

OBAMA'S WAR ON THE YOUNG



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Obama's War on the Young

During the election of 2008, it was young voters who stood huddled in stadiums waiting for Barack Obama's arrival and then cheered themselves hoarse with slogans such as "We are the change we've been waiting for." It was young people who made "hope" into a prayer as well as a political slogan and helped convince the rest of America that Obama was a savior of democracy.

And again in 2012, young people worked the phone banks and precincts for Obama, rocked the vote, and gave currency to the President's campaign slogan that he represented the way *forward*.

These voters, aged 18-29, were (except for blacks and Hispanics) the President's most enthusiastic demographic, backing him by a whopping 66%-to-31% margin over John McCain in '08,¹ and by 60%-to-37% over Mitt Romney four years

¹ <http://www.pewresearch.org/2008/11/13/young-voters-in-the-2008-election/>

later.² But unlike other groups, which might feel rewarded for their vote by redistributionist policies and initiatives such as immigration “reform,” young people have been hurt by the agendas and philosophy of this administration. Barack Obama has put a lien on their future. They’ve been mugged by his policies, even if they don’t realize it yet.

Despite their support, this administration’s massive expansion of the national debt lays a crushing burden on young people who are going to be responsible for paying it. Obama’s weak economy has already brought about youth-unemployment levels exceeding anything we have witnessed in more than half a century. Obama’s proposed minimum-wage hike, if passed, will inevitably—like every other minimum-wage hike—cause a rise in youth unemployment by pricing many young, inexperienced workers out of the job market. The crushing costs and substandard care associated with Obama’s signature healthcare-reform legislation will diminish young people’s quality of life for generations to come.

In higher education—the place where young

² <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/11/07/fox-news-exit-poll-summary/>

people live—Obama has placed the federal government in charge of the student-loan industry, thereby causing both tuition costs and student debt levels to rise dramatically in a way that his proposed “reforms” will not change. And finally, on the international stage, Obama’s policies of appeasement and retreat have allowed the Islamic jihad to go on the offensive, which means that young people will be fighting wars of survival tomorrow that could have been won today.

Crushing National Debt

During his 2008 presidential campaign, Barack Obama famously referred to George W. Bush as “irresponsible” and “unpatriotic” for having added, “by his lonesome,” some \$4 trillion to America’s national debt over the previous eight years.³ Vowing that he would not “leave our children with a debt that they cannot repay,” Obama piously pronounced that it was morally unacceptable to “simply spend as we please and defer the consequences to the next budget, the next administration, or the next generation.” He pledged to “tak[e] responsibility right now ... for getting our

³ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kuTG19Cu_Q

spending under control,” and promised to “cut the deficits we inherited by half” within four years.⁴

Obama’s words resonated powerfully with his supporters, particularly young voters—the taxpayers of tomorrow who would be forced to bear the immense financial burden of continued increases in America’s national debt.

But here are the facts: When Obama took his Oath of Office on January 20, 2009, the total U.S. federal debt was \$10.627 trillion. During his first term in office, the national debt not only continued to grow, but grew at a pace that was utterly without precedent: \$3.98 billion of new debt *each and every day*—or, to frame it another way, \$67,245 of new debt *per second*.

By the start of Obama’s second term, in January 2013, the federal debt had skyrocketed to a once-unimaginable \$16.433 trillion—a \$5.81 trillion increase in just four years. By April 15 (tax day), the figure had reached \$16.8 trillion.⁵ Today, the U.S. government borrows an incredible 46 cents

⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyrlMr0Bedo>

⁵ <http://www.treasurydirect.gov/NP/debt/current>

of every dollar that it spends.⁶ President Obama has clearly distinguished himself as the most profligate government spender in American history.⁷

These figures are so astronomical that it is hard to comprehend their meaning, particularly for young people setting out to find jobs and begin adult lives. One way of understanding the implications of these rising trillions in debt is to consider this: if we count married couples who file jointly as individual “tax units”—or households—there are approximately 85 million tax units in the U.S., each owing a \$196,000 share of the national debt.⁸ Meanwhile, another 76 million Americans younger than 18 are steadily approaching the day when many of them will join the ranks of those taxpayers—at which time they, too, will be saddled with a share of the nation’s debt burden.⁹ By then, however, that burden will be much heavier because the debt, by the Obama administration’s own projections, will

⁶ <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/dec/7/government-borrows-46-cents-every-dollar-it-spends/>

⁷ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/peterferrara/2012/06/14/president-obama-the-biggest-government-spender-in-world-history/>

⁸ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/joshbarro/2012/04/17/everything-about-this-drudge-headline-is-wrong/>

⁹ <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-03.pdf>

continue to rise at a dizzying pace and will reach a predicted \$20.3 trillion by the end of 2016, Obama's last full year in office.¹⁰ Approximately \$9.7 trillion of that total will have been racked up during the Obama years, meaning that Obama's debt, by itself, will be nearly equivalent to the combined debt of every previous president in American history, including the one whose spending habits Obama described as "irresponsible" and "unpatriotic."

Today, U.S. taxpayers are already paying \$237 billion in interest on the national debt each and every year.¹¹ This amounts to nearly \$3,000 *per taxpaying household, per year*.¹² But the interest on the nation's ever-mounting debt will exceed \$1 trillion per year by 2022, according to Erskine Bowles, a co-chair of President Obama's bipartisan deficit-reduction commission.¹³ That would be more than the government currently spends

¹⁰ http://www.weeklystandard.com/blogs/obamas-budget-add-44-trillion-debt-next-four-years_650614.html

¹¹ <http://dailycaller.com/2012/07/27/ten-inconvenient-truths-about-the-national-debt/>

¹² <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/jan/4/generation-y-asks-why-us/?page=all>

¹³ <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2012/11/19/how-the-nations-interest-spending-stacks-up>

on Medicare, Social Security, national defense, Medicaid, or any other safety-net programs that provide aid to the poor.¹⁴ It would also be more than the government now spends on the Departments of Education, Agriculture, Homeland Security, Transportation, Labor, Energy, Justice, Housing, State, and Commerce, *combined*.¹⁵

In their 2012 book, *The Clash of Generations: Saving Ourselves, Our Kids, and Our Economy*, economics professor Laurence Kotlikoff and finance writer Scott Burns put it succinctly: “U.S. generational policy has become a Ponzi scheme—a Ponzi scheme that’s on the verge of collapse.”¹⁶ The ultimate victims of this cynical game are those currently under the age of 30, whom the Heritage Foundation has dubbed “the Debt-Paying Generation.”¹⁷ In the next 10 or 15 years, as they start families and try to buy a home and they first have to shoulder the \$17-trillion (or so) debt run up largely by the Baby Boomer generation, they will wonder why

¹⁴ <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=1258>

¹⁵ <http://www.federalbudget.com/>

¹⁶ Laurence Kotlikoff and Scott Burns, *The Clash of Generations: Saving Ourselves, Our Kids, and Our Economy* (570-71).

