
From: Gregory Brown <[REDACTED]>
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Subject: Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.... 1/12/2014
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DEAR =RIEND.....

Saying Farewell to a Rock Icon <<http://www.nytimes.com/video/2014/01/04/arts/music/100000002633285/saying-farewell-to-a-rock-icon.html>>

A dear friend chas=ised me for not mentioning Phil Everly in last week's offering, because he die= last weekend at the age of 74.

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Web Link: <http://nyti.ms/1gyyD7V>

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Phil Everly, as half of the Everly Brothers, =nspired the Beatles, Linda Ronstadt, Simon and Garfunkel and many others who recorded t=eir songs and tried to emulate their ringing vocal alchemy. During the late =950s and early 1960s, Phil Everly and his brother, Don (now 76), ranked among the elite in the music w=rld by virtue of their pitch-perfect harmonies and emotive lyrics. Singer=Phil Everly died a week ago Friday at 74 at St. Joseph's Hospital in Burbank CA (an institution that I know intimately). Rolling Stone labeled the Everly Brothers "the most important vocal duo in rock," having influenced the Beatles, the Beach Boys, Simon & Garfunkel and many other acts. Along the way, they notched 35 Top 100 songs -- more than any other vocal pair. The Everly Brothers' sound -- with Don's lower register generally complementing Phil's higher =oice -- was the backbone of dozens of hits.

Phil and Don were born in the business, the offspring of country and western singers Margaret and Ike Everly. The Everlys sang with their parents in live shows and on the radio. In the mid-'50s, while still teenagers, they moved to Nashville to be song=riters. In 1957, they found a Felice and Boudleaux Bryant song, "Bye Bye Love." According to "The Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock & Roll," 30 acts had rejected the song, but the Everlys -- with the key guitar contributions of =het Atkins, who played on many of their hits -- took the song to No. 2 on the p=p charts. "They added

Bo Diddley riffs, teenage anxieties and sharkskin suits but -- for all that -- the core of their sound remained country brother harmony," read their bio on the Country Music Hall of Fame's website. After averaging a Top 10 hit every four months over the next few years, the Everly Brothers inked a 10-year pact with Warner Brothers Records (formerly=part of CNN's parent company, Time Warner, though now owned by Access Industries) in 1960. More success followed -- including "Cathy's Clown," which the duo wrote -- and they stayed particularly popular in Britain.

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By the 1970s, the pair was performing in a band that also included legends Warren Zevon and Waddy Wachtel. But their time together=came to a sudden end in 1973, when Phil stormed off the stage during a show in California. The brothers reunited on stage and in the studio 10 years later, leading to more albums, including "EB 84" (including the McCartney-written "On the Wings of a Nightingale") and "Born Yesterday." Their remaining years were highlights by occasional shows, hall of fame induction= and various other honors, including a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997.

Who are the Millennials?

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?i=2&ik=875c48a476&view=att&th=1436f30dd757c867&att=d=0.1&disp=safe&readattid=ii_1436f30dd757c867&zw>

Having two children born between 1982 and 2002 I should know something about Millennials Baby Boomers and there was a generation called Generation X that is in between. As a result of doing research for this piece, I discovered that prior to the Baby Boomers, Americans born from 1901 through 1945 are called the Greatest Generation as this generation was shaped by two World Wars and the Great Depression and transform the United States into the greatest country in the world. And depending on what you read there are a number of sub-categories, GI Generation (1901 to 1924), Silent Generation (1925 to 1945), Hippie Generation (1946 to 1964), Baby Boomers (1945 to 1980), Generation X (1975 to 1980), Generation Y (1995 to now). And as you will see some of these generations overlap because there are no precise dates when a generation begins or ends. But again, who are the Millennials?

List of Generations Chart, web link:

http://www.esds1.pt/site/images/stories/isacosta/secondary_pages/10%C2%BA_block1/Generations%20Chart.pdf
http://www.esds1.pt/site/images/stories/sacosta/secondary_pages/10%C2%BA_block1/Generations%20Chart.pdf

The Millennial generation is the generation of children born between 1982 and 2002, some 81 million children who have attended K-12, have already entered college and the workforce. This generation will replace the Baby-boomers as they retire. The Millennials have different characteristics than any generation before them and in order to serve them better, K-12 education and colleges and universities are having to change the way they do business. The Millennials have grown up in a society that is very different than any group before them. They have been plugged into technology since they were babies, are a safe generation, are the first generation for which Hispanics/Latinos will be the largest minority group instead of African Americans and have the most educated mothers of any generation before them. They are the most scheduled generation ever, are true multi-taskers, expect to have 6-8 careers in their lifetime and are attracted to diverse environments. The Millennial student has been a different animal for their teachers. K-12 institutions, colleges, universities and now the work force are wondering how to motivate and meet the expectations of this generation.

Some have argued that the Millennials have transcended the ideological battles spawned by the counterculture of the 19=0s, which persist today in the form of culture wars. This is further documented in Strauss & Howe's book titled *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation*, which describes the Millennial generation as "civic-minded," rejecting the attitudes of the Baby Boomers and Generation X. Since the 2000 U.S. Census, which allowed people to select more than one racial group, "Millennials" in abundance have asserted their right to have all their heritages respected, counted, and acknowledged. A 2013 poll in the United Kingdom found that Generation Y was more "open-minded than their parents on controversial topics". Of those surveyed nearly 65% supported same-sex marriage. While there was a "near-equal split" Millennials came of age in a time where the entertainment industry was affected by the Internet.

American sociologist Kathleen Shaputis labeled Millennials as the boomerang generation or Peter Pan generation, because of the members' perceived tendency for delaying some rites of passage into adulthood, for longer periods than most generations before them. These labels were also a reference to a trend toward members living with their parents for longer periods than previous generations. According to Kimberly Palmer, "High housing prices, the rising cost of higher education, and the relative affluence of the older generation are among the factors driving this trend." However, other explanations are seen as contributing. Questions regarding a clear definition of what it means to be an adult also impacts a debate about delayed transitions into adulthood and the emergence of a new life stage, Emerging Adulthood. For instance, one study by professors at Brigham Young University found that college students are more likely now to define "adult" based on certain personal abilities and characteristics rather than more traditional "rite of passage" events.

And if you have been in the presence of any Millennials, they are addicted to social media and would rather text than speak. But if there is one thing that singularly defines Millennials, it is that they are absorbed by themselves with an insatiable need for immediate gratification which is often in contrast to their tolerance for others, as such they are an interesting bunch with a world of challenges ahead and the access to an unprecedented amount of information, far more than any other previous generation.

Obviously this is not true in many other countries, as Millennials in the Middle East and in European countries who have been hard hit by the 2007/8 recession where the young people have limited employment and career prospects. These groups can be considered to be more or less synonymous with Generation Y, or at least major sub-groups in those countries. Needless to say they are much less optimistic than their American counterparts in the Western Hemisphere and in Asia. Even still these people have more opportunities than previous generations.

As many of you may have surmised television is truly my mistress, but that's what happens when you grow up watching the neighbor's television on Sunday nights when they opened their door so that the kids and other adults in the

building could sit on the stairs and watch along with them. At the age of eleven, I saved up enough so that I could buy my mother and me a 19 inch Philco television set. And one of my perennial favorite television shows over the decades has been 60 Minutes. So I was truly surprised at the hatchet job journalism of last Sunday's segment, 'Cleantech Crash,' which critics have called a "hit job," a "debacle," an "about face" and even "Dumb & Dumber Part 3."

Web Link: <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/the-cleantech-crash> <<http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/the-cleantech-crash>>

The segment is drawing sharp criticism for its pessimistic take on the green technology sector, which questioned whether clean tech has become a "dirty word," arguing that renewable energy and other types of clean technology are a dying industry. One of the biggest issues with the segment, critics charge, is that it conflated the Silicon Valley clean tech venture capital scene with the Department of Energy's loan guarantee program for renewable energy. Climate Progress' Joe Romm contends that CBS missed the point by focusing on the failure rate of private-sector startups and "[failed] to understand that the successes more than pay for the failures." It's worth noting that as many as three-quarters of all venture-backed businesses fail, the Wall Street Journal explained in 2012. Only three in 10 startups in the clean tech sector yield favorable returns for investors, according to a 2004 estimate.

