

An Ingrate For The Ages

By now, more than a few Americans have heard that its thug-in-chief, one Barack Hussein Obama Soetoro Obama (BHOSO), did a smashing job of insulting British Prime Minister Gordon Brown when he recently visited the White House. The diss started when the new temporary occupant of the Oval Office spotted a bust of the great British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. BHOSO immediately ordered it removed.

The valuable bust, by the famous sculpture Sir Jacob Epstein, was initially loaned to former President Bush by Britain's Government Art Collection. The offer to extend the loan of the bust was extended to Obama, but he wanted it moved – not just out of the Oval Office, but out of the White House completely. The likeness of Churchill was eventually taken to the residence of the British Ambassador to the U.S., the considerably more appreciative Sir Nigel Sheinwald. (An Oval Office photo in the March 2 issue of Newsweek shows what looks to be a bust of Martin Luther King, Jr. in its the place.)

One Brit later remarked that *“the young president could learn a thing or two about leadership from Sir Winston Churchill, the British hero whose bust he so crassly removed from the Oval Office.”* It was not immediately clear why Obama felt it necessary to remove from his presence a symbol of “resolve, courage and faith against the enemies of Western civilization” – or whether he also plans to return the Statue of Liberty to France.

A few weeks later Obama embarrassed (some would say insulted) Brown by meeting with him in the White House but refusing to hold the usual joint press conference with him afterward. Obama also decided not to have any British flags on display when they met – another break from tradition. The snub was perhaps a result of staff ineptitude (God knows the new administration seems to have its share of that) or an indication that Obama does not want to share the limelight for any economic recovery that may (if he's lucky) take place. Obama also likely does not want too much credit going to Brown for his proposed “global new deal.” Obama is as eager to avoid sharing credit for any eventual economic recovery as he is to avoid blame for his own incompetence.

Prime Minister Brown presented Obama with a first-edition seven-volume biography of Winston Churchill. In return, Obama gave Brown a set of 25 DVDs, purportedly from the American Film Institute's list of the top 100 American films. (It is unknown whether the DVDs presented to Brown are even useable in Great Britain, where different “region codes” render standard American DVDs unplayable.) Brown, by the way, is blind in one eye and his sight is failing in the other. The better to watch “Psycho” by, perhaps thought Obama. (When Mrs. Brown presented Michelle Obama with specially-made dresses for her two daughters, the First Lady trotted down to the White House gift shop to grab a few toy Marine One helicopters for the Brown's boys.)

Brown also presented Obama with a pen holder crafted from the wood of the British ship H.M.S. Gannet. (The Gannet is the sister ship of the famous British warship, “The

Resolute,” which was stuck in the ice in the Arctic, abandoned by the British, and later retrieved by Americans and returned to England.) The pens were meant by Brown to symbolize the friendship between the U.S. and the U.K., and match a Presidential desk made from the H.M.S. Resolute which was presented to the U.S. decades ago. (It is unclear what Obama’s DVDs were meant to symbolize, and one would hope Obama doesn’t decide to “re-gift” the pen holder or the Churchill books.)

Although Obama insisted during the campaign that he would improve relations with other nations (which he argued President Bush had caused to deteriorate), his initial meeting with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown suggests Obama has a lot to learn about foreign relations. Obama was immediately excoriated for his treatment of Brown in the largely sycophant-free British press. One report remarked that “*The Prime Minister was given a humiliatingly low key reception at the White House at the hands of a new U.S. Administration that seems to care little for the Anglo-American alliance or even the basics of international diplomacy.*” The London Daily Telegraph wrote, “*Obama has been rudeness personified toward Britain.*” Despite Brown’s unpopularity in England, its citizens still expect him to be treated with dignity, prompting the media comment, “*No British leader in modern times has been greeted with less decorum by his American counterpart, and the amateur reception he received was more fitting for the arrival of a Third World potentate than the leader of America’s closest ally.*”

To put Obama’s sophomoric effrontery into perspective, one should consider the unsubstantiated – but entirely believable – story that when he entered the Oval Office for the first time and saw the Churchill bust, Obama boomed, “*Get that God damned thing out of here!*”

Obama’s alleged anger relates to the fact that Kenya, which became an independent nation in 1963, had previously been under British rule for more than 50 years (it was known as the British East African Protectorate of Zanzibar) and Obama may therefore harbor resentments against the British. Winston Churchill was Prime Minister between 1951 and 1955, at a time when the British were fighting the Mau Mau rebellion, and Obama’s father was a British citizen before he became a Kenyan in 1963. (He was also a drunken, wife-beating communist bureaucrat, but that’s another story.)