¹⁷ <http://blog.heritage.org/2013/01/11/generation-y-a-taste-of-what-is-to-come-for-generation-debt/>

the burden of repaying the debts of their better-off elders falls largely upon themselves and probably remember with bitterness the votes they cast for Barack Obama back in the day when they believed they were doing something idealistic.

Catastrophic Youth-Unemployment Levels

The prospect of shouldering a national debt they had no part in running up assumes that young people will find work to become taxpayers. But that is not assured. Young people looking for their first jobs step into a stagnant, foundering economy that, due to the tax-and-spend policies of the Obama administration, has scarcely rebounded from the meltdown of 2008. Economist John B. Taylor reports that the current economic “recovery” has been four times weaker, on average, than all previous post-recession recoveries since the 1880s.¹⁸ Between January 2009 (the month President Obama took office) and March 2013, the median income of all U.S. households fell by 6.5%, from \$54,983 to \$51,404.¹⁹ During roughly the same period, the number of people participating in the Supplemental

¹⁸ <http://www.aei-ideas.org/2012/10/economist-this-is-the-weakest-post-financial-crisis-recovery-since-the-1880s/>

¹⁹ <http://tinyurl.com/pjc8uk6>

Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps) rose by about 50%, from 31.9 million to 47.8 million.²⁰

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), fully 11.7 million Americans are currently out of work, a figure translating to a 7.6% unemployment rate.²¹ But even this dismal statistic paints a deceptively rosy picture of the U.S. economy, for the overall labor-force participation rate (working-age people who are either working or actively looking for work) is an anemic 63.3%, the lowest figure in 34 years.²² Just since the beginning of the Obama presidency, some 9.46 million people have been compelled to leave the labor force because there were no jobs for them to keep looking for; they gave up their job search entirely.²³ If they had elected to persevere in their fruitless job searches—thereby technically remaining in the labor force—the unemployment rate today would be well over 11%.²⁴

²⁰ <http://tinyurl.com/qcdqpyh>; <http://preview.tinyurl.com/oyvprqz>

²¹ <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.ht>

²² <http://tinyurl.com/jvjctdt>; <http://tinyurl.com/bnkprjq>

²³ <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/record-89967000-not-labor-force-another-663000-drop-out-march>

²⁴ <http://dailycaller.com/2012/09/10/unemployment-would-be-11-2-percent-if-labor-force-same-as-when-obama-took-office/>

Yet the foregoing facts, grim as they are, do not begin to express the full magnitude of the economic disaster that Obama has created. In addition to the 11.7 million unemployed Americans, another 7.6 million are *underemployed*, working part-time but seeking full-time jobs. (Factoring this latter group into the equation yields an un/underemployment rate approaching 14%, a more accurate barometer of the nation's desperate job situation.)²⁵ As today's young people enter the labor force, they will have to compete for jobs with these 19.3 million un- and under-employed. It is a grim prospect. The unemployment rate for the 18-29 group is currently 11.7%. Factoring in another 1.7 million workers in that age group who have completely given up looking for work during Obama's presidency and thus are no longer officially counted as "unemployed," the effective youth unemployment rate is actually 16.2%. Those who *are* working, meanwhile, find it increasingly difficult to make ends meet financially. Just in the period between 2010 and 2012, the wages of young college graduates decreased by 8.5%.²⁶

Perhaps no youth-specific statistic is more de-

²⁵ <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.t15.htm>

²⁶ <http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Government/2013/04/05/Losing-Hope-Effective-Millennial-Unemployment-Rate-At-16-2>

pressing than the teenage unemployment rate of 24.5%, the highest figure since the government began tracking it in the late 1940s.²⁷ Demoralized by dim employment prospects, fewer teens than ever before are even trying to find jobs. Historically, between 45% and 55% of teenagers have participated in the labor force by either having or seeking a job; today, that figure is just 34%.²⁸ Why is that number significant? Because economists have repeatedly found that an individual's unemployment in youth is highly correlated with his or her subsequent earnings later in life.²⁹

A Minimum-Wage Hike That Would Make Things Worse

The President thinks that raising the federal minimum wage would help this situation. In his 2013 State of the Union address, he called for raising it from \$7.25 to \$9.00 per hour.³⁰ “A family

²⁷ <http://blog.heritage.org/2011/07/12/youth-hardest-hit-in-obama-economy/>

²⁸ <http://blog.heritage.org/2011/07/12/youth-hardest-hit-in-obama-economy/>

²⁹ <http://blog.heritage.org/2011/07/12/youth-hardest-hit-in-obama-economy/>; <http://jhr.uwpress.org/content/XLI/2/259.abstract>

³⁰ <http://jhr.uwpress.org/content/XLI/2/259.abstract>

with two kids that earns the minimum wage still lives below the poverty line,” Obama lamented. “That’s wrong.”³¹ But most minimum-wage workers are unmarried people younger than 25. Fewer than 20% of them have a family to support. Often they are high-school or college students trying only to help pay their way, 60% work only part-time.³²

Minimum-wage jobs serve chiefly as a vital bottom rung on the economic ladder for many young people who have little or no prior work experience and want to get started in the job market. Whenever the government raises the minimum wage by decree, however, every employer is forced to evaluate whether the extra expenditures on inexperienced and relatively unskilled workers can be justified. In some instances, employers simply may not be able to afford the higher pay rate and thus will either trim their work force or scale back the number of hours employees work. In other cases, employers may decide to hire more seasoned workers in order to increase the likelihood of getting an adequate

³¹ <http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2013/03/06/7-small-businesses-tells-us-how-obamas-call-for-an-increase-in-minimum-wage-would-affect-them-bad-bad-bad/>

³² http://townhall.com/columnists/thomassowell/2003/11/05/living_wage_kills_jobs/page/full/; <http://www.bls.gov/cps/min-wage2011.htm>

amount of productivity in exchange for their financial outlay. Whatever their reason for cutting back, starter jobs for young people are jeopardized.