The New York Times recently profiled the U.S. solar industry in a front-page story, noting that companies are benefitting from a "solar power craze that is sweeping Wall Street." Despite the recent U.S. oil and gas boom, the country "has more than doubled electricity generation from wind and solar" in the past four years, notes the San Jose Mercury News' Dana Hull. "If 60 Minutes had taken just two minutes to call us, they could have gotten some of their facts straight," Ken John, a vice president of the Solar Energy Industries Association, told the Washington Examiner. "In truth, America's solar energy industry just closed the books on a record-shattering year in 2013."

The "60 Minutes" segment also focused on the Department of Energy's loan guarantee program, which has funneled billions of dollars into low-carbon and clean-energy projects since the passage of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The goal of the program "is not to make money," Romm notes, but to accelerate the deployment of clean energy technology, while dropping prices and creating jobs. Jonathan Silver, the former head of the DOE's loan guarantee program, testified before Congress in 2012 that the portion of grants given to ventures that later failed "represent[s] less than 3% of the total portfolio." He told Fortune in June that the program "has been a significant success." "Markets will always have difficulty deploying innovative technologies at scale," he explained. "Fundamentally, a program like this is necessary to address that market failure."

Despite the successes of the program and analyses showing its cost-effectiveness for taxpayers, Sunday's segment focused on two notable failures -- automaker Fisker and solar panel manufacturer Solyndra. While interviewing former Energy Department undersecretary Steven Koonin, "60 Minutes" host Lesley Stahl rattled off seven other failures of the

DOE program before declaring, "I'm exhausted." Their focus on those outliers in the DOE program, however, was "both stale and overblown," GigaOM's Katie Fehrenbacher argues.

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To CBS' credit, it has been a rocky road for some=venture capitalists in the clean technology sector, Fehrenbacher notes. There was a bubble, but "only in the venture capital, Silicon Valley ecosystem," she explains. "60 Minutes" did itself a disservice by combining the "totally separate and different" stories of venture capital and federal support for green technology. One problem, according to Fehrenbacher is that clean tech is a "convoluted term," that "can mean many things, and isn't all that helpful as an organizing group." The segment makes reference to the "general cleantech area," while discussing biofu=ls, solar panels, electric vehicles, and other widely divergent industries.

Critics have also noted that the words "climate change," "global warming," "greenhouse gas emissions&qu=t; or "carbon dioxide" were never uttered in the "60 Minutes" segment. "Si=ply put, 60 Minutes is flat wrong on the facts," U.S. Department of Energy spokesman Bill Gibbons said in a= emailed statement. "The clean energy economy in America is real =nd we are increasingly competitive in this rapidly-expanding global industry. This is=a race we can, must and will win."

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But for me the real issue is that it is not the failu=es that make us great, it is our successes. People forget that NASA's first launches were disasters and that 90% of start-ups fail and that is even in Silicon Valley. I wonder how many people sailed west before Columbus. And the personal computer or the cell phone did not start with Apple. We have to=get away from this sense of immediate gratification and do what the Chinese are doing..... taking a lon= term view..... As for 60 Minutes, their resent shoddy journalism makes diehards like me long for Don Hewitt to return from=the grave, but then even under his rein the show stumbled and one of the reason= maybe because morphing journalism into entertainment to achieve ratings wit=out offending sponsors and political heavyweights in itself will lead to these types of problems/issues.

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It seems like every week there is a new po=itical scandal ("bridge-gate") in the country that diverts everyone's attention from fixing the many proble=s and issues currently facing the country, with the latest is the four-day closur= last September of several lanes of the George Washington Bridge that connects th= states of New York and New Jersey and is the busiest traffic bridge in the nation — the result of what New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie said was polit=cal retribution by his staff. Not only was the decision to close access roads in Fort Lee, N.J. skullduggery, it may have =iolated Federal Law and the laws of both States. More importantly it caused a massive traffic jam inconveniencing hundreds of thousands of commuter and business traffic, as well as potentially endan=ering lives. Emails released earlier this week suggest that Christie's senior advisors had concocted a plan to cause a massive traffic jam in Fort Lee to punish t=e town's Democrat mayor, Mark Sokolich, for not endorsing Republican Christ=e's November reelection. At a lengthy news conference Thursday, Christie apologized for the action and said he had no idea his aides had be=n involved. Even if we take him for his word we should be outraged that a =roup of Americans believed that this type of behavior was okay.

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<http://www.toledoblade.com/image/2014/01/09/800x_b1_cCM_z/Traffic-Mystery.jpg>

At the news conference Thursday, Christie referred to the lane closings as a "rogue political operation." "I am stunned by the abject stupidity that was shown here," Christie said. "This was handled in a callous and indifferent way, and this is not the way this administration has conducted itself over the last four years." Christie took reporters' questions at the packed news conference in his office that lasted nearly two hours. He appeared contrite, describing himself repeatedly as "heartbroken" and apologizing several times to the public, and even to the media. Toward the end of his lengthy appearance he visibly relaxed, leaning against the podium, and resorted to more typical form, calling one reporter's question "crazy." He later visited For Lee and apologized to Mayor Mark Sokolich, who told reporters he accepted the apology.

On Thursday Christie fired one of his top aides, Deputy Chief of Staff Bridget Anne Kelly "because she lied to me". "callous indifference" displayed by Stepien in the emails released Wednesday. Stepien had widely been seen as a potential campaign manager for Christie if he runs for president. Christie said he is still looking into the traffic jam episode and will take action against other senior staff members if it is warranted. Christie said he is still looking into the traffic jam episode and will take action against other senior staff members if it is warranted.

Over and over at Thursday's press conference, Christie took responsibility for the affair by virtue of his role as governor while simultaneously blaming his staff for doing something "stupid" and for not telling him the truth when he asked. He said he saw the emails and text messages for the first time on Wednesday and was "blindsided" by what he read and outraged by the callous language. He said he was left "heartbroken" and "betrayed" by his tight-knit circle of advisers. "I have no knowledge or involvement in this issue, in its planning or execution," Christie said of the lane closings. "And I am stunned by the abject stupidity that was shown here."

Emails released Friday by the New Jersey Assembly underscore the dangerous situation New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's aides created by closing access lanes to the George Washington Bridge, with the head of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey worrying that people may have died. In an email to subordinates the morning of Sept. 13 -- several days into the lane closures -- Patrick Foye, Port Authority executive director, said he believed traffic congestion may have hindered first responders. "This hasty and ill-advised decision has resulted in delays to emergency vehicles," he wrote. "I pray that no life has been lost or trip of a hospital-or hospice-bound patient delayed." The lane closings did delay emergency personnel from responding to four incidents, including a 91-year-old suffering cardiac arrest, who later died.

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I don't want to say anymore on this issue because the tabloid media, blogosphere, cable news pundits, Jersey Democrats and political rivals in his own Republican Party will chew on this bone with the zeal of Donald Trump's demanding Barrack Obama producing his long-form birth certificate and Congressman Darrell Issa's continual attempt to link Hillary Clinton to the terrorist attack in Benghazi in 2012. My question is that if Christie is telling the truth, why would his aides believe that they could use "dirty tricks" as retribution because politician from a different party did not support their man? We are seeing this type of dysfunctional, dangerous and divisive behavior across the country. This week I saw a news piece on NBC where RNC Chairman Reince Priebus presented a list of fantasy scandals that include the Rose Law Firm, the attempt to reform healthcare in 1992, to Fast and Furious gun policy and Benghazi as a reason that Hillary Clinton is unqualified to run for President even though all of those were manufactured and all have been proven to be false, and she hasn't even announced her candidacy.

Whether these are Republicans or Democrats perpetuating this type of behavior, or the dog eat-dog 24/7 broadcast cycle that presents this as news instead of trying to tackle some of the major challenges facing the country, such as our deteriorating infrastructure, disastrous public education system, chronic long-term unemployment, culture of violence, worsening environmental situations across the country and the weakening of the safety net protecting the elderly, poor, children and infirmed. We have to stop hating? And the currently Christie scandal is the latest example of how this type of hatred can manifest into people believing that they can subvert their authority to damage others without consequence. The country is spending tens if not hundreds of billions of dollars each year to protect us from North Korea, Iran and other imaginary threats when the one thing that can and will destroy us is rot from within. I hope that you are as disgusted as I am, not because of the latest specific event but because a group of Americans felt that this type of behavior is okay.
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This week Reuters posted the article – Feds Probe Banks For Mortgage Misdeeds After Financial Crisis. The article said that although federal regulators are probing whether several big banks deliberately mispriced mortgage bonds in the years following the financial crisis, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing people close to the inquiry, that a new investigation is a potential blow to the banks as they have already paid billions of dollars in penalties and fines to various federal agencies following scrutiny of their conduct leading up to and during the market panic of 2008.

