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Attachments: Untitled attachment 00115.pdf; Untitled attachment 00118.pdf; Untitled attachment 00121.pdf; The Urban Fire Next Time_Patrick Sharkey_NYT_April 28, 2013.pdf; Untitled attachment 00124.pdf; Iraq on the brink, again_Ryan Crocker_TWP_April 30, 2013.pdf; Untitled attachment 00127.pdf; Untitled attachment 00130.pdf; Untitled attachment 00133.pdf; Untitled attachment 00136.pdf; Untitled attachment 00139.pdf; Untitled attachment 00142.pdf; Meshell Ndegeocello bio.pdf

DEAR FRIEND.....

After doing=a "last review/edit" of my Weekend Reading an= sending it to friends, being a political news junkie, I start the week with the Sunday Morning major networks news programs, Face the Nation hosted =y Bob Schieffer/CBS, Meet the Press hosted by David Gregory/NBC and The Week with Ge=rge Stephanopoulos/ABC. Since in LA they all concurre=tly broadcast at 8am, I record them along with Chris Matthew' half-hour weekend new= show on NBC for later viewing. In addition to their round table panels of usual suspects including, George Will, Newt Gindrich,=Mathew Dowd, Chuck Todd, Kelly O'Donald, Bob Woodward, Andrea Mitchell, Dan Rather, David Ignatius, Peggy Noonan, Cokie =oberts, David Brooks, Sam Donaldson, Fareed Zakaria, E.J. Dionne, Jr., Robert Reich= David Gergen, Peggy Noonan, John Dickerson, and Norah O'Donnell, this week&rs=uos special guests included Senator Lindsey Graham on CBS, Senator John McCain on NB= and Representative Mike Rogers on ABC, to allow them to 'Monday Mo=ning Quarterback' the past week's political events and decisions. The problem with all of these shows, it that they are often use to settle scores and advance ideological positions, with sound bites being presented as solutions, pro and con, just in case one is correct. And=because great humor is often based on a foundation of truth, what President Obama s=id at the Press Dinner last Saturday is true for the Sunday news programs &nbs=;— "... I know CNN has taken some knocks I=tely, but the fact is I admire their commitment to cover all sides of a story, ju=t in case one of them happens to be accurate."

House Intelligence Committee chair Rep. Mike Rogers, R-Mich., said this morning on This Week that "some a=tion needs to be taken" against Syria for its alleged use of chemical weapons, saying that the red =ine "can't be a dotted line." Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said Sunday on Face the Nation that "=here's a growing consensus in the U.S. Senate that the United States should get involved." "If we keep this hands-off approach to Syria, this indecisive action towards Syria, kind of =ot knowing what we're going to do next, we're going to have war with I=an because Iran's going to take our inaction in Syria as meaning we're not ser=ous about their nuclear weapons program," he said. "We need to=get involved." And on Meet the Press, Senator John= McCain auguring that the United States should be arming the rebels, using airstrikes to att=ck Assad's forces and create a safe haven for refugees. What all o= this really means, no one knows, because as we know from Viet Nam, Iraq and Afghanistan, without clearly def=ned goals, strong partners and total international support, the aftermath will =ost likely end up as a disaster. The first rule in drinking, "if you don't know sip slow", an= in international diplomacy, "when you don't know move slow." The President is right to dial back the "red line", especially when n=ne of his options are good and there is no clear long-term goals or strong local partners. Leaving Afghanistan in the hands of Karzai and Iraq with Chalabi, Allawi and Maliki has proven to be a disaster, and in Syria it could be eve= worse.

A=though I applaud John McCain as a patriot, he is totally out of touch with reality. This is=a person who believes that the Surge In Iraq was a success, when in reality is was a temporary band-aid that for a time, overwhelming several violent f=ctions while paying off others, but doing nothing to address the underlying core p=oblems and functionality in the country. I believe that Lindsey Graham is right when he says t=at Syria looks like it is going to end up a failed

state. As such I believe that Senator McCain and the other Sunday experts are wrong when they insist that America should act alone, when the=e is nothing that the US can do other than putting a band-aid on a festering situation, especially with little or no public support at home, and regiona= non-existent partners, will put the blame on the last man standing. =Because of this, all of the President's options are bad. Bombing a foreign country is -- an act of war, however you spin it. And as Collin Powell once caution, President George W. Bush "if it=breaks you will own it", the same is true in Syria. It is estimated that 70,000 people have already died in Syria as a result of this current civil war, and to use the death of 20 to 30 more as a pretense to g= to war seems a bit hypocritical to me. Although Sarin is categorized as a WMD, less people died worldwide during the same period in the US due to firearms. Still, we couldn't even get background checks approved in Congr=ss last week. I watched the Sunday Morning News Programs, with their guests advocati=g that we do something immediately, even when they all agree that there are no good options. Maybe when there are no good options, we should wait. And if this is truly a problem, let's wait for the Arab League, EU or the UN to take=the lead, because as General Powell explained, "if we break it we will end u= owning it." And the Syrian war, will be our war....=game-changer or not. So again, if you don't know, sip slow.

Video Clip: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/01/jon-stewart-on-syr-as-red_n_3192131.html
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05=01/jon-stewart-on-syrias-red_n_3192131.html?utm_hp_ref=email_share

Please watch the above video clip, to truly see the absurdity of the ill=hooght advice that the Sunday News Programs experts presents week in and w=ek out.