In 2011, labor economists William Even and David Macpherson released a study for the Washington, DC-based Employment Policies Institute, titled “Unequal Harm: Racial Disparities in the Employment Consequences of Minimum Wage Increases.” They found that because minimum-wage hikes remove the incentive for employers to hire workers with low skills and little experience, 16-to-24-year-old males are affected more than anyone else by such policies. Indeed, the authors report that historically, each 10% increase in a state or federal minimum wage has decreased employment by 2.5% for males in this age group as a whole, and by 6.5% for young black males in particular.³³

Hoover Institution economist Thomas Sowell concurs, “[T]he cold fact is that minimum-wage laws create massive unemployment among black teenagers,” regardless of economic conditions in the nation as a whole.³⁴

³³ <http://www.creators.com/opinion/walter-williams/minimum-wage-s-discriminatory-effects.html>

³⁴ <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/333418/need-explain-thomas-sowell>

Obamacare Crushes Young People

Nowhere is the price young people will pay for this President's policies clearer than in Obamacare

All told, Obamacare calls for the enactment of some two dozen new or higher taxes, at least seven of which violate the president's "firm pledge" not to raise taxes on anyone earning less than \$250,000.³⁵

FutureOfCapitalism.com editor Ira Stoll—using figures supplied by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office—calls Obamacare the largest tax hike in American history.³⁶

Obamacare stipulates that every business with 50 or more "full-time equivalent workers" (i.e., those who work 30 or more hours per week) must provide health insurance for each of its employees.³⁷ Any business that fails to do so will be re-

³⁵<http://www.forbes.com/sites/ashleaebeling/2012/06/28/obamacares-7-tax-hikes-on-under-250000-a-year-earners/>;

³⁶ <http://reason.com/archives/2012/07/09/yes-actually-obamacare-is-the-biggest-ta>

³⁷ When calculating compliance with the law, two 15-hours-per-week employees equal one 30-hour worker.

quired to pay a \$2,000 annual penalty for each uncovered worker beyond 30 employees. (“By hiring the 50th worker,” the *Wall Street Journal* points out, “the firm pays a penalty on the previous 20 as well.”)³⁸ In other words, business owners now have an incentive to limit their “full-time equivalent” work forces to 49 employees or fewer.³⁹ This means that young people who might have been hired will now likely be passed over.

Obamacare further handicaps employers by compelling them to offer their workers only “qualified,” government-approved insurance plans with standardized benefits that will raise the cost of premiums dramatically.⁴⁰ The low-cost, so-called “mini-med plans” that many employers have until now provided for low-wage workers—of whom a high percentage were young people—will no longer be available under Obamacare.⁴¹

Any worker who does not receive healthcare insurance through his or her employer must—on

³⁸ <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324616604578304072420873666.html>

³⁹ Betsy McCaughey, *Decoding the Obama Health Law*, 10.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

pain of a \$2,085 annual penalty⁴²—either purchase a plan through a state insurance exchange or enroll in Medicaid.⁴³ Obamacare will dramatically reduce the threshold of eligibility for Medicaid, thereby swelling the program’s rolls from about 70 million people to at least 95 million.⁴⁴ An enormous number of these will be young people who, in times past, could have gotten health insurance privately through their employers.

But because Medicaid pays doctors and hospitals only 56% of what private insurers pay for the same services, about half of all doctors (and a strong majority of specialists in every field) currently refuse to treat any Medicaid patients at all.⁴⁵ Not surprisingly, research shows that Medicaid patients consistently have poorer medical outcomes than those who have private insurance.

A 2013 survey by the American Action Forum,

⁴² Ibid., 20.

⁴³ Ibid., 9.

⁴⁴ <http://cnsnews.com/news/article/record-704-million-enrolled-medicaid-2011-1-out-every-5-americans>; <http://www.breitbart.com/Breitbart-TV/2012/03/22/McConnell-Obamacare-Will-Increase-Medicaid-Rolls-By-25-Million>

⁴⁵ Sally Pipes, *The Top Ten Myths of American Health Care*, 17-18. Betsy McCaughey, *Decoding the Obama Health Law*, 41.

a think-tank headed by economist Douglas Holtz-Eakin, studied how Obamacare’s numerous mandates were likely to affect the cost of healthcare premiums in six major markets—Chicago, Phoenix, Atlanta, Milwaukee, Austin, and Albany—and concluded that young people’s premiums will rise by an average of 169%—more than those of any other demographic group. Galen Institute president and healthcare analyst Grace Marie Turner explains that young people will face disproportionately steep rate increases because Obamacare “limits how much insurers can use age and health status in calculating premiums.”⁴⁶ That is, youth and good health will no longer serve as factors that qualify an individual for less expensive coverage.

Paul Howard, director of the Manhattan Institute’s Center for Medical Progress, explains yet another way that Obamacare’s ripple effects will decimate the healthcare industry: “Medicare pays about 80 percent of what private insurers do, Medicaid pays even less, about 60 percent of what private insurers do, so we’re asking them to do more, we’re paying them less. That trend is encouraging, for instance, older physicians to retire, it’s encour-

⁴⁶ <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/feb/20/obamacare-will-hurt-young-people-most/?page=all#pagebreak>

aging more physicians to throw up their hands.”⁴⁷ In other words, while more Americans will now have healthcare “coverage” under Obamacare, they will, as a practical matter, have a difficult time finding doctors to treat them in a timely fashion. Instead, like so many people in other countries that have elected to institute government-dominated healthcare systems, young people today will have access not to a doctor, when they become ill tomorrow, but only to a spot on a very long waiting list, and when they get treated it will increasingly be by a physician’s assistant or a nurse practitioner.