Banks continued to hold billions of dollars in hard-to-price assets on their books even in the aftermath of the credit crisis. Regulators are now seeking information about whether banks made "significant misrepresentations" about some of those assets to make deals, the Journal said. The probe focuses on whether traders bought or sold residential mortgage-backed securities at artificially depressed or inflated values from around 2009 through 2011, the paper said. The other parties in such deals would typically be rival banks, hedge funds and other large investment firms, according to the paper.

The banks being probed include Barclays Plc, Citigroup Inc, Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs Group Inc, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, Royal Bank of Scotland Group and UBS AG. The investigation, which began less than a year ago, is still

at an early stage and may not lead to enforcement action. Subpoenas have been sent to several firms to gather information, according to the newspaper. The probe is being conducted by the Securities and Exchange (SEC) and the special inspector general for the Troubled Asset Relief Program (Sigtarp). Spokesmen for the SEC, Sigtarp and JPMorgan declined to comment to the newspaper. RBS spokeswoman Mary Taylor declined to comment to Reuters on the Journal report.

The damaged U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, on September 12, 2012.

In an article this month in The Atlantic Magazine – >A0David Rohde wrote – How Partisan Bickering Sabotaged America's Middle East Policy – based on a recent New York Times investigation which questioned the central tenet of the Republican assault on the White House regarding Benghazi in September 2012, with both Republicans and Democrats, however, remained focused on winning their daily messaging battle in Washington. Neither the American left nor the right has offered a serious strategy for how to respond to the emergence of new types of militant groups across the Middle East. President Barack Obama's approach consisted of trusting unchecked CIA drone strikes and NSA eavesdropping to secure the United States. Republicans used the region's instability as a cudgel to beat the president with.

Here are three of 2013's most troubling developments in the Middle East—and Washington's perfunctory responses that were a disservice to all Americans.

Benghazi's Meaning: As Amy Davidson correctly noted in The New Yorker this week, Washington's response to months of investigation on the ground in Libya and Egypt by Times reporters Kirkpatrick, Suliman Al-Zway, Osama Alfitori, and Mayy El Sheikh quickly devolved into a useless debate over the term "al Qaeda." Representative Darrell Issa (R-Calif.)—eager to undermine Obama administration statements that core al Qaeda has been weakened—insisted that the group involved in the attack "claims an affiliation with al Qaeda," as if that was the same as an actual relationship with core al Qaeda's remaining leaders. Fox News commentator and Washington Post columnist Charles Krauthammer dismissed the story as an effort "to protect Hillary [Clinton]." Fox News terrorism analyst Walid Phares absurdly argued that Kirkpatrick was "known to side with Islamists."

The broad message from the left, meanwhile, was that the United States only makes things worse in the Middle East when it acts there. On MSNBC, Karen Finney said the story exonerated the Obama administration because it found that a fake Hollywood video mocking the Prophet Muhammad did, in fact, help spark the attack. Isolationists on the left and the right argued that any military action—particularly one carried out by the United States—was destructive. What was lost when each side cherry-picked conclusions that fit their worldview? The Libyan people's growing disdain of militias, both jihadi and tribal. In November, Libyans outraged by rising lawlessness drove militias out of Tripoli. Libya's weak central government, however, lacks the properly trained security forces needed to assert control.

Libya's first democratically-elected prime minister—a pro-Western moderate—asked in June for American and NATO forces to help train government security forces. Washington's response? After five months of talk, the United States

agreed in November to train 6,000 to 8,000 Libyan soldiers at a military base in Bulgaria. This paltry effort will not be nearly enough to aid Libyans who oppose militancy. U.S. and NATO military forces should not enter Libya—a move we know from past experience will strengthen jihadists there. But a far larger training effort should be mounted outside Libya.

The Muslim Brotherhood: In 2013, the biggest gamble in the region was the Egyptian army's decision in July to violently crush the Muslim Brotherhood and remove that nation's first democratically elected president. The military-dominated government seems to announce each week a new crackdown on the Brotherhood and other critics. But it is not clear that the use of force is working. The Egyptian military campaign against the Brotherhood has now killed more people than the Iranian government's 2009 crushing of the "Green Revolution." Yet Cairo has failed to stop regular demonstrations by the Brotherhood. It has also failed to halt a series of car bombings by Islamic extremist groups that are urging Brotherhood members to take up arms. The stakes in Egypt are enormous. The crackdown could succeed—or drive tens of thousands (possibly hundreds of thousands) of conservative activists into the arms of al Qaeda. The reaction of Republican and Democrats to these developments?

Collective silence. The Obama administration should suspend all U.S. military aid to Egypt and stop embracing the Saudi fantasy that autocrats are the region's low-risk cure-all. Over the long-term, autocrats foster instability and economic stagnation—not stability—in the Middle East.

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Syria: 2013 will be viewed as the year that President Bashar al-Assad turned the tide in the war in Syria. As Adam Entous and Michael Gorman detailed in a Wall Street Journal story this week, "all-in" military support from Iran and Hezbollah allowed Assad to retake crucial territory. The Obama administration, however, blinked. Obama had vowed to punish Assad for any chemical weapons attacks. Yet the president held off on air strikes or fully arming the rebels, citing fears of getting embroiled in another Mideast conflict. The result is a conflict in Syria that could drag on for years. Assad can hold much of the country, but not all of it.

Jihadists, meanwhile, are taking control of the opposition. Thousands of militants from Iraq, Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia have flocked to Syria. An estimated 1,500 to 2,000 European citizens and dozens of American citizens have joined the fight there as well. An unknown number are being radicalized. Some of these jihadists will likely return home, as it becomes clear that Assad will not be toppled in 2014. The Obama administration is gambling that CIA drone strikes and NSA surveillance will somehow hold them at bay. More likely, the blowback from Syria will resemble that of the 1980s anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan. Jihadists from that conflict sparked a decade-long civil war in Algeria that killed 50,000—and, of course, carried out the 9/11 attacks.

The Obama administration's only remaining leverage in Syria is its economic sanctions on Iran, Assad's primary military backer. Any nuclear agreement with Iran that involves a reduction in economic sanctions should include Iranian support for a peace settlement in Syria. The chances of Washington agreeing on such a strategy are low. Our political elite was

so deeply divided in 2013 that we could not define a common enemy. We turned a blind eye to the revival of Mideast authoritarianism. And we fashined no plans for how to respond to Syria becoming a new Afghanistan. The damage that Washington's partisanship wrought on domestic affairs in 2013 was chronicled daily in the media. Its destructive impact on the Middle East—and our national security—will emerge for years to come. And for Representative Darrell Issa, Charles Krauthammer, Walid Phares and others where is your shame? And to President Obama, please don't bite the bait and stay out of Syria, because getting in will result in America being responsible for a solution as well as the damage that this continuing conflict is causing.

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Here's What GOP Obstruction Of Health Care Does To People In One Chart

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While Republicans at the national level have thus far been completely unsuccessful in attempts to repeal or defund the Affordable Care Act, Republicans at the state level have succeeded in preventing people from obtaining health coverage under the new law. Data compiled by Theda Skocpol of Harvard University for the Scholars Strategy Network, a progressive group of academics, illustrates how states' decisions to not create their own health care exchanges or expand Medicaid under the ACA have suppressed enrollment. According to Skocpol's research, the 14 states that are expanding Medicaid and running their own exchanges have seen enrollment in Medicaid and exchanges at around 40 percent of projections. In contrast, in the 23 states that refused to expand Medicaid or cooperate when it comes to an exchange, enrollment percentages are in the single-digits.

The chart illustrates the vastly different experiences with Obamacare from state to state. Texas, which has the highest percentage of uninsured in the country and whose governor, Rick Perry (R), opted not to expand Medicaid and has called Obamacare a "criminal act," saw only about 14,000 people sign up using the exchange through the end of November, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. California, which has a higher number of uninsured than Texas but a lower proportion, saw 107,087 people sign up through the state's exchange and 181,817 qualify for the state's Medicaid program through the end of November, according to federal data reported by the Los Angeles Times. Tens of thousands more signed up in California in December.

Under the Affordable Care Act, states can either run their own exchange or have the Department of Health and Human Services run it for them. Alternatively, seven states have opted for a federal-state partnership exchange. Many Republican governors wanted no ownership over the Obamacare exchanges and deferred to the federal government. The website of the federal marketplace, HealthCare.gov, has been plagued by a botched rollout with many glitches.

