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The Incredible, Shrinking Presidency of Barack Obama

Slip Sliding Away

by MIKE WHITNEY

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According to a new Washington Post-ABC poll, Barack Obama now ranks among the least popular presidents in the last century. In fact, his approval rating is lower than Bush's was in his fifth year in office. Obama's overall approval rating stands at a dismal 43 percent, with a full 55 percent of the public "disapproving of the way he is handling the economy". The same percentage of people "disapprove of the way he is handling his job as president". Thus, on the two main issues, leadership and the economy, Obama gets failing grades.

An even higher percentage of people are upset at the way the president is implementing his signature health care system dubbed "Obamacare". When asked "Do you approve or disapprove of the way Obama is handling "implementation of the new health care law?" A full 62% said they disapprove, although I suspect that the anger has less to do with the plan's "implementation" than it does with the fact that Obamacare is widely seen as a profit-delivery

system for the voracious insurance industry. Notwithstanding the administration's impressive public relations campaign, a clear majority of people have seen through Obama's health care ruse and given the program a big thumb's down.

Of course, Obamacare is just the straw that broke the camel's back. The list of policy disasters that preceded this latest fiasco is nearly endless, including everything from blanket pardons for the Wall Street big-wigs who took down the global financial system, to re-upping the Bush tax cuts, to appointing a commission of deficit hawks to slash Social Security and Medicare (Bowles-Simpson), to breaking his word on Gitmo, to reneging on his promise to pass Card Check, to expanding to wars in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, to drone 4-times as many civilians as the homicidal maniac he replaced as president in 2008.

Obama's treatment of undocumented immigrants has been particularly shocking although the details have been kept out of the media, presumably because the news giants don't want to expose the Dear Leader as a heartless scoundrel who has no problem separating mothers from their children, locking them up in privately-owned concentration camps and booting them out of the country with nothing more than the shirt on their back. Check out this blurb which sums up Obama's "progressive" immigration policy in one paragraph:

"Obama is on track to deport 3 million immigrants without papers by the end of his second term, more than any other president. George W. Bush deported about 2 million over two terms. Obama will likely hit that mark this month..... The average daily count of immigrants in detention now is about 33,000. In 2001, it was 19,000. In 1994, it was 5,000, according to the Detention Watch Network. Almost all of the detainees and deportees are Latino. True, the population of illegal immigrants has also doubled in that time to more than 11 million. But the detainee and deportee counts have escalated more than twice as fast.

"He could go down as the worst president in history toward immigrants," said Arturo Carmona, executive director of the liberal activist group Presente.org.

Hooray for the Deporter in Chief! You're Numero Uno, buddy. You even beat Bush! Is it any wonder why the man's ratings are in freefall?

All told, Obama has been bad for the economy, bad for civil liberties, bad for minorities, bad for foreign wars, and bad for health care. He has, however, been a very effective lackey-sock puppet for Wall Street, Big Pharma, the oil magnates, and the other 1% -vermin Kleptocrats who run the country and who will undoubtedly attend his \$100,000-per-plate speaking engagements when he

finally retires in comfort to some gated community where he'll work on his memoirs and cash in on his 8 years of faithful service to the racketeer class.

But, let's face it; no one really gives a rip about "drone attacks in Waziristan" or "hunger strikes in Gitmo". What they care about is keeping their jobs, paying off their student loans, putting the food on the table or avoiding the fate of next-door-neighbor, Andy, who got his pink slip two months ago and now finds himself living in a cardboard box by the river. That's what the average working stiff worries about; just scraping by enough to stay out of the homeless shelter. But it's getting harder all the time, mainly because everything's gotten worse under Obama. It's crazy. It's like the whole middle class is being dismantled in a 10-year period. Wages are flat, jobs are scarce, incomes are dropping like a stone, and everyone's broke. (Everyone I know, at least.) Did you know that 76% of Americans are living paycheck-to-paycheck. Check it out:

"Roughly three-quarters of Americans are living paycheck-to-paycheck, with little to no emergency savings, according to a survey released by Bankrate.com Monday.

Fewer than one in four Americans have enough money in their savings account to cover at least six months of expenses, enough to help cushion the blow of a job loss, medical emergency or some other unexpected event, according to the survey of 1,000 adults.

Meanwhile, 50% of those surveyed have less than a three-month cushion and 27% had no savings at all....

