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## THEY SAID IT

This government will not content itself with administering and governing the masses politically, as all governments do today. It will also administer the masses economically, concentrating in the hands of the state the production and division of wealth, the cultivation of land . . . All that will demand . . . the reign of scientific intelligence, the most aristocratic, despotic, arrogant, and elitist of all regimes. There will be a new class, a new hierarchy . . . the world will be divided into a minority ruling in the name of knowledge, and an immense ignorant majority. And then, woe unto the mass of ignorant ones!

Mikhail Bakunin, a co-founder of the 19th century anarchist movement and Marx's archrival at the First International, 1872.

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## SUNDAY MORNING COMING DOWN.

It appears that one of the foundations upon which conservatives are building their assault on Barack Obama's popularity is the charge that he is a "socialist." Now this is fine with us, although we would caution his critics that such an accusation can only be effective if a broad section of the public actually knows what a "socialist" is, finds it plausible to believe that Barack is one, and, most importantly, would consider it to be objectionable if he were.

Think, for example, of the word "cad." Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this was a commonly used pejorative. According to the Oxford English Dictionary it describes "a fellow of low vulgar manners and behavior." Today, most Americans are totally unfamiliar with the word. Moreover, many among those who know what it means do not find low vulgar manners and behavior to be all that offensive, and many among those who profess to find low vulgar manners and behavior to be offensive have become so inured to their commonality that they only recognize and object to the most extreme forms.

Now, we have no data to support this claim, but we would simply point out that most of the nation's cultural, intellectual, and political elite, from the bedrooms of Hollywood to backrooms of Washington to the boardrooms of New York City once found and still find Bill Clinton's low vulgar manners and behavior to be perfectly acceptable, even charming.

So to put this in context, we think that it is questionable, given the sad state of the nation's education system during the past several decades, whether a majority of Americans would be able to explain the difference between a socialist and an aardvark. And even among those that could, we believe that many would not believe that Barack Obama is one, if told so by a Republican, and more importantly, we don't believe that most would care if he were.

You see, whether most Americans, including most of Barack's conservative critics, know it or not, most Americans, including most of Barack's conservative critics, have slowly but ever so surely over the past fifty years become inured to socialism. In fact, most Americans, including most of Barack's conservative critics, have prospered greatly under the cloying spell of "creeping socialism," gaining power, favors, and lucre that they would never have enjoyed under a system that rewarded individual merit.

To make this point in a more understandable form, we would argue that a young lady who is having the time of her life riding on the back of Bubba's motorcycle and partying with the Hell's Angels is much less apt to believe her parent's warnings about the perils of such a life style than a girl who has never been on the back of Bubba's motorcycle.

And, metaphorically at least, we Americans have been on the back of Bubba's motorcycle for a long time now. And what a great ride it has been.

Indeed, over two generations of Americans have enjoyed the benefits of a government that was not just willing, but was enthusiastic about borrowing trillions upon trillions upon trillions of dollars in their name and using it to finance the greatest party that any group of people in the entire history of the world has ever known. And the only cover charge that this generous government has asked of the revelers at this marvelous party is their freedom, surrendered in small, barely noticeable portions, one little piece at a time. A small price to pay for the snowy white dreams of a socialist state.

But, of course, all good things must come to an end, as the saying goes. And Americans must now make a choice. Cold turkey or ever larger doses of what caused the problem in the first place. Barack is offering the latter. And it's appealing, very appealing. Some conservatives are offering the former. God bless them for this. But while they are being honest about the dangers of accepting Barack's offer of more socialism as a cure for the ills caused by socialism, they are not being honest about the pain involved in

"coming down" from such a ride as Americans have enjoyed for the past half century. So who, we ask, is going to win the hearts and minds of Americans?

Our guess is that the young lady won't get off of Bubba's motorcycle until the consequences about which her parents warned her become unbearable. Detoxification is no fun, but eventually it's that or death. Until Americans make the choice, the ride will go on, a little less fun all the time.

In the meantime, as we await the peoples' decision on this important matter, and ponder the consequences either way, we thought we would offer a few thoughts on the subject of socialism. This may seem a bit redundant, given the working over that the term seems to be getting in press and among the pundit community of late. But the fact is that most of today's critics of socialism depend heavily either on clichés they picked up in a barbershop somewhere or from a very narrow range of well known, conservative experts on the subject, ranging from Frederick Hayek to Ludwig von Mises to Milton Freedom.