Thanks to the Supreme Court decision that declared the law constitutional, governors are free to decline the federal money to expand Medicaid without losing the federal money they already received to insure low-income people. For reasons similar to why they didn't set up exchanges, many Republican governors decided not to expand Medicaid under the law, despite the fact that the federal government plans to pick up all of the cost for newly eligible enrollees in the first three years and no less than 90 percent permanently. While community organizers in red states with high populations of uninsured have tried to organize their own campaigns, the data suggests that it takes the power of a state to implement the health care law.

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The Atlantic's '5= Greatest Innovations' misses the Mother of them all

=span style="font-size:12pt;line-height:17px;font-family:Georgia,serif">The Atlantic's columnist James Fallows recently listed the top=50 innovations by polling "a panel of 12 scientists, entrepreneurs, engineers, historians of technology, and others." Strangely, I counted onl= 11 panelists (math wasn't on the list), which included Silicon Valley V= John Doerr; Joi Ito from MIT Media Lab; and the perennial favorite of =every editor: whoever happens to be around the office at the time, which in=this case was The Atlantic's senior editor Alexis Madrigal. The li=t starts off with: - The printing press (1430s not th= earlier Chinese one).

Then you have all the ones you'd expect: electricity, semicondu=tors, optics, internal combustion engine, Internet, of course. But they mi=sed the most important technology breakthrough of all time: Gastronomy. =The editors said they wanted to list the most important innovations since =he wheel, or about 6,000 years ago, so that they could avoid listing fire.= But that makes little sense because fire is not an invention but a natu=al phenomenon. And some recent civilizations, such as those in the Amer=cas, didn't use the wheel for transportation, or like the Mayans used th= wheel only for toys. Atlantic could have just said 50 most important b=reakthroughs (fire and wheel not included).

The Atlantic asked each panelist to mak= 25 selections and to rank them, despite the impossibility of fairly compa=ing, say, the atomic bomb and the plow. (As it happens, both of these made=it to the final list: the discovery and application of nuclear fission, wh=ch led to both the atomic bomb and nuclear-power plants, was No. 21 of the=top 50, ahead of the moldboard plow, which greatly expanded the range of l=nd that farmers could till, at No. 30.) They also invited panelists to =dd explanations of their choices, and I followed up with several of them a=d with other experts in interviews.

One panelist ranked his choices not by =importance but by date of invention, oldest (cement) to newest (GPS satelli=es). Some emphasized the importance not of specific breakthroughs but o= broad categories of achievement. For instance, Joel Mokyr, an economic=historian at Northwestern, nominated in his top 10 "modularity."=A0 By that he meant the

refinements in industrial processes that all-wed high-volume output of functionally identical parts. This enabled ma= production and the Henry Ford-style assembly line (49 on The Atlantic=92s list), and the profound shift from handmade to volume-produced version= of everything. Modularity didn't make it onto Atlantic's final lis=; the adoption of standardized shipping containers, which extended the sam= logic in a different realm, just missed the cut.

The Author: In short, these scientis=s and creative types decided to answer the question they wanted us to ask,=rather than the exact one we posed. We have new sympathy for people attemp=ing to manage universities and R&D labs. But in the end we had enough =omparable and overlapping suggestions, from enough people, with enough spe=led-out explanations, and enough force of experience and insight behind th=m, to be comfortable presenting The Atlantic's survey of humanity's 50=most important technical breakthroughs since the wheel. We converted all t=e responses into values we could enter on a spreadsheet; we weighted, as r=asonably as we could, the intensity and breadth of support; we watched the=combined rankings go up and down as each new response arrived; and we came=up with the final ranking you see here.

The List

The Atlantic ask=d a dozen scientists, historians, and technologists to rank the top innova=ions since the wheel. Here are the results.

1. =AOThe printing press, 1430s

The printing press was nomi=ated by 10 of our 12 panelists, five of whom ranked it in their top three.=Dyson described its invention as the turning point at which "knowledge b=gan freely replicating and quickly assumed a life of its own."

2. =AOElectricity, late 19th century

And then there was light—and Nos. 4, 9, 16, 24, 28,=44, 45, and most of the rest of modern life.

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3. Penicillin, 1928=/b>

Accidentally discovered in =928, though antibiotics were not widely distributed until after World War =I, when they became the silver bullet for any number of formerly deadly di=eases

4. =AO Semiconductor electronics, mid-20th century

The physical foundation of the virtual world</=>

5. Optical lenses, 13th century

Refracting light through glass is one of those simple ideas that took a mysteriously long time to catch on. "The Romans had a glass industry, and there's even a passage in Seneca about the optical effects of a glass bowl of water," says Mokyr. But it was centuries before the invention of eyeglasses dramatically raised the collective human IQ, and eventually led to the creation of the microscope and the telescope.

6. =AO Paper, second century

"The idea of stamping images is natural if you have paper, but until then, it's economically unaffordable." — Charles C. Mann

7. =AO The internal combustion engine, late 19th century

Turned air and fuel into power, eventually replacing the steam engine (No. 10)

8. Vaccination, 1796</=>

The British doctor Edward Jenner used the cowpox virus to protect against smallpox in 1796, but it wasn't until Louis Pasteur developed a rabies vaccine in 1885 that medicine—and government—began to accept the idea that making someone sick could prevent further sickness.

9. =AO The Internet, 1960s

The infrastructure of the digital age

10. The steam engine, 1712

Powered the factories, trains, and ships that drove the Industrial Revolution

1=. Nitrogen fixation, 1918

The German chemist Fritz Ha=er, also the father of chemical weapons, won a Nobel Prize for his development of the ammonia-synthesis process, which was used to create a new class=of fertilizers central to the green revolution (No. 22).

12. =A0Sanitation systems, mid-19th century

A major reason we live 40 years longer than we did in=1880 (see “Die Another Day”)

13. Refrigeration, 1850s

“Discovering how to make cold would chang= the way we eat—and live—almost as profoundly as discovering how to co=k.” —George Dyson

14. =A0Gunpowder, 10th century

Outsourced killing to a machine

15. The airplane, 1903=/b>

Transformed travel, warfare, and our view of =he world (see No. 40)

16. =A0The personal computer, 1970s

Like the lever (No. 48) and the abacus (No. 43), it a=gmented human capabilities.

17. The compass, 12th century=span>

Oriented us, even at sea

18. =A0The automobile, late 19th century

Transformed daily life, our culture, and our landscape

19. Industrial steelmaking, 1850s

Mass-produced steel, made possible by a method known as the Bessemer process, became the basis of modern industry.

20. =A0The pill, 1960

Launched a social revolution

21. Nuclear fission, 1939<=span>

Gave humans new power for destruction, and creation

22.= The green revolution, mid-20th century

Combining technologies like=synthetic fertilizers (No. 11) and scientific plant breeding (No. 38) huge=y increased the world's food output. Norman Borlaug, the agricultural economist who devised this approach, has been credited with saving more than = billion people from starvation.

23. =A0The sextant, 1757

It made maps out of stars.

24. The telephone, 1876

Allowed our voices to travel

25. =A0Alphabetization, first millennium B.C.

Made knowledge accessible and searchable—and may have contributed to the rise of societies that used=phonetic letters over those that used ideographic ones

26. =A0The telegraph, 1837

Before it, Joel Mokyr says, “information could move=no faster than a man on horseback.”

27. The mechanized clock, 15t= century

It quantified time.

28. =A0Radio, 1906

The first demonstration of electronic mass media's =ower to spread ideas and homogenize culture

One of the firs= practical applications of Louis Pasteur's germ theory, this method for =sing heat to sterilize wine, beer, and milk is widely considered to be one=of history's most effective public-health interventions.

34. The Gregorian calendar, 1582

Debugged the Julian calendar, jumping ahead 10 days t= synchronize the world with the seasons

<=>

35. Oil refining, mid-19t= century

Without it, oil drilling (No.=39) would be pointless.

36= The steam turbine, 1884

A less heralded cousin of s=eam engines (No. 10), turbines are the backbone of today's energy infras=ructure: they generate 80 percent of the world's power.

37. =A0Cement, first millennium B.C.

The foundation of civilization. Literally.