The issue is that I really can't whitewash are the failures of his administration, no matter how many supporters try to rewrite history=so that his legacy can be redeemed, similar to what has happen with Harry Trum=n. Like LBJ's legacy will always be linked to Viet Nam, Nixon's to Watergate and Carter's to American hostage= in Iran, George W. Bush will and should always be painted with his biggest blunder = the senseless failed Iran war. When asked what was the biggest problem was when he first arrived in the White House at the tender =ge of 31, George Stephanopoulos replied, "everything is mag=ified." He described having a great day in the White House Press Briefing Room, and his Mother calling to=say that she saw him pick his nose while on camera and as a result, she wi=l never be able to face her friends at the hairdressers – t=us both mistakes and/or successes are magnified beyond sensible proportion. But this is not true for the 2nd Iran War.

My father use to say, "that history is always rewritten b= the winners." And like everyone else, President's should be allowed to make mistakes, and not be tainted fo=ever as a result of one, two or several miscalculations or indiscretions. Ronald Reagan got beyond Iran-Contra and the Marine Barracks massacre to become the most popular Republican since Abe Lincoln (who actually wasn't popular when in office) and somehow Bill Clinton got b=yond Monica Lewinsky and Somalia, to now become the most popular former President in the world. But in t=is moment of Kumbayah we should rightfully be put aside Presid=ntial mistakes. But if =e do not want to repeat the past mistakes, we should not allow history to be white-washed. As a result we should al=ays recognize that slavery, the Holocaust and child labor and child soldiers/armies in the past and present are bligh=s on humanity, should be acknowledged and not white-washed, so that they never happen again. As a result, the same should be said for the Bush/Cheney Presidency, even though like President Obama said, I personally believe that George W. Bush is a good man. And obviously his mother agrees with me, based on what she said on the Today Show last week, "I think it's a great count=y. There are a lot of great families, and it's not just four families or whatever. There are othe= people out there that are very qualified and we've had enough B=shes."

"No taxation without representation" is a slogan originating during the 1750s and 1760s that summarized a primary grievance =f the British colonists in the Thirteen Colonies, which was one of the major causes of the American Revolution. In short, many in those colonies believed that, as they were not directly represented in the distant British Parliament, any laws it passed taxing th= colonists (such as the Sugar Act and the Stamp Act) were illegal und=r the Bill of Rights 1689, and were a denial of their rights as Englishmen. The phrase captures a sentiment central to the

cause of the English Civil War that led to the creation of the United States. Obviously our current congressional representatives in Washington have lost sight that they serve at the pleasure of the people who voted them into office, and as such should enact their wishes.

But let's not limit this to economic matters. In the wake of the Newtown massacre, 90% of Americans, including almost 80% of NRA members now believe that there should be background checks on anyone purchasing a firearm, still with 54 to 46 voting in favor, gun control legislation was shelved. And with more than 11 million people living in America illegally, many for decades with children who were born here, supported by a majority of Americans favoring a pathway to citizenship, congress still appears to be slow-walking legislation that would address this grievance. Obviously a major part of the problem is hyper-partisanship. But the Big Ugly is Republican leaders' desire/intention to make Obama a failed President. As a result, I Agree with the President when he chides Congress telling them that they should act as adults. And I urge everyone of you to make our political representatives know that the current dysfunctionality, will not be tolerated and that there will be a price paid on Election Day.

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This week in Money Morning, journalist David Zeiler wrote – What America's \$2 Trillion Underground Economy Says About Jobs. Although I totally disagree with the premise of his article that Obamacare and other regulations enacted during current administration has caused the US underground economy to balloon to \$2 trillion annually. By "underground economy," Zeiler is talking about all the business activity that is not reported to the government, which includes a growing number of people getting paid for their labor in cash.

My belief is that many in the underground economy are folks (like my mother who was a domestic worker for fifty years), including handymen day-laborers, construction workers, childcare workers, illegal aliens and domestic maids like my mother. And most of these people have been trapped in the underground economy for years. And the number one reason is that paying workers off the books has great appeal to employers, who then can avoid paying benefits and taxes, as well as to get around regulations that protect workers' rights. And as more people are now working from home or have had to take on second jobs, much of this increased business activity goes unreported. But the balloon is a result of companies moving full-time employees to private contractor status, and the growth of many more working from home.

Again: To suggest that Obamacare and increase regulations caused the underground economy to mushroom over the past couple of years, is a totally fallacy, especially since Obamacare wasn't

One of the problems with the main-stream press today, is that if the news isn't sensational it is ignored. As such they concentrate on buzz words such as WMDs and foreign born terrorists, when the truth is that including 9/11 terrorists have killed 3,033 people in America while in the decade of 2000 to 2010 445,000 people have died as a result of traffic accident, 485,000 patients have died from hospital infections, (not infections that you came in the hospital with but infections contracted when, of instance a doctor wearing a tie that got into your soup). But the most dangerous place is your couch, because three million people died as a result of obesity related diseases. The World Health Organization says that 150,000 people die every year from immediate causes as a result of the environment. And 13 people go to work every day who don't come home because of work-related accidents, while the Homeland Security budget is \$60 billion and the EPA budget is \$8 billion a year. Shouldn't the main-stream media try a little harder to explain to people what is really killing them, instead of them playing to the cheap seats.

