



Our Know-nothing President

Is it really possible that the President of the United States knows as little about what his administration is doing as his defenders claim? That no one tells him *anything* about what's going on until he reads it in the papers?

Consider all of the scandals that have taken place since Barack Obama moved into the White House: Operation Fast and Furious; the murder of our ambassador and three other Americans in Benghazi, Libya; the Internal Revenue Service harassment of Tea Party and other patriotic groups; National Security Agency spying on foreign leaders, as well as millions of Americans; the incredibly botched implementation of Obamacare; etc. The list goes on and on.



We're supposed to believe that Obama remained in blissful ignorance about all of them until the media reports started. When that happened, he was just as surprised and upset as the rest of us.

The latest "I didn't know anything about it" scandal is the revelation that the NSA has been monitoring the private conversations of some 35 world leaders. Apparently, the bugging operation has been going on for years. Yet we're supposed to believe that no one told the President about it until a couple of months ago.

Sure, that sounds credible, doesn't it? Turns out, we're tapping the cellphone of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, among others; yet no one in the chain of command thinks that maybe, just maybe, Obama should be told about it.

Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, followed the party line when she said: "It is my understanding that President Obama was not aware Chancellor Merkel's communications were being collected since 2002. That is a big problem."

It certainly is. Of all the sorry excuses that have been offered for this Presidential ignorance, my favorite is the one from [anonymous officials](#) who said that "the NSA has so many eavesdropping operations under way that it wouldn't have been practical to brief him on all of them."

If you were in charge, how would you like to have that pathetic excuse laid in front of you? Do you think that maybe some heads would roll? That's what would happen in the real world — but not in this administration, where the watchword is to protect the President at all costs. And always, but always, blame somebody else when anything goes wrong.

The latest example of this came on Wednesday, when Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen



Written by [Wallis W. Wood](#) on November 1, 2013

Sebelius, the woman in charge of implementing Obamacare, trudged up Capitol Hill to explain why things have gone so disastrously wrong in the launch of the President's pet program — and to promise that they will get better very soon.

In her testimony before the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Sebelius said that she was “as frustrated and angry as anyone” about the problems that have occurred since the launch of Obamacare on Oct. 1.

At one point, she even denied that the Healthcare.gov website had actually crashed, saying it just runs a lot slower than it should. Hah! In a piece of cosmic irony, the website crashed again, just as she was delivering this whopper. When it did, CNN broadcast a split screen, showing Sebelius on the right half and the crash error message from the website (“The system is down at the moment”) on the left-hand side of the screen.

Potential enrollees aren't the only ones who can't get the information they need from the Obamacare website. Turns out that neither can the HHS Secretary. When asked how many people had actually managed to navigate through the website to the end and actually purchase one of the government-mandated health plans, Sebelius said that the numbers weren't available yet. Check back next month.

Is it that the total number of enrollments can't be tabulated or that they won't be released, since they are so embarrassingly low?

Still, Sebelius promised her skeptical inquisitors that everything would be hunky-dory by the end of November, when the website will finally be working properly. In the meantime, she proclaimed, “Hold me accountable for the debacle. I'm responsible.”

Does that mean she'll do the honorable thing and tender her resignation to the President? Not on your life. Or at least, not yet. If the promised re-launch of the website comes on Dec. 1, as seems likely, I don't think the White House will bear with her much longer. By sometime in January, I suspect you can color Sebelius gone.

Meanwhile, [CNN reports](#) that the administration is putting pressure on insurance companies not to say anything critical of Obamacare. “What's going on,” reporter Andrew Griffin told Anderson Cooper, “is [a] behind-the-scenes attempt by the White House to at least keep insurers from publicly criticizing what is happening under this Affordable Care Act rollout. Basically, if you speak out, if you are quoted, you're going to get a call from the White House, pressure to be quiet.”

Bob Laszewski, a consultant for several insurance companies, says he's getting calls from executives he knows, asking him to speak out on their behalf. He told CNN: “The White House is exerting massive pressure on the industry, including the trade associations, to keep quiet.”

Now it turns out that the insurance companies — and the Obama Administration — have known for *years* that millions of Americans would lose their health insurance once Obamacare went into effect, despite all of the claims to the contrary.

Regulations written by the Department of Health and Human Services in July 2010 estimated that “40 to 67 percent” of policyholders would not be able to keep their health insurance once the Affordable Care Act went into effect. Now there are estimates that the actual figure may be as high as 80 percent. So somewhere between 8 million and 14 million Americans will lose the health insurance they presently have.

Of course, Obama promised the American people exactly the opposite. Back in June 2009 he said, “[W]e



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will keep this promise to the American people: If you like your doctor, you will be able to keep your doctor. Period. If you like your healthcare plan, you will be able to keep your healthcare plan. Period.”

And he’s repeated that promise countless times since then. In fact, as of yesterday, the official White House website still claimed, “If you like your plan, you can keep it and you don’t have to change a thing due to the healthcare law.”

Of course, we now know that this isn’t true. Millions of people are learning that they won’t be able to keep their present policy, no matter how much they might like it. But the Obama Administration continues to spread this falsehood.

This helps explain why Obama’s popularity is plummeting faster than a safe falling from a window. The latest *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News poll says that the President’s job-approval rating has fallen to an all-time low. According to the poll, a majority of Americans — 51 percent — now disapprove of the job he is doing. Only 42 percent say they still approve of his performance. That’s down from 53 percent at the end of last year.

In the same poll, just 29 percent said that their representative deserved to be re-elected to Congress. More than twice as many, some 63 percent, said it was time to give a new person a chance.

The disdain was bipartisan, by the way, with two Republican leaders — House Speaker John Boehner and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell — joining Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid in getting their highest negative ratings ever.

Oh, and get this: Half of those polled don’t believe that an accord will be reached by the Jan. 15 deadline on a plan to fund the government. They say another Federal shutdown is likely.

Will all of this disdain and distrust result in votes to actually reduce the size, power and *cost* of our central government? It would be wonderful if that were the case. But I wouldn’t count on it.

Until next time, keep some powder dry.

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