

OBAMA'S DIRTY DOZEN

Stephen L. Bakke – July 29, 2010

The biggest problems that we're facing right now have to do with George Bush trying to bring more and more power into the executive branch and not go through Congress at all. And that's what I intend to reverse when I'm president of the United States

– Candidate Sen. Barack Obama, March 31, 2008

To say President Obama failed to follow through on [the above quoted] promise is an understatement. By appointing a virtual army of "czars" - each wholly unaccountable to Congress yet tasked with spearheading major policy efforts for the White House - the president has made an end-run around the legislative branch of historic proportions. To be sure, the appointment of a few special officers to play a constructive role in an administration is nothing new. What is new is the elevation of so many czars, with so much authority on endless policy fronts. Vesting such broad authority in the hands of people not subjected to Senate confirmation and congressional oversight poses a grave threat to our system of checks and balances.

– Rep. Eric Cantor of Virginia – House Minority Whip

and

Judge me by the people with whom I surround myself.

– Candidate Sen. Barack Obama during the 2008 Presidential campaign.

OK! Let's do that!

Much has been written by me and others of some of the surprising appointments President Obama has made. Now, over 18 months into his administration, I will attempt to come up with my own “favorites” list. This is my version of “Obama’s Dirty Dozen.” This is now and forever shortened to “**ODD**.” ODD, ain’t it!

Most of the positions listed below were not subject to congressional oversight and approval. Some of these individuals have now gone on to other activities – some because of the threat of public information disclosure and eventual embarrassment for President Obama. At least one person is assuming his position by virtue of a “recess appointment.” In that case, approval is required but the President withheld his appointment while congress was in session-apparently because of several very controversial statements made by the appointee. And to think Obama once referred to recess appointments as “damaged goods.”

ODD, ain’t it!

ODD # 1 – Donald Berwick was the recent “recess appointee” to be the top administrator for Medicare and Medicaid. Even though this position requires Senate

confirmation, the Democrats didn't even have the opportunity to schedule hearings for the confirmation – probably because they and the President didn't want Dr. Berwick's past opinions and statements to be aired in such a public forum. If the President delayed the appointment, all the participants knew this left the door open for Obama to make the appointment official during their summer recess.

So what are those secrets they are keeping? If the Senate confirmation hearings would have proceeded, Republicans would certainly have pushed for answers to many questions about Berwick's apparent advocacy of health care rationing, his enthusiasm for Britain's National Health Service, and his penchant for including central planning for our nation's health care system. Remember all those denials by Obama and the democrats that this approach would be part of the reform legislation?

Berwick founded a non-profit organization, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. This organization has raised millions of dollars. The recess appointment means that he won't have to answer questions about its activities or supporters. And Byron York reports that Berwick personally received almost four million dollars from the institute over just 3 years. I wonder what policies the Institute would support. Hmmm?

Well the National Center for Policy Analysis has compiled some quotes from Dr. Berwick:

- On **rationing** – “The decision is not whether or not we will ration care, the decision is whether we will ration with ... eyes open.”
- On **redistribution of wealth** – “Any health care funding plan that is just, equitable, civilized and humane must redistribute wealth from the richer among us to the poorer Excellent health care is by definition redistributational.”
- On **Britain's government-run health care system** – “I am a romantic about the National Health Service. I love it.”
- On **personal choice** – “The primary functions [of health regulation is] to constrain individual decision making [and] weigh public welfare against the choices of private consumers.”
- On **the free market** – (paraphrased) “Don't trust market forces, trust leaders with plans.”

WOW! ODD and frightening, ain't it!

ODD # 2 – Ezekiel Emanuel is a close adviser to our President. Yes, he is Rahm's brother. He has been accused of putting part of the blame for high medical costs on the physicians' Hippocratic Oath. He wrote that doctors take the oath too seriously, “as an imperative to do everything for the patient regardless of the cost or effects on others.” He is accused of favoring certain other frightening policies. For example he implies that it is “worth discussion” that medical care should be first reserved for the non-disabled, and not guaranteed to those “who are irreversibly prevented from being or becoming participating citizens An obvious example is not guaranteeing health services to patients with dementia.” He says he is quoted out of context and isn't guilty of the accusations. I have read several of his statements and “papers” in full and in all fairness he is guilty of at least favoring giving consideration to these controversial policies.

He even gives backhanded defense of age discrimination by stating: “Unlike allocation by sex or race, allocation by age is not invidious discrimination; every person lives through different life states rather than being a single age. Even if 25-year-olds receive priority over 65-year-olds, everyone who is 65 years now was previously 25 years (old).”

