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## January 27, 2010

ANN ALTHOUSE WILL BE LIVEBLOGGING the State Of The Union. And Jason Pye emails that the folks at UnitedLiberty will be liveblogging, too.

Stephen Green, of course, will be drunkblogging it, and has links to various State Of The Union drinking games. Jim Treacher will be liveblogging, too, and while it isn't *formally* "drunkblogging," well, informally it just might be . . . .

The country's in the very best of hands. Our future's so bright, we gotta wear shades. So sit back, relax, and watch!



Plus, Sandy Levinson on a SOTU catastrophe. "If we really do believe that there is, say, a 1% probability that a successful attack will take place on the Capitol when everyone gathers for the State of the Union address, that's a good reason either to revert to an earlier tradition, when Presidents delivered written messages, or, at the very least, telling most of the Cabinet and Justices, for starters, that they can, like the rest of us, watch it on TV. (I note that Dick Cheney did not attend the immediate post-Sept. 11 address to Congress, but did seemingly attend all of the States of the Union address thereafter. But why? I ask this as a fully serious, and not cheap-shot, question.)" Well, Hillary isn't attending tonight, but not as a security holdout. What does that mean?

UPDATE: More liveblogging from a panel of experts at the Cato Institute.

Also the inimitable Dana Loesch.

Plus, Jules Crittenden is doing the drinking games.

From the Cato Liveblog: "The assertions about the Depression we would have had are outrageous. Their forecasts of the stimulus's impact have been horrible, so how can they have any credibility on this kind of issue? " I think it's full speed ahead, here, credibility be damned. Plus this: "Bastiat is spinning in his grave."

The "stimulus" didn't produce any jobs, but if we pass a *new* stimulus and call it a "jobs bill," it will!

On Facebook, Alex Lightman writes: "I was looking forward to the State of the Union speech. Then I read most of it, and got depressed. It's as if he's running for office, not holding office. I didn't hear anything about what's going to be cut. Anyone can make promises to spend other people's money."

Reader C.J. Burch writes: "'The worst of the storm has passed.' Forget Green and Crittenden, what the Hell is Obama drinking?"

More from Cato: "Wonderful, more government-directed investment. That worked really well with Fannie and Freddie." Plus this prediction: "He'll pivot from a new \$100 billion jobs bill to cutting the deficit."

Ann Althouse: "Small businesses are good. (Come on, *talk* to them.) Big business sucks though. We want to help small business grow... so it can become big business and then we can hate it."

Seems pretty much like a recycled campaign speech to me.

And not just recycled campaign speech — the Cato folks note this:

"Through stricter accounting standards and tougher disclosure requirements, corporate America must be made more accountable to employees and shareholders and held to the highest standards of conduct."

—George W. Bush, 2002 SOTU

They told me if I voted for John McCain we'd see a third Bush term. And they were right! [LATER: Tad DeHaven keeps running quotes from Bush SOTUs that match what Obama's saying tonight.]

More from Cato: "He has decided to run against lobbyists. The populist turn again. Carter did that too." Those guys are on fire. Just head over there to catch all the gems. But here's one more: "This is the most awful anti-trade position of any president in a long time."

More liveblogging from Jason Van Steenwyk.

Ed Driscoll: The Semiotics Of The Anointed.

Stephen Green: "Our approach would bring down the deficit by as much as one trillion dollars over two decades.' Fine. But when those two decades mean another 20 or 30 trillion dollars of debt, you're talking about scooping pee out of the ocean with sieve."

Plus this: "Let me know.' Dude, the voters of Massachusetts just did."

And: "The guy who just bragged of his (mysterious) 25 tax cuts just ragged on the Bush tax cuts."

An Obama speech word cloud.

"But we took office in a crisis — *and never let a crisis go to waste!*" Okay, I kinda interpolated the second part. . . .

Hey, does this sound familiar?

Many of you have talked about the need to pay down our national debt. I listened, and I agree. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to act now, and I hope you will join me to pay down \$2 trillion in debt during the next 10 years.