=p class="MsoNormal">>

38. Scientific plant breeding, 1920s

=umans have been manipulating plant species for nearly as long as we've g=own them, but it wasn't until early-20th-century scientists discovered a=forgotten 1866 paper by the Austrian botanist Gregor Mendel that we figure= out how plant breeding—and, later on, human genetics—worked.</=>

39. Oil drilling, 1859

Fueled the modern economy, established its geopolitic=, and changed the climate

40. The sailboat, fourth =illennium B.C.

Transformed travel, war=are, and our view of the world (see No. 15)

=41. Rocketry, 1926

"Our only way off the planet—so far." — Georg= Dyson

42. Paper money, 11th =entury

The abstraction at the core of =he modern economy

=A0 43. The abacus, third millennium B.C.

One of the first devices to augment human intelligenc=

44. Air-conditioning, 190=

Would you start a business in Houston=or Bangalore without it?

=A0 45. Television, early 20th century

Brought the world into people's homes

46. Anesthesia, 1846</=pan>

In response =o the first public demonstration of ether, Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. wrote= "The fierce extremity of suffering has been steeped in the waters of fo=getfulness, and the deepest furrow in the knotted brow of agony has been s=oothed forever."

47. =A0The nail, second millennium B.C.

"Extended lives by enabling people to have shelter.=94 — Leslie Berlin

48. The lever, third mill=nnium B.C.

The Egyptians had not yet d=covered the wheel when they built their pyramids; they are thought to hav= relied heavily on levers.

49. =A0The assembly line, 1913

Turned a craft-based economy into a mass-market one</=pan>

50. The combine harvester= 1930s

Mech=nized the farm, freeing people to do new types of work

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=3D2&ik=875c48a476&view=att&th=1436409196e7eee1&attid=3D0.1&disp=safe&realattid=ii_1436409196e7eee1&zw>

Staff workers play armchair volleyball with members of the Care Club in Boise, ID=/span

=p class="MsoNormal" style="text-align:left"> A= someone who finds himself searching for words on an increasing basis and senses it is taking longer to connect the dots, I take=a special interest in any news about Alzheimer disease. But then I am not =lone as one in three seniors dies with some form of dementia, it is the sixth-leading cause of d=ath in the United States and more than 5 million Americans currently living wit= Alzheimer's. This number does not include the 15 million Americans currently caring for a love one with dementia. As such I took interest in Richard Gunderman's article this month in The Atlantic – Bringing =ementia Patients to Life. The good news for Baby Boomers and our elders is that a dementia diagnosis is not the medical equivalent of falling off a cliff and if we stay hopeful and focus on what matters most, =e can do a lot to help patients reach their peak every day.

T= provide the best possible care for dementia patients, we need to get past some important misconceptions about the disease. One is=that Alzheimer's, which accounts for about 80 percent of dementias, is strictly a disorder of memory. In fact= it usually involves many mental processes, including the abilities to focus attention, organize thoughts, a=d make sound judgments. Another is the notion that Alzheimer's is strictly a disease of cognition. In reality= it can affect emotions and personality, as well. But perhaps the biggest misconceptions Theresa encoun=ers regards a dementia diagnosis as the end.

N=turally, being diagnosed with dementia represents an important change in life, but it is certainly not a death sentence. Some patients diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease will live another 15 and even=20 more years, though others will progress more quickly. Nor does it represent=the end of all that is good in life. Professional caregivers have learned a crucial lesson that needs to be disseminated everywhere: "We should dwell less on lamenting what dementia patients are incapable of and focus more on bringing out and celebrating what they are capable of doing.&=uot;

Like anything else in medic=ne, helping someone suffering from dementia requires understanding, compassion, and dedication. Care need= to be tailored to each patient's personality, life history, and stage in the development of the disease. When this is done well, new possibilities open =p. What might have been an atmosphere of regret and hopelessness centered on t=e disease's relentless progress can be transformed into an upbeat outlook t=at celebrates abilities, rejoices in moments of recognition, and looks to the future with hope.

D=mentia caregivers now invite patients to participate in such rituals on a regular basis. One of the key words here is "part=cipate." They do not passively sit back and watch or listen as someone else recites prayers and sings hymns. They are invited=and encouraged to join in the service. Some, typically those in the early stages of their disease, are able to participa=e fully, even engaging in discussions about the meaning of what they are doin=. For others at later stages, participation may mean singing, ringing bells, or simply tapping feet and clapping hands.

O=e recent case demonstrated the power of such rituals to bring out the best in a person. Martha was a silver-haired, 82-year-old dementia patient whose adult daughter visi=ed her in her memory care facility every day. Usually, Martha spent most of=her day asleep in bed, and when she sat in a chair, she tended to slump to one side, seemi=gly oblivious of her surroundings. But within a few minutes of the start of a service, she would sit straight up, =ook at her daughter, and join enthusiastically in the prayers and hymns. On =ore than one occasion she even told her daughter that she loved her.

The implicit expectation that dementia patients will somehow withdraw and shrivel up can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Martha ha= been in and out of hospice three times. Three times her daughter had prepared to say goodbye to her for the last time. The key in such cases is =o avoid the mentality that the most anyone can hope is that patients will sim=ly keep quiet and leave everyone alone. As Theresa says, "We need to avoid treating the Marthas of the world as just patients we do things to. We must never forget that they are also human beings we can do things with."</=>

<=span>

Gunderman: = physician friend recently told me a similar story. He and a colleague had just emerged from a very difficult conversation with a young cancer patient whos= disease had progressed so far that she understood very little of their conversation. They had gone out into the nursing station to write notes in her chart when he noticed an elderly gentleman sitting in the hall in a wheelchair. Clearly in the advanced s=ages of dementia, he slumped to his side, oblivious to what was going on around him, held upright= only by a restraining belt clutching him to the chair.

To everyone's amazement, just as =hey were sitting down, the old man burst forth in song. Everyone immediately stopped what they were doing, amazed and transfixed. Inexplicab=y, he was intoning in a clear, sonorous tenor voice two verses of an old Bapti=t hymn, "God Will Take Care of You." Every eye within earshot welled with tears each time he launched into the refrain:

God will take care of you,

Through every day, o'er all the way;/p>

He will take care=of you,

God will take care of you.

R=tual—in this case, as in others, a familiar hymn—had transformed an otherwise hopeless recipient o= care into someone quite different. At least for those few minutes, he had become a human being capable of reaching out =nd caring for others, a beacon of light and joy to everyone. We simply do n=t know what is transpiring in the mind of another person. It is all too easy to place all the blame on th= dementia patient, lamenting and even despising their disability. But were w= to do so, we would be letting ourselves off the hook a bit too soon. Awareness= understanding, and affection are not merely the outputs of some inner dynam=. They also emerge in response to what others do, say, and feel. In some c=ses, unresponsiveness may say less about a patient's disability than a failure on our part to offer someth=ng worth responding to. So if you have a friend, relative or love one suffering from dementia, although not a cure, keeping them engaged helps.

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I recently heard=a pundit on one of the Sunday morning network news programs describe one of President Lyndon Johnson's signatur= achievements, the War On Poverty, as a failure when this is a= absolute distortion of the truth. In an Huffington Post article this week =y Jillian Berman – This Is What Poverty Would Look Like If The GOP Had Its Way – that a new study by Columbia University research=ers released this week – Without the War on Poverty's govern=ent programs such as food stamps, Medicaid and the Earned Income Tax Credit, America's poverty rate would have jumped from 25 percent to 31 percent =between 1967 and 2012. Instead, it fell from 19 percent to 16 percent during that period. (The chart below shows what the SPM would have been without government programs in dark blue and what it actually was in light blue.)

Government programs have been especially effective at reducing what is known as the "deep poverty rate," or the share of people living below 50 percent of t=e poverty threshold, the researchers found. Without government programs, t=e deep poverty rate would have been 19.2 percent in 2012. Instead, it was 5.3 percent.=A0 "These government policies and programs have really kept that deep poverty rate pr=tty remarkably flat," said Chris Wimer, a research scientist at Columb=a University's Population Research Center and one of the authors of the s=udy. "Even as the business cycle goes up and down, we've been able to hold back real serious deprivation at the bottom."

Though the War on Poverty was largely a bipart=san undertaking in its early years, Republicans -- led by Ronald Reagan - star=ed questioning its merits in the 1980s. In 1988, Reagan famously quipped: "In the '60s, we waged a war on poverty, and poverty won." Republican =arling Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) will likely continue that ideological tradition with a speech he is due to deliver from the LBJ Room of the Capitol on Wednesday. "After 50 years isn't it time to declare big government's war on poverty a fai=ure?" Rubio asked in a video released on Sunday. He went on to advocate "a real agenda that helps people acquire the skills they need" instead of spendin= more on government programs. To that end, over the past few years, Republicans have proposed cutting food stamps and Social Security benefits.

