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AIM REPORT

For Fairness, Balance and Accuracy in News Reporting

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Are the Media Steering Us Over Fiscal Cliff?

By Roger Aronoff

As the nation is poised to go over the so-called fiscal cliff on January 1st, it is clear that President Obama is counting on the media to lay the blame on the Republicans. Based on his experience during the recent presidential election, he is right to assume that, and there is little doubt they will attempt to do so. Following a December 13th meeting and a December 14th phone call between Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-OH) and Obama, Boehner apparently began to cave on a couple of his previous lines in the sand. According to news reports, Boehner offered a tax-rate hike on those earning \$1 million a year, and a willingness to take the debt-ceiling limit off the table for this February, when it was scheduled to be up again for a vote. Boehner's spokesman called the reports on the debt-limit delay "highly misleading," in that it depended on the level of spending cuts and entitlement reforms to which the Democrats would agree. But clearly, Obama believes he is in the driver's seat and wouldn't agree to the new offers.

The tragic murder of 26 people in Newtown, Connecticut, at the Sandy Hook Elementary School had the effect of taking the fiscal cliff out of the headlines, and suddenly it didn't feel quite as urgent. But with barely a week till Christmas, and with no promising reciprocation by President Obama to Boehner's offers of compromise, it is probably too late to actually come together and pass something that will avoid the fiscal cliff, the dreaded combination of automatic tax hikes and sequestered spending cuts set to take place on the first day of 2013, if no agreement is reached before then. In reality, the fiscal cliff is more like a fiscal hurdle, as others have called it, because resolving this does very little towards fixing our long term economic plight.

There are a series of issues, such as the debt-ceiling, ObamaCare's state insurance exchanges, tax reform and entitlement reform that really need to be resolved to get us off a path of economic ruin, if it's not already too late. For more than three years, Congress and the White House have shown an inability to do anything other than short term fixes, kicking the can down the road. Have we finally reached a crossroads where decisions



must be made? Only time will tell.

Once an agreement is reached, meaning that either President Obama backs off his demand for a tax rate increase on the upper two percent of income earners, or enough House Republicans accept a rate increase, the following steps would still have to occur: a bill would have to be written by the House Republicans; it must be submitted to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) for scoring; it would then be sent to the Senate; then to a committee for reconciliation; and finally go to the President for signing. Of course that process could be compressed if both parties' leaders were able to reach an overall agreement.

It is questionable whether or not there are enough House Republicans ready to accept the rate hike, even if the President gave them a fig leaf to show the folks back home that they got something in return—namely significant spending cuts in the form of entitlement reform. So far there is no sign that he will. The President did offer to reform corporate tax rates, but Republicans weren't buying it. According to Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX), a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, it may call for reducing the tax rate to 28 percent, but, "it would add loopholes and 'clean energy' credits for Mr. Obama's liberal allies

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AIM

in the News

The **Huffington Post** recently took a shot at **Breitbart's Big Hollywood** website, and at the same time, a dig at **AIM**. "No one goes to **Andrew Breitbart's Big Hollywood** site anymore," they wrote. "They're so rudderless and fifth-rate it's not even good for laughs. You don't even have the heart to make fun of them. They've got nothing. They're like federal children guarding a skeleton in a sundress, or the rump elements of **Reed Irvine's Accuracy in Media**."

The author of that **HuffPo** piece is someone named **Chris Kelly**, who writes for **Bill Maher's Real Time**. That's what happens when you write for an ignorant, misogynistic bigot like **Maher**. This insult certainly doesn't rise to the level of the quote that **Reed Irvine** proudly kept framed on **AIM's** wall, from former **Washington Post** editor **Ben Bradlee**. **Bradlee** called **Reed** a "miserable, carping, retromingent vigilante," referring to an animal that urinates backward.

AIM continues to need your help. Please visit our website, aim.org, and please donate and sign up for our daily email. We are planning new projects for 2013. We appreciate your continued support, and will continue to keep a close eye on the media.

