not part of the decision process. For more information please feel free to read the attached **Reuters** article written by Michele Kambas and Karolina Tagaris – **Cyprus lawmakers reject bank tax; bailout in disarray.**

In 2003, President George W. Bush and Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy defense secretary, used the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, to wage pre-emptive war against Saddam Hussein and a nuclear arsenal that did not exist. They promised a “*free and peaceful Iraq*” that would be a model of democracy and stability in the Arab world. While no one laments Saddam’s passing and violence is down from peak war levels, the country is fragile, with grave tensions between Sunnis and Shiites and Arabs and Kurds that could yet erupt into civil war or tear the state apart. A State Department travel warning last month described Iraq as dangerous, with numerous insurgents, including Al Qaeda in Iraq, still active, and said Americans were “*at risk for kidnapping and terrorist violence.*” On Tuesday, a wave of car bombings and other attacks in Baghdad killed more than 50 people and wounded nearly 200. Yet none of the Bush administration’s war architects have been called to account for their mistakes, and even now, many are invited to speak on policy issues as if they were not responsible for one of the worst strategic blunders in American foreign policy. In a video posted recently by the conservative American Enterprise Institute, Mr. Wolfowitz said he still believed the war was the right thing to do. Will he and his partners ever have the humility to admit that it was wrong to prosecute this war?

So a decade after the invasion in Iraq to overthrow Saddam Hussein there were no Iraqi celebration, no bombs bursting in the air, no independence parties, just another day. The cost of the war reported by the government up till now is around \$2.2 trillion and will continue to grow for the next 50 to 60 years. The government reported it is likely to rise to about \$35 trillion by 2050 caring for our veterans and the interest it is costing to pay back the money for the war.

In an editorial this week in the **New York Times – Ten Years After** – it concludes that although the war still haunts the United States with lessons learned about the limits of American leadership and power, but they seem to fade when it comes to Iran. Many of the conservatives who strongly supported the charge into Iraq are fanning calls for United States military action to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon. President Obama has also been threatening “*all options*” if negotiations to curb Iran’s ambitions are not successful, and many lawmakers seem ready to take action against Iran soon. The Iraq war was unnecessary, costly and damaging on every level. It was based on faulty intelligence manipulated for ideological reasons. The terrible human and economic costs over the past 10 years show why that must never happen again.

Echoing this sentiment, is **The Last Letter written** by dying Iraqi veteran **Tomas Young** to George W. Bush and Dick Cheney. **It opens with:** *I write this letter on the 10th anniversary of the Iraq War on behalf of my fellow Iraq War veterans. I write this letter on behalf of the 4,488 soldiers and Marines who died in Iraq. I write this letter on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of veterans who have been wounded and on behalf of those whose wounds, physical and psychological, have destroyed their lives. I am one of those gravely wounded. I was paralyzed in an insurgent ambush in 2004 in Sadr City. My life is coming to an end. I am living under hospice care.*

Ending with: *I would not be writing this letter if I had been wounded fighting in Afghanistan against those forces that carried out the attacks of 9/11. Had I been wounded there I would still be miserable because of my physical deterioration and imminent death, but I would at least have the comfort of knowing that my injuries were a consequence of my own decision to defend the country I love. I would not have to lie in my bed, my body filled with painkillers, my life ebbing away, and deal with the fact that hundreds of thousands of human beings, including children, including myself, were sacrificed by you for little more than the greed of oil companies, for your alliance with the oil sheiks in Saudi Arabia, and your insane visions of empire. I have, like many other disabled veterans,*

suffered from the inadequate and often inept care provided by the Veterans Administration. I have, like many other disabled veterans, come to realize that our mental and physical wounds are of no interest to you, perhaps of no interest to any politician. We were used. We were betrayed. And we have been abandoned. You, Mr. Bush, make much pretense of being a Christian. But isn't lying a sin? Isn't murder a sin? Aren't theft and selfish ambition sins? I am not a Christian. But I believe in the Christian ideal. I believe that what you do to the least of your brothers you finally do to yourself, to your own soul. My day of reckoning is upon me. Yours will come. I hope you will be put on trial. But mostly I hope, for your sakes, that you find the moral courage to face what you have done to me and to many, many others who deserved to live. I hope that before your time on earth ends, as mine is now ending, you will find the strength of character to stand before the American public and the world, and in particular the Iraqi people, and beg for forgiveness.