As mos= of you know, I am a big fan of Bill Moyers and last week on Moyers & Company, political scholars Norman Ornstein and=Thomas Mann explained to Bill that Congress' failure to make progress on gun=control last week — despite support for background checks from 90% of the American publ=c — is symptomatic of a legislative branch's dysfunction, partisan ravings and obstructionism.

Web Link: <http://billmoyers.com/segment/norman-ornstein-and-thomas-mann-explain-why-cong=ess-is-failing-us/>
<http://billmoyers.com/segment/norman-ornstein=and-thomas-mann-explain-why-congress-is-failing-us/>

=p>See web link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVCAfG=XoqA>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch==MVCAfGwXoqA>

For one thing, taxes will quickly whittle a seven-figure income right down to the mid-six figures, perilously close to being within sight of the middle class. Then, an ex-Goldman banker points out, with the mere \$600,000 in take-home pay remaining, bankers still need to "pay the mortgages on, and maintai= houses, in the Hamptons and Manhattan, to put three children through privat= schools costing \$40k a year each, and to pay living costs."=/p>

An even stronger urge than the need to keep up with the Rothschilds or satisfy the miss-us is rooted in the bankers' childhoods.= Every time they push a client to buy a sub-prime CDO, these bankers are merely tr=ing to bring a smile to the cold, disapproving eyes of the parents looking over their shoulders. According to the squid/therapist quoted in the artic=e, only "intense therapy." So you truly have to ask, if these new Masters of the Universe, who see the=selves apart from those who make less are having trouble living off of \$1.6 million a ye=r, they are obviously not financial wizards that they claim. Whereas, anyone who is working at McDonalds earning \$18,000 yearly or a family of four living on \$50,000 a year are economic magicians, much like m= Mother who raised me, making \$10, \$12, \$16 a day in the 1960s.

For those of=you (like me) you probably haven't had any formal computer training and after reading Computer for Dummies</=>, you trudged along learning what you can, during trial and error. To help both you=and me Tech columnist David Pogue shared 10 simple= clever tips for computer, web, smartphone and camera users during a TED =alk. And yes, you may know a few of these already -- but there&#=9;s probably at least one you don't. David Pogue is the personal technology columnist for the New York Times and a tech correspondent for CBS News</=>. He's also one of the world's bestselling how-to authors, with titles in the For Dummies series and his=own line of "Missing Manual" books. Please feel free to click on the web-link below.

http://www.ted.com/talks/david_pogue_10_top_time_saving_tech_tips.html?source=f=cebook#.UX64fRcQhpJ.facebook
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The April employment numbers are in and after a disappointing M=rch report in which only 88,000 jobs were added to the US economy, the Department of Labo= said that the nation added 165,000 jobs and unemployment fell to 7.5%; &nbs=a solid job creation in April. What is truly encouraging is that th=s positive news comes in the shadow of the sequester's automatic spending cuts, causing federal government employment (excluding postal service) to fall by 4,900. On top of this the new report revised the March numbers up from 88,000 to a healthier 138,000, suggesting that the labor market isn't slumping=as much as it had appeared. Many of the details of the new report also point to a steady job market: The drop in the unemployment rate= for example, was driven by more people finding jobs, not by

people leaving the labor force. Some 293,000 more people described themselves as employed in a survey of households, and 93,000 fewer said they were looking for a job but couldn't find one. The ratio of the population with a job ticked up to 58.6 percent, from 58.5 percent. And the number of long-term unemployed, those out of work and looking for a job for more than 27 weeks, fell by 258,000. Good news I say....

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

This week in The Washington Post, filmmaker Chris Paine wrote — Five myths about electric cars — based on his documentaries: "Who Killed the Electric Car?", "Charge" and "Revenge of the Electric Car." He writes this article to counter the debate around electric-car-maker Fisker Automotive, who halted production, laid off most of its employees, missed a federal loan payment last week and told a congressional hearing on Wednesday that bankruptcy may be unavoidable, fueling the debate that plug-ins cars were dead. In the article he dispels five major myths.

Paine says that his myth is partly his fault, perpetuated by the title of his 2006 documentary, "Who Killed the Electric Car?" Saying that the signs back then weren't promising, when under pressure from car companies and other lobbyists, California rolled back its Zero-Emission Vehicle mandate, which had helped get nearly 5,000 electric cars on the road. The change in the regulation freed car-makers to round up the cars they had leased — and then surreptitiously crushed them. Today, almost all the major automakers, along with a cast of new players, are investing in and building plug-in cars. California's mandate has also made a comeback, and other states are considering similar rules. A new report from IEE, part of the Edison Foundation, projects that between 5 million and 30 million electric cars will be on U.S. roads by 2035. "The electrification of the vehicle fleet is a foregone conclusion," says former GM vice chairman (and former electric-car-basher) Bob Lutz. Having driven both the Fisker and its main start-up rival Tesla, I found both to have the feel of toys, except that Tesla developed both a sports car along with a separate sedan, and is estimated to turn a quarterly profit this year.