He believes that one of the causes of high costs is that we are so enamored with technology. He’s right! I suggest that our expectation of, willingness to pay for, and insistence upon medical “miracles” is what has caused today’s 65-year-olds to be like the 50-year-olds of a very few decades ago. We have “pushed the envelope” and it has paid off! Accomplishments like that require the incentives of a free enterprise economy.

Uff Da!

ODD # 3 – Dr. David Blumenthal, a Harvard Medical School professor, is another of the President’s closest health care advisors. He admits that “government controls on health care spending are associated with longer waits for elective procedures and reduced availability of new and expensive treatments and devices”. His statements seem to indicate he believes it is “debatable” whether the timely care we now receive is worth the higher cost. He suggests that slowing medical innovation is one way to stem the growth of costs, and also stated several years ago in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that “government controls are a proven strategy for controlling health care expenditures.”

Dr. Blumenthal is in charge of medical information technology. What do you think he means when he uses the phrase “embedded clinical decision support”? Betsy McCaughey claims it is computers telling doctors what to do. I agree because the intention is to have a government commission determine what are acceptable treatments considering age, condition, and relative costs – and he’s leading that effort.

That’s “rationing” – any way you cut it!

ODD # 4 – John Holdren is the “science czar.” Mr. Holdren appears to be a population control zealot. In 1977, he co-authored a book with Paul Ehrlich called “*Ecoscience: Population, Resources, Environment*”: “There exists ample authority under which population growth could be regulated. It has been concluded that compulsory population-control laws, even including laws requiring compulsory abortion, could be sustained under the existing Constitution if the population crisis became sufficiently severe to endanger the society.” I have read that he even advocated a global police force to keep population down.

Continuing to quote from the 1977 book: “Such a comprehensive Planetary Regime could control the development, administration, conservation, and distribution of all natural resources, renewable or nonrenewable The Planetary Regime might be given responsibility for determining the optimum population for the world and for each region and for arbitrating various countries’ shares within their regional limits. The Regime would have some power to enforce the agreed limits.” Holdren denies that he ever advocated these views, but the record is clear.

In a pre-appointment interview, which I personally viewed, Holdren expressed his adamant opinion that the concept of American Exceptionalism is “misguided.” In the same interview he stated the importance of reducing American consumption through widespread redistribution of resources so that the poor could then prosper.

Holdren has gained a reputation as quite a “Chicken Little”, crying wolf about numerous anticipated global catastrophies. On the one hand he was adamant that worldwide population would increase out of control (hence the need to control population legislatively), while on the other hand he worried that global warming and related catastrophes would result in the death of 1 billion people by 2020.

ODD # 5 – Charles Bolden is the NASA administrator. Sadly NASA seems to be drifting aimless with only vague Obama lip-service given to its future and potential. Little did we know what Obama really had in mind for this “august” government agency! Bolden stated that he had been charged with finding “a way to reach out to the Muslim world and engage much more with dominantly Muslim nations to help them feel good about their historic contribution to science, math, and engineering.” On al-Jazeera he announced that this was his “foremost job.” Isn’t it unusual that al-Jazeera “got the scoop and heard it first”?

Let’s remember that according to former NASA head Mike Griffin, the agency’s mission is laid out in the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, whereby it “was chartered to develop the arts and sciences of flight in the atmosphere and in space and to go where those technologies will allow us to go.”

In any case, Bolden has now been thrown under the bus with administration denials that this was ever a priority nor was it intended to be one. Why would Bolden say this if that was not his understanding? Sadly, Bolden is a distinguished retired Marine Corps major general and astronaut. What set him astray?

ODD, ain’t it!

ODD # 6 – Todd Stern is a Hillary Clinton subordinate serving as the Special Envoy for Climate Change (climate czar). Stern supports a national system for limiting carbon emissions through the provisions of cap-and-trade legislation. He is described as an anti-business former Clinton advisor and was a strong supporter of the Kyoto Protocol. In fact, he helped negotiate the Kyoto and Buenos Aires climate pacts, both of which fell apart partially because of a lack of U.S. support during the Bush administration. He has written extensively on climate change and singles out U.S. business to blame for our planet’s warming cycle.

What a guy to have “protecting us” from international exploitation in the face of the climate change scandals and debates.