AIMREPORT

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Editor's Message



Dear Fellow Media Watchdogs:

As this AIM Report goes to press, Speaker John Boehner announced what he is calling his Plan B in the fiscal cliff negotiations—basically a vote in the House to keep the Bush tax cuts for everyone making less than a million dollars a year. Previously he seemed prepared to give away the ranch in his negotiations with President Obama in an effort to avert the cliff. It is my belief that he should have accepted the permanent extension on tax rates for the 98% who earn less than \$250,000. That he could have gotten. The Democrats dared him to take that deal. After that, the Republicans could have spelled out their principles and ideas for governing in a series of resolutions and legislation calling for tax reform, entitlement reform, and budgets that show they are serious about their main argument—we have a spending problem, not a revenue problem. And by the way, no tax-rate hikes. It's bad for the economy.

Until Plan B emerged, it seemed that Boehner was trying to show he was flexible and compromising, believing that somehow he and the Republicans would get credit from the media for having tried to avert going over the cliff, while realizing that there is no bridging the gulf between the two parties on these issues. His previous offer, following a meeting at the White House on December 17, was to offer tax-rate hikes on those earning more than a million dollars a year, most of whom have small businesses whose profits are reported on their personal income tax returns. He is also asking for \$1 trillion in spending cuts, but as I explain in this report, cuts are an illusion.

But even more distressing than that to conservatives was his willingness to remove the issue of the federal debt-limit, already at more than \$16 trillion, for one year. That is the one bit of leverage that Republicans have in the negotiations. But he apparently was willing to give that up for a deal with Obama and the Democrats.

At the same time, Obama had dropped his demand for tax hikes of \$1.6 trillion, down to \$1.2 trillion. It is hard to see Boehner winning the support of a majority of his caucus, though he could probably get enough Republicans to take the leap with him and, combined with all the Democrats in the House, get passed whatever he and Obama decide on. It would almost certainly mean the end of his speakership.

I also want to take this opportunity to apologize to those of you who receive the printed AIM Reports. I have fallen behind this year in getting the reports out on time. But by January 2013 I will be back on schedule, and plan to stay that way. So please hang in there with us. I hope you had a great holiday season, and that the New Year brings you joy, good health, and many blessings to share with your loved ones. We cherish our relationship with you, and always appreciate hearing from you. Thanks. •

For Accuracy in Media

Roger Aronoff

Your Letters

Dear Mr. Aronoff:

Regarding your article, "JINSA Again Honors America's Military Heroes"—Shame on the MSM for missing such a great opportunity to help honor these brave men. I thank God every day that America has true patriots protecting us and I pray for all our members of the military and their families for their sacrifices. Thank you AIM for this recognition.

Sally E.

Please send Letters to the Editor to:

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Please keep your submissions to 50 words or less. Letters may be edited for length.

while oil companies and other affordable energy producers would be punished.”

The media have been pounding home the notion that the Republicans are in the process of caving in and accepting a tax-rate hike, and that polls show that the public prefers Obama's plan. They argue that since Obama won the presidential election in November, he has a mandate and the Republicans should accept that. But even at this late date, the Republicans still have a clear path to take a principled position and not be routed in this political brinksmanship.

Rep. Tom Cole of Oklahoma suggested a way out for the Republicans, but Boehner and others disagreed. Cole said that Republicans should take the Democrats up on the offer to extend the Bush tax rates for the 98%, or those making less than \$250,000 as a couple, or \$200,000 as an individual. He said they should accept that deal, since it is something that both sides want. The objection seems to be that it would be giving Obama what he says he wants—the higher rates for those making more than \$250,000 and a freeze on the rates for the so-called middle class, while getting nothing in return. But the reality is that the issue of the Bush middle class tax extension provides no leverage whatsoever.

What this really looks like is an attempt by Obama and the Democrats to badly humiliate the Republican Party, or as Rich Lowry, editor of National Review called it, Operation Humiliation. Obama is confident he has the media and the public behind him enough to force the GOP to break their “no tax-rate hike” pledge. But in the absence of any apparent agree-



ment, the Republicans may have to act on their own principles based on what it is they actually control, which is the House of Representatives. They could then pass an extension on the rates for the two percent, and go on record against an increase in taxes on capital gains, divi-

dends and inheritances. At the same time, they should be emphasizing their reasoning—that higher tax rates will hurt the still struggling economy, while lower rates and serious tax reform would promote economic growth. That, combined with real spending cuts, is perhaps the only hope to turn the economy around.

