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Deriding the Tea Party: Terrorists “Strapped with Dynamite”

“There’s a nihilist caucus which is, ‘Listen, we want to burn the place down.’ I mean, they’re not, they’ve strapped explosives to the Capitol and they think they are immune from it. The Tea Party caucus wants this crisis, and do we want to do this again six months from now?”

— Bloomberg columnist Margaret Carlson on *Inside Washington*, July 29.

“You know, the problem with this is it’s like a form of economic terrorism. I imagine these Tea Party guys are, like, strapped with dynamite, standing in the middle of Times Square at rush hour and saying, ‘Either you do it my way, or we’re going to blow you up, ourselves up, and the whole country up with us.’ So you tell me how those kinds of stand-offs end.”

— MSNBC economic analyst Steven Rattner on MSNBC’s *Morning Joe*, July 29.

“If sane Republicans do not stand up to this Hezbollah faction in their midst, the Tea Party will take the GOP on a suicide mission.”

— *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman, July 27.

“You know what they say: Never negotiate with terrorists. It only encourages them. These last few months, much of the country has watched in horror as the Tea Party Republicans have waged jihad on the American people....For now, the Tea Party Republicans can put aside their suicide vests. But rest assured: They’ll have them on again soon enough.”

— *New York Times* columnist Joe Nocera, August 2.

Tea Party Budget Slashers = “Cannibals,” “Vampires” and “Zombies”

“Tea Party budget-slashers....were like cannibals, eating their own party and leaders alive. They were like vampires, draining the country’s reputation, credit rating and compassion. They were like zombies, relentlessly and mindlessly coming back again and again to assault their unnerved victims, Boehner and President Obama. They were like the metallic beasts in *Alien* flashing mouths of teeth inside other mouths of teeth, bursting out of Boehner’s stomach every time he came to a bouquet of microphones.”

— *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd, August 3 column.

Children Who Don’t “Understand” How Government Works

“Do you think that Republicans — particularly those in the freshman class over in the House — understand just how serious this debt limit crisis is?...Do you think they understand what might happen if you can’t raise this debt limit here?”

— Bob Schieffer to Senator Jon Kyl on *Face the Nation*, July 24.

“The question, I think, some people might be asking is, do you think that members of the Tea Party caucus know how to govern, or are they — do they understand that standing up for a cause is not the same as governing?”

— Co-host Ann Curry to Tom Brokaw on NBC’s *Today*, August 1.

“Some people say that the Republican Party has been held hostage by the Tea Party. One of our Facebook followers sent in an interesting analogy and said, ‘Why are Republicans allowing freshman congressmen to control this debate?’ and this person said, ‘It’s like letting the teenager in the family run the family budget.’ I mean, there’s some truth in that.”

— Moderator Bob Schieffer to GOP Senate Leader Mitch McConnell on *Face the Nation*, July 31.



Obama Foes Are “Muggers,” “Kidnappers” and “Haters”

“Let me finish tonight with this bad experience we’ve all just been through. What we saw, what I saw at least, was one guy with a knife and the other trying to avoid being cut. It was a thug attacking a victim. It was a mugging. Now, the good news — relief is a better word, I suppose — is that the victim did get through it. The bad news is that the mugger got what he wanted. He got the wallet.... The mugging continues, again and again and again. The people who perpetrated this assault on the President will come back to do it again.”

— Chris Matthews talking about the debt talks on MSNBC’s *Hardball*, August 2.



“Why did he [Obama] let this develop for six months, well, eight months since last December, this drum roll of the Republicans saying, ‘We’ve got the baby. You don’t get the baby back unless you pay us?’ Why do you let the other side have the baby, to use kidnapping terms?”

— MSNBC’s Chris Matthews to the *New Republic*’s Jonathan Chait on *Hardball*, August 1.

“From day one, from second one, the goal of the Republican Party of the right, of corporate America, of the Tea Party, the whole shebang, has been eliminate this guy’s presidency. It’s been personal, it’s been about him, and it’s about hatred.... ‘We hate you, want to kill you (pause) politically.’”

— Chris Matthews on MSNBC’s *Hardball*, August 3.

Tea Party = Slow-Motion Secessionists

Howard Fineman: “What’s going on here, as I see it, is a kind of slow-motion secession. This is an ending of the social compact. This is two, three generations worth of agreement about Social Security, about Medicare, about the role of the federal government. The Tea Party people are saying, we want to secede from that society....”

Chris Matthews: “You know what this sounds like? You know what this sounds like? When I spent two years in Southern Africa. It sounds like what the whites talked about doing. Eventually going into some sort of little circle, like Custer’s last stand against the United States.”

