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The Politics? Lookin' Pretty Good

Peter Robinson · 12 hours ago

Although I was on a family vacation back East, to the extent that I followed the news over the last few days I had the feeling that things were moving, broadly, Obama's way. He had backed the GOP into a corner. He would be able to force them to surrender on a matter of principle, raising taxes as part of a debt ceiling settlement. And he had set Republicans up to take the blame for the weak economy for months to come.

Today?

If Speaker Boehner's plan wins approval in the House today--still an "if," but one looking increasingly likely--the Republicans will have backed the president and the Democratic leadership into a corner, fashioning a proposal that will raise the debt ceiling, cut spending, and leave taxes right where they are, setting up a national debate. During the presidential campaign, Republicans will stand unambiguously for smaller government, lower taxes and economic growth, Obama and the Democrats for stagnation and bloat.

Two additional items complete the political picture.

As Brian Hughes reports in the *Washington Examiner*, the federal government is likely to suffer a ratings downgrade even after the debt ceiling is raised. Hughes quotes Mark Calabria of the CATO Institute, whose judgement strikes me as just right:

"I think we are inevitably on the path to downgrade," said Mark Calabria, director of financial regulation studies at the Cato Institute. "It's not just about the debt limit but a question about the sustainability of the fiscal situation...."

"Presidents bear most of the blame for that type of thing," Calabria said. "If someone gets laid off, they don't think back to the process that got them there. He's the economic steward."

Also in the *Washington Examiner*, the always-indispensable Michael Barone notes that Republicans won the popular vote for the House of Representatives last year by 52 to 45 percent.

Were the 2012 presidential race to pan out this way, it would be the strongest showing for Republicans since 1988. Could it happen? Two good articles out today argue that it could. On the *Weekly Standard* blog, Jay Cost looks at Barack Obama's job approval ratings and trends in party identification (the latter is something I discussed in my *Wednesday Examiner* column). And over at *National Journal*, Josh Kraushaar looks at poll numbers in key states like Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan, all of which Obama carried in 2008.

A lot can happen between now and November 2012, and much depends on the strength of the Republican nominee. But the clear drift of these numbers is that Obama is not in nearly as good a shape for reelection as conventional wisdom in *Washington* supposes.

After two months of demagoguery on the debt ceiling, in other words, the president of the United States--the greatest orator since Lincoln, the One, the man of whom a recent article in *Esquire* asked "How Can We Not Love Obama?"--the president of the United States finds himself in deep, deep trouble.

Huzzah.

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Comments (displaying 9 of 9):



Paul A. Rahe

If Boehner manages to get this through the House, my bet is that the Senate will pass it and Obama will sign it. And when he signs it, he will show the same good grace he demonstrated when he signed the bill extending the Bush tax cuts.

Let me repeat what I said in a recent post. Boehner is going to go down as one of the most significant Speakers of the House in the history of Congress.

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Southern Pessimist (1)
bereket kelile (1)
Forrest Cox (2)

Contributor Feed

Re: Why Insist On Not Raising the Debt Ceiling? Because "I won."

Tommy De Seno

Bryan G. Stephens: Yes! How is it we are told we have 1/3 of Government, but we are expected to keep coming up with plans. Obama killed the deal, the Senate won't even vote on what the house sent. ...

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Jul 29 at 5:38am · Like (0), Share,
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Tommy De Seno

Why Insist On Not Raising the Debt Ceiling? Because "I won."

· 31 minutes ago

An election cannot give a nation a firm sense of direction if it has two or more national parties which merely have different names but are as alike in their policies as two peas in the same pod. - Franklin D.

...

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Bill Whalen

Now, to repeat myself again, if we could only find a standard-bearer for 2012 who understands what an opportunity we have.

#1 · Jul 28 at 1:24pm · [Like](#), [Share](#), [Permalink](#)

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Charles Allen

Of course what Harry Reid and the Senate Dems will do (after sending a letter saying the Boehner bill would not pass) is to tack a bunch of amendments on to it and send it back to the House as a "compromise", and dare the GOP to turn down their "balanced" approach. Then they will demogouge the hell out of any opposition.

But as Peter points out, that might actually be good for the GOP in the polls....