Economist Thomas Sowell explains, “Posterity is the ideal person to pay for things politically because posterity cannot vote, and so therefore whatever you put on them, by the time they get stuck with it, your [political] career will be over and there’ll be nothing they can do retroactively.”⁴⁸

⁴⁷ <http://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/obamacare-premiums-doctors-retiring/2013/03/25/id/496255>

⁴⁸ <http://ibdtv.investors.com/510822-thomas-sowell-interview-politics-vs-economics-in-the-health-care-debate.aspx>

Obama's Education Policies Create Incompetence

Nothing could do greater damage to young people's prospects for future success than a public education structure that fails to equip them with the intellectual skills they will need eventually to navigate the workplace. But the U.S. public school system has been a hindrance rather than a help. In 1994, the National Assessment of Educational Progress—a measure of students' abilities in core academic subjects—found that scarcely one-third of fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-graders could read with “proficiency.”⁴⁹ The figures haven't gotten any better since then. In 2011, the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) reading scores of graduating high-school seniors were the lowest on record,⁵⁰ while the combined reading and math scores of that same class declined to their lowest level since 1995.⁵¹ According to the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)—an evaluation of 15-year-old students in 34 countries (mostly in Europe and the Americas)—the U.S. today ranks a lowly 25th in math literacy, 17th

⁴⁹ <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pubs/main1994/96045.asp>

⁵⁰ <http://tinyurl.com/lys79ca>

⁵¹ <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/sep/14/sat-reading-scores-at-all-time-low/>

in scientific literacy, and 14th in reading ability.⁵² Black and Hispanic students have been particularly shortchanged by the public-education system's inadequacies. In public high schools nationwide, 45% of black students and 43% of Hispanics (as compared to 22% of whites) drop out before their classes graduate.⁵³ But even many of those who do manage to get their diplomas are scarcely prepared for the challenges of higher education or the business world. Of all graduates in the class of 2011, only 11% of blacks and 15% of Hispanics were proficient in math, while just 13% of blacks and 4% of Hispanics were proficient in reading. The corresponding figures for whites—who had proficiency rates of 42% in math and 40% in reading—were better, but hardly inspiring.⁵⁴ In a 2006 survey, 72% of employers rated high-school graduates—regardless of race or ethnicity—as deficient in basic writing skills, and 54% rated them as deficient in mathematical abilities.⁵⁵ ACT, the national organization that administers college admissions tests, reports that fully 76% of all U.S. high-school graduates are “not adequately prepared

⁵² <http://teachersunionexposed.com/international.cfm>

⁵³ http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_48.htm

⁵⁴ <http://tinyurl.com/lkoa85w>

⁵⁵ <http://www.nea.gov/research/toread.pdf>

academically for first-year college courses.”⁵⁶

These devastating realities spell disaster for the millions of youngsters who, year after year, are forced to attend public schools that fail to properly educate them. Adults with substandard reading skills, for instance, are 4.5 times less likely to be able to earn a middle-class income than those who read proficiently.⁵⁷ Similarly, high-school dropouts go on to earn approximately 35% less than high-school graduates.⁵⁸ Over the course of a four-to-five-decade work life, these differentials amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars per individual—the difference between retiring with financial security, or destitute.

What has the President proposed to do about this national tragedy? Spend more money. He has described financial investments in public education as the centerpiece of a vital “national mission.”⁵⁹

⁵⁶ <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/06/the-failure-of-american-schools/308497/>

⁵⁷ <http://www.nea.gov/research/toread.pdf>

⁵⁸ <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/education/dropout-failure/by-the-numbers-dropping-out-of-high-school/>; <http://www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/HighCost.pdf>

⁵⁹ <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-02-13/obama-requests-increase-in-u-s-education-spending-to-almost-70-billion.html>

But studies have repeatedly shown little correlation between money spent on schools and teachers and academic failure. Between 1973 and 2008, for instance, the performance of 17-year-old high-schoolers on the math and reading portions of the National Assessment of Educational Progress—a federal initiative that quantifies students’ academic competence—was essentially unchanged, even as per-student spending on public education more than doubled (in present-day dollars).⁶⁰ American taxpayers currently spend some \$12,550 annually on the education of each K-12 public-school student in the country, a figure exceeding that of every other nation on earth except Switzerland, Austria, and Norway.⁶¹ And numerous U.S. cities—e.g., Washington, Baltimore, New York, Milwaukee—spend far more than \$12,550 a year, even though they achieve dismal results. Perhaps the most remarkable case is that of Washington, DC, where the per-pupil cost of a public elementary and high-school education is an astonishing \$29,400 per year⁶²—

⁶⁰ http://nationsreportcard.gov/ltt_2008/ltt0002.aspx?subtab_id=Tab_3&tab_id=tab1#chart; <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=66>

⁶¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2012/sep/11/education-compared-oecd-country-pisa>

⁶² <http://blog.heritage.org/2012/07/25/d-c-public-schools-spend-almost-30000-per-student/>

nearly as much as the annual cost of an undergraduate education at Harvard.⁶³ Still, DC's high-school students score lower on the SAT than do their counterparts anywhere else in the United States.⁶⁴

If a lack of funding is not the problem, then what is? The answer to that question begins and ends with the teachers unions and their symbiotic relationship with the Democratic Party. Contemporary teachers unions rank among the most powerful political forces in the United States. The National Education Association, for instance, employs a larger number of political organizers than the Republican and Democratic National Committees *combined* and has made almost \$31 million in campaign contributions to political candidates since the early 1990s, while the American Federation of Teachers has given another \$28 million to its favored candidates. Of the \$59 million in combined NEA and AFT campaign donations, more than \$56 million (i.e., 95%) has gone to Democrats.⁶⁵

⁶³ <http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k79903&tabgroupid=icb.tabgroup125619>

⁶⁴ <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2005/aug/30/20050830-103030-6569r/?page=all>

⁶⁵ <http://teachersunionexposed.com/blocking.cfm>; <http://teacherunionexposed.com/dues.php>

By no means is the financial relationship between Obama and the Democrats on the one hand, and the teachers unions on the other, a one-way street. Knowing where their bread is buttered, Democrats, with near unanimity, have long embraced, advanced, and funded the educational and political agendas of those unions. No one has been more consistent in this regard than Barack Obama. During the 2008 presidential campaign, for example, Obama pledged to “recruit an army of new teachers” earning “higher salaries” and getting “more support.”⁶⁶ His massive 2009 stimulus package allocated an unprecedented \$100 billion to public education, nearly twice the Department of Education’s annual budget.⁶⁷ And in 2012, the president implored America’s governors to do everything within their power to “invest more in education, invest more in our children and in our future”⁶⁸—above and beyond the \$600 billion per year that taxpayers were already spending on public schools.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ http://www.ontheissues.org/2012/Barack_Obama_Education.htm

⁶⁷ <http://reason.com/archives/2010/04/09/obamas-education-spending-fren>

⁶⁸ <http://www.cnn.com/2012/02/27/politics/obama-governors>

⁶⁹ <http://www2.census.gov/govs/school/09f33pub.pdf>

At first blush, these colossal expenditures seem to suggest a deep commitment by Obama and the Democrats to the academic success of young people. But in reality, such outlays are part and parcel of a political spoils system wherein the mandatory union dues which teachers pay are effectively laundered through those unions and ultimately deposited in the coffers of the Democratic Party, which in turn supports public policies that favor their union benefactors—a perpetual cycle of mutual payoffs that benefit the unions and the Democrats while doing *nothing whatsoever for schoolchildren*.