But ask people what their biggest hesitation is about electric vehicles, they're most likely to say something about the car leaving them stranded. This myth is so pervasive that General Motors applied to trademark the name for it: "range anxiety." A controversial New York Times test drive in February of Tesla's Model S, which ended up needing a tow to a charging station, seemed to confirm the fear. But that test drive — covering more than 500 miles in temperatures as low as 10 degrees — was not your everyday trip. The average American drives fewer than 40 miles a day. That's well within the 75-mile-plus range of most electric cars. And while batteries do run down faster in extreme cold on a normal day Tesla's Model S can go as far as 265 miles on a single charge. The answer to range anxiety for many car-makers is the plug-in hybrid, an electric car with a backup gasoline engine. The Chevrolet Volt, the Toyota Prius Plug-In and the Ford C-Max Energi all use electric power for the first 20 to 50 miles and then switch to gasoline for longer drives. And most Americans drive less than 50 miles a day.

Charging an electric car can be as simple as plugging it into a wall outlet. But AC outlet charging is slow, taking between eight and 24 hours. So it's not usually the method of first resort. That's why most plug-ins are sold with charging docks that work in a home garage and can charge a car in four to eight hours, allowing drivers to treat their cars like their cellphones: topping them off periodically or charging them up overnight. For those who don't have garages, there are now 5,734 public stations in the United States, many with multiple charging points. The newest generation will charge your car nearly 10 times faster than home stations and 50 times faster than an AC outlet. Tesla just installed several of these supercharger stations on the East and West coasts, and Nissan recently announced plans to install 500 in the coming months.

4. Electric cars aren't any better for the environment.

5. Most people will never be able to afford an electric car.

Summary:

Without a doubt, electric cars are the future= and in the meantime, advances developed by electric car-makers are being used in hybrid cars, such as our Prius and Cadillac, which give excellent mileage compared to the 12 mpg that my Jeep Grand Wagoner and 15 mpg Jaguar use to give two decades ago and the 18mpg m= BMW gave a decade ago. As for the potential failure of Fisker, lets imagine how many people sailed west before the Vikings and Columbus were successful, and the thousands of failures before the Wright Brothers proved that man-flight=was possible. A hundred and fifty years ago, most manufacturing was powered by steam engines, breakthroughs were made= and today steam power is obsolete while electric power trains run at speed =n excess of 200 mph. Thus the same can be true for automotive travel and transportation of goods.

This week in Monday Morning Shah Gilani wrote an article under the title – The Next Wall Street Mega-Scandal Has Arrived=/**b**> – saying that major financial institutions haven't learned a lesson as it appears that they are neck deep in another new financial scandal of global proportions, as U.S. and international securities regulators investigating manipulation of LIBOR, the world's most important set of benchmark interest rates, have uncovered another price-rigging scheme, this one in the \$379 trillion market for interest rate swaps. \$379 Trillion, not Billion. Trillion. And the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) has already issued subpoenas to Wall Street's=biggest banks and is interviewing a dozen former and current brokers from the Jersey City, NJ, offices of ICAP Plc. For investors in the big banks, new revelations may put an end to the upward push to the groups' stock prices, whose earnings of late have been helped by reductions in reserves meant as a cushion against future asset hits and litigation expenses.

Far from being in a shady corner in the world of derivatives, interest rate swaps are a mainstream financing tool used by tens of thousands of corporate treasurers worldwide. Interest rate swap prices are used to set the value of over \$550 billion of commercial real estate collateralized bonds and are used to calculate pension annuity values and benefits.

Mega-banks primarily facilitate interest rate swaps by initially taking the other side of customers' trades and are responsible for establishing pricing of these instruments in conjunction with a handful of brokers. Similarly to how LIBOR is calculated, the ISDAFIX, the benchmark series of rates used to price interest rate swaps for U.S. dollar denominated swaps, is convened by a "panel" of banks. The panel, according to the International Swaps and Derivatives Association consists of: Bank of America Corp., Barclays, BNP Paribas SA, Citigroup Inc., Credit Suisse AG, Deutsche Bank AG, Goldman Sachs Group Inc., HSBC Holdings Plc, JPMorgan Chase & Co., Mizuho Financial Group Inc., Morgan Stanley, Nomura Holdings Inc., Royal Bank of Scotland, UBS and Wells Fargo & Co.

An Easy Con in an Era of Regulation

Not only can banks ask ICAP brokers to post whatever quote benefits the bank's internal trading book, whether it's to affect a=positive mark-to-market closing price for accounting and profit and loss (bonus)<=i> calculations, or manipulate an entry price on a new trade with a counter-party, they allegedly ask ICAP brokers to delay entry of actual transactions until after ISDAFIX rates are disseminated. The delay can easily create a beneficial entry price on a trade that would otherwise be priced based on fresh data. Manipulation of prices and rates has huge profit and loss and mark-to-market implications in terms of capital reserve ratios and other bank balance sheet metrics.