But, according to the Columbia study, those government programs and others are keeping millions of Americans out of poverty and were particularly important during the recession. In 2012, the supplemental poverty measure was 16 percent. Without programs like food stamps, Medicaid and Social Security, it would have been 31 percent, the study found. "You're not seeing nearly the jumps in poverty under the supplemental poverty measure as you saw in previous recessions, and that seems to be because we took a lot of concrete policy actions," like extending unemployment benefits and expanding the food stamp program, Wimer said. "These things have sort of stanching some of the bleeding in the economy."

I often wonder about people like Marco Rubio whose mission is to do everything they can to eviscerate, weaken or kill social programs that provide a safety net for children, poor, elderly and the less fortunate and then claim that they haven't worked. It is akin to defunding NASA and then suggest that it is a failure from the start. First of all, why wouldn't the richest country on the planet not believe that the most vulnerable Americans be provided as much protection as possible? Especially, those of us who consider ourselves Christians. As someone who grew up in a household that was only able to survive with the assistance of Welfare, I can tell you from first-hand experience that it wasn't a luxury and without it the human toll would have been much worse. So if we want our social programs to be successful we have to truly support them and we have to stop ridiculing recipients. Remember expectation is 90% of success because if you can't envision a way-out it is difficult to find a pathway to success.

The decline in median African-American household income from 2000 to 2010.

- * \$4,235: The decline in median Hispanic household income from 2000 to 2010.
- * 49.1 Million: The number of people under 65 without any health insurance.

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To settle a barrage of government legal actions over the last year, JPMorgan Chase has agreed to penalties that now total \$20 billion, a sum that could cover the annual education budget of New York City or finance the Yankees' payroll for 100 years. It is also a figure that most of the nation's banks could not withstand if they had to pay it. But since the financial crisis, JPMorgan has become so large and profitable that it has been able to weather the government's legal blitz, which has touched many parts of the bank's sprawling operations. Peter Eavis/article in the New York Times – Steep Penalties Taken in Stride by JPMorgan Chase.

The latest hit to JPMorgan came on Tuesday, when federal prosecutors imposed a \$1.7 billion penalty on the bank for failing to report Bernard L. Madoff's suspicious activities to the authorities. Yet JPMorgan's shares are up 28 percent over the last 12 months. Wall Street analysts estimate that it will earn as much as \$23 billion in profit this year, more than any other lender. And JPMorgan's investment bankers, who on average earned \$217,000 in 2012, can look forward to another lush payday as bonus season approaches. "The fines have been manageable in the context of the

bank's earnings capacity," Jason Goldberg, a bank analyst at Barclays, said. "It makes \$25 billion in revenue per quarter and has record capital." "JPMorgan failed — and failed miserably," Preet Bharara, the United States attorney in Manhattan, said on Tuesday in announcing the action.

As much as such words might sting at first, the bank's shareholders and clients show every sign of remaining loyal. JPMorgan's financial success highlights a deep quandary that regulators have to grapple with as they press the largest banks to clean up their acts. The government's penalties may seem large on paper — JPMorgan's mortgage settlement with the Justice Department last year cost it a record \$13 billion — but the largest banks seem capable of earning their way out of serious legal trouble. "JPMorgan's shareholders may believe these billions of dollars don't count because they see them as extraordinary expenses," said Erik Gordon, a professor at the University of Michigan Law School. "But they keep popping up one after another — and the bank could have done something about them."

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One reason that JPMorgan can absorb the \$20 billion is that it has steadily set aside reserves over the last few years to finance future legal payouts. Mr. Goldberg, the bank analyst, estimates that, as of last year's third quarter, JPMorgan had injected \$28 billion into its legal reserves since the end of 2009. The legal payouts that have been subtracted from the reserves, including those booked since the third quarter, might have taken the reserve down to about \$10 billion. Most analysts expect JPMorgan will be able to cover any remaining settlements, though the bank said on Tuesday that it might have to set aside an extra \$400 million for the Madoff settlement.

In theory, regulators have other ways of improving ethics at banks. They can try to hold more individuals personally accountable. Some senior executives have left JPMorgan as a result of recent scandals at the bank, including the so-called London whale incident, in which the bank's traders lost more than \$6 billion on botched derivatives trades. In recent months, the bank has also added two members to its board to improve oversight. But facts contained in the government's Madoff action suggest that efforts to hold executives responsible may go only so far.

The action describes how the chief risk officer of JPMorgan's investment bank allowed the bank to increase its financial exposure to a Madoff entity in 2007 to \$250 million. The risk officer had spoken with Mr. Madoff but approved the increase even though Mr. Madoff appeared to make it clear that he would not answer more probing questions about his firm. The government's action says that the risk officer understood that Mr. Madoff "would not authorize any further direct due diligence of Madoff Securities." The risk officer, John Hogan, still works at JPMorgan as chairman of risk. "Our senior people were trying to do the right thing and acted in good faith at all times," Brian J. Marchiony, a JPMorgan spokesman, said in a statement. The bank also said, "We recognize we could have done a better job pulling together various pieces of information and concerns about Madoff from different parts of the bank over time." </p>

Still, some banking experts say they think that companies like JPMorgan are so large and complex that it might be almost impossible to keep all employees in line. "With respect to the big banks, it is not so much a culture problem but a complexity problem," said Kurt N. Schacht, a managing director at the CFA Institute, an organization that promotes ethics and standards at financial firms. "We think these firms are so large that they are always going to be plagued by rogue operators." As a result, breaking up the banks to make them smaller might improve their cultures, some bank specialists contend. "I think JPMorgan is too big to manage and it should be broken up," said Paul Miller, a bank analyst

at F=R Capital Markets. The London whale incident, he said, showed that some employees at large banks may still try to maximize their compensation at the expense of the firm. "There is too much of an incentive for an individual to cut corners."

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Not Just About Us

Every day the headlines from the Arab world get worse: An Al Qaeda affiliate group, aided by foreign fighters, battles with seven different homegrown Syrian rebel groups for control of the region around Aleppo, Syria. The Iranian Embassy in Beirut is bombed. Mohamad Chatah, an enormously decent former Lebanese finance minister, is blown up after criticizing Hezbollah's brutal tactics. Another pro-Al Qaeda group takes control of Fallujah, Iraq. Explosions rock Egypt, where the army is now jailing Islamists and secular activists. Libya is a mess of competing militias.

What's going on? Some say it's all because of the "power vacuum" — America has absented itself from the region. But this is not just about us. There's also a huge "values vacuum." The Middle East is a highly pluralistic region — Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds, Christians, Druze and various tribes — that for centuries was held together from above by iron-fisted colonial powers, kings and dictators. But now that vertical control has broken down, before this pluralistic region has developed any true bottom-up pluralism is a broad ethic tolerance — that might enable its citizens to live together as equal citizens, without an iron fist from above.

For the Arab awakening to have any future, the ideology that is most needed now is the one being promoted least: Pluralism. Until that changes, argues Marwan Muasher, in his extremely relevant new book — "The Second Arab Awakening and the Battle for Pluralism" — none of the Arab uprisings will succeed.

<= class="MsoNormal">Again, President Obama could have done more to restrain leaders in Iraq, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran or Syria from going to extremes. But, ultimately, argues Muasher, this is the Arabs' fight for their political future. If 500,000 American troops in Iraq, and \$1 trillion, could not implant lasting pluralism in the cultural soil there, no outsider can, said Muasher. There also has to be a will from within. Why is it that some 15,000 Arabs and Muslims have flocked to Syria to fight and die for jihadism and zero have flocked to Syria to fight and die for pluralism? Is it only because we didn't give the "good guys" big enough guns?

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As Muasher, a former Jordanian foreign minister and now a vice president at the Carnegie Endowment in Washington, put it in an interview: "Three years of the Arab uprising have shown the bankruptcy of all the old political forces in the Arab world." The corrupt secular autocrats who failed to give their young people the tools to thrive — and, as a result, triggered these uprisings — are still locked in a struggle with Islamists, who also have no clue how to deliver jobs, services, security and economic growth. (Tunisia may be an exception.) "As long as we're in this zero-sum game, the sum will be zero," says Muasher.

<= class="MsoNormal">No sustainable progress will be possible, argues Muasher, without the ethic of pluralism permeating all aspects of Arab society — pluralism of thought, pluralism in gender opportunities, pluralism in respect to other religions, pluralism in education, pluralism toward minorities, pluralism of political parties rotating in power and pluralism in the sense=of everyone's right to think differently from the collective.