Consider, for instance, the teachers unions' unwavering opposition to voucher programs that would enable parents to divert a portion of their customary tax liabilities away from failing public-school systems, and to use that money instead for tuition at private schools where their children might actually have a chance to succeed academically. The teachers unions have attacked vouchers and President Obama, taking his cue from them, has derided the “tired rhetoric about vouchers” while exhorting taxpayers to keep paying more to “fix and improve our public schools.”⁷⁰ Notwith-

⁷⁰ http://www.ontheissues.org/2012/Barack_Obama_Education.htm

standing his professed devotion to public education, however, the President has long sent his own children to the prestigious Sidwell Friends School in DC, a private facility where annual tuition costs exceed \$33,000.⁷¹

Yet another sacred cow of the teachers unions and President Obama is the famous Head Start program which is ostensibly intended to provide a boost—in the form of educational, nutritional, and health-related services—to more than a million disadvantaged three-to-four-year-old children before they enter elementary school.⁷² This massive initiative, on which American taxpayers have spent more than \$180 billion since its inception in 1965, provides tens of thousands of jobs each year for dues-paying members of the teachers unions.⁷³ And the President has marched in lock step with their demands for increased funding. His 2009 stimulus bill, for instance, earmarked an extra \$1.1 billion specifically for Head Start services,⁷⁴ and

⁷¹ <http://www.sidwell.edu/admissions/tuition-and-fees/index.aspx>

⁷² <http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/headstartdata2008us.pdf>

⁷³ <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2013/01/head-start-impact-evaluation-report-finally-released>

⁷⁴ <http://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-05-10-00240.pdf>

his proposed 2014 federal budget asks for a record \$9.62 billion in funding for Head Start.⁷⁵

But what are taxpayers—or the children enrolled in Head Start, for that matter—getting in return for all this money? Two scientifically rigorous, longitudinal analyses, whose results were released in 2010 and 2012 respectively, indicate that Head Start has little to no effect on the participants’ cognitive abilities, socio-emotional development, or physical health; that whatever meager benefits may be detectable while children are actively participating in Head Start “almost completely disappear by first grade”; and that in some cases, access to Head Start has harmful effects on the children.⁷⁶

Such cautionary flags notwithstanding, the President’s 2014 budget, in fact, includes not only record-high outlays for Head Start, but also an additional \$77 billion to fund a brand new “Pre-school for All” initiative over a ten-year period.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ http://earlyed.newamerica.net/blogposts/2013/early_learning_in_the_president_s_2014_budget_request-82100

⁷⁶ <http://preview.tinyurl.com/pncqxu4>; <http://preview.tinyurl.com/c993mee>

⁷⁷ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/10/obama-budget-education_n_3053564.html

The welfare of the children who serve as pawns in these schemes is irrelevant. Joel Klein, the former chancellor of the New York City Department of Education, cuts to the heart of the matter: “[P]oliticians—especially Democratic politicians—generally do what the unions want. And the unions, in turn, are very clear about what that is. They want, first, happy members, so that those who run the unions get reelected; and, second, more members, so their power, money, and influence grow.”⁷⁸ The late United Federation of Teachers president Albert Shanker was even more candid when he stated: “When schoolchildren start paying union dues, that’s when I’ll start representing the interests of schoolchildren.”⁷⁹ The same might be said of Barack Obama.

A Hostile Takeover of the Student-Loan Industry

Those young people who fight their way through an incompetent public school system to colleges and universities often incur crushing debt on loans to finance their degree. Two-thirds of grad-

⁷⁸ http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/06/the-failure-of-american-schools/308497/?single_page=true

⁷⁹ http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/06/the-failure-of-american-schools/308497/?single_page=true

uating college seniors owe money on such loans. Their average debt is \$27,253 per borrower—up from \$17,233 in 2005.⁸⁰ Since 2009, the cumulative sum of all student loan debt has skyrocketed from \$600 billion to more than \$1 trillion, a figure surpassing even the nation’s total credit card debt.⁸¹

Why are costs rising so steeply? For decades prior to the summer of 2010, the most common way for students to borrow money for college was to deal with private lending institutions, most notably the Student Loan Marketing Association (known colloquially as Sallie Mae). Each time these lenders issued a student loan, they paid a fee to the federal government, which, in turn, assumed responsibility for covering the cost of any defaults.⁸² Knowing that taxpayers would pick up the tab for bad loans, lenders relaxed their standards and made money readily available at rates far lower than what private lenders could have offered on their own—even to students with weak credit credentials.⁸³ This led, predictably, to record levels

⁸⁰ <http://tinyurl.com/b219baf>

⁸¹ <http://tinyurl.com/knah8fr>

⁸² <http://tinyurl.com/l2af3jz>

⁸³ <http://tinyurl.com/pncqxu4>; http://inflationdata.com/Inflation/Inflation_Articles/Education_Inflation.asp

of borrowing.⁸⁴ Colleges and universities, reaping the windfall of this easy access to cash, had no incentive to keep their operating costs or tuition fees in check.⁸⁵ Consequently, since 1985, the cost of college tuition has been rising at more than 4 times the general rate of inflation.⁸⁶

Instead of trying to break this cycle by taking the government out of the equation and allowing the free market to operate, the Obama administration took precisely the opposite tack. Beginning on July 1, 2010, Obama signed into law a bill authorizing the U.S. Department of Education, which theretofore had been responsible for approximately one-third of college loans through its direct-lending program, to handle 100% of the nation's federal student loans and grants.⁸⁷ In other words, the fed-

⁸⁴ http://inflationdata.com/Inflation/Inflation_Articles/Education_Inflation.asp

⁸⁵ <http://www.freedomworks.org/blog/jborowski/government-overhaul-of-student-loans-likely-to-eli>