Crocker (a former US ambassador to Iraq) advocates that to bring Iraqis from this current brink, the United States must lead a sustained, high-level diplomatic effort, because we did it in the past, beginning in 2007; and that we must do so again, because the stakes for Iraq and the region are far too high for anything less. BUT when will Crocker and neocon supporters understand that until the underlying issues are addressed these fixes will only be temporary? Because we have seen that hawkish diplomacy can lead to a slippery slope, as hawks will sooner or later will lose patience and demand military intervention. So we have to ask ourselves why is this our problem? If the Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish leaders can't resolve their differences, maybe Iraq's neighbors in the Arab League should take the lead. The US has spent more than a trillion dollars, in addition to the loss of more than 4000 American lives, with tens of thousands more who will need life-long assistance due to injuries suffered in Iraq — isn't this=enough. Some wars you just have to walk away from and let time and others resolve the country's problems. The Russians did this in Afghanistan and the US in

Viet Nam, and somehow the Afghans aren't sending terrorist to Russia nor are the Vietnamese sending terrorist to America. Maybe this is the lesson that we should learn.

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It appears that May Day celebrations appeared in pre-Christian times, with the Festival of Flora, the Roman goddess of flowers, and the Walpurgis Night celebrations of the Germanic countries. It is also associated with the Gaelic Beltane. And many of the pagan celebrations were abandoned or Christianized during the process of conversion in Europe. In the 19th Century, popularized by movements supporting worker's rights and in the United States the eight-hour work day groups in Chicago decided to organize a non-violent general strike on May 1, 1996. On 1891 May Day was formalized as an international holiday in Paris. It has since become an official holiday in many countries where governments respect the will of working people. In the last decade in the United States May Day has become a site for recognition and support for the struggles of undocumented immigrant workers. Having work in a factory where new employees often would start their first day (night) grave-yard shift at 11:30pm and quit before midnight, and next to the time-clock management posted a notice that said, "If you don't come to work on Sunday, don't come back on Monday." I truly support the idea as a celebration of worker's rights. In the last decade in the United States May Day has become a site for recognition and support for the struggles of undocumented immigrant workers. Also attached please find The Brief Origins on May Day by The Industrial Workers of the World, to see May Day from the prospective of unions.

As Harold Meyerson writes this week in The Washington Post in the article, How to ease economic anxiety Since the end of World War II the expectations of economic security and mobility that were widely shared by Americans and this been replaced by a pervasive economic anxiety. The problem is that anxiety won't change things. As Meyerson writes, "neither will the majority of analyses of how we got into this fix, nor will most of the (relatively few) recommendations as to how we can get out of it." Especially when people like former private equity banker and Obama administration official Steven Rattner, writing in the New York Times, "the lack of wage growth owes much to the continuing effects of globalization, a trend that has benefited the United States as a whole while hurting many workers." Good for America, apparently, but bad for Americans. Besides, he implies, who can do anything about globalization? It's as inexorable as the sunrise.

But moving from a shareholder capitalism that has diminished most Americans' share of the national pie to a stakeholder capitalism that distributes a greater share of company revenue to the workers who produce it will require major changes to our political economy. It will require our remaining unions to organize millions of workers whom they don't enroll as members but who can nonetheless agitate for better pay and working conditions. It will require Congress, state legislatures and city councils to set the kind of wage standards — and not just minimum-wage standards — that workers once were able to win for themselves before the advent of shareholder capitalism. It will require the rebirth of the kind of economic left in the United States that gave us the New Deal and the four ensuing decades of broadly shared prosperity. Tall orders all, but the alternative is just more anxiety, and all its attendant pathologies.

Let's remember that when Mr. Bush took office following the stock market bubble, and left during the bursting of the housing bubble. Mr. Obama took office during the financial crisis and great recession. People forget that employment during Mr. Bush's first term was very sluggish, and private employment was down 946,000 jobs at the end of his first term. At the end of Mr. Bush's second term, private employment was collapsing, and there were net 665,000 jobs lost during Mr. Bush's two terms. With public sector jobs down over the last several years (Federal, State and local layoffs) dragging down the economy, now a couple of months into Mr. Obama's second term there are now 2,282,000 more private sector jobs than when he took office. To see the difference please download McBride's article who expects the economy to continue to expand and as such doesn't expect a sharp decline in employment as happened at the end of Mr. Bush's 2nd term. The facts are that government jobs are down under the

Obama Administration and private-sectors jobs have grown by more than 2.5 million, compared to the 70,000 jobs loss the month that President Obama took office.<=p>

In an editorial this week in the New York Times -- The Economy Is Heading the Wrong Way -- even those at The=Old Grey Lady believes that although at first glance, the latest economic growth report, released last =riday, appears to show the economy revving up, in reality, the economy is either stuck in low gear, or worse, slowing to a stop as budget cuts harm not only the users of overstretched government ser=ices but the overall economy. And that this precarious situation urgently calls for more federal spending, not less, th=ough that message has been lost on Congress, where the strategies to cut the bud=et have taken priority over strategies to increase growth, jobs and pay. =And please don't blame the Obama Administration, who have been doing everything in their power to both grow the economy and =atisfy the deficit hawks. But when you work at cross-purposes, often neither side is given proper justice due to compromis=s that water-down the strengths of their solutions.