It's from George W. Bush's 2001 SOTU.

A reader emails: "Oh for heaven's sake. It's a freaking stump speech. You've been elected all ready Mr. President. Now you have to do things. See the difference?"

The freeze starts next year? And I start my diet tomorrow.

From Dan Mitchell at Cato: "We've all done something very naughty if this is the government we deserve."

Now Obama, after delivering an hour-long stump speech, criticizes the perpetual campaign. Luckily for him, most people will be watching *Teen Mom* on their Tivo by now.

A reader sends a link to Reagan's 1982 State Of The Union by way of comparison.

The Insta-Daughter: "He needs to quit referring to Bush. It's weird."

Nick Schulz: The Definition of Chutzpah.

John Samples at Cato: "I agree with Chris. It is surprising how unsurprising this speech has been, particularly for a president in deep political trouble."

More liveblogging at *Reason*. Radley Balko: "wow. no none is better at trivializing opponents' arguments than obama."

A call to repeal Don't Ask Don't Tell. I'm for it, but I'll bet there's not much follow-through.

Stephen Green: "I have embraced the vision of John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan.' Okay. Except you embraced the competence of Jimmy Carter & Herbert Hoover."

Jim Harper at Cato: "Following through on his transparency promises would be a great way to actually deliver change."

Matt Welch: "8-year-olds sending money to the president don't make me all tingly inside."

Reader Rob Lain emails:

Others have probably done this already, but I just ran these numbers:

Obama SOTU 2010 First Person Singular Pronoun Count

I – 96 times

me – 8 times

Bush SOTU 2008 First Person Singular Pronoun Count

I – 39 times

me – 2 times

Think this may wind up correlating to their relative contributions to the national debt, when all is said and done?

I dunno, but what's funny is that I think Obama was restraining himself here . . . .

Okay, it's over. My sense is that he was trying a bit too hard. Comparing the mood to last year, the Democratic applause and cheering seemed rather forced, too. Plus, I don't think his public scolding of the Supreme Court was very Presidential — or, for that matter, very smart.

Krauthammer is noting that Obama treats "Washington" as a pejorative, but that he *is* Washington now.

Matt Welch: "I think I've forgotten it already. Except for the I WON'T QUIT part. Don't worry, it *\*is\** about you, etc."

Reader Matt Barger writes: "There has never been a SOTU as patronizing as this. God help us."

C.J. Burch emails again: "A brittle speech by a brittle administration. He's done as a political force, I think. If not now, soon." We'll see.

And Stephen Green concludes: "We're into the Big Finish... but there's no new here. For a guy who got his bottom handed to him in three big elections, he's strangely reluctant to change course. In fact, he's not even willing to change tone. Which means, whatever you thought of Bush's lousy last three years, Obama has already outdone him in being tone-deaf. Let me restate that. This guy hasn't gotten one single thing done since Porklulus was passed 11 months ago, and he just doubled down. Well, you know what? Who cares how much is in the pot when it's other people's money?"

Reader Allen S. Thorpe writes: "It is probably better to think of it as a State of My Presidency speech and it's probably the best chance he's had since his Inauguration to speech to this size of an audience. He'd better be in campaign mode, because he's losing the election right now. From the back of my memory, some familiar words are floating up: 'Lipstick on a pig.'"

Gerard van der Leun emails with praise: "Excellent digest. All the hot liveblogging lines with none of the screen refreshing tedium."

Thanks! As Leon Lipson once said, "Anything you can do, I can do meta." But really, follow the links to the other blogs as this is just the merest skim of cream.

And there's always the Zomby translation.

Plus, Richard Fernandez weighs in. "Since the current administration is doing all these good things, it will stay the course. It won't let the aforementioned saboteurs and wreckers stand in the way."