⁸⁶ <http://tinyurl.com/lm3k589>

⁸⁷ <http://www.conservativeactionalerts.com/2011/11/eat-the-debt-obamas-absurd-student-loan-program/>; <http://tinyurl.com/ko-h3ese.php>; Banks could continue to make private, non-guaranteed college loans, but because these are generally more expensive than guaranteed loans, the private student-loan industry was essentially driven to ruin.

eral government—the very entity most responsible for having caused tuition and default rates to rise so steeply in the past—was now given carte blanche to run the federal student-loan industry as a monopoly. Said the *Wall Street Journal*: “As for the cost of college, expect it to become even less affordable as the subsidies keep flowing. The main achievements of this new legislation will be to give more power to government, and to transfer more of the costs and risks of college financing to taxpayers.”⁸⁸

Delinquency rates on student loans have risen steeply since the implementation of the new Obama program, from 12.4% on loans made between 2005 and 2007, to 15.1% on loans issued in 2010-12. According to the Chicago-based credit rating agency TransUnion, fully one-third of all outstanding student loans today are held by the riskiest borrowers, and more than half of student loan accounts—65.5 million of 128.8 million—are in deferment.⁸⁹

One reason default rates typically soar in a

⁸⁸ <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703312504575141943090519772.html>

⁸⁹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/31/student-loan-debt-unsustainable_n_2593303.html

government-run system is that when the government hires contractors to collect on its loans, it pays them simply for their time rather than for their results; i.e., the contractor gets paid merely for calling the borrower, even if that effort fails to result in a payment. Private lenders, by contrast, earn profits only when loans are actually paid back. Thus, as the *Wall Street Journal* notes, they have a far greater incentive “to do careful underwriting and aggressive collection.”⁹⁰

The new Obama student-loan policy also introduces a new, income-based repayment program limiting the borrower’s repayments to 10% of his or her discretionary annual income (down from the traditional 15%), and forgiving any unpaid balance after 20 years (as opposed to the customary 25 years). (Public-service workers, who have long had the sweetest deal of all, will continue to have their unpaid balances forgiven after just 10 years.)⁹¹ Common sense dictates that any system that forgives unpaid loans after a designated time period is inherently fraught with potential for squandering taxpay-

⁹⁰ <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203440104574405154157021052.html>

⁹¹ <http://www.sfgate.com/business/networth/article/Feds-take-over-student-loan-program-from-banks-3193888.php>

er money, even in cases where the borrower makes regular payments on his or her loan. Consider this example, offered by Chris Stirewalt of Fox News:

“If Suzy Creamcheese gets into George Washington University and borrows from the government the requisite \$212,000 to obtain an undergraduate degree, her repayment schedule will be based on what she earns. If Suzy ... takes a job as a city social worker earning \$25,000, her payments would be limited to \$1,411 a year after the \$10,890 of poverty-level income is subtracted from her total exposure. Twenty years at that rate would have taxpayers recoup only \$28,220 of their \$212,000 loan to Suzy.”⁹²

The Obama student-loan system will not only encourage a steeper rise in tuition costs and a higher rate of loan defaults, but is also likely to result in the elimination of many thousands of private-sector jobs in the loan industry. In March 2010, six Democratic Senators—Thomas Carper (DE), Blanche

⁹² <http://www.conservativeactionalerts.com/2011/11/eat-the-debt-obamas-absurd-student-loan-program/>

Lincoln (AR), Ben Nelson (NE), Bill Nelson (FL), Mark Warner (VA) and Jim Webb (VA)—went so far as to write a letter expressing their concern about this to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid.⁹³

Obama's Foreign Policy Jeopardizes the Future of Young People

One of the most disturbing legacies President Obama will pass along to young Americans is an increasingly dangerous world—a world where, thanks in part to his foreign policies, America's security has been weakened over the last four years, allowing Islamic extremists to make dramatic gains. Ignominious withdrawals from battlegrounds in the War on Terror will be noted by jihadis anxious to go on the offensive against America; cutbacks in long range military preparedness will be noted by the Chinese, Russians and other international opponents. As these policies bear poisoned fruit, young people will be forced to pay in the future for today's weakness and appeasement.

⁹³ <http://www.freedomworks.org/blog/jborowski/government-overhaul-of-student-loans-likely-to-eli>; http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/11/us/politics/11loans.html?src=tw&tw=nytimespolitics&_r=1&

The administration has signaled its intention to “get beyond” the War on Terror. (Indeed, it advises that this term be replaced by “overseas contingency operations.”)⁹⁴ Most directly, it has withdrawn precipitously from Iraq, against the advice of field generals, which has allowed the Baghdad government to seek a closer alliance with the mullahs of Iran. Similarly, in Afghanistan, which candidate Obama had called “the good war” in opposition to the bad one in Iraq,⁹⁵ there has been a rush for the exit which includes negotiation with the Taliban, the enemy, with its al-Qaeda allies, which caused the U.S. to go to war there in the first place.

A Talibanized Afghanistan and Iranized Iraq will put America in their gunsights. The relief at today’s withdrawal from these troubled regions will turn to heartache for a future generation required to deal with the enemies there emboldened by Obama’s retreat.

But while he did not support the green revolution of the “Iranian Spring,” the President did sup-

⁹⁴ <http://tinyurl.com/cm3q3kp>

⁹⁵ http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/think-tank/post/is-afghanistan-still-the-good-war/2012/06/12/gJQALIUNYV_blog.html

port some of the revolutions of the Arab Spring, which have brought, not democracy, but greater power to Islamic extremists and jihadists throughout the Middle East. The President's support for the Arab Spring may turn out to be the decision that most haunts the next generation. For instance, when Tunisian president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who had long been known for his pro-Western orientation, became the first Arab leader to fall to a popular uprising in early 2011, Obama announced that "the United States of America stands with the people of Tunisia," whose "democratic aspirations" were "more powerful than the writ of a dictator."⁹⁶ Foreshadowing what would subsequently occur in Egypt and elsewhere in the Arab world as the Arab Spring turned to winter, the Tunisian revolution resulted in the ascendancy of the Islamist Ennahda party, a Muslim Brotherhood offshoot that garnered 41% of the vote in parliamentary elections and is now ruling the nation.⁹⁷

Also in 2011, Obama, without congressional

⁹⁶ <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/10/08/170747.html>;
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/jan/31/egypt-tunisia-will-of-the-people>