ODD # 7 – Van Jones was appointed the “green jobs czar.” Not bad for a self-described communist. Joseph Farah reports that Jones once founded a major “human rights center” named after a known socialist activist with alleged ties to the Weather Underground terrorist organization - the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. He also served as its president.

In a statement soon after the war in Iraq began, when asked in an interview about the human shields being used to insulate Saddam Hussein from harm, he stated that these “volunteers” were not criminals – they’re heroes. I did read the transcript to this interview.

Jones himself was as an admitted communist, explaining that his environmental activism was simply a means to an end – the real goal being racial and class “justice.” “I’ll work with anybody, I’ll fight anybody if it will push our issues forward,” he said in a 2005 interview. “I’m willing to forgo the cheap satisfaction of the radical pose for the deep satisfaction of radical ends.”

I have listened to an interview in which he states that the “green jobs” goal is complete revolution away from “gray capitalism” and that “green capitalism” is a first step, but is not nearly enough. The goal for Jones is complete revolution.

Farah identifies him as a founder and leader of the communist revolutionary organization Standing Together to Organize a Revolutionary Movement, or STORM. The leftist blog Machete 48 identifies STORM’s influence as “third-worldist Marxism (and an often vulgar Maoism).”

Mr. Jones resigned under the pressure of further disclosures of his radical positions, affiliations, and statements.

ODD # 8 – Cass Sunstein, a Harvard Law professor, was been appointed to head the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. He is a close personal friend of President Obama. He oversees regulations throughout the government, from the Environmental Protection Agency to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Given his philosophies and this position, I am certain that he will do everything possible to redefine the borders of the role of government and the meaning of freedom of speech.

Regarding speech, he believes the internet is rampaging out of control, libel laws need to be redefined, and is willing to use the courts to impose a chilling effect on anything that may hurt someone’s feelings. In his book “Nudge” he states his belief that the government should gently force people to be better human beings. The NY Post opines that Sunstein dreams of an impossibly virtuous America: “We could also imagine a future in which those who spread false rumors are categorized as such, discounted and marginalized” Is this PC to the extreme, or what? And it reflects a common unrealistic, idealistic, progressive utopian dream.

Sunstein has advocated a policy under which the government would “presume” someone has consented to having his or her organs removed for transplantation into someone else when they die unless that person has explicitly indicated that his or her organs should not be taken. Under such a policy, hospitals would harvest organs from people who never gave permission for this to

be done. This is another peek into the progressive utopian dream combined with central government planning and control (communism?).

In 2004, Sunstein wrote a book, "The Second Bill of Rights: FDR'S Unfinished Revolution and Why We Need It More than Ever," in which he advanced the radical notion that welfare rights, including some controversial ideas, be granted by the state. His inspiration for a new bill of rights came from President Roosevelt's 1944 proposal of a different, new set of bill of rights. Here is a selection:

- The right to a useful and remunerative job in the industries or shops or farms or mines of the nation;
- The right to earn enough to provide adequate food and clothing and recreation;
- The right of every farmer to raise and sell his products at a return which will give him and his family a decent living;
- The right of every businessman, large and small, to trade in an atmosphere of freedom from unfair competition and domination by monopolies at home or abroad;
- The right of every family to a decent home;
- The right to adequate medical care and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health;
- The right to adequate protection from the economic fears of old age, sickness, accident, and unemployment;
- The right to a good education.

While achieving these ideals through free enterprise and individual effort is commendable, Sunstein's government would guarantee them. There is no question this is a radical leftist/communist theory which would involve throwing out our existing constitution and form of government.

ODD, ain't it!

ODD # 9 – Mark Lloyd is Obama's FCC "diversity czar." The Washington Times reported an eye-opening comment. Lloyd seemed to praise Hugo Chavez during a June 2008 conference on media reform by saying the Venezuelan president had led "really an incredible revolution – a democratic revolution." Taken in the current context of his role at the FCC, Lloyd seemed to be siding with the anti-American Chavez against independent media outlets in Venezuela which opposed him and supported a short-lived coup in 2002. Of course, he denies that he supports the dictator – but doesn't he at least appear to have a "soft spot" for Chavez?

At another conference, Mr. Lloyd spoke about the need to remove white people from powerful position in the media to give minorities a fairer chance. He includes even competent "liberal leaning" personalities in his white "hit list" He also stated: "There are few things, I think, more frightening in the American mind than dark-skinned black men. Here I am."

He once wrote: "At the very least, blind references to freedom of speech or the press serve as a distraction from the critical examination of other communication policies The purpose of free speech is warped to protect global corporations and block rules that would promote democratic governance."