So we thought it might add a little intellectual meat to the discussion if our thoughts on the subject emanated from the left. So we opened this week with a "They Said It" quote from Michael Bakunin, one of the 19th century's most colorful characters.

Bakunin was a Russian aristocrat, a giant of a man who weighed over 250 pounds, sported a huge black beard, had a booming voice, and an enormous storehouse of courage and energy. He was the inspiration for Turgenev's character Rudin in his novelette by that name, and, according to George Bernard Shaw, was used by Wagner as the model for Siegfried in the opera by that name.

Bakunin manned the barricades during the 1848 revolution in France, and afterward traveled throughout Europe fomenting uprisings. He coined the phrase "the passion for destruction is also a creative passion." He co-authored the well-known tract *Catechism of a Revolutionist* with Sergei Nechayev, which contains the famous phrase, "The revolutionist is a doomed man."

He spent over eight years in some of the worst prisons in Europe, eventually escaping to America through Siberia. He then returned to Europe and announced that “I shall continue to be an impossible person so long as those who are now possible remain possible.” After his return, he founded secret conspiratorial societies all over the continent, and battled Marx for control of the First International. Marx won the fight in 1872, but he so despised Bakunin, and so feared his influence, that he moved the organization’s General Council to New York, safely out of Bakunin’s reach.

As you can see from the above quote, Bakunin’s principal complaint was that socialism would eventually turn into just another arrogant, oppressive, despotic, hierarchy of elitist clowns who would oppress the masses.

And lo, in less than a half a century, the French socialists had confirmed Bakunin’s fears. They had developed what Georges Sorel, one of their most vociferous and brilliant critics on the left, described as Parliamentary Socialism.

Sorel is known today primarily for his terrifically entertaining and insightful book, *Reflexions Sur La Violence*, which was first published in 1908. He is a bit difficult to characterize. The *Cambridge Biographical Encyclopedia* describes him as a “social philosopher.” We have a 1976 paperback containing excerpts from Sorel’s many works, entitled *From Georges Sorel*, published by the Oxford University Press, which describes him as “one of the foremost thinkers of this century to write extensively on the great importance of the moral dimension of social movements.”

For purposes of this article, we will simply say that he was a devoted leftist radical and a strong critic of what he called the “Parliamentary Socialists,” who ruled France during his day under the direction of Jean Jaures, one of the principal founders of the French Socialist Party.

As we indicated above, Sorel’s complaint against Jaures and his lot was not of a Hayekian nature. It was, instead, that these Parliamentary Socialists had

abandoned the Marxist blueprint for a proletarian led revolution that would put an end to conventional government altogether, and had instead become the government, as oppressive and hypocritical as any that preceded it, including the monarchy that had fallen just over a century earlier.

In a 1907 letter to a friend, Daniel Halevy, Sorel compared the Parliamentary Socialists to the Germans who conquered the Roman Empire, and then “ashamed of being barbarians,” “put themselves to school with the rhetoricians of the Latin decadence.” He often used the term “worthy progressive” to describe them, which he defined as “naive, philanthropically disposed people who believe that they have discovered the solution to the problem of social reform – whose attitude, however, is often complicated by a good deal of hypocrisy, they being frequently rapacious when their own personal interests are at stake.”

Sorel was an advocate of what he called the “general strike,” by which he meant that the proletariat would quit working *en masse*, thus beginning the Marxist revolution. He scorned what he called the “political general strike,” a sarcastic term for the slow morphing of revolutionary Marxism into *status quo* governing by bourgeois “socialists.”

Anyway, let’s “go to the text,” as the saying goes. Here you will find a vivid description of America’s future, if Americans make the wrong choice in the next couple years.

Whole pages could be filled with the bare outlines of the contradictory, comical, and quack arguments which form the substance of the harangues of our great men; nothing embarrasses them, and they know how to combine, in pompous, impetuous, and nebulous speeches, the most absolute irreconcilability with the most supple opportunism.

Parliamentary Socialists can only obtain great influence if they can manage, by the use of a very confused language,

to impose themselves on very diverse groups; for example, they must have working-men constituents simple enough to allow themselves to be duped by high-sounding phrases about future collectivism; they are compelled to represent themselves as profound philosophers to stupid middle-class people who wish to appear to be well informed about social questions; it is very necessary also for them to be able to exploit rich people who think that they are earning the gratitude of humanity by taking shares in the enterprises of Socialist politicians.