This week writing for **Bloomberg**, Ezra Klein – ***Mistakes, Excuses and Painful Lessons From the Iraq War***, points out the obvious.

1. First, listen to the arguments of the people who will actually carry out a project, not the arguments of the people who just want to see the project carried out. Who manages a project can be as important as what the project is.
2. Second, don't trust what "everybody knows." There is, perhaps, nothing more dangerous than a fact that everyone thinks they know, because it shuts down critical thinking.
3. Third, the people who are most persuasive aren't necessarily the people who are actually right. Argument is a skill. Authority is a position. Trusting too much in either can lead you astray.
4. Fourth, the U.S. military is a blunt and limited instrument. Tasks that require it to stray far outside its core competence, such as rebuilding societies rather than destroying them, are projects that aren't likely to go well.

As a young and impressionable college student at the time Klein said that he thought that if U.S. President George W. Bush and Secretary of State Colin Powell and former President Bill Clinton and U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair all thought that the second war in Iraq was necessary, then that was because they had intelligence proving as much. He thought there was no way the Bush administration would neglect to plan for the obvious challenges of the aftermath. I As such he turned on the war quickly when he saw how poorly and arrogantly it was being managed. And he believes that the core of his support for the war was an analytical failure: Rather than looking at the war that was actually being sold, he like others invented his own Iraq war to support -- an Iraq war with different aims, promoted by different people, conceptualized in a different way and bearing little resemblance to the project proposed by the Bush administration. In particular, he supported Kenneth Pollack's Iraq war.

In 2002, Pollack, a Persian Gulf expert who'd worked at the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Council, published ***The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq.*** Pollack's argument, in short, was that Saddam Hussein was an unusually reckless, cruel and self-deluded dictator who either had weapons of mass destruction or was very close to attaining them. His past, which included catastrophic wars with Iran and Kuwait, murderous rampages against his own people, erratic personal behavior and a clear aspiration toward regional hegemony, suggested that he wasn't the sort of tyrant who could be contained or reasoned with, and so Pollack's reluctant, unhappy conclusion was that he was the sort of tyrant who must be stopped before the right weaponry made him unstoppable. Although much of this may have had a seed of truth it definitely wasn't enough reason to start a war that would result in the death of more than 200,000 people, displacing millions more, costing trillions of dollars and destabilizing the entire Middle East in favor to our sworn enemy Iran.

This week in **The Huffington Post**, Amanda Terkel wrote – **Washington Post Editorial Page Misses Iraq War Anniversary** – that in the months leading up to the Iraq War, **The Washington Post** ran 27 editorials in favor of invasion, while on 10-year anniversary of the war, it has yet to print any editorials or columns on the subject. Media outlets have been publishing their Iraq War anniversary coverage on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week, since Americans learned that the U.S. invaded Iraq the night of March 19. **The New York Times**, for example, centered its coverage on Wednesday, with several op-eds on Iraq and an editorial looking back. But so far, **The Washington Post** editorial page hasn't run a single column or editorial addressing the war. In an email to **The Huffington Post**, Fred Hiatt, **The Washington Post's** editorial page editor, said there will be *"a couple of pieces coming this week."* The second Iraq War is in the pantheon of US policy mistakes, on the level of Vietnam and for **The Washington Post** to not retract its support and ignore the immenseness of the lies, deception of this mistake, is an indication that many in mass media is either involved in a cover-up or totally ignorant of their responsibility of being part of a free press.

Echoing this fact is another article in **The Huffington Post** by Michael Calderone – **Iraq War Media Failure Can Happen Again**. With the 10-year anniversary of the Iraq invasion on Tuesday, journalists are again reminded -- and reminding each other in first-person essays -- of the media debacle a decade ago. But while there's a tendency to look back on the pre-Iraq media drumbeat as a post-9/11 aberration, a number of the same institutional forces exist today that could combine for a similar media-driven rush to war.

And although a number of journalists rightly scrutinized the Bush administration's claims a decade ago, some of the same potential pitfalls exist when covering current issues surrounding war, drones and military intervention. Reporters need to remain vigilant when speaking with government sources - especially when doing so under the condition of anonymity. As **The Washington Post's** Walter Pincus, whose more skeptical coverage often ran in the back of the paper a decade ago, recently said he's concerned that reporters *"fall so much in love with quoting people that we don't analyze what it is they're saying."* And again.... If we don't own up to our previous mistakes and journalist don't do their job of analyzing the facts and the evidence we will end up in an unnecessary military foray with North Korea or Iran based on deception and lies at a cost unknown to our politicians and the public.

