

[Brad DeLong](#)

Grasping Reality with Both Invisible Hands: Fair, Balanced, and Reality-Based: A Semi-Daily Journal

Tom Levenson Watches Conor Friedersdorf Meet the Real World

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Tom:

Reality, Meet Conor. Conor, Meet the Real World. « The Inverse Square Blog: [A]cknowledging that Friedersdorf has both reason and the right to feel moral revulsion at some of the acts of the Obama administration, in this fallen world you don't get the choice of the perfect man or government. Friedersdorf acknowledges the "lesser of two evils" argument with a faint sneer... moral relativism is not for the stalwart Friedersdorf... Ahh, the eternal righteousness of the resolutely disengaged...

[Friedersdorf's] argument rests on the claim that on the crucial matter Romney and Obama are the same. Which is why this report in today's New York Times is such a firecracker up his rhetorical butt:

In one of his first acts, President Obama issued an executive order restricting interrogators to a list of nonabusive tactics approved in the Army Field Manual. Even as he embraced a hawkish approach to other counterterrorism issues — like drone strikes, military commissions, indefinite detention and the Patriot Act — Mr. Obama has stuck to that strict no-torture policy.

By contrast, Mr. Romney's advisers have privately urged him to "rescind and replace President Obama's executive order" and permit secret "enhanced interrogation techniques against high-value detainees that are safe, legal and effective in generating intelligence to save American lives," according to an internal Romney campaign memorandum.... "We'll use enhanced interrogation techniques which go beyond those that are in the military handbook right now," he said at a news conference in Charleston, S.C., in December...

As Jim Henley wrote, Conor Friedersdorf is engaging in some high-quality concern-trolling. He is, as I would put it, objectively pro-Romney: writing in the Atlantic to an overwhelmingly Democratic audience, he is working hard to diminish the number of votes for Obama.

I don't see Friedersdorf directing analogous arguments that they should not vote for Romney at the denizens of Reason or the American Spectator or National Review or the Cato Institute.