At the same time, cutbacks in government spending took a big chunk out of growth, reflecting, in part, the onset of automatic budget cut= under the sequester. The hit from lower public spending will only intensify in the quarters to come as the sequester= takes full effect, threatening to push growth below its already paltry 2 percent average. There is a tendency, in the gloom, to look for bright spots. Housing, for example, showed continued growth in the first quarter, but it was more than offset b= the drag from cuts in government spending. But if overall growth remains sluggish or even slows down, it could overwhelm the housing recovery, because the pace of home sales is inseparab=e from the pace of the economy. Without enough growth to power jobs and pay, potential homeowners will simply not h=ve the income and credit profiles to buy.

Republicans have insisted on austerity for ideological and political reasons. And to counter government cuts the administration has added new taxes and made inves=ments, but the reductions (especially on state and local levels with teachers, police, firefighter=, social programs) have result in deep cuts and damaging local communitie=. Still the budget fights continue even though the intellectual arguments for near=erm deficit reduction have collapsed. They have endured even as the economies that have enforced budget cuts most strenuously have contracted, notably in Britain and in much of the rest of Europe. And they endure even as the United States remains impaired by fiscal wounds that are, unfortunately and undeniably, self-inflicted. Hopefully now that the New York Times Editorial Board has joined the growing n=umber of prominent economist and think-tanks, publicly saying that au=terity is the wrong direction, our politicians in Washington will finally get the message.

Now that austerity has=been debunked as the economic solution to the current recession, with most economist agreeing that the be=t way for us to get out of our current economic malaise is to promote program= that directly create jobs — with this in mind this week I=have included an Washington Post article by Deputy Assistant Secretary Commerce fr=m 2009 to 2011, Ro Khanna — Five myths about manufacturing jobs, to address the five biggest misconc=ptions about U.S. manufacturing — and why the sector still matte=s. Lets start with the fact that the United States remains a world leader in manufacturing, and that sector remains essential to our economic and technological future.

There is no doubt that America's manufacturing base has declined, peaking at 19.6 million jobs in 1979 and now at just over 11 mill=on jobs. Despite this economic transition, U.S. manufacturing jobs are still worth having. On average, full-time manufacturing work pays 20 percent more than full-time service-sector jobs.= Example, electronic technicians with only a high school diploma can rise through the ranks of manufacturing companies to ear= more than \$100,000 a year. Whereas, high school grads in retail or service-sector jobs rarely reach six figures.

Andy Grove, the former chief executive of Intel, has famously argued that the best innovation takes place when design teams are integrated with production teams. Product designers can get feedback about =he practical constraints

involved in manufacturing and can fine-tune their designs accordingly. Apple has said that it is investing \$100 million in new U.S. plants — a move hailed as bringing manufacturing back to our shores. However, Apple has always done most of its prototype manufacturing in the United States. The company may mass-produce iPhones in China, but it has maintained U.S. factories as laboratories to perfect its products before launch. Now, rising wages in China and transportation costs have encouraged Apple to manufacture some of its Mac lines here. It is naïve to think we can keep design in America without retaining some manufacturing capacity.

Over the past decade, the growth of Chinese manufacturing has exceeded America's, so for the first time, China has taken the lead in global manufacturing. Yet, for all the hype about the BRIC economies — Brazil, Russia, India and China — the United States remains neck-and-neck with China in manufacturing output, and we still far outstrip such traditional powerhouses as Japan and Germany. China and the United States each produce about one-fifth of the world's manufacturing, yet we do so with only about 20 percent of our economy devoted to that sector, compared with nearly 40 percent of the Chinese economy. U.S. manufacturing workers are almost six times as productive as Chinese workers and 11 / 2 times as productive as those in Japan and Germany.

If you think of manufacturing as a tedious job with no intellectual stimulation, you haven't visited a U.S. factory floor lately. Whether making steel bars or suits for firefighters, many of today's manufacturing jobs require the ability to operate complex machines, math skills and an understanding of how to maximize efficiency. No doubt, every job has repetitive aspects. One of the advantages is that the best manufacturing workers are not just doing repetitive tasks; they are thinking about how to improve a product's design or production.

America has long had a bipartisan consensus favoring government support for private manufacturers. In 1791, Alexander Hamilton argued that the nation should provide incentives and assistance to manufacturers to compete in the world economy. Even Thomas Jefferson came around to the view that government has a stake in building domestic manufacturing. These principles influenced Herbert Hoover, who before he was president was regarded as a great commerce secretary and provided financial support for the aviation industry. Later, President Ronald Reagan supported Sematech to help our semiconductor industry.

Of course, America's free-enterprise system is what enables our manufacturers to be the most innovative. No one is suggesting that the government pick winners or losers. Some bets on new companies, such as Solyndra, are bound to fail. But such failures should not deter the government from investing in DARPA, a strategic agency at the Defense Department, or ARPA-E, a strategic agency at the Energy Department, which can propel innovation, new technologies and new industries. As such we must do everything that we can to keep manufacturers at home through tax incentives, attract immigrants and better prepare a skilled workforce. And we must continue the collaboration between government and business that helped make America an economic superpower.