Politicians have nothing to fear from the Utopias which present a deceptive mirage of the future to the people, and turn [in the words of Clemenceau] “men towards immediate realizations of terrestrial felicity, which any one who looks at these matters scientifically knows can only be very partially realized, and even then only after long efforts on the part of several generations.” The more readily the electors believe in the magical forces of the State, the more will they be disposed to vote for the candidate who promises marvels; in the electoral struggle each candidate tries to outbid the others; in order that the Socialist candidates may put the Radicals to rout, the electors must be credulous enough to believe every promise of future bliss; our Socialist politicians take very good care therefore, not to combat these comfortable Utopias in any very effective way.

Enfeebled classes habitually put their trust in people who promise them the protection of the State, without ever trying to understand how this protection could possibly harmonize their discordant interests; they readily

enter into every coalition formed for the purpose of forcing concessions from the Government; they greatly admire charlatans who speak with a glib tongue . . .

The political general strike [as opposed to the real “general strike”] presupposes that very diverse social groups shall possess the same faith in the magical force of the State; this faith is never lacking in social groups that are on the downgrade, and its existence enables windbags to represent themselves as able to do everything. The political general strike would be greatly helped by the stupidity of philanthropists, and this stupidity is always a result of the degeneration of the rich classes. Its chances of success would be enhanced by the fact that it would have to deal with cowardly and discouraged capitalists.

Wise Socialists desire two things: (1) to take possession of this [great State] machine so that they may improve its works, and make them run to further their friends’ interests as much as possible, and (2) to assure the stability of the Government which will be very advantageous for all business men . . . Socialist financiers . . . understand instinctively that the preservation of a highly centralised, very authoritative and very democratic State puts immense resources at their disposal, and protects them from proletarian revolution. The transformations which their friends, the Parliamentary Socialists, may carry out will always be of a very limited scope, and it will always be possible, thanks to the State, to correct any imprudences they may commit.

Therefore, the authors of all enquiries into modern socialism are forced to acknowledge that the latter implies the division of society into two groups: the first of these is a select body, organized

as a political party, which has adopted the mission of thinking for the thoughtless masses, and which imagines that, because it allows the latter to enjoy the results of its superior enlightenment, it has done something admirable. The second is . . . the whole body of the producers. The select body of politicians has no other profession than that of using its wits, and they find that it is strictly in accordance with the principles of immanent justice (of which they are sole owners) that the proletariat should work to feed them and furnish them with the means for an existence that only distantly resembles an ascetic's.

The masses believe that they are suffering from the iniquitous consequences of a past that was full of violence, ignorance, and wickedness; they are confident that the genius of their leaders will render them less unhappy; they believe that democracy, if it were only free, would replace a malevolent hierarchy by a benevolent hierarchy. The leaders who foster this sweet illusion in their men, see the situation from quite another point of view; the present social organization revolts them just in so far as it creates obstacles to their ambition; they are less shocked by the existence of the classes than by their own inability to attain to the positions already acquired by older men; when they have penetrated far enough into the sanctuaries of the State, into drawing-rooms and places of amusement, they cease, as a rule, to be revolutionary and speak learnedly of "evolution."

Politicians . . . argue about social conflicts in exactly the same manner as diplomats argue about international affairs; all the actual fighting apparatus interests them very little; they see in the combatants

nothing but instruments. The proletariat is their army, which they love in the same way that a colonial administrator loves the troops which enable him to bring large numbers of negroes under his authority; they apply themselves to the task of training the proletariat, because they are in a hurry to win quickly the great battle which will deliver the State into their hands; they keep up the ardor of their men, as the ardor of troops of mercenaries has always been kept up, by promises of pillage, by appeals to hatred, and also by the small favors which their occupancy of a few political places enables them to distribute already. But the proletariat for them is food for cannon, and nothing else, as Marx said in 1873. The reinforcement of power of the State is at the basis of all their conceptions; in the organizations which they at present control, the politicians are already preparing the framework of a strong, centralized and disciplined authority, which will not be hampered by the criticism of an opposition, which will be able to enforce silence, and which will give currency to its lies.