As many of you know, I have been a strong supporter of the new leadership in Libya. And last month marked the second anniversary of eruptions in Benghazi that led to the overthrow of 41 years under the tyranny at the hands of Muammar Qaddafi. And although progress has been slow and the culture of genuine democratic give and take remains absent, the country is definitely on its way to greater prosperity, employment, healthcare and freedom.. Currently, Libya presents mixed indicators. This month, the IMF stated that Libyan economic growth in 2012 exceeded 100 percent and that non-hydrocarbon growth is expected to average 15 percent per annum until 2018. On the other hand, on March 5 the General National Congress (GNC) -- Libya's elected parliament -- was again stormed by militant demonstrators. They held the Congress under siege, demanding an immediate vote to ban all officials who served the Qadhafi regime from holding government office. As two term President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki once explained to me, what was his biggest obstacle moving forward – managing expectation of the black majority who naively expected these benefits to be served on a silver platter the day after Nelson Mandela took office. America and other Western powers who sent jets spearheaded the international effort to halt Muammar Qadhafi's assault on Benghazi by enforcing a No-Fly Zone over Libya is just a first step of many.

Writing in **The Huffington Post** this week, Jason Pack and Mustafa Abushagur wrote – **Libya: Two Years Later** – that Western governments and business can play an essential role. Police trainers and capacity building professionals should descend on Libya as part of a coordinated multilateral effort to follow through on international commitments to the Libyan people. Just as American technology was needed to enforce the No-Fly Zone, American acumen and experience is now needed to help train Libya's army and develop its command and control structures. Simultaneously to the government to government dimension, American businessmen should flock to events where high-level Libyan officials, private sector entrepreneurs, and experts in the legal and security challenges of operating in Libya will come together under one roof to explain to foreign companies how they can enter and prosper in the Libyan market.

Western powers should see Libya as part of a coordinated multilateral effort to follow through on international commitments to the Libyan people. Just as American technology was needed to enforce the No-Fly Zone, American acumen and experience is now needed to help train Libya's army and develop its command and control structures. Simultaneously to the government to government dimension, American businessmen should flock to events where high-level Libyan officials, private sector entrepreneurs, and experts in the legal and security challenges of operating in Libya will come together under one roof to explain to foreign companies how they can enter and prosper in the Libyan market. Across North Africa, the ultimate challenge remains to treat the underlying cause of the revolutions: the opportunity deficit for young people. In Libya, project spending has remained mostly stagnant because the security situation has not permitted international companies to return. The resumption of major infrastructure projects and the establishing of genuine partnerships with Libyan entrepreneurs will create the jobs required for young people to abandon their guns and replace them with laptops and screwdrivers. Putting the current situation in its proper historical perspective provides both scope for patience and realistic assumptions about future progress. Rome wasn't built in a day.

In the first day since Newtown 37 children died as a result of gun violence. In the first week after the Newtown, Conn., massacre on Dec. 14, more than 100 people in the U.S. were killed by guns. In the first seven weeks, that number had risen to at least 1,285 gunshot killings and accidental deaths. A little more than three months after Newtown, there have been 2,243. **The Huffington Post** has recorded every gun-involved murder and accidental shooting death reported in U.S. news media since Newtown, revealing an epidemic that shows no signs of abating. The horrors cannot be contained behind yellow police tape or find resolution in a courtroom. For the victim's families, the grief deforms all it touches. There's the fear that the radio will play her favorite ballad. An airplane overhead, like the kind he flew, will strike panic. Home is not safe. One month, two months, two years, nine years since those fatal shots -- the grief never leaves. See attached article in **The Huffington Post** -- **One Nation Under The Gun Deaths Since Newtown**.

Much like when President Reagan and James Brady were shot 32 years ago, in the aftermath of Newtown there was much talk about enacting laws that might reduce this type of gun violence. People initially talked about banning assault weapons, extended ammunition magazine clips and enacting universal background check, to make it more difficult for felons, mental disturbed people and others in domestic violence situations. As of yesterday, more than 2443 young people died as a result of gun violence since the Newtown massacre 98 days ago.

As Congress and legislatures across the country debate new gun legislation, pro-gun advocates respond by arguing that more restrictions do nothing to keep guns out of the wrong hands or to reduce gun violence.