If the Republicans pass their own budget again, it would be a reminder that the Senate Democrats haven't passed a budget since April of 2009. President Obama has submitted budgets both this year and last

Of course the media will be Obama's complicit partner. He already had his White House spokesmen come to the White House, i.e., the MSNBC prime time lineup...

which have gathered zero votes.

The key is going along with the permanent tax rate extension for the 98%. If the GOP doesn't, I believe they play right into Obama's hands. On January 3, Obama could propose a stand-alone tax cut for the 98%, and dare the Republicans in the House to vote against it. He would get and take the credit as the man who lowered tax rates for the 98%, while the Republicans would be seen as having allowed us to go over the fiscal cliff to protect their wealthy friends. That is how this is being set up. Obama wants the Republicans as his partners on his failed economic plans.

Of course the media will be Obama's complicit partner. He already had his White House spokesmen come to the White House for a pep talk, i.e., the MSNBC prime time lineup, who represent their Mother Ship, NBC, a once proud network that has become a permanent Super Pac for the Democratic Party.

And as far as getting meaningful spending cuts, it never takes place. First of all, when Obama talks about \$4 trillion in cuts, that doesn't mean \$4 trillion in cuts. It means spending \$4 trillion less than we were projected to spend.

An editorial in Investor's Business Daily (IBD) summed it up very well:

“In short, Obama's plan is no plan at all, but a PR exercise relying on the ignorance of average Americans about the fiscal fix we're in and the role government spending plays. If he wins this battle, America will take another giant step down the path of

economic decline.”

Regarding talk of cutting taxes, IBD called it “nonsense. According to the CBO, spending is likely to rise from \$3.54 trillion in 2012 to \$5.97 trillion in 2022—a 69% increase. Over that entire span, spending will total \$46.5 trillion—a 72% increase from the previous 10 years.

Parts of the problem for Obama are his flip-flops on many of these issues. Or it would be if the media decided to report on various statements he has made that are at odds with his current positions.

For example, proof that Obama understands that his proposed “tax hike on the rich” won't do anything significant toward reducing the deficit, and actually would probably make things worse, is when ABC's Charlie Gibson asked candidate Obama during the 2008 campaign if he would raise capital gains tax rates even if it brought less revenue to the government. Yes, Obama said. “I would look at raising the capital gains tax for purposes of fairness.” After all, it's not about raising revenues and encouraging growth, but rather about what he considers “fairness.”

At a July 2011 news conference, Obama said the government could increase tax revenues by \$1.2 trillion over 10 years without raising income tax rates. It could be done, he said, “by eliminating loopholes, eliminating some deductions and engaging in a tax reform process that could have lowered rates generally while broadening the base.” He apparently no longer believes that is true, but no one challenges him on it.

Following his stinging defeat at the polls in 2010, when the Republicans picked up 63 seats in the House, Obama was faced with the issue of extending the Bush tax cuts. He said, “The last thing you want to do is to raise taxes in the middle of a recession because that would just suck up, take more demand out of the economy and put businesses in a further hole.”

No doubt, elections have consequences, and Obama is feeling emboldened and empowered. But with Benghazi-Gate, the scandal over the deaths of four Americans on the anniversary of 9/11, Republicans have been emboldened too, and it may prove to be the impetus that keeps them from completely caving in to Obama's demands. •

Roger Aronoff is the Editor of Accuracy in Media, and can be contacted at roger.aronoff@aim.org

How Romney Was Out-Organized by Obama

By Cliff Kincaid



Jeremy Bird, the National Field Director of Obama for America (OFA), said that Obama's winning coalition on November 6 was the result of "the strongest grassroots organization in the history of American presidential politics." OFA had more than twice as many local offices as Republican Mitt Romney in the targeted swing states, he said.

In those targeted states, Bird said, OFA had 631 offices, compared to only 282 for Romney.

While Republican strategist Karl Rove was raising \$300 million for television ads depicting Republican candidate Mitt Romney as a would-be efficient manager of the U.S. economy, Bird said the Obama for America operation assembled a network comprised of more than two million volunteers, backed by neighborhood political teams and 2,700 field organizers. The local offices were critical to mobilizing the volunteers, he said.

