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President ‘Irrelevant’?

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“No commander in chief of the U.S. armed forces can be wholly irrelevant, but to the extent one can be, Mr. Obama is,” writes Peggy Noonan. “After the attacks Mr. Obama went on TV, apparently to comfort us and remind us it’s OK, he’s in charge. He prattled on about violence being at odds with ‘universal values.’ He proceeded as if unaware that there are no actually universal values, that right now the values of the West and radical Islam are clashing, violently, and we have to face it.”

A Journal editorial today says that President Obama “watered down U.S. interrogation, and the Snowden panic has done the same to intelligence collection. This amounts to unilateral disarmament in a world where, as Paris reminds us, terrorists can kill by the hundreds or thousands.” The editorial notes that the attacks in France, resulting in part from an intelligence failure, “have reopened the debate over antiterror surveillance, and a good thing too.”

Mac Zimmerman cites a Cato Institute report showing that “the average federal employee earned \$84,153 in 2014—roughly 50% more than the average worker in the private economy. When you include benefits like health care and pensions, the average federal worker’s compensation rises to \$119,934—nearly 80% higher than everyone else.”

House Financial Services Chairman Jeb Hensarling writes in our pages today about a reform of the Federal Reserve that passed the House on Thursday. Under the bill, the Fed can “choose the rule or method for conducting monetary policy,” notes Mr. Hensarling, but the Fed would be required to “report and explain its rule, and if it deviates from its chosen rule, why.” The central bank would also have to conduct cost/benefit analysis of its proposed rules, disclose details of its stress-testing of banks and accept new limits on its emergency lending powers.

A Journal editorial shares good news from Wisconsin, “where lawmakers voted Monday to dismantle the agency that promoted an illegal investigation of conservative nonprofits.” The Wisconsin Supreme Court shut down the infamous Government Accountability Board’s partisan campaign-finance investigation, but only after it had “blanketed the state’s conservatives with subpoenas.” The board will be remembered as the perpetrator of “one of the most extensive assaults on free speech in the state’s history.”

Our columnist Kimberley Strassel writes that Ted Cruz has been “the stealth contender” who “has quietly built his donor base and erected an early-state infrastructure.” But Ms. Strassel says

that “after Paris, he finds himself with a national security agenda that is increasingly at odds with the public will.”

Dan Epstein writes that the Federal Trade Commission’s chief administrative-law judge has finally dismissed the agency’s complaint against LabMD. “But it was too late. The reputational damage and expense of a six-year federal investigation forced LabMD to close last year.” Mr. Epstein adds that “the case illustrates the injustice of the federal system that allows agencies to cow companies into submission rather than seek a day in court.”

Nicholas Hahn describes a new initiative of the Humane Society that is “ostensibly aimed at reminding Christians of their duty to protect animals” but “is peddling a theologically questionable and overtly political agenda.”

And finally, President Obama is in Malaysia today. The editorial board writes that he has an opportunity “to score a diplomatic and moral victory for the U.S. That would be the release of opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, now serving his second prison sentence on trumped-up sodomy charges. Mr. Anwar’s real crime is the political threat he poses” to “the United Malays National Organization, which has ruled the country since independence in the 1950s.”