So much of what comes out of the mouth of our President and others close to him smacks of racial motivation and even almost a “liberation theology.” I’m really uncomfortable with some of the people this “post-racial” administration is serving up!

ODD # 10 – Michael Posner is a State Department/Hillary Clinton “underling” whose apparent recent job it was to try to persuade China to move in the direction of more humane governance and broader application of real human rights. That’s certainly commendable. But in doing so he apparently felt compelled to sincerely apologize for our human rights violations in Arizona. Give me a break!

Who is this guy? I agree with Bill O’Reilly who says he appears to be “a committed left-wing zealot who joined the State Department in September 2009. Before that, he founded an organization called Human Rights First, which is generously funded by radical billionaire George Soros.” In 2005 Posner made a speech in which it is reported he compared the treatment of American Muslims to the rounding up of Japanese-Americans during WWII. Good Grief! We don’t need this type of “loose cannon” in the state department.

Many would feel he doesn’t deserve a place in the ODD. Yes he does, because it’s MY list and he really “ticked me off!”

That ain’t so ODD!

ODD # 11 – Anita Dunn was the White House Communications Director for a few months in 2009. She became controversial when, early in her tenure she assured the world that Fox news was merely an extension of the Republican Party. But that was to be expected from the administration. She drew some attention when she, in an otherwise informative interview, she proudly declared how the Obama campaign controlled the press and the information the press dealt with and reported.

But, what really drew attention was that in a speech to a high school graduating class she implied an unusual admiration for both Mao Zedung and Mother Teresa by describing them as favorite political philosophers. To some this meant she was at least a radical leftist and at worst a Maoist. She resigned shortly thereafter for reasons I can’t confirm.

ODD # 12 – Auto Team (collectively) is a selection to occupy one spot in ODD. First there was **Steve Rattner**, who then named “thirty something/no business experience” **Brian Deese** as his chief auto expert advisor. This in spite of the open boast that he “never set foot in an automotive assembly plant.” Rattner, who was part of a New York “financial ethics cloud,” soon left the administration, being replaced by **Ron Bloom**. Guess what his expertise is – he’s a (allegedly far left) union lawyer and union official who, according to Michelle Malkin, “cut his teeth under big labor boss John Sweeney.” He was quoted as giving this opinion: “The blather about free trade, free-markets and the joys of competition is nothing but pabulum for the

suckers.” Are these really the kinds of backgrounds we want for the persons running a couple of the largest industrial companies in the country?

Recently the TARP inspector general stumbled onto the following about Bloom. Regarding the initial mass closings of auto dealerships, Barofsky writes that: “no one from Treasury, the manufacturers or from anywhere else indicated that implementing a smaller or more gradual dealership termination plan would have resulted in the cataclysmic scenario spelled out in Treasury’s response; indeed, when asked explicitly whether the Auto Team could have left the dealerships out of the restructurings, Mr. Bloom confirmed that the Auto Team ‘could have left any one component [of the restructuring plan] alone,’ but that doing so would have been inconsistent with the President’s mandate for ‘shared’ sacrifice.”

Initially it was reported that Chrysler made the choice of dealerships to close. It was actually a task force headed by Rattner that made the decision. And “wet behind the ears” Brian Deese was undoubtedly part of the mix. While some of the closing plans are starting to unwind, there are continuing reports that the selection of closed dealerships was closely correlated to previous political contributions and affiliations. And with union attorney Bloom in charge, the unions were given favored status in the Chrysler bankruptcy settlement. In effect, I believe this upended decades of clear bankruptcy law and precedent. It has been replaced by a system where it is possible that winners and losers in litigation are chosen by politicians and their appointees. (Refer to my earlier article on “Obama and O’bankruptcy”)

Unfortunately, I believe there is a lot of sincerity in the minds of these people, and it seems that many of them are deeply committed to a goal of subverting the American system of government, attacking free enterprise, and advancing radical agendas.

There could have been more names added. I have been asked if I included [name a prominent “unfortunate” in the administration]. If I haven’t, they seem surprised. But I had to stop somewhere, and some of those prominent but unmentioned “unfortunates” I have written about before, or are just plain “old news” anyway. So my list is what it is.

And for a special reward – these “unfortunates” get to serve their “lord and master!”



If you feel I have left out an important character, please feel free to make it a “Baker’s Dirty Dozen” by adding one more. You could even call it “BaDD.”

BaDD and ODD, ain’t it!