The first Arab awakening in the 20th century was a fight for independence from colonial powers, says Muasher. It never continued as a fight for democracy and pluralism. That war of ideas, he insists, is what "the second Arab awakening" has to be about. Neither the autocrats nor the Islamists =an deliver progress. "Pluralism is the operating system we need to solve all=our problems, and as long as that operating system is not in place, we will not=get there. This is an internal battle. Let's stop hoping for delivery from th= outside." This will take time.

Naïve? No. Naïve is thinking that everything=is about the absence or presence of American power, and that the people of the region ha=e no agency. That's wrong: Iraq is splintering because Prime Minister Malik= behaved like a Shiite militiaman, not an Iraqi Mandela. Arab youths took th=ir future in their own hands, motivated largely by pluralistic impulses. Bu= the old order proved to be too stubborn, yet these youth aspirations have not gone away, and will not.

"The Arab world w=ll go through a period of turmoil in which exclusionist forces will attempt to dominate the landscape with absolute tr=ths and new dictatorships," writes Muasher. But "these forces will also fail, because, in the end, the exclusionist, authoritarian discourses cannot answ=r the people's needs for better quality of life. ... As history has demonstrated overwhelmingly, where there is respect for diversity, there is prosperity. Contrary to what Arab societies have been taught for decades by their governments to believe — that tolerance, acceptance of different points o= view, and critical thinking are destructive to national unity and economic growth — experience proves that societies cannot keep renewing themselves=and thereby thrive except through diversity."

Muasher, who is returning to Jordan =o participate in this struggle for diversity, dedicated his book to: "The youth of the Arab =orld — who revolted, not against their parents, but on their behalf."=p>

Thomas L. Friedman (New York Times – Jan. 7, 2014)

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Fifty years ago today, President Lyndon Johnson declared "unconditional war" on poverty. Depending on your ideological priors, the ensuing effort was either "a catastrophe" (Heritage's Robert Rector) or "lived up to our best hopes as a people who value the dignity and potential of every human being" (the White House's news release on the anniversary). Below is some data on these matters to hopefully clarify what exactly happened after Johnson's declaration, and the role government programs played. Here's what you need to know. This week in The Washington Post journalist – Dylan Matthews – wrote an interesting article – Everything you need to know about the war on poverty.

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Web Site of the article: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2014/01/08/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-war-on-poverty/> <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/>>

1. What was the war on poverty?

The term "war on poverty" generally refers to a set of initiatives proposed by Johnson's administration, passed by Congress, and implemented by his Cabinet agencies. As Johnson put it in his 1964 State of the Union address announcing the effort, "Our aim is not only to relieve the symptoms of poverty, but to cure it and, above all, to prevent it."

=span style="font-size:14pt;line-height:107%;font-family:Georgia,serif">2= What programs did it include?

The effort centered around four pieces of legislation=

- The Social Security Amendments of 1965, which created Medicare and Medicaid and also expanded Social Security benefits for retirees, widows, the disabled and college-aged students, financed by an increase in the payroll tax cap and rates.
- The Food Stamp Act of 1964, which made the food stamps program, then only a pilot, permanent.
- The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which established the Job Corps, the VISTA program, the federal work-study program and a number of other initiatives. It also established the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), the arm of the White House responsible for implementing the war on poverty and which created the Head Start program in the process.

=p class="MsoNormal">>• The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, signed into law in 1965, which established the Title I program subsidizing school districts with a large share of impoverished students, among other provisions. ESEA has since been reauthorized, most recently in the No Child Left Behind Act.

3. Why did it start when it did?

Besides Johnson's personal interest in the issue, a number of factors made 1964-65 the ideal time for the war on poverty to start. The 1962 publication of Michael Harrington's "The Other America," an exposé which demonstrated that poverty in America was far more prevalent than commonly assumed, focused public debate on the issue, as did Dwight MacDonald's 13,000-word review essay on the book in *The New Yorker*. Many historians, such as Harrington biographer Maurice Isserman, credit Harrington and the book (which John F. Kennedy purportedly read while in office, along with the MacDonald review) with spurring Kennedy and then Johnson to formulate an anti-poverty agenda, on which Harrington (despite being a member of the Socialist Party) consulted alongside Daniel Patrick Moynihan and OEO chief Sargent Shriver.

The civil rights movement also deserves considerable credit for forcing action. Groups like the NAACP and the Urban League were prominent allies of the Johnson administration in its push for the Economic Opportunity Act and other legislation on the topic. Another factor is the fact that we just didn't have good data on poverty until shortly before the war on it began; our numbers only go back to 1959.

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4. How long did it last?

Many of the war on poverty's programs — like Medicaid, Medicare, food stamps, Head Start, Job Corps, VISTA and Title I — are still in place today. The Nixon administration largely dismantled the OEO, distributing its functions to a variety of other federal agencies, and eventually the office was renamed in 1975 and then shuttered for good in 1981.

5. Did it reduce poverty, actually?

It did. A recent study from economists at Columbia broke down changes in poverty before and after the government gets involved in the form of taxes and transfers, and found that, when you take government intervention into account, poverty is down considerably from 1967 to 2012, from 26 percent to 16 percent:

While that doesn't allow us to see how poverty changed between the start of the war in 1964 and the start of the data in 1967, the most noticeable trend here is that the gap between before-government and after-government poverty just keeps growing. In fact, without government programs, poverty would have actually increased over the period in question. Government action is literally the only reason we have less poverty in 2012 than we did in 1967.

What's more, we can directly attribute this to programs created or expanded during the war on poverty. In 2012, food stamps (since renamed Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP) alone kept 4 million people out of poverty:

And is even more important in fighting extreme poverty (that is, people living under \$2 a day):

In fairness, SNAP isn't the biggest anti-poverty program on the books. That would be Social Security, also expanded by the war on poverty. The Earned Income Tax Credit, which came a few decades after, and other refundable credits are No. 2:

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The impact of non-transfer programs such as Medicare, Medicaid and Job Corps on poverty is harder to measure, but what indications there are are promising. Amy Finkelstein and Robin McKnight have found that Medicare significantly reduced out-of-pocket medical expenditures for seniors, which increased their real incomes. The Oregon Medicaid Study found that the program significantly reduces financial hardship for its beneficiaries, who under Oregon's eligibility rules at the time, all fell below the poverty line. A randomized evaluation of the Job Corps found that it caused improvements in a variety of outcomes, most notably a 12 percent increase in earnings of participants but also reductions in rates of incarceration, arrest, and conviction.

Title I, on the other hand, is generally agreed to cause more equitable school funding allocations, but the evidence on its effects on student achievement is less promising, with many evaluations finding no effect. A randomized evaluation of Head Start found that its effects faded out quickly, and many experts, notably James Heckman, are quite skeptical of the program's benefits. That said, other researchers, like Harvard's David Deming, have more positive evaluations.

6. Why don't people think it reduced poverty?

Largely because people rely on the official poverty rate, which is a horrendously flawed measure, which excludes income received from major anti-poverty programs like food stamps or the EITC. It also fails to take into account expenses such as child care and out-of-pocket medical spending. If you look at the traditional rate — which, I'm not even kidding, is based on the affordability of food for a family of three in 1963/4, with no adjustments except for inflation since then — it looks like poverty has stagnated rather than fallen. So when you read, say, the Cato Institute's Michael Tanner writing things like, "the poverty rate has remained relatively constant since 1965, despite rising welfare spending," keep in mind that that statistic is completely meaningless in this context. The relevant measure is the supplemental poverty measure which, as mentioned above, fell following the start of the war on poverty.

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7. What more could we be doing now to fight poverty?

So many things! We could expand existing working anti-poverty programs like Social Security, the Earned Income Tax Credit, the child tax credit and food stamps, or at least reverse recent cuts to the latter. We could, similarly, cut taxes on the working poor, perhaps by exempting the first \$10,000 or so of a worker's earnings from payroll taxes, or by cutting down on the extremely high effective marginal tax rates which poor Americans face. We could adopt a still more dramatic transfer regime, such as a basic income or low-income wage subsidies. We could be investing in education, such as by scaling up successful pre-K pilots such as the Perry or Abecedarian experiments, or by expanding high-performing charter schools and having traditional public schools adopt their approaches. We could raise the minimum wage, which all researchers find reduces poverty.