#2 · Jul 28 at 1:27pm · [Like](#) (1), [Share](#), [Permalink](#)



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David Williamson

Peter - I am glad your absence from CA is clearing your mind.

Nothing has been moving Mr Obama's way since Jan 20, 2009, when he messed up the oath of allegiance (a Freudian slip?).

Could you stop by Washington, while you are nearby, and persuade Mr Ryan to run? Otherwise it will have to be Mr Perry or Mrs Bachmann.

Edited on Jul 28 at 01:30 pm

#3 · Jul 28 at 1:28pm · [Like](#), [Share](#), [Permalink](#)



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The King Prawn

I second the need for a standard-bearer. Romney is simply not that person. He is a very white, barely Republican version of what we need to get rid of. That will not sell.

Does there yet exist a way for Obama to turn this to his advantage? Can Republicans again snatch defeat from the jaws of victory?

#4 · Jul 28 at 1:30pm · [Like](#) (1), [Share](#), [Permalink](#)



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HVTs

If this new deal cuts trivial sums from actual FY12 spending (amounts mentioned are less than what the Feds *borrow* in a *single day!*) it will be hard to put this in the 'win' column. A political victory? MSM will spin it a tie and conclude that it was all much ado about nothing anyway, foisted upon the poor, heroic Obama by vile "ultra conservatives." ('And didn't he just weather the storm brilliantly', they will gush.) The best thing about the deal is forcing the debt ceiling to national attention again in Feb 12, which might keep Obama's profligacy in voters' frontal lobes during Primary season.

#5 · Jul 28 at 1:54pm · [Like](#) (1), [Share](#), [Permalink](#)



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Oct '10

Southern Pessimist

I don't see anything in the news that makes me think that this crisis is going to end well.



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May '11

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TWS Blog

#6 · Jul 28 at 2:05pm · [Like](#), [Share](#), [Permalink](#)

bereket kelile

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Now, to repeat myself again, if we could only find a standard-bearer for 2012 who understands what an opportunity we have. · Jul 28 at 1:24pm

Was that the gracefulness with which he lambasted the final agreement and criticized the Republicans? Awesome.

#7 · Jul 28 at 6:13pm · [Like](#), [Share](#), [Permalink](#)



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Oct '10

Forrest Cox

Paul A. Rahe: If Boehner manages to get this through the House, my bet is that the Senate will pass it and Obama will sign it. And when he signs it, he will show the same good grace he demonstrated when he signed the bill extending the Bush tax cuts.

Not so sure that was good grace - he never had good footing in that debate, and never really seemed like he was going to put up much of a fight.

Let me repeat what I said in a recent post. Boehner is going to go down as one of the most significant Speakers of the House in the history of Congress.

You may well be right here, but I don't think it's due to anything extraordinary about Boehner himself. How many other SOTH have presided during such a precarious - financially-speaking - time? Significance, like luck, can run both ways...

#8 · Jul 29 at 1:10am · [Like](#), [Share](#), [Permalink](#)



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Forrest Cox

Now, to repeat myself again, if we could only find a standard-bearer for 2012 who understands what an opportunity we have.

I'm prone to the same fits of panic that seem to be plaguing those of us who tend to vote GOP over the perceived talent level of the current field.

But somehow I can't seem to shake the notion that it's going to work out just fine.

I mean, who doesn't look presidential when compared to President Obama, especially as he's been in recent weeks? When you put Biden next to him, then what do you get? Worse for him, anyone he could tap to replace Biden (Ed Rendelly, say) will simply overshadow him.

Look at these potential tickets:

- Romney / Pawlenty
- Romney / Ryan
- Romney / Daniels (has he REALLY ruled out VPOTUS?)
- Romney / Jindal (see Daniels)
- Perry / Ryan
- Perry / Giuliani
- Perry / Pawlenty
- Perry / Jindal

I could be a minority here, but I'm having problems seeing how we lose



Joined
Sep '10

with any of these.

And we must remember, with an even more solidly GOP House and a GOP Senate, the POTUS will be pushed rightward by the legislative agenda - prioritization will become the main challenge.

#9 · Jul 29 at 1:33am · [Like](#), [Share](#), [Permalink](#)



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