



## 5 Best Monday Columns

By *JARED KELLER & ALEX EICHLER* on June 07, 2010 10:06am

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- **E.J. Dionne on Obama's Double Bind** Looking ahead to the November elections, the Washington Post columnist [discerns](#) yet another pitfall ahead for both Obama and Democrats. Politically, the Obama administration will play a dog with two bones, torn between making up for its recent PR flubs regarding the oil spill and concentrating on revitalizing the economy. "He needs to establish that he is doing all he can to repair the damage in the gulf even as he maintains his focus on the economy and convinces reluctant conservative Democrats that the job of ending the downturn is not done," muses Dionne. "However unfair the first impressions of Obama's response to the oil spill may be, he can't afford to let them stand. He also can't afford to let oily waters engulf his priorities."
- **James Carroll on a Time for Self-Surpassing** The Boston Globe columnist [takes](#) an anthropological view of our current Gulf Coast woes. "Humans have been defined by the urge to surpass themselves," declares Carroll, before making this urge the source of our technological missteps. "But the Deepwater Horizon blowout is a harbinger. Oil drilling is only one activity taking place at the frontier where unprecedented human inventiveness intersects with forces making for wholly predictable catastrophe." Carroll cautions us to look beyond the human impulse to innovate and invent to the unintended consequences. "The time of necessary self-surpassing is here again."
- **Peter Singer on the Morality of Reproduction** In a post for The New York Times' philosophy blog, Singer, a bioethics professor at Princeton, [weighs](#) the big-picture questions raised by the decision to become a parent. If a child is born today, what are the odds that she'll be happy in life? "If we could see our lives objectively, we would see that they are not something we should inflict on anyone," Singer writes. His argument eventually loops back upon itself, devil's advocate-style-- "In my judgment, for most people, life is worth living"--but passes through some provocative territory on the way.
- **Jeffrey Miron on Drugs and the Tea Party** At National Review, Miron, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, [submits](#) that in order for the Tea Party to remain intellectually consistent, it must endorse the libertarian plank of sweeping drug legalization. "Drug prohibition is not remotely consistent with fiscal responsibility," writes Miron, "and prohibition has unintended consequences that push its cost-benefit ratio even farther in the wrong direction." Not only that, but "drug prohibition, at least when imposed at the federal level, is also hard to reconcile with constitutionally limited government." In Miron's view, the Tea Party's way forward is clear.
- **Christoph Westphal on Faster Pharmaceuticals** In a guest column for The Boston Globe, Westphal [calls](#) for industry reforms that would make pharmaceutical research and development faster and less costly. A new drug typically takes 10 years and over a billion dollars to develop, Westphal points out. How can we address this? "We could apply lessons learned during the AIDS crisis, when drug regulators authorized more rapid clinical trial and approval timelines for a disease with no good therapies," Westphal writes. We could also outsource

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"some of the labor- and cost-intensive initial steps in drug discovery... to countries such as India and China." None of these suggestions is a silver bullet, he acknowledges, but for things to continue as they are would be unacceptable.

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