From left, Joe McNeil, Franklin McCain, Billy Smith and Clarence Henderson, N.C. A&T State University students, on the second day of a sit-in campaign in 1960 when they asked for service at a whites-only counter at an F.W. Woolworth store in Greensboro.

Thursday night an unsung American hero died. His simple act was sitting at a Greensboro lunch counter and asking for coffee. With that action on Feb. 1, 1960, Franklin McCain Sr. and three fellow students from N.C. A&T State University became icons of the civil rights era and an inspiration to a generation of Americans. McCain, who was born in Union County and lived much of his life in Charlotte, died Thursday night in Greensboro after a brief illness. He was 73. That 1960 visit to the F.W. Woolworth marks the start of the sit-in movement, which spread across the South and gave renewed spark to the struggle for equal rights. A portion of the once whites-only lunch counter is at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. And the old Greensboro store is now the site of the International Civil Rights Center & Museum. "To the world, he was a civil rights pioneer who, along with his three classmates, dared to make a difference by starting the sit-in movement," his oldest son, Franklin Jr., said Friday. "To us, he was Daddy – a man who deeply loved his family and cherished his friends. We will forever treasure the wonderful memories that we have and be thankful for all that he did for us and for his fellow man."

Harvey Gantt was a teenager in 1960. The Greensboro sit-ins inspired him and friends in his hometown of Charleston to do the same at lunch counters there. "(McCain) was one of the iconic figures of the civil rights movement who inspired a lot of people, including me," "will endure as a model of citizenship and freedom for this country whose Constitution begins, 'We the People.' " A poster at the International Civil Rights Center & Museum sums up the legacy. "Before the march on Washington, Montgomery and Birmingham," it says, "there was the walk to Woolworth's." It was a seminal moment.

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On that Monday in 1960, McCain, then 19, and his friends – Joseph McNeil, Ezell Blair Jr. (now Jibreel Khazan) and David Richmond (who died in 1990) – walked a mile from the A&T campus to Woolworth. They bought a few items, toothpaste and a composition book for McCain, and asked for receipts. Then they sat at the whites-only counter. A white waitress and the store manager told them that they could not be served. A black woman who cleared the counter told them to order food at the standup counter downstairs. An elderly white woman sitting at the counter got up and left. As she passed the four students, she put her right hand on McCain's shoulder and her left on McNeil's. McCain would recall a half-century later. "But then she said, 'Boys, I am so proud of you. I only wish you'd done this 10 years ago.' "

The four students, later known as the Greensboro Four, left the counter shortly before closing time, vowing to return. Only McCain and McNeil showed the next day, with two other students they'd recruited. But as the news spread, the sit-ins grew. There had been other sit-ins, in places like Chicago and Wichita, Kan. But none had the galvanizing effect of that February day in 1960. "It's an amazingly seminal, influential moment," said historian David Garrow. "It was emulated and copied in town after town after town. And it's fascinating to watch how the word spreads from Greensboro to Durham ... to Nashville (Tenn.). "So the real importance of it is as a classic example of a perfectly timed spark that moves scores of other black college students to ... start doing exactly the same thing."

It also led 10 weeks later to the creation in Raleigh of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which would become a driving force of the civil rights movement throughout the South. In 2010, on the 50th anniversary of the sit-in, McCain said he had been told by his parents and grandparents that if they followed the Bill of Rights, Constitution and Ten Commandments, and if they worked hard and helped others, they had a good chance of success. They had arrived on the Greensboro campus "angry at the system," McCain said. "The system still betrayed us," McCain said. "I considered myself as part of the big lie. All four of us did."

After Greensboro, McCain went on to graduate from N.C. A&T with degrees in chemistry and biology. A year later, he married Ettye Davis, a Bennett College student who also had participated in the civil rights demonstrations. She died Jan. 2, 2013. They had three sons – Franklin Jr., Wendell and Bert – and six grandchildren. McCain worked for nearly 35 years as a chemist and sales representative at the Celanese Corp. in Charlotte. A bevy man with oversized passion and a penchant for candor, he remained active in his community and in civil rights efforts. He once led the Black Political Caucus. "It's a huge loss because Franklin has been a community leader for a long time," said former Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board Chair Wilhelmina Rembert. McCain was active in education, too. He chaired the board of trustees at N.C. A&T and served on the boards of Bennett College, N.C. Central University and the UNC Board of Governors. "His courage and commitment to doing what was right didn't end at Woolworth's," UNC system President Tom Ross said. "That commitment continued throughout his life, and he channeled it in ways that really mattered, particularly in his service and devotion to our university and to higher education." A&T Chancellor Harold Martin Sr. said, "The Aggie family mourns the loss of Dr. Franklin McCain. His contributions to this university, the city of Greensboro and the nation as a civil rights leader ... (are) without measure."

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McCain also was active with the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and chaired the organization's North Carolina regional committee. Retired educator Sarah Stevenson said her friend, whom she called "Little Brother," never lost his passion for advancing the cause of equal opportunity. "He said many times that our children are not getting it, and we just need to keep fighting," Stevenson said. Civil rights attorney James Ferguson called McCain "a lifetime activist for civil rights." "His presence is going to be missed," Ferguson said, "but his legacy will live on." Gov. Pat McCrory said McCain "made his mark on American history in 1960 with a simple act of extraordinary courage." Although social progress can seem slow, McCain never gave up on his native North Carolina, McCrory added in a statement. "His death follows a life of service to his community and is a true loss for our state." In 2015, McCain reflected on his moment in history. "That day – Feb. 1, 1960 – was the best day of my life, and just for sitting on some dumb stool," he said. "It was a reaffirmation of who I am and what I'm supposed to be." Most important is that four students' non-violent defiance inspired a movement that changed America for the better.

THIS WEEK's QUOTE

'The Modern Conservative Is Engaged In One Of Man's Oldest Exercises In Moral Philosophy; That Is, The Search For A Superior Moral Justification=For Selfishness.'

John Kenneth Galbraith

WONDERFUL PHOTOS

National Geographic Photos Web Link:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ui=2&ik=875c48a476&view=att&th=3D1437b160f212d717&attid=0.1&disp=safe&zw>

Please enjoy as the photos are fantastic.....<=span>

THIS WEEK's MUSIC</=>

To pay homage to Phil Everly who as you kn=w died last week, I would like to share some of the music of The Everly BrothersBlue Grass roots fused with Rock & Roll to inspir=a generation and music around the world afterward. With this said I invite you to enjoy the music of The Everly Brothers=/i>.

The Everly Brothers – Bye Bye Love -- <http://youtu.be/xCWMM=S6W4Q> <<http://youtu.be/xCWMMKS6W4Q>>

The Everly Brothers – All I Have to Dream -- <http://youtu.be/ITYe9eDqxe8> <<http://youtu.be/ITYe9eDqxe8>>

The Everly Brothers – Problems -- <http://youtu.be/ZRGCeM1enhw> <<http://youtu.be/ZRGCeM1en=w>>

The Everly Brothers – Cathy's Clown -- <http://youtu.be/z3-E9JebDtU> <<http://youtu.be/z3-E9JebDtU>>

The Everly Brothers – When Will I Be Loved -- <http://youtu.be/rI0lI5SexV0> <<http://youtu.be/rI0lI5SexV0>>

The Everly Brothers – Til I Kissed You -- <http://youtu.be/80l8HEZ5zFw> <<http://youtu.be/8=I8HEZ5zFw>>

The Everly Brothers – Walk Right Back -- <http://youtu.be/4OwRp49x-FI> <<http://youtu.be/4OwRp49x-=I>>

The Everly Brothers – Crying In The Rain -- <http://youtu.be/1RVYmY1EFFI> <<http://youtu.be/1RVYmY1EFFI>>

The Everly Brothers – Let It Be Me -- <http://youtu.be/leRPr-zKNwl> <<http://youtu.be/leRPr=zKNwl>>

The Everly Brothers – Wake Up Little Susie -- <http://youtu.be/E6Q6zg90dxk> <<http://youtu.be/E6Q6zg90dxk>>

The Everly Brothers – On The Wings of a Nightingale -- http://youtu.be/LRb8_4dQkBM

The Everly Brothers – Message to Mary/Maybe Tomorrow -- <http://youtu.be/RECqqc8S-fI>

The Life and Times of The Everly Brothers -- <http://youtu.be/4miV-DamNy4>

The Everly Brothers & The Beach Boys live =edley -- <http://youtu.be/6E0=RIxq3tc> <<http://youtu.be/6E0IRIxq3tc>>

I hope that you enjoyed this week's=readings and wish you and yours a wonderful week.....

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

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