Churchill was also, of course, Prime Minister between 1940 and 1945, when Britain and the United States combined forces to defeat Hitler and the Nazis. Churchill (the first Honorary Citizen of the United States, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, and recipient of 37 orders, decorations and medal) kept the spirits of the British alive with his stirring speeches. It was his first speech as Prime Minister that included his famous line, “*I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat*” – which is now consistently misquoted and overused (by people who somehow think they are being original).

Before the Battle of Britain Churchill said, “*...we shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be, we shall fight on the beaches,*

we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.”

Churchill spoke these memorable words, *“Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves, that if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, ‘This was their finest hour.’”*

Referring to the British fighter pilots who so bravely defended both England and Western civilization, Churchill said, *“Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”*

After the Allied victory at the Second Battle of El Alamein, the great statesman noted – without a teleprompter – *“This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.”*

If you’re looking for inspiration, wit, and wisdom, pick up a book about Churchill – or search the Internet for his famous quotes. You will find gems like, *“an appeaser is one who feeds the crocodile hoping it will eat him last.”* One can hope Obama will learn to accept that advice before he lodges Israel any further under the wheels of the Iranian bus. It also wouldn’t hurt if Obama committed to memory Churchill’s sound advice, *“In reaching out to foes, take care not to reject your friends,”* before he turns his back on Poland, the Czech Republic, South Korea, Israel, and Taiwan in his eagerness to play nice-nice with Russia, North Korea, Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, Syria, and China.

Of course, like Churchill, Obama has had his share of memorable quotes as well:

“I wasn’t in church that day.” (When asked about his minister’s controversial sermons.)

“I can unequivocally say I will not be running for national office in four years... I am a believer in knowing what you’re doing when you apply for a job, and I think that if I were to seriously consider running on a national ticket, I would essentially have to start now, before having served a day in the Senate. There may be some who are comfortable doing that, but I’m not one of those people.”

“I’ve been very blessed. Keynote speaker at the Democratic convention. The cover of Newsweek. My book made the best-seller list. I just won a Grammy for reading it on tape. Really, what else is there to do? Well, I guess I could pass a law or something.”

“If I am the Democratic nominee, I will aggressively pursue an agreement with the Republican nominee to preserve a publicly financed general election,” and *“I have promised that I would sit down with John McCain and talk about can we preserve a public (financing) system.”*

The Muslim call to prayer is... *“one of the prettiest sounds on Earth at sunset.”*

Sex education for kindergartners is... *“the right thing to do.”*

“One thing I'm very confident about is my judgment in foreign policy is, I believe, better than any other candidate in this race, Republican or Democrat.”

“I'm not just asking you to take a chance on me. I'm also asking you to take a chance on your own aspirations.” (Astute readers may note the uncanny similarity between Obama's remark and that made by Massachusetts candidate for Governor Deval Patrick in June of 2006, *“I am not asking anybody to take a chance on me. I'm asking you to take a chance on your own aspirations.”* Not that anyone would accuse Obama of plagiarism. That's Biden's department.)

“So if somebody wants to build a coal-powered plant, they can; it's just that it will bankrupt them because they're going to be charged a huge sum for all that greenhouse gas that's being emitted.”

“Under my plan of a cap and trade system, electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket... even regardless of what I say about whether coal is good or bad, because I'm capping greenhouse gasses, coal power plants, natural gas... you name it... whatever the plants were, whatever the industry was, they would have to retro-fit their operations. That will cost money... they will pass that money on to the consumers.”

My job... *“is to be so persuasive... that a light will shine through that window, a beam of light will come down upon you, you will experience an epiphany, and you will suddenly realize that you must go to the polls and vote for Barack.”*

“For the first time in my adult life, I am proud of my country.” (Oh, wait, that was his wife. Sorry.)

“The notion that...me knowing somebody (terrorist bombers William Ayers and Bernadine Dohrn) who engaged in detestable acts 40 years ago... somehow reflects on me and my values doesn't make much sense.”

“I can no more disown him (controversial and arguably anti-American preacher Reverend Jeremiah Wright) than I can disown the black community.”

“We're a country that is just downright mean.” (Oops, sorry. Michelle again.)

Because of lost jobs the residents of small-town America...*“get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them or (become) anti-immigrant.”*

“I believe that the Constitution confers an individual right to bear arms. But just because you have an individual right does not mean that the state or local government can't constrain the exercise of that right.”

“As our nation honors its unbroken line of fallen heroes – and I see many of them here in the audience today – our sense of patriotism is particularly strong.”

“This was the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal.”

“I'm saddened by today's verdict. This isn't the Tony Rezko I knew.”

“But understand this, instead of worrying whether immigrants should learn English, they'll learn English, you need to make sure your child can speak Spanish.”