In an article this week in Money Morning — Myths and Realities About the U.S. Economy, Ben Gersten uses graphs to point out myths and misleading statistics about the US economy. Are taxes the highest they've ever been? Is the country's spending at record levels? Are the majority of products U.S. consumers buy produced by low-wage workers overseas? The answer often depends on the spin. Using Bureau of Economic Analysis's graphs, Gersten points out seven myths and misperceptions about the U.S. economy to give a sense of what's real and what is the twisted truth

7 Myths About the U.S. Economy

1. Are Federal Taxes at a Record High?

Even though Americans paid a record \$2.7 trillion in federal taxes in 2012, as a percentage of the economy, that amounted to 16%, below the long-term average. And both the Total Federal Taxes as a Share of the GDP and Personal Income Taxes as a Share of Personal Income, are both less than they were in 1971, and approximately 20%

less than their high in 1999, which produced the first federal government surplus the following year, since the Kennedy Administration.

2. Is Federal Debt as a Record High?

The amount of overall debt in our country continues to reach new highs every week - but it's not at its highest level in relation to GDP. As of April 2, debt held by the public was roughly \$11.96 trillion, or 75% of GDP. But federal debt held by the public as a percentage of GDP was much higher in the 1940s and 1950s.

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4. Is the U.S. Still the World's Leading Economy?

Yes. Americans contribute an average of almost \$50,000 to the country's GDP. That's higher than the average contribution to GDP of any other nation. Japan: \$35,000. EU: \$34,000. And China: \$9,000.

5. Do Foreigners Own America?

Not as much as some would think. Although foreigners own \$25 trillion in U.S. assets and no country, including China owns more than 2.5% of U.S. assets. Furthermore, with only 5% of the world's population the US owned more than \$21 trillion assets abroad. This does not include an estimated \$2 trillion hidden abroad.

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6. Have U.S. Companies Off-shored Their Production to Low-Wage Countries?

The idea that the majority of products U.S. consumers buy are made by poorly paid workers is simply false. In fact, only 1% of the goods produced and services offered by U.S. multinational companies come from low-wage countries, with 70% goods coming from the U.S., 21% from High-Wage foreign countries and 8% from Median-Wage foreign countries. Although I am not sure about these numbers, I included just the same.

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7. Rising of Stagnant Wages?

Wages are growing, but barely. Since the recession, wages have grown at half the rate they did from 2000-2007. These numbers I truly believe are distorted due to the number of people who have been moved or migrated into the Underground Economy, which topped 2 trillion in 2012, not to mention the long-time unemployed, many of whom have dropped out of the workforce. Please feel free to download the attached article so that you can review the graphs personally.

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This week I was drawn to an article in the New York Times by Patrick Sharkey – **The Urban Fire Next Time**. In the article he points out that for the past several years all the ingredients have been in place for an urban crisis. Unemployment has hovered above 15 percent in many of our most distressed cities. High-poverty neighborhoods have spread beyond cities and into the suburbs. The housing collapse has left large sections of communities boarded up. And yet our cities have been relatively quiet. Crime remains at its lowest point since the early 1970s, public housing complexes have not fallen into disrepair, and large numbers of homeless people have not emerged on the streets. Although it has been labeled the Great Recession, he says that it should be called the Private Recession, as hardship

facing many American families have never made it onto the streets other than the Occupy Wall Street protests and Tea Party rallies, both allowing their believers to blow off steam.

But really caught my initial interest was the article's title – The Urban Fire Next Time, as it caused me to reflect on James Baldwin's brilliant and provocative 1963 book – The Fire Next Time. The book consists of two essays, both examining the so-called "Negro Problem" in America in the early 1960's ("Negro" was the term then in use for African-American, and is used interchangeably with the term "black" in this book. The use of both terms in this analysis is therefore reflective of their usage in the book, and of the socio-cultural-literary context in which they were written). Themes other than "the Negro Problem" explored by the book include an examination of the shallowness and ineffectiveness of religious faith, and of intergenerational influences and relationships. I was so taken by this book that in my early 20s I sought out James Baldwin in Paris and we became friends to his death in 1987.

The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin: YouTube Clip: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dI7mLJ9JGzg>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dI7mLJ9JGzg>

This is a book that Mitt Romney should have read, because if he had he might have understood why his 47% comment was egregious and in a sense racist, even though the 47% included whites, but it included them in a way that "they are Niggers (Spics, Fags, Ragheads, Chinks, poor white trash) too." Also every Republican should read, The Fire Next Time, including Latino Republicans, especially people like Marco Rubio, who like myself try to walk the fine line between our ethnicity and the establishment, that tells us that our success is because we are different from our ethnic brothers and sisters. And if you really want to understand why Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev became radicalized, you too should read James Baldwin's The Fire Next Time, and substitute the word "Negro" with Muslim or Arab. And to be honest, the same is true for our foreign policy, where the term American Exceptionalism is often used in condescension (much like the Silent Majority, separating them from us), instead of a beacon of light for those who want to join.

But getting back to Sharkey's article, The Urban Fire Next Time, he points out that the gutting of urban social programs that have kept minorities, the poor and the disaffected young could have grave consequences, and the bombing of the Boston Marathon and the Newtown massacre are the most recent examples – like the messages in The Fire Next Time, if heeded by the establishment might have reduced the angst that led to the 1960s urban riot. How many more mass shootings and bombings do we have to endure before our political and business leaders realize, that dulling the strength of the safety net that the elderly, poor, minorities and the young rely on to survive and more importantly to feel part of the society?