Last week, online lender CashNetUSA said 22% of the 1,000 people it recently surveyed had less than \$100 in savings to cover an emergency, while 46% had less than \$800. After paying debts and taking care of housing, car and child care-related expenses, the respondents said there just isn't enough money left over for saving more."

Savings??!

Are you kidding me? What's that? Who do you know that's able to save money in this economy? Maybe rich uncle Johnny whose lived on canned sardines and Akmak for the last 50 years, but nobody else can live like that. Subtract the rent, the groceries, the doctor bills etc, and there's barely enough leftover to fill the tank to get to work on Monday. Saving just isn't an option, not in the Obamaworld, that is.

Now check this out from Business Insider:

"Thousands of Americans aged 55 and older are going back to school and reinventing themselves to get an edge in a difficult labor market, hoping to rebuild retirement nest eggs that were almost destroyed by the recession....

According to the Federal Reserve, household financial assets, which exclude homes, dropped from a peak of \$57 trillion in the third quarter of 2007 to just over \$49 trillion in the fourth quarter of last year, the latest period for which data is available.

A survey to be released this summer by the Public Policy Institute of AARP, an advocacy group for older Americans, found a quarter of Americans 50 years and older used up all their savings during the 2007-09 recession. About 43 percent of the 5,000 respondents who took part in the survey said their savings had not recovered." ("Unemployed Baby Boomers Are Getting Hired By Going Back To School", Business Insider)

Sure they're going back to work. What do you expect them to do? They're broke! They got wiped out in Wall Street's mortgage laundering scam and they're still behind the eightball five years later. And what's left of the money they set aside for retirement is yielding a big zilch thanks to the Fed's zero rate policy which is forcing people back into another decade of penal servitude at minimum wage. That's why you see so many hunched over graybeards in red vests with "Happy to Serve You" splattered on their chests lugging shopping bags out to the cars for old ladies. Because they're broke and out of options. Everyone knows someone like this unless, of course, they're one of the fortunate few who make up the Nobel 1%; aka-The Job Cremators. Then they don't have to fret about that sort of thing.

Here's another gem you might not have seen in *USA Today* a few months back:

"Four out of 5 U.S. adults struggle with joblessness, near-poverty or reliance on welfare for at least parts of their lives, a sign of deteriorating economic security and an elusive American dream.

Survey data exclusive to The Associated Press points to an increasingly globalized U.S. economy, the widening gap between rich and poor, and the loss of good-paying manufacturing jobs as reasons for the trend....

Hardship is particularly growing among whites, based on several measures. Pessimism among that racial group about their families' economic futures has climbed to the highest point since at least 1987. In the most recent AP-GfK poll, 63% of whites called the economy "poor."

"I think it's going to get worse," said Irene Salyers, 52, of Buchanan County, Va., a declining coal region in Appalachia. Married and divorced three times, Salyers now helps run a fruit and vegetable stand with her boyfriend, but it doesn't generate much income....

Nationwide, the count of America's poor remains stuck at a record number: 46.2 million, or 15% of the population, due in part to lingering high unemployment following the recession. While poverty rates for blacks and Hispanics are nearly three times higher, by absolute numbers the predominant face of the poor is white...

"Poverty is no longer an issue of 'them', it's an issue of 'us,'" says Mark Rank, a professor at Washington University in St. Louis who calculated the numbers. "Only when poverty is thought of as a mainstream event, rather than a fringe experience that just affects blacks and Hispanics, can we really begin to build broader support for programs that lift people in need." ("4 in 5 in USA face near-poverty, no work", USA Today)

Does Obama have any idea of the damage he's doing with his Rich-First policies? The country is in a terrible state and yet Obama continues to approve bills that throw millions of people off unemployment benefits, sharply cut government spending, or undermine vital safetynet programs that keep the sick and the elderly from dying on the streets. It's like he's trying to reduce 300 million Americans to grinding third world poverty in his short eight-year term. Is that the goal?

Did you know that—according to Gallup—20.0% of all Americans did not have enough money to buy food that they or their families needed at some point over the past year? Or that—according to a Feeding America hunger study—more than 37 million people are now using food pantries and soup kitchens? Or that one out of six Americans is now living in poverty which is the highest level since the 1960s? Or that the gap between the rich and poor is greater than any in history?

Everything has gotten worse under Obama. Everything. And, not once, in his five years as president, has this gifted and charismatic leader ever lifted a finger to help the millions of people who supported him, who believed in him, and who voted him into office.

These latest poll results indicate that many of those same people are beginning to wake up and see what Obama is really all about.