⁹⁷ <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Anti-Semitic-rhetoric-increasing-in-Tunisia-under-MB>

approval, provided military support for the Libyan rebels who sought to topple the regime of longtime dictator Moammar Qadhafi, a dangerous figure in the 1980s and 90s who had moderated his behavior in the aftermath of 9/11, relinquishing his weapons of mass destruction, and aligned his country against al-Qaeda.⁹⁸ Since his regime was destabilized, in large part by the U.S. “leading from behind,” and Qadhafi himself was killed by rebels, Islamic radicalism in Libya has been on the rise.⁹⁹ The grimest proof of its advance occurred on September 11, 2012, when al-Qaeda terrorists attacked a U.S. diplomatic mission in Benghazi and murdered the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans. In the aftermath of this attack, the administration steadfastly resisted characterizing it as an act of terror, so as not to contradict the 2012 Obama reelection campaign narrative that al-Qaeda was “on the run” and Islamic terrorism was in decline thanks to the president’s policies.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ <http://tinyurl.com/ldtxd93>

⁹⁹ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/19/libya-islamists-gaining-strength-libyans-concerned-by-sectarian-violence_n_2909693.html

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.discoverthenetworks.org/viewSubCategory.asp?id=1755>

But what may ultimately prove to be Obama's most consequential foreign-policy move was his decision in early 2011 to withdraw U.S. support from longtime Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, who, since taking power 30 years earlier, had cultivated a stable relationship with Israel and cooperated with U.S. objectives in the region. Israeli lawmaker Binyamin Ben-Eliezer warned that Obama's decision to abandon Mubarak constituted a "disaster" that would give "half of the seats in [Egypt's] parliament" to the Muslim Brotherhood—the creator of Hamas and ideological godfather of al Qaeda—and would bring about "a new Middle East" dominated by "extremist radical Islam."¹⁰¹ Unfazed by such warnings, Obama welcomed Mubarak's fall as a sign that "the moral force of nonviolence" had "bent the arc of history toward justice once more."¹⁰² This "justice" led not to democracy, but to the Muslim Brotherhood and the presidency of Mohammed Morsi, one of that organization's high-ranking leaders.

Ben-Eliezer's warnings turned out to be prophetic. Praising the Palestinian effort to "resist

¹⁰¹ <http://apnews.myway.com/article/20110203/D9L59U1G0.html>

¹⁰² <http://www.cnn.com/2011/US/02/11/egypt.us.reaction/index.html>

imperialism,” Morsi not only refused to pledge that his new government would officially recognize Israel’s right to exist, but also announced that Egypt’s historic peace treaty with the Jewish state would eventually have to be “revise[d].”¹⁰³ Candid about his preference for a government based on strict adherence to Islamic law, Morsi vowed that under his leadership, the substance of Egyptian law would be “the sharia, then the sharia, and finally, the sharia.”¹⁰⁴ Morsi also asserted that eagerness to develop closer ties with Iran was “part of [his] agenda” to “create a strategic balance in the region.”¹⁰⁵

Meanwhile, the Obama administration formalized ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, allowing, for the first time, State Department diplomats to deal directly with Brotherhood party officials in Cairo, where the international organization is based.¹⁰⁶ In addition to pledging foreign aid for the new regime, in January 2013 the administra-

¹⁰³ <http://www.worldtribune.com/2012/08/15/morsi-looks-to-revise-1979-egypt-israel-peace-treaty/>

¹⁰⁴ <http://tinyurl.com/lk5bmzn>

¹⁰⁵ <http://tinyurl.com/laygmlt>; <http://www.ndtv.com/article/world/egypt-s-morsi-keen-to-renew-long-severed-iran-ties-235773>

¹⁰⁶ <http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/070611-577509-editorial-the-us-legitimizes-a-terrorist-group.htm?p=1>

tion sent Morsi's government at least twenty F-16 fighter jets, which the Israelis fear will some day be used against them as Muslim Brotherhood power congeals throughout the Middle East.¹⁰⁷

In 2013, when the Egyptian military removed Morsi from office, the Obama administration sat on the fence, not bothering to make a case for American interests in Egypt and how to attain them in a way that would increase the long term stability of the region and thus reduce the likelihood that young American soldiers would someday have to fight there. The same hesitancy—born of doubts about America's moral right to act—was on view in the administration's dithering over what to do in Syria as reports of chemical warfare attacks on civilians there surfaced in mid-2013, a stunning abdication of leadership in the face of a fire threatening to spread throughout the region. As the White House dithered and backtracked, America's prestige, which itself has been, until the Obama presidency, crucial to maintaining international order, was undermined on a daily basis.

At the same time that it has enabled the transi-

¹⁰⁷ <http://news.investors.com/ibd-editorials/121112-636671-obama-foolishly-arms-an-unstable-egypt.htm>

tion of the Muslim Brotherhood from a shadowy opposition to a threat to established order throughout the Middle East, the Obama administration has also allowed that organization.....

At the same time that it has enabled the transition of the Muslim Brotherhood from a shadowy opposition to a ruling elite in the Middle East, the Obama administration has also allowed the organization unprecedented power in the American foreign policy establishment. For instance, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's closest aide, Huma Abedin,¹⁰⁸ has three family members who are, or were, leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood. In fact, Abedin herself spent 12 years working for the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs, a Saudi-based Islamic think-tank whose agenda, as former Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew McCarthy explains, is "to grow an unassimilated, aggressive population of Islamic supremacists who will gradually but dramatically alter the character of the West" and "incrementally ... infiltrate sharia principles in our law, our institutions, and our public policy."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ <http://tinyurl.com/kfobo8q>

¹⁰⁹ <http://tinyurl.com/kwjp3c9>; <http://pjmedia.com/andrewmccarthy/2012/08/17/huma-abedins-muslim-minority-affairs-its-not-just-a-journal/?singlepage=true>

In April 2009, President Obama appointed Arif Alikhan, a former prosecutor in the Los Angeles U.S. Attorney’s office, to a post in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). A staunch opponent of the war on Islamic terror, Alikhan was responsible for derailing the LAPD’s efforts to monitor suspicious activities within that city’s Muslim community, where numerous radical mosques and madrassas were known to exist, and where some of the 9/11 hijackers had received support from local residents.¹¹⁰

In 2011, President Obama appointed Imam Mohamed Magid,¹¹¹ who has served stints as vice president and president of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Islamic Society of North America,¹¹² to be part of the DHS’s “Countering Violent Extremism Working Group.”¹¹³ Claiming that media refer-