The title of Bird's presentation was "Brick-by-brick: The nitty-gritty organizing work that turned out Obama's winning coalition." Although he is now the National Field Director for Obama for America, Jeremy Bird is a former community organizer with a history of working in Democratic Party politics.

Some conservatives are still insisting that Obama was elected through vote fraud, even though Romney has conceded the

election and Republican consultants are acknowledging the flaws in the "ground game" of turning out the vote. The Bird presentation makes it plain that the Obama campaign simply out-organized the Romney campaign and used money where it was most effective—on the streets.

Bird's remarks and a slide presentation dramatizing the Democratic Party advantages in the election were delivered at a Center for American Progress (CAP) event called "The Obama Coalition in 2012 and Beyond."

As panelists openly talked about the success of the "Obama coalition" and what it could accomplish in the future, including in the 2014 congressional elections, they quickly dismissed a concern that the political nature of the conversation could jeopardize CAP's status as a "non-partisan" and tax-exempt entity.

Funded by hedge-fund billionaire George Soros and other prominent liberals, CAP is considered a virtual front of the Obama Administration and claims to have played a "key role" in passing Obamacare.

CAP's 2010 annual report, which reports almost \$30 million in revenue, notes appearances by CAP figures on CNN as well as MSNBC host Ed Schultz's taping of his radio show at the CAP radio studio.

The November 6 election came as a shock to many Republicans and conservatives, who believed the polls forecasting a Romney win. On Fox News, Karl Rove and Dick Morris were among those predicting a Romney victory.

The CAP event went behind the headlines of the Obama victory to demonstrate how they did it. Jeremy Bird said that OFA volunteers contacted 146 million people

for Obama in order to try to get them out to the polls, and conducted a voter registration program that "changed the electorate" by increasing the turnout of minorities and others favorable to Obama. Bird noted that the Obama campaign had another program, Operation Vote, which focused on getting "core constituencies" to the polls.

Democratic pollster Anna Greenberg, senior vice president of Greenberg Quinlan, Rosner Research, mocked the pollsters who had predicted a Romney win and said that the GOP's most "reliable voters" did not turn out on Election Day. Greenberg said her final poll showed Obama winning the election by four points, close to the actual final margin of 3.7%.

She said that while Republican officials had ridiculed the Democratic Party's emphasis on early voting, that turned out to be one of the keys to the outcome. Obama won the early vote in such states as Iowa, Ohio, Virginia, Nevada, North Carolina, Florida and Colorado.

Ruy Teixeira, a CAP fellow, was the host of the event and delivered his own report on the election results. "In 2012 President Obama won re-election with 50.9 percent of the popular vote and 332 Electoral College votes," he noted. "He is the first Democratic president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt to win two terms with more than 50 percent of the total popular vote. Unlike Democratic victories of the past, however, President Obama was also able to achieve victory with a historically low percentage of the white vote."

He said, however, that it is an open question whether Obama and the progressives can deliver on their agenda for the nation and "improve the economic standing of middle- and working-class families..."

Cliff Kincaid is the Director of the AIM Center for Investigative Journalism.

American Reds Still Backing Obama

By Cliff Kincaid

Erwin Marquit, a member of the International Department of the Communist Party USA (CPUSA), recently told a conference of communist political parties from around the world that communists in the U.S. did not run their own candidate for president on No-

vember 6 because they worked within the Democratic Party for the reelection of Barack Obama and the victories of "progressive" Democrats to Congress.

"The Communist Party USA not only welcomes the reelection of President Barack Obama, but actively engaged in the electoral campaign for his reelection

and for the election of many Democratic Party congressional candidates," Marquit declared at the conference, hosted by the Lebanese Communist Party.

Under Obama, he said, "...we have been forming Party clubs in states in which we previously had very few or even no members. This influx of new members led us to

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have a national Party school earlier this year to acquaint new members with the Marxist-Leninist orientation of the Party.”

The communist resurgence under Obama is not surprising, since he has consistently waged a Marxist class warfare campaign as President and was influenced as a young man by Communist Party member Frank Marshall Davis.