Religions constitute a very troublesome problem for the intellectualists [read: Parliamentary Socialists], for they can neither regard them as being without historical importance nor can they explain them. To most people the class war is the principle of Socialist tactics. That means that the Socialist party finds its electoral successes on the clashing of interests which exist in an acute state between certain groups, and that, if need be, it would undertake to make this hostility still more acute; their candidates ask the poorest and most numerous class to look upon themselves as forming a corporation, and they offer to become the advocates of this

corporation; they promise to use their influence as representatives to improve the lot of the disinherited . . . Socialism makes its appeal to the discontented without troubling about the place they occupy in the world of production; in a society as complex as ours, and as subject to economic upheavals, there is an enormous number of discontented people in all classes, – that is why Socialists are often found in places where one would least expect to meet them.

Parliamentary Socialism speaks as many languages as it has types of clients. It makes its appeal to workmen, to small employers of labor, to peasants; and in spite of Engels, it aims at reaching the farmers; it is at times patriotic; at other times it declares against the Army. It is stopped by no contradiction, experience having shown that it is possible, in the course of an electoral campaign, to group together forces, which, according to Marxian conceptions, should normally be antagonistic . . . In the end the term ‘proletariat’ became synonymous with oppressed; and there are oppressed in all classes.

He [Jaures] saw that this upper middle class was terribly ignorant, gapingly stupid, politically absolutely impotent; he recognized that with people who understand nothing of the principles of capitalist economics it is easy to contrive a policy of compromise on the basis of an extremely broad Socialism; he calculated the proportions in which it is necessary to mix together flattery of the superior intelligence of the imbeciles whose seduction was aimed at, appeals to the disinterested sentiments of speculators who pride themselves on

having invented the ideal, and threats of revolution in order to obtain the leadership of people void of ideas.

We could go on, of course. Sorel is a mother lode of wonderful observations about bourgeois socialists that are as true today as they were in turn-of-the-century France. But we will close with some of Sorel’s thoughts on the horrors with which the Parliamentary Socialists viewed the concept of the general strike because, while the idea was simpatico with their publicly professed left-wing anti-establishment views, it threatened their actual position as part of that very same establishment.

When the force of the State was in the hands of their [the socialists’] adversaries, they acknowledged, naturally enough, that it was being employed to violate justice, and they then proved that one might with a good conscience “step out of the region of legality in order to enter that of justice” (to borrow a phrase of the Bonapartists); when they could not overthrow the government, they tried at least to intimidate it. But when they attacked the people who for the time being controlled the force of the State, they did not at all desire to suppress that force, for they wished to utilize it some day for their own profit; all the revolutionary disturbances of the nineteenth century have ended in reinforcing the power of the State . . . That is why our parliamentary socialists, who spring from the middle classes and who know nothing outside the ideology of the State, are so bewildered when they are confronted with working-class violence. They cannot apply to it the commonplaces, which generally serve them when they speak about force, and they look with terror on movements which may result in the ruin of the institutions by which they live.

## HELP ME MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT.

Barack Obama is tired, the poor dear. Or at least that is what we've been told. He's spent. Wiped out. Totally overwhelmed. Seven weeks in, and 200 more to go. And the poor guy has had it. The London *Sunday Telegraph* explains:

Sources close to the White House say Mr. Obama and his staff have been "overwhelmed" by the economic meltdown and have voiced concerns that the new president is not getting enough rest.

British officials, meanwhile, admit that the White House and US State Department staff were utterly bemused by complaints that the Prime Minister should have been granted full-blown press conference and a formal dinner, as has been customary. They concede that Obama aides seemed unfamiliar with the expectations that surround a major visit by a British prime minister. . . .

Allies of Mr. Obama say his weary appearance in the Oval Office with Mr. Brown illustrates the strain he is now under, and the president's surprise at the sheer volume of business that crosses his desk.

A well-connected Washington figure, who is close to members of Mr. Obama's inner circle, expressed concern that Mr. Obama had failed so far to "even fake an interest in foreign policy" . . .

The American source said: "Obama is overwhelmed. There is a zero sum tension between his ability to attend to the economic issues and his ability to be a proactive sculptor of the national security agenda.

"That was the gamble these guys made at the front end of this presidency and I think they're finding it a hard thing to do everything."

Now, on the surface, one might think that this is troubling. After all, the President is only 46 years old. He is, we are told, in tip-top physical shape. And besides, he doesn't really need to focus on foreign affairs, since he has the smartest and most powerful woman in the world handling such trivial matters for him. And she's a superstar. Right? Well . . .

