



Written by [Wallis W. Wood](#) on March 5, 2010

Hey, Washington — Reconcile This!

Thank goodness for a conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, last week. I had day-long duties as the master of ceremonies — which meant I was not able to watch Barack Obama’s seven-hour healthcare summit on TV.

If you did, please tell me what you thought of it. (If you’ve never joined our comment club before, it’s easy to do. Just go to the end of this *Straight Talk* column, type in your raves, rants or whatever, and click “Submit Comment.” Assuming your remarks aren’t obscene, you’ll see them posted a few moments later.)



The analysts I trust — and even a few I don’t like — say the whole affair was *boring*. Apparently our President came across as smug, arrogant, and condescending. Do you agree? This doesn’t surprise me; I think that’s pretty much what he’s actually like.

Peggy Noonan, a conservative commentator who is frequently much kinder to our opponents than am I, said of Obama’s manner, “The President has entered a boorish phase.”

But boors don’t win in politics. I’m beginning to wonder if some of the President’s most avid supporters don’t see the handwriting on the wall. (The word they’re seeing is “failure.”)

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In the television coverage of Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi, Obama’s water carriers in the Senate and House, both looked as though they had been sucking on lemons all morning. No jovial, back-slapping, glad-to-have-you-here gushing for them. It was more like, “Line up the victims, boys, and let’s get this execution underway.”

In fact, the *New York Times* said as much in its coverage the next day. One of its lead stories started this way: “Speaker Nancy Pelosi says she is confident she will be able to get the votes needed to pass sweeping healthcare legislation in the House, *even if it threatens the political careers of some members of her party.*”

I put that last part in bold italics because I wanted to be sure you saw it — and recognize the significance of it. How would you like to be a moderate Democrat facing a tough reelection battle this November and read those words? Think it might send a chill up your spine?

Nasty Nancy has already lost at least one vote. Representative Marion Berry (D-Ark.) announced last month that he won’t be running for reelection this year. In his remarks, he lambasted the White House for pushing Blue Dog Democrats “into the abyss.” His words, not mine.

One astute analyst of the Washington scene commented thusly: “The thing to know about President Obama’s health talk-fest is that it had zero to do with Republicans or their ideas. The GOP came, it spiritedly debated, it left. The president never budged. *He never intended to.*”



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Precisely!

If the President had actually meant for the summit to lead to compromise and accommodation he would have said so up front. He knew that every Republican in Washington — not to mention an overwhelming majority of Americans — wants to toss out those two disasters that the House and Senate approved under extreme pressure.

But instead of agreeing to kill those bills and, as the Republicans have insisted, “start with a clean sheet of paper,” the President has made it clear it’s “my way or the highway.”

It was apparent to me long before the summit started that the Democratic leadership had absolutely no intention of achieving a “compromise” with the Republicans. The White House had been dropping hints for days that the President was going to set aside the velvet glove and instead take out his heaviest hammer. In this case, that means endorsing an odd legislative practice called “reconciliation” to get his healthcare bill passed by both branches of Congress.

I’ve written about reconciliation before. Basically, it means rigging the rules so that legislation already approved in the Senate by 60 votes can be ratified — when it comes back from a House-Senate conference committee — by a simple majority.

Normally, neither side would attempt this parliamentary sleight-of-hand when major changes have been made in a bill. But apparently the powers-that-be in the Democratic camp have decided that this is the only way they’re going to get Obamacare passed this year. So the heck with precedent, the public, or the outraged cries of the opposition. It’s “damn the torpedoes, guys, full speed ahead.”

In an op-ed piece in the *Wall Street Journal*, former Senator Majority Leader Bill Frist wrote that using “reconciliation” to get Obamacare approved would be “an unprecedented, dangerous and historic mistake.”

Actually, Bill, I kind of hope they’ll go for it. I can’t imagine anything the Obamacrats could do that would stir up the opposition more than to cram this odious piece of legislation down our throats. You think the Tea Parties, town hall meetings, and other gatherings have shown some spirited opposition? You ain’t seen nothin’ compared to what will happen if this happens. It’s going to take a lot more than a few hundred million in Cornhusker kickbacks to bully this bill through Congress. It’s going to take a few dozen acts of political suicide.

We’ve already seen the first sign that the deal is breaking down. Both Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi are insisting that the other one be the first to bring the bill up for a vote. Watching them toss this hot potato back and forth would be amusing, if the situation weren’t so serious. (Actually, it’s pretty amusing even so.)

I’m sure many of you are getting all sorts of anxious e-mails from all of sorts of conservative groups, organizations, and coalitions urging you to “write your Senators” and “call your Congressman.” Far be it from me to dissuade you — even though you can be certain they already know their constituents don’t like this sleazy effort to socialize medical care in this country.

Instead of telling them to “just say no,” how about we try a little legislative ju-jitsu here? Ask your elected representatives to support an amendment by Representative John Fleming (R-La.) that would require all members of Congress *and their staffs* to enroll in any new government-run health plan.

I can’t think of anything that would get these pompous planners to switch sides faster. They already know — as most of their constituents do not — that they have exempted themselves from most of the



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legislative shackles they've been so eager to foist on us. Enough of this "some pigs are more equal than others." Let's level the playing field and see how they like it.

As soon as we get Fleming's amendment passed, let's take away their fancy pensions and force them to join Social Security and Medicare. *That* will teach them to fuss with our freedoms!

Until next time, keep some powder dry.

Chip Wood was the first news editor of *The Review of the News* and also wrote for *American Opinion*, our two predecessor publications. He is now the geopolitical editor of *Personal Liberty Digest*, where his *Straight Talk* column appears twice a month. This article first appeared in [PersonalLiberty.com](#) and has been reprinted with permission.



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