— MSNBC’s *Hardball*, July 25.

Fretting Tiny Cuts in Government Spending Will Smother Economy

“Spending cuts could further weaken economy”

— *USA Today* headline, August 2.

“You mentioned jobs. One advocacy group, the liberal-leaning Economic Policy Institute, says the economy could lose 1.8 million jobs in the next year due to the cuts in this deal. Agree? Is that too much?”

— Ann Curry to CNBC’s Jim Cramer on NBC’s *Today*, August 3. The debt deal calls for just \$21 billion in spending cuts over the next year, out of a total federal budget of about \$3.7 trillion.

Slamming Puny Debt Deal as “Hurting Real People”

“The last time the President and the Congress compromised on a major spending bill, Republicans got tax cuts and Mr. Obama won an extension of unemployment benefits. But in this latest compromise, there are only budget cuts and no relief for those suffering in this economy.”

— Anchor Scott Pelley on the *CBS Evening News*, August 2.

“A liberal member said to me his fear is the poor are gonna get hurt and the rich are gonna get by without harm in this. Is that your fear?”

— NBC’s Brian Williams to Nancy Pelosi on his July 31 *Dateline* special, “Taking the Hill: Inside Congress.”

ABC’s Diane Sawyer: “You think this is really going to hurt real people?”

Nancy Pelosi: “Well, I hope not. How could we have severe cuts to our domestic agenda, the education of our children, for example, and not one red cent coming from those who can afford to share the sacrifice that is necessary to reduce the deficit.”

— *World News*, August 1.



“Conservative” Obama Now Using GOP Language

“Frustrated members of your own party, they are saying, look, why doesn’t the President who has his principles stand up for them, rather than spending so much time wanting to be bipartisan....The President has moved all of the way to the language and the ideals that the Republicans espouse.”

— Christiane Amanpour to Obama advisor David Plouffe on ABC’s *This Week*, July 31.

“Your colleague in New York, Gary Ackerman, said the Republicans invited the President, quote, ‘to negotiate at a strip poker table, and he showed up half naked.’ And then liberal columnist Paul Krugman calls the deal an ‘abject surrender.’ Would the President be better off running as a conservative in 2012?”

— Fill-in anchor Don Lemon to Democratic Representative Raul Grijalva, CNN’s *In the Arena*, August 1.



So “Stuck to Tea Party...They Cannot Think of What’s Good for the Country”

“Usually you’re good at seeing someone’s angle. Like you know what their angle is. What’s the angle here? Who’s, I don’t get it....Are they so stuck to their little contract and the Tea Party that they cannot even think outside the box for the good of the country? Seriously!”

— Mika Brzezinski to her co-host Joe Scarborough on MSNBC’s *Morning Joe*, July 25.

It’s “Crazy” and “Intransigent” to Oppose Tax Increases

“Senator Portman, they’ve got a point, the Democrats, haven’t they? You’re being pretty intransigent. You won’t countenance any tax increases....Isn’t it time you guys took one for the team, the team being America?”

— CNN’s Piers Morgan to Ohio Republican Senator Rob Portman, July 25.

“Grover, you’re the eye of the tiger in all this. People take their lead from you on the Republican side and you’ve been intransigent: ‘There will be no tax increases.’ Most impartial observers outside of America say that is crazy, and you have got to change your attitude to this and allow some tax increases.”

— Morgan a few minutes later to Americans for Tax Reform President Grover Norquist.



Balanced Budget Amendment Would Have Guaranteed a Depression

“Let’s say we’d had a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution in early 2009 when we were losing close to 800,000 jobs a month and headed for another Great Depression. By Speaker Boehner’s terms, we wouldn’t have had any government efforts to try to end that near depression. Does he really think the country would have been better off if the Congress had been handcuffed and unable to take any measures to fight a coming depression? I think we’d be in a depression now if there had been a balanced budget amendment in 2009.”

— MSNBC analyst Jonathan Alter on *Martin Bashir*, August 1.

Imagine the Bias If They Weren’t “Scared of Being Labeled as Liberal”

Host Howard Kurtz: “The alternative analysis... is that it’s the Republicans and particularly the Tea Party faction that has been intransigent, that has said no to trillions in spending cuts, and the Democrats and Obama have moved quite a ways.... Why has mainstream journalism not portrayed this as a crisis largely created by one party, and instead has developed this narrative that the two sides are just, you know, a bunch of clowns?”

Thomson Reuters digital editor Chrystia Freeland: “Because I think mainstream journalism is averse to making judgments. And I also think that mainstream journalists are particularly scared of being labeled as liberal.”

— CNN’s *Reliable Sources*, July 31.

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