I won't be swayed by... *“tired rhetoric about vouchers and school choice.”*

“Well, (sigh), you know, I... I... eh, er, I think that whether you're looking at it from a theological perspective or, uh, a scientific perspective, answering that question with specificity, uh, you know, is above my pay grade.” (When asked “When does human life begin?”)

If my daughters make a mistake I wouldn't... *“want them punished with a baby.”*

Israel is a... *“constant sore (that) infects all of our foreign policy.”*

I represent the... *“World's hopes for America.”*

“This is the moment the world is waiting for.”

“I have become a symbol of restoring America to its best traditions.”

“That's why we need to offer those who are willing to make amends a pathway to citizenship. That way, we can reconcile our values as both a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws.”

“If I were designing a system from scratch, I would probably go ahead with a single-payer (socialized health care) system.”

“Nobody has spoken out more fiercely on the issue of anti-Semitism than I have.”

“I graduated in 1979. The Vietnam War had come to an end. We weren’t engaged in an active military conflict at that point. And so, it’s (enlistment in the Armed Forces) not an option that I ever decided to pursue.”

“I want you to argue with them (Republicans) and get in their face.”

“So, you know, I think the message is, if you need us, if I can be helpful, I’m prepared to be there at any point.” (When asked if he would stay in Washington to help resolve the economic crisis.)

Senator McCain is... *“using a hatchet (on the budget) when you need a scalpel.”*

“I’m cutting more than I’m spending so that it will be a net spending cut.”

“I think when you spread the wealth around, it’s good for everybody.”

“I didn’t want to get into a Nancy Reagan thing about doing any séances.”

“We are going to go through our federal budget, as I promised during the campaign, page by page, line by line, eliminating those programs we don’t need and insisting that those that we do need operate in a sensible, cost-effective.”

“The economy is going to get worse before it gets better.”

“We don’t want government to run companies.”

“I had no contact with the (Illinois) governor (Blagojevich) or his office.”

“I have not discussed the Senate seat with the governor (Blagojevich) at any time.”

“...let me just cut you off, because I don’t want you to waste your question.”

“We can’t just keep driving our SUVs, eating whatever we want, keeping our homes at 72 degrees at all times...”

“There aren’t two sets of rules – you know, one for two prominent people (tax cheats Daschle and Geithner) and one for ordinary folks who have to pay their taxes.”

“You can’t just listen to Rush Limbaugh and get things done.”

“Well, I think Afghanistan is still winnable, in the sense of our ability to ensure that it is not a launching pad for attacks against North America. I think it's still possible for us to stamp out al Qaeda to make sure that extremism is not expanding but rather is contracting.”

“ Hamas-Fatah government is good for stability.”

“We are going to ban all earmarks.”

“Absolutely we need earmark reform, and when I am president we will go line by line to make sure we're not spending money unwisely.”

“Now, I'm proud that we passed a recovery plan free of earmarks,”

“The stock market is sort of like a tracking poll in politics. It bobs up and down day-to-day. And if you spend all your time worrying about that, then you're probably going to get the long-term strategy wrong.”

“What you're now seeing is... is, uh... profit and earning ratios are... are starting to, uh, get to the point where buying stocks is a potentially good deal if you've got a long term perspective on it.”

“I did think it might be useful to point out that it wasn't under me that we started buying a bunch of shares of banks. It wasn't on my watch. And it wasn't on my watch that we passed a massive new entitlement – the prescription drug plan – without a source of funding. And so I think it's important just to note when you start hearing folks throw these words around that we've actually been operating in a way that has been entirely consistent with free-market principles and that some of the same folks who are throwing the word 'socialist' around can't say the same.”

We are at... *“the point where buying stocks is a potentially good deal if you've got a long term perspective.”*

“We've got a very big border with Mexico. I'm not interested in militarizing the border,”

...and the all-time champion:

“All of the statements that have been the subject of controversy are ones that I vehemently condemn.”

While some might describe the words of Winston Churchill as stirring and inspirational, Obama's tend to fall into the category of “the dog ate my homework.” Maybe MSNBC's

Chris Matthews was thinking of his dog when he said that Obama's speeches send a thrill up his leg.

Putting the "speechifying" aside, Obama may nevertheless still want to reconsider his resentment of Churchill and the British Empire. After all, had the British not brought railroads, trade, the rule of law, and education to Kenya, Obama's father would never have learned English and traveled to Hawaii to study Russian and meet Stanley Ann Dunham. Obama would not have been born, let alone become President, had the British and other European nations not brought civilization to East Africa.

But Obama won't stop to consider that. Nor will he bother reading the Churchill biography given to him by a gentleman from England.

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