

October 22, 2013

Dear Burlington City Council members,

Please consider reading
what "The Week" magazine published,
recently, about the F-35.

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BURLINGTON CLERK
TREASURER'S OFFICE

Thank you for being mindful
regarding your decision about F-35s
and the Burlington Airport area.
Your decision affects the
Burlington area and beyond.
We need to create jobs which
have constructive, humane,
qualities, not involving weapons.

Sincerely,

Patricia Heatherlea
38 Pleasant St.
Bristol, VT 05443

Tea Party rebellion: Is America still fighting the Civil War?

No shots have been fired. No blood has been spilled. But a second Civil War is underway, with a new breed of angry rebels "taking up where the Old Confederacy left off," said Colbert King in *The Washington Post*. The Tea Party soldiers of this "New Confederacy" have seized control of the Republican Party, shutting down the federal government and threatening a default on the U.S. national debt unless President Obama delays or dismantles the Affordable Care Act. In a very real sense, "the Civil War never ended," said Stephan Richter in *Salon.com*. "The same anti-Union spirit" that led to secession in 1860 still flourishes in the deep red states of the South, which see themselves as nobly resisting the "tyranny" of an illegitimate Northern president. In 1860, it was the end of slavery that the rebel states feared; today, it's universal access to health care. Both times, these causes symbolized a deeper cultural struggle, with the rebels rejecting modernity as a threat to their very way of life. As Rep. Paul Broun (R-Ga.) puts it, "This law is going to destroy America and everything in America, and we need to stop it."



privilege and "redistribute" the spoils of class war to the undeserving, dark-skinned poor.

Nonsense, said Charles Krauthammer in *The Washington Post*. If Republicans' "frantic fight" against Obamacare seems extreme in its tenor and tactics, that's because for the first time in our nation's history, a major piece of social legislation was rammed through by one party, without a single Republican vote. This affront to "constitutional decency" is what caused the Tea Party rebellion. The people in this movement "are sincerely motivated" to stop the growth of Big Government, said Michael Hirsh in *NationalJournal.com*. Since the New Deal, the federal government "has metastasized like a giant tumor," and not even Republican presidents have stopped the explosive growth of expensive social programs. That's why they hate Obamacare. Despite the wild fury of their rhetoric, "the Tea Partiers are not making their deeper grievances up."

Let's call this hysteria what it is—racism, said Jamelle Bouie in *TheDailyBeast.com*. It's no coincidence that 10 of the 11 states of the Old Confederacy have refused to expand Medicaid access under the ACA; as a result of that decision, "the majority of people who will suffer are poor and black." It's also no coincidence that states most opposed to Obamacare also are instituting voter ID laws designed to keep poor minorities from voting. The resentful whites who make up the Tea Party "view themselves as besieged by minorities seeking free benefits," said Andrew Sullivan in *Dish.AndrewSullivan.com*. They see Obama as a Pied Piper of check seekers, out to strip whites of their remaining wealth and

Welcome to "the new normal," said Dan Balz in *The Washington Post*. The philosophical and demographic gulf between the two parties has become a chasm, making compromise almost impossible. Republicans are now the party of white, rural voters who live in terror of creeping socialism. Democrats, meanwhile, depend heavily on urban liberals and minorities, many of whom do receive government benefits. These two "competing camps live in parallel universes," and regard the other side not only as wrong, but as evil. Compromise with the enemy is seen as a fatal capitulation. This bitter paralysis won't end until voters decide they've had enough, and hand the entire "machinery of government" to one party. Until then, we'll keep becoming a nation of "deeper blues, darker reds," and perpetual dysfunction.

Only in America

■ A Long Island, N.Y., school has banned footballs, baseballs, and games of tag from school grounds to prevent students from getting hurt during recess. Weber Middle School officials say too many kids have gotten bumps, scrapes, and head injuries. Students are not happy, saying they need to have some fun at recess. "We're in school all day sitting behind the desk learning," said one.

■ Healthy school-lunch advocates in Fairfax, Va., suffered a setback when the 100 percent beef patties they requested were rejected by students, who said they neither looked nor tasted right. The schools gave in to the students' demands and replaced the real beef patties with a version of the artificially colored, 26-ingredient, "pink slime" burgers they had previously served.

Good week for:

Having followers, after Washington Capitals forward Joel Ward used Twitter to call for help when he found himself locked in a bathroom stall on game day. "Stuck in the washroom...someone help?" he tweeted, before being rescued.

Dick Cheney, who was roasted at a gathering of old Bush administration allies, with waterboarding jokes dominating the evening. It was, said one attendee, "a very sentimental night."

Big government, after Michigan legislators introduced a bill mandating that every tavern selling "pints" of beer actually include 16 ounces of beer, instead of a smaller amount in a glass shaped like a pint glass. "It's a truth-in-advertising issue," said a sponsor.

Bad week for:

American exceptionalism, after U.S. adults scored below the international average in a test of math, reading, and problem-solving skills. Twelve countries, including Canada, Australia, Sweden, and Slovakia, scored higher than the U.S. in all three areas.

Humanity, after a Russian defense official boasting about his country's sophisticated air defense systems admitted they could not repel all possible invasions. "We are unfortunately not ready to fight extraterrestrial civilizations," Sergey Berezhtoy told reporters.

Sinners, after Republican Rep. Michele Bachmann told a talk radio host that President Obama's decision to send arms to some Syrian rebels—whom she called "terrorists"—proved he was on al Qaeda's side and was a sign "we are in God's end times." She added, "Maranatha, come Lord Jesus, his day is at hand."

Boring but important

The F-35's serious cost and quality problems

The costliest weapons system in U.S. history is plagued with hundreds of major problems, according to a report released last week by the Pentagon's watchdog. The stealth F-35 Joint Strike Fighter—slated to be the main tactical jet for the Air Force, Navy, and Marines—has more than 360 quality "issues" that could "adversely affect aircraft performance," the Defense Department's inspector general has found. Resolving them will drive up the program's manufacturing costs, which have already ballooned to \$392 billion—70 percent above the original estimate projected 12 years ago. The total operating costs of the long overdue program, now expected to launch in 2018, are pegged at \$857 billion.