Compare the current conditions in urban America with those in the early 1980s, when the nation saw a less severe recession, yet neighborhoods were deteriorating and violent crime was much higher. Cities were trying to overcome a range of economic and demographic transformations: the loss of manufacturing jobs, the migration of whites and middle-class minorities out of central city neighborhoods and declining tax revenues. Meanwhile, cities saw their federal aid decline rapidly as the Reagan administration slashed programs like the Community Development Block Grant and public housing. And the consequences were predictable. Housing agencies were unable to maintain their complexes. Public schools crumbled, police forces were overwhelmed. Public transit deteriorated. It took two decades for many cities to recover. But the rich got richer at the cost of economic inequality mushrooming.

Sharkey believes that one of the main differences between now and then is, \$840 billion fiscal stimulus program in 2009, the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, because many of the largest and most important investments made by the "stimulus" went to institutions and organizations that were essential to functioning communities. Abandoned homes did not become hot spots for crime because almost \$2 billion went to acquiring, renovating or demolishing them. As such, class sizes did not swell and police officers did not disappear from city streets because stimulus money was used to stabilize state budgets, improve under-performing schools and rehire officers for community-oriented policing.

A historical perspective on urban policy reveals a cycle in which periods of major investment are followed by periods of neglect, disinvestment and decline. This pattern is in the process of repeating, feast to famine – promise to disillusion. Now that the stimulus money is gone, even though more than half going to tax breaks for the affluent, in the cycle of urban policy making, we are entering another period of neglect. With the impending cuts to housing, schools, and community organizations from the sequestration, vulnerable communities are in danger of falling apart. And to break this dysfunctionality a sustained commitment to urban neighborhoods is necessary to end the erratic cycle of urban policy, and to avoid the next urban crisis. Or as my dear friend James Baldwin called it, The Fire Next Time.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain." =span>

— James Baldwin, The Fire Next=Time

During these election times, here are a few comments on politicians.....

"Those who are too smart to engage in politics are punished by being governed by those who are dumber."

"When I was a boy I was told that anybody could become President; now I believe it."

"Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich, by promising to protect each from the other."

"A politician is a fellow who will lay down your life for his country."

"Instead of giving a politician the keys to the city, it might be better to change the locks."

In 1993/4 my dear friend David Ellington introduced me to the music of Meshell Ndegeocello who is a American singer-songwriter, rapper, bassist, and vocalist. Her music incorporates a wide variety of influences, including funk, soul, hip hop, reggae, R&B, rock, and jazz. She has received significant critical acclaim throughout her career, and has had ten career Grammy Award nominations. She has been credited for having "sparked the neo-soul movement." Ndegeocello was born Michelle Lynn Johnson on August 29, 1968 in Berlin, Germany, to army Sergeant Major and saxophonist father Jacques Johnson and health care worker mother Helen. She was raised in Washington, D.C. where she attended Duke Ellington School of the Arts and Oberlin High School. In early press releases from Maverick Records (started in 1992 by Madonna & Frederick DeMann) her birth year was erroneously listed as 1969. With 12 studio albums/CDs with several notable hits, Ndegeocello has established herself as a serious musician who like my idol Miles Davis and her idol Nina Simone she writes, sings and plays music to her own beat. With this brief overview (longer bio is attached) please along with me enjoy the music of Meshell Ndegeocello=

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — Outside Your Door -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cohuc=UbdXM>
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CohuccUbdXM>>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — Sweet Love -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkyAX_P4q2w
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkyAX_P4q2w>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — D.N.B.</> -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_7GzBHhaVQ
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_7GzBHhaVQ>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — If That's You're Boyfriend -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Oi=zYckcYI>
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OiBzYckcYI>>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — I'm Diggin' You (like n old soul rec) --
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2AN8tuC7SM> <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2AN8tuC7SM>>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — Gettin' High -- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_0SU2jLTjY
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_0SU2jLTjY>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — So I Searching -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bo-nAhT1rVQ&list=PLEDD9C43143DD3850> <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DBo-nAhT1rVQ&list=PLEDD9C43143DD3850>>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — Beautiful --
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6orCSJmWvc&li=t=PLEDD9C43143DD3850>
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6orCSJmWvc&list=3DPLEDD9C43143DD3850>>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — You Make Me Feel So Good --
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKJTRfa9xeg&list=PLEDD9C43143DD3850>
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKJTRfa9xeg&list=PLEDD9C43143DD3850>>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — Call Me -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNwrNp458tE&list=PLEDD=C43143DD3850>
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNwrNp458tE&list=PLEDD9C=3143DD3850>>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — Lilliquo Moon --
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DR2TAbuwECI&list=PLEDD9C43143DD3850>
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v==2TAbuwECI&list=PLEDD9C43143DD3850>>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — Come Smoke My Herb -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1T7T9bCcuHs>
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1T=T9bCcuHs>>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — Stay -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1GyUUt5NNsM>
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1GyUUt5NNsM>>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — Bitter -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEnz6iagZog>
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OE=z6iagZog>>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — Dradlocks -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30QtMpCnmS4>
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=30QtMpCnmS4>>

Me'Shell NdegéOcello — The Chosen -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rm2WTwFtN1g>
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rm2WTwFtN1g>>

=b>Again, I hope that you enjoyed this week's offerings and wish you a great week.....

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

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Gregory B=own
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