¹¹⁰ <http://www.discoverthenetworks.org/individualProfile.asp?indid=2401>; <http://tinyurl.com/k82r3n5>; <http://tinyurl.com/mmd7sx>

¹¹¹ <http://www.discoverthenetworks.org/individualProfile.asp?indid=2562>

¹¹² <http://www.discoverthenetworks.org/groupProfile.asp?grpId=6178>

¹¹³ http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/hsac_cve_working_group_recommendations.pdf

ences to *jihad* as “holy war” constitute a “misuse” of the term, Magid has helped persuade government officials to purge some 700 documents and 300 presentations from its training materials and lesson plans—on grounds that they are allegedly insensitive to the feelings of Muslims.¹¹⁴

Another notable Obama appointee was Rashad Hussain,¹¹⁵ whom the president named as his deputy associate counsel and as a special envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference, a 57-country coalition that seeks to outlaw any and all criticism of Islam.¹¹⁶ Hussain, who characterized the legal prosecution of Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorist Sami Al-Arian as “politically motivated persecution,” published a 2008 paper rejecting the use of such terms as “Islamic terrorism” and “Islamic extremist.”¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/on-faith/fbi-muslims-report-progress-over-training-materials/2012/02/16/gIQA7R7KIR_story.html

¹¹⁵ <http://www.discoverthenetworks.org/individualProfile.asp?indid=2563>

¹¹⁶ <http://www.discoverthenetworks.org/groupProfile.asp?grpId=7453>

¹¹⁷ <http://tinyurl.com/nywe5zr>

In 2009, Obama appointed the Muslim scholar Dalia Mogahed to his Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.¹¹⁸ The first veiled Muslim woman ever to serve in the White House, Mogahed has depicted supporters of violent jihad as people who crave freedom and democracy but “believe [that] their faith and their way of life is threatened . . . by the West.”¹¹⁹ She also laments that “Islamophobia” is a “disease of racism” that “presents a grave danger to America as a whole.”¹²⁰

The Obama administration’s appeasement of jihadists has had no discernible positive effect on U.S. relations with the Muslim world. A June 2010 Saban Center/University of Maryland/Zogby poll of respondents in six predominantly Muslim nations—Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Lebanon and Jordan—found that between 2009 and 2010 the percentage of Middle Easterners who held a favorable view of President Obama and the U.S. had declined from 45%

¹¹⁸ <http://www.discoverthenetworks.org/individualProfile.asp?indid=2428>

¹¹⁹ <http://tinyurl.com/pbw9jny>; <http://www.investigativeproject.org/1904/dalia-mogahed-a-muslim-george-gallup-or-islamist>

¹²⁰ <http://tinyurl.com/dep8n8>

to 20%.¹²¹ In April 2011, a Pew Research poll reported that only 20% of Egyptians had a positive opinion of the United States.¹²² Three months later, a poll conducted by IBOPE Zogby International for the Arab American Institute Foundation found that in most of the countries surveyed, the percentage of people who had favorable attitudes regarding the United States had dropped to levels lower than they had been during 2008, the last year of the Bush Administration. For example, favorable ratings in Saudi Arabia had fallen from 41% to 30% since 2009, and in Egypt they had declined from 30% to 5%.¹²³ Moreover, a February 2013 Gallup poll found that 92% of Pakistanis disapproved of U.S. leadership, while an all-time low of just 4% approved.¹²⁴

In the harsh light of these realities, young Americans today find themselves coming of age in a world more dangerous than ever before. In part, this danger comes from the increasing power of radical Islam, as embodied in the movement of the Muslim Brotherhood from a marginal to a central

¹²¹ http://www.salon.com/2010/08/05/muslims_3/

¹²² http://www.salon.com/2011/04/26/egypt_12/

¹²³ <http://tinyurl.com/6carnvs>

¹²⁴ <http://tinyurl.com/awvszy3>

institution in governments throughout the Middle East. But it also comes from the administration's willingness to see the U.S. as part of the problem and to be vigilant in searching for opportunities to apologize for America, even though such a defensive posture clearly incites our adversaries.

This danger is further exacerbated by the fact that President Obama has telegraphed, many times, his intent to dramatically scale back America's military capabilities. In the summer of 2011, for instance, he authorized approximately \$489 billion in defense cuts to be implemented over a ten-year period.¹²⁵ All told, he has cut or delayed more than 50 major weapons programs since taking office.¹²⁶ Notably, one budget item that Obama originally slated for the chopping block was America's arsenal of 44 ground-based missile-defense interceptors, which the president tried to reduce to 30, although he was forced to change course abruptly when North Korea threatened to launch a nuclear attack against the United States in April 2013.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ <http://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/DefenseStrategy/2012/01/05/id/423099>

¹²⁶ <http://blog.heritage.org/2012/05/02/in-pictures-defense-spending-plummets-under-obamas-budget/>

¹²⁷ <http://blog.heritage.org/2013/04/08/when-naivety-clashes-with-real-world-north-korea-proves-benefits-of-missile-defense/>

Weakness, apology, policy incoherence, a preening desire to be admired by forces that hate everything that America stands for—this is the wind that the Obama administration is sowing in foreign affairs. Today's young will reap the whirlwind.

Conclusion

President Obama has laid the groundwork for a future that will pose many substantial—even grave—challenges for young Americans as they come of age. He has propelled the U.S. national debt to heights that were previously inconceivable—and young people, as they enter the ranks of our nation's taxpayers, will be saddled with the burden of paying off that debt for decades to come. In addition, Obama's tax-and-spend fiscal policies have produced a stagnant, moribund economy where young people are already experiencing extremely high levels of unemployment and financial hardship. As a sop to those who view economics as a zero-sum game between victims and victimizers, the president has proposed minimum-wage hikes and living-wage laws that have a long track record of diminishing the employment and earning opportunities of young people. He has implemented

a host of new, permanent taxes that will drain the wallets and sap the spirits of young Americans year after year, until the end of their lives. He has spearheaded the creation of a new, government-dominated healthcare system that clearly will be far less efficient and much more costly than the system it is replacing. He has given responsibility for our education system over to the teachers unions. And he has made the world a more dangerous place by emboldening and even supporting Islamist radicals both at home and abroad, while betraying America's closest ally, Israel, and weakening our nation's defense capabilities.

These are President Obama's poisoned presents to the young people whose support was so crucial to his election and re-election. This is how he has repaid their hope—with changes that dim their future.

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