The McDonnell reponse? The bar for these things is low — and he was certainly infinitely better than Jindal last year. But the big story is the subtext: "I was just elected in a state Obama carried, even though Obama campaigned against me. Whatever he may say under the lights, he can't save you come election day." Likewise, the Scott Brown mention.

And from Meryl Yourish: Breaking the Obama Code:

Tonight, he addressed the American people, and he addressed Congress. Go back and look at the speech. He was earnest, and his chin was down, his head relatively level, when speaking to Congress.

When he spoke to us, his chin rose, and he talked down to us—literally.

Go ahead. Take a look. Note his posture. You'll see it, too. You and I, we are not his equals. He is above us.

*That's* what sets my teeth on edge every time I listen to him.

That's almost worth rewinding the DVR for, but . . . no, I've suffered enough.

Some extensive thoughts from Dan Riehl, including this: "Obama praised the concept of separation of powers, then immediately turned to question the Supreme Court's recent decision on campaign finance reform. That tendency caused much of speech to ring hollow throughout."

Alex Castellanos writes: "There were too many Barack Obamas tonight, making too many promises to too many interests. The same president who said he wasn't interested in relitigating the past . . . did exactly that for over an hour. The same president who yearned for less partisanship also resorted to it without hesitation, often just a few sentences afterwards, blaming his problems on his predecessor one long year into his own administration."

Jim Geraghty: [On His Last Day in Office, Obama Will Still Be Talking About What He Inherited.](#)

More from The Anchoress:

You know, one could argue that President Bush "inherited" Al Qaeda from Bill Clinton, who did little-to-nothing in response to all of Al Qaeda's provocations throughout the 1990's and unto the USS Cole bombing. But never, not once, did Bush ever say, "I inherited this..." It's time for Obama to become a man.

Much more at the link.

John Podhoretz: "One liberal trope after the speech, voiced by Chrystia Freedland of the Financial Times on Charlie Rose, is that Obama is putting Republican politicians on notice he will go after them as the do-nothing impeters of progress. Republicans should pray this is the case, and it may be the case." In New Jersey, Virginia, and Massachusetts he's proven impotent. Why should people fear him more now, when he's weaker?

And reader Eric Naft writes:

You posted a CATO link that mentioned Bastiat, but do you realize exactly how precisely delicious that observation is? In extolling the virtues of the stimulus, President Obama cited several small businesses, including a "window repair company" in Philadelphia.

Having read Bastiat's influential "That Which Is Seen & That Which Is Not Seen: The Unintended Consequences of Government Spending," I don't think he could have chosen more poorly (or perhaps more aptly?). The opening vignette of Bastiat's seminal work, which demolishes the notion that government spending stimulates anything, is subtitled, "The Broken Window." It explains that paying to repair broken windows doesn't help the economy at large because the money used to pay for the repair is money that can't be used to buy a shirt or to do whatever else the private citizen may be inclined to do with his money.

Has nobody in the administration's speech-writing team ever read basic economics? Never mind. I think I know the answer to that.

Yes, I do realize. But heck, forget the speech-writing team. What about the economic team?

Plus, what the voters think about Obama's speech points.

Chris Matthews on Obama: 'I Forgot He Was Black For an Hour'.

Good grief. Why is this guy still on the air? Oh, wait, he's not — he's on MSNBC . . . .

And reader Scott Blanksteen writes:

Obama's comments about the Supreme Court's decision enabling foreign corporations to donate in US campaigns are particularly ironic given that it was his campaign that mis-configured their credit-card acceptance software in a way for which the only purpose would be to enable foreign donations!

More on that [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).

Jules Crittenden: "But seriously, we have just witnessed an extraordinary exercise in presidential oratorical animation that may be without peer or precedent. Can it be said that any American president has ever tried to blame so much on other people, or has been willing to so rapidly abandon his own principles for the betterment of his standing with the people, to seize up the banner against himself in our nation's time of need, that this nation should not stand against him? For this, the president deserves our unabashed, gaga-eyed astonishment."

Posted at by Glenn Reynolds at 8:55 pm