Reuters reports:

Hillary Clinton raised eyebrows on her first visit to Europe as secretary of state when she mispronounced her EU counterparts' names and claimed U.S. democracy was older than Europe's.

Clinton has set herself a grueling pace on visits to Egypt, Israel and Brussels soon after touring the Far East, attending dozens of meetings and giving speech after speech, with little time worked into her schedule for sleep.

Tiredness appeared to show Friday when she answered questions in front of 500 young Europeans at the European Parliament, where she was the highest-ranking U.S. visitor since the late U.S. President Ronald Reagan in 1985.

Super. Everybody's worn out. As it turns out, this job – running the world – isn't all it was cracked up to be. It's kinda hard to win friends and influence people. And it's kinda hard to keep focused and to keep plugging along when everybody, everywhere expects you to be the leaders of the free world. Who knew?

But at least there's a light at the end of the proverbial tunnel, right? Things are going to get better soon. The proverbial pendulum will swing and foreign affairs will get less complicated. Particularly with the

Norks sending up satellites or missiles or . . . ummm . . . something; and with the Iranians getting precariously close to obtaining their own bomb and their own long-range missiles; and with the Israelis looking more and more like they'll deal with Iran themselves; and with Pakistan releasing nuclear proliferator AQ Kahn from jail and making peace with the Taliban; and with pirates still raiding ships off the coast of Africa; and with China entering a period of prolonged political instability related to economic instability; and with the Russians mocking the Secretary of State for her "reset button" joke; etc., etc. *ad infinitum*.

Or maybe not.

At least things are better domestically. That we know for sure. Even if Hill, like her boss, is too tired to do the job, at least that's not the case here at home, where the real serious stuff is taking place. Right?

Right?

From AFP:

US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner is practically alone on the job, working night and day to cope with the worst economic downturn in decades.

Of the 15 key Treasury Department positions that require Senate confirmation, only one has been filled. Stuart Levey, a leftover from the previous administration, who as under secretary of the treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence, is not central to the crisis management however . . .

Annette Nazareth, who had been expected to be chosen as deputy secretary – Geithner's top aide – has withdrawn her name, the *Wall Street Journal* reported in its online edition, citing people familiar with the matter . . .

Geithner's choice for undersecretary for international affairs, Caroline Atkinson, also took her name out of the running, only weeks ahead of the April 2, Group of 20 developed and developing nations summit in London.

Super.

Wait . . . did we say that already?

In all seriousness, though, this is a bit troubling, to put it mildly. What we see here, indeed, what we've seen from the Obama team over the last several weeks, is an indication of how the administration will be run over the course of the long term and, as such, an indication of the sort of problems they (and we) can expect to encounter. In short, what we have here is enough information from which to extrapolate some expectations for the near and long-term future.

For starters, it should be clear that when Candidate Obama declared that he would repair our relations with the world he meant the "rest" of the world, not those nations that have historically proven themselves to be worthy allies in pursuit of common goals. In other words: Great Britain and Israel – the co-protectors of Western civilization – can go suck eggs.

Almost immediately into his presidency, Obama began ruffling British feathers. And he shows no signs of stopping. A bust of Winston Churchill, lent by the Brits to the United States after 9/11, was, in early February, summarily and ungraciously returned, despite the British government's offer to "renew" the loan. According to *The Telegraph*, "The rejection of the bust has left some British officials nervously reading the runes to see how much influence the UK can wield with the new regime in Washington."

Next, of course, came the slights delivered upon British Prime Minister Gordon Brown on his first official state visit to the United States and to the Obama administration. Obama seemed a little less than enthusiastic about his meeting with Brown,

and he made little attempt to hide it. We hate to keep coming back to Mark Steyn like this, but once again, he sums it up as no other could:

British prime minister Gordon Brown thought long and hard about what gift to bring on his visit to the White House last week. Barack Obama is the first African-American president, so the prime minister gave him an ornamental desk-pen holder hewn from the timbers of one of the Royal Navy's anti-slaving ships of the 19th century, HMS Gannet. Even more appropriate, in 1909 the Gannet was renamed HMS President.

The president's guest also presented him with the framed commission for HMS Resolute, the lost British ship retrieved from the Arctic and returned by America to London, and whose timbers were used for a thank-you gift Queen Victoria sent to Rutherford Hayes: the handsome desk that now sits in the Oval Office.