True, no law will stop all gun-related violence. However, research published online in the medical journal JAMA Internal Medicine shows that states with the most gun control laws generally had the lowest rates of death by firearms. The study compared gun laws in the 50 states against the number of suicides and homicides committed with firearms between 2007 through 2010. The researchers noted there were 73,702 suicides with

firearms between 2007 and 2010, and 47,382 homicides. The overall firearm fatality rate was 9.9 for every 100,000 people per year. Louisiana, a state with few gun restrictions, had the highest firearm fatality rate, 17.9 per 100,000 population. Hawaii, a state with strict gun laws, had the lowest rate, 2.9 firearm deaths per 100,000 people. California, judged to have the second most restrictive firearm laws after Massachusetts during the study period, had eight firearm deaths – four suicides and four homicides – for every 100,000 population. Nevada, a state with few restrictions, had almost 15 firearm-related deaths for every 100,000 residents, including the fourth highest rate of suicide of any state. Arizona, another state with few restrictions, had 13.6 firearm deaths for every 100,000 people.

On Thursday, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) announced that the full Senate will soon begin considering a package of gun-related bills, including a proposal to expand background checks. (Under current law, gun sales that don't involve licensed dealers are exempt from checks.) This signaled that stronger gun control measures such as a ban on assault-style weapons and high-capacity magazines, expanding the background check requirement, and stricter gun trafficking laws. Obviously watered-down gun control legislation is going to little if anything to reduce gun-violence death. We know from experience that when you don't allow passengers to bring weapons on airplanes, it reduces if not eliminates aircraft high-jacking. So if we were serious about reducing death by gun violence we have to enact serious gun control laws. And with more than 2500 deaths due to gun violence in less than 100 days since the Newtown massacre, there should be a moral outrage by each and every American and our politicians in both major political parties should be ashamed.

THIS WEEK'S QUOTE

"Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated."

Confucius

THIS WEEK'S MUSIC

This week I would like to share my favorite musicians of *"my generation"* who provided the soul, spirit and conscience of Black culture for your people in the 1970s until his death on May 27, 2011. **Gilbert "Gil" Scott-Heron** born on April 1, 1949 was an American soul and jazz poet, musician, and author, known primarily for his work as a spoken word performer in the 1970s and '80s. His collaborative efforts with musician Brian Jackson featured a musical fusion of jazz, blues, and soul, as well as lyrical content concerning social and political issues of the time, delivered in both rapping and melismatic vocal styles by Scott-Heron. His own term for himself was *"bluesologist"*, which he defined as *"a scientist who is concerned with the origin of the blues."* His music, most notably on *Pieces of a Man* and *Winter in America* in the early 1970s, influenced and helped engender later African-American music genres such as hip hop and neo soul. Besides influencing contemporary musicians, Scott-Heron remained active until his death, and in 2010 released his first new album in 16 years, entitled *I'm New Here*. A memoir he had been working on for years up to the time of his death, *The Last Holiday*, was also published, posthumously in January 2012. His recording work received much critical acclaim, especially one of his best-known compositions *"The Revolution Will Not Be Televised"*. His poetic style has influenced every generation of hip hop.

Gill Scot Heron interviewed by the BBC 2009 p1 -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5eYRwvLYHA>

RBG-Gil Scott Heron Godfather of Rap 2 of 6 -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LeGukR7b1s>

Gill Scott Heron – *Whitey on the Moon* -- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtBy_ppG4hY

Gil Scott-Heron – **We Beg Your Pardon** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDCfEkopryo>

Gil Scott Heron – **The Bottle** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MnOVbMFiGVg>

Gil Scott-Heron – **Pieces Of A Man** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2VqGWfq0Btg>

Gil Scott-Heron – **Home Is Where The Hatred Is** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mumx4GoGNDw>

Gil Scott-Heron – **Save The Children** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Phm7Nhlaxzs>

Gil Scott-Heron – **The Revolution Will Not Be Televised** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGaoXAwI9kw>

Gil Scott- Heron – **Rivers of My Fathers** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sgauc85EdRc>

Gil Scott-Heron – **The Ghetto Code (Dot Dot Dit Dit Dot Dot Dash)** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZuP-7UI0Xo>

Gil Scott-Heron – **Winter in America** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2EhaPUqG3M>

Gil Scott-Heron – **Johannesburg** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvHFuJX2Ock>

Gil Scott Heron – **Lady Day and John Coltrane** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fKBCD0R9FU>

Gil Scott Heron – **Inner City Blues** -- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcrQBU7x-IA>

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

Sincerely,
Greg Brown

--
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