In a report to the Communist Party USA National Committee on November 17, 2012, national CPUSA chairman Sam Webb declared, “We meet on the heels of an enormous people’s victory.” He explained, “An African American president was reelected to the Presidency, the Democrats unexpectedly strengthened their hand in the Senate and House, new progressive voices, like Elizabeth Warren, are coming to Washington, and victories, including for marriage equality, occurred at the state level.”

The 14th International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties (IMC-WP) was staged under the lengthy slogan, “Strengthen the struggles against escalating imperialist aggressiveness, for satisfying peoples’ socio-economic-democratic rights and aspirations, for socialism.” It was held in Beirut, Lebanon, November 22-25.

Marquit went on in his conference presentation: “In our electoral policy, we seek to cooperate and strengthen our relationship with the more progressive elements in [the] Democratic Party, such as the Progressive Caucus in the U.S. Congress, a group of seventy-six members of the Congress co-chaired by Raúl Grijalva, a Latino from Arizona, and Keith Ellison, an African American Muslim from Minnesota. We also will strengthen our relationship to the Congressional Black Caucus (formed by African Americans in the Congress), which has been the point of origin of innovative policies including an end to the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba, and with the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.”

Marquit’s Facebook page includes Reps. Maxine Waters and Keith Ellison among his “likes.”

But when Republican Rep. Allen West in April made sensational charges of communist influence in Congress, through members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, the major media accused West of



McCarthyism and making false accusations. The Congressional Progressive Caucus said that West had engaged “in base and childish conversations that lower the high level of discourse Americans rightly expect from their representatives.”

Marquit said the CPUSA is concerned that the Republican Party “still controls the lower house of the Congress and has enough votes in the upper house [the Senate] to block legislative changes of a highly progressive nature...” This “obstacle,” he said, will be addressed and “changed” in the 2014 elections. “We still have the task of strengthening the center-left alliance and enriching its anti-imperialist character,” he said.

The recommendations from the conference included “Promoting the international front against imperialism and the support for the international anti-imperialist mass organizations, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the World Peace Council (WPC), the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), and the Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF), in the specific framework of every country.”

These so-called “international anti-imperialist mass organizations” are old Soviet front groups. Like the CPUSA, they were funded by Moscow during the Cold War and before the “collapse” of international communism.

The activities of the International Meeting of Communist and Workers’ Parties demonstrate that international communism is very much alive and well.

Marquit praised Obama for “a major expansion of the people’s access to financing of their health care” and “taking some modest but real steps” on the issue of “justice for immigrant workers and their families.”

Referring to the Obama coalition that

worked for his re-election, the CPUSA statement said, “...we saw the necessity of a policy of center-left alliances in order not to separate ourselves from the people’s struggles for dealing with the far right onslaught. The basis of such an alliance now includes the labor movement, organizations of African Americans and Latinos, the women’s movement, gay and lesbian civil rights groups, and organizations of the elderly and retirees.”

Turning to foreign policy and referring to Marxist regimes in such countries as Venezuela, Marquit said, “We welcome the election of several progressive, anti-imperialist governments in Latin America and oppose U.S. attempts to undermine them. This leftward shift in Latin America, opening a path to possible socialist development, is of tremendous importance in the worldwide anti-imperialist struggle.”

In regard to the Middle East, Marquit said, “With the elections now over, there is a prospect that growing support in the United States for a just Middle East solution can induce President Obama once again to put pressure on the Israeli government to end the settlement expansion and resume negotiations leading to such a [two-state] solution.”

His statement concluded, “While the victory of Obama is a welcome aid for us in our domestic struggles, we still face the challenge of mobilizing mass pressure on his administration to reverse the imperialist character of U.S. foreign policy. The CPUSA will pursue this formidable task vigorously in alliance with domestic progressive forces and with our comrades in the Communist and Workers’ Parties and their allies throughout the world.”

As a footnote, Marquit is a Professor Emeritus of Physics at the University of Minnesota, where he had received mixed reviews. On the “Rate My Professors” website, one student said, “Worst class in my college career. Erwin spent the 2.5 hours rambling on about being a diehard Stalinist. This man put everyone to sleep! However, you can still score a good grade (A-B) without actually reading the (mountain of) text books or attending the lectures. But why waste time and money?”•

Cliff Kincaid is the Director of the AIM Center for Investigative Journalism, and can be contacted at cliff.kincaid@aim.org.