And, just to round things out, as a little stocking stuffer, Gordon Brown gave President Obama a first edition of Sir Martin Gilbert's seven-volume biography of Winston Churchill.

In return, America's head of state gave the prime minister 25 DVDs of "classic American movies."

Evidently, the White House gift shop was all out of "MY GOVERNMENT DELEGATION WENT TO WASHINGTON AND ALL I GOT WAS THIS LOUSY T-SHIRT" T-shirts.

Sadly, things just continued to get worse. After the Obama administration denied the Prime Minister the usual joint Rose Garden press conference, many in the British diplomatic corps and the British press were

notably upset. The *Telegraph*, for one, sought answers. And the answers it found were sadly telling:

The real views of many in Obama administration were laid bare by a State Department official involved in planning the Brown visit, who reacted with fury when questioned by *The Sunday Telegraph* about why the event was so low-key.

The official dismissed any notion of the special relationship, saying: "There's nothing special about Britain. You're just the same as the other 190 countries in the world. You shouldn't expect special treatment."

Add this to the fact that the Obama administration has pledged nearly \$1 billion in aid to Hamas; that the Secretary of State has been openly and virulently critical of Israel for exercising its right to self-defense against Hamas in Gaza; that the Obama team has chosen to appoint an anti-Israel Arabist Saudi pawn to its intelligence lineup; and that Team Obama has been openly and piteously solicitous of both the Iranians and the Syrians, and one can't help but think that Obama's promise to "improve" diplomacy will amount to little more than punishing America's allies and rewarding its enemies. Hope and change indeed.

We can also surmise from all of this that President Obama and his aides will pride themselves on their willingness to micromanage policy. No one should be surprised by this, of course. But it's nice to have confirmation. Generally speaking, when politicians – or leaders of any sort, for that matter – believe that they have certain gifts that are inimitable, they set about to use those gifts; more to the point, to apply them to every situation and in every circumstance.

One of Ronald Reagan's greatest strengths was his ability to delegate. He knew what he believed. He surrounded himself with people who either agreed or had the good sense to subordinate their own beliefs to their boss's. And he let them do their jobs.

By contrast, one of Jimmy Carter's greatest weaknesses was his inability to delegate. Carter believed that he had a personal, moral responsibility to be involved with every minute detail of his presidency. And he (nearly?) drove himself batty. He did drive himself into "malaise," and then into early retirement, courtesy of the American electorate.

If Obama is indeed "overwhelmed" by the amount of work that crosses his desk, we can only surmise that that's because he is unable or unwilling to delegate. And although we joked about it in our intro, the fact that this is obvious in the first SEVEN WEEKS of his presidency is an indication that this guy is in for a very long four years. Being "the most powerful man on earth" is a tough job. Even more so if you can't or won't ask for help.

Finally, we can glean from what we've seen and/or read about Obama, about his Secretary of State, about his Secretary of the Treasury, and about all the rest that these people have a great passion for electoral politics but little passion for actual governance. After Jimmy Carter was long gone from the White House, Pat Caddell, one of that administration's political gurus and the man often credited with planning the wildly successful 1976 campaign, lamented that the Carter team had a brilliant strategy to win, but no strategy whatsoever to govern. One gets a similar vibe from Team Obama.

If the President is indeed tired, maybe it's because he has been on the campaign trail non-stop for more than two years. He never stops, despite the fact that he is, quite obviously, no longer required to do so. Every day almost, he's in another town at another rally making another speech. That's not governance. That's campaigning. And there's a difference. But we're not sure that the President or any of those close to him understand that.

In an appearance this morning on CNBC, Warren Buffett declared that the economy has, over the past several months, followed "close to a worst-case scenario." Sometimes we feel precisely the same way about the early stages of the Obama presidency. The guy is tired. He's micromanaging his affairs, but he's more interested in the game of politics than actual governance. He remains supremely confident in his abilities, yet has demonstrated little that would cause others – the markets, the nation's friends, enemies, and rivals – to have similar confidence. He has consciously decided to abandon traditional democratic allies in pursuit of pipe dreams about peace, love, and understanding. And he has taken the nation decidedly leftward, appearing indifferent to the consequences of that shift.

Granted, we never expected to be happy with an Obama presidency. But, as we noted last week, we never expected to be this unhappy this quickly either.

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