Left-Wing Media Plan to Get Tough on Obama

By Don Irvine



Politico's Dylan Byers reported that some members of the progressive, or left-wing, media are making efforts to push Obama to complete the key parts of the unfinished liberal agenda that he first outlined in 2008.

Those parts include climate change, drone strikes, gun control and closing the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, among others.

Byers pointed out that one of the first to challenge Obama was none other than the editorial page of *The New York Times*, which launched a series titled, "Goals for a New Term." *The Times* was sharply critical of the President, saying Obama lacked courage on gun control and had adopted the "Bush team's extravagant claims of state secrets and executive power, blocking any accountability for the detention and brutalization of hundreds of men at Guantánamo and secret prisons, and denying torture victims their day in court."

Others have chimed in as well. David Remnick, editor of *The New Yorker*, criticized Obama for his lack of attention to climate change, and Ari Melber of *The Nation* hit the President on what he said was the lack of transparency in the use of drone strikes to target terrorists.

Rik Hertzberg, a veteran liberal journalist and chief political commentator for *The New Yorker*, told Politico that now that Obama has been re-elected, the media can be more critical:

"Liberals in the media are going to be tougher on Obama and more respectful at the same time. He was the champion of our side, he vanquished the foe..... [but] now liberals don't have to worry about hurting his chances for re-election, so they can be tougher in urging him to do what he should be doing."

How convenient. Rather than remind

the public about Obama's multitude of failures, the liberal media bit their collective tongues so as not to endanger his re-election chances. And now that he has won a second term they feel somewhat obligated to do their job and to actually criticize him for failing to live up to his promises. But that criticism will probably only go so far and for so long with another election coming up in two years, and with the Democrats within striking distance of regaining control of the House. •

Chris Matthews Still Pushing Narrative that Republicans "Don't Like Black Presidents"

By Don Irvine



On MSNBC's *Hardball*, Chris Matthews continued to beat the drum that the Republican Party's goal during the election was to suppress the black and Hispanic vote. He accused the party's leadership of using "dog whistles" to tell voters that "we don't like black presidents."

After playing a montage of clips featuring Newt Gingrich, Donald Trump and John Sununu, Matthews turned to former Congressman J.C. Watts to try and get him to admit that the Republican Party doesn't like Obama because he is black.

Matthews: Do you agree that these are dog whistles? These are signals to people; we don't like black presidents?

Watts: I think it's unfair to paint with a broad brush and say that all Republicans agree with John Sununu.

Watts told Matthews that in his opinion, the Romney campaign lacked diversity, but he refused to go along with Matthews' assertion that the Republican Party was sending some sort of secret message to voters on race.

Matthews' trotting out the race card in attacking the GOP is nothing unusual. He consistently did it throughout the

campaign. Unfortunately, it is likely to continue as long as Obama is in office. •

White House Opens Its Doors to MSNBC Hosts

By Don Irvine



Several MSNBC hosts, including Rachel Maddow, Lawrence O'Donnell, Al Sharpton and Ed Schultz, went to the White House for a post-election briefing with President Obama on his tax plan.

When asked by Politico about the meeting, White House spokesman Josh Earnest said the following:

"This afternoon at the White House, the President met with influential progressives to talk about the importance of preventing a tax increase on middle class families, strengthening our economy and adopting a balanced approach to deficit reduction."

Those influential progressives just happen to be a part of a network that was so blatantly pro-Obama during the election that they didn't report any negative stories about the President in the last week leading up to Election Day.

The meeting with the left-wing hosts at MSNBC is from the same White House that three years ago accused Fox News of being an arm of the Republican party.

Tell me again exactly which cable news network is doing the bidding of which political party? •

What You Can Do

Please send the enclosed postcards to:

- Mr. Jeff Zucker, the new president of CNN about what he might do to improve the network's image;

- Ms. Soledad O'Brien, about how she was pushing her anti-Second Amendment agenda when, following the tragedy at Newtown, Connecticut, she indignantly addressed some guests who didn't share her views;

- Please make a sizable donation to AIM to help us continue our work in 2013