



Written by [Wallis W. Wood](#) on January 18, 2013

Obama's "In Your Face" Nominations

Barack Obama's second term hasn't even officially begun. But we already know that the tone will be even more demanding and confrontational than his first term. That became clear in the so-called negotiations over the fiscal cliff.

Except there weren't really any negotiations. It was pretty much "my way or the highway." One of his most recalcitrant representatives in discussions with Congressional leaders was White House Chief of Staff Jack Lew.



In fact, Lew's intransigence so infuriated Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell that the normally mild-mannered Republican refused to meet with him anymore. To show you just how extreme Lew was, the Democrats brought in Vice President Joe Biden as a "moderating" influence. Imagine Biden being the calming voice in the room.

So how did all those negotiations end? Here's how veteran Washington observer Pat Buchanan described the results:

"Rather than do a deal with Speaker John Boehner and offer one-for-one budget cuts for tax hikes, the president forced congressional Republicans into a humiliating climb-down and public retreat that split the House majority asunder. Then he spiked the football to rub it in, saying he had made good on his pledge to make the rich pay."

Obama then added insult to injury, at least as far as conservative Republicans are concerned, by nominating Lew to succeed Timothy Geithner as Secretary of the Treasury.

John Carney, an editor at CNBC.com, said that by nominating Lew for the Treasury post, Obama was being intentionally antagonistic. Indeed, he is sending a "pointed message" that he is now ready to "pick fights with Congress."

Indeed, that is precisely what has been happening.

Two years ago, when he was serving as Obama's budget director, Lew testified that Obama's budget "will get us ... to the point where we can look the American people in the eye and say we're not adding to the debt anymore."

What a joke! Instead of not adding to the debt, Obama increased the national debt by \$6 trillion in four short years. His Administration overspent receipts by more than \$1 trillion a year every year he's been in office.

And now he's demanding that the debt ceiling be increased — or even worse, abolished altogether — so the spending spree can continue. To put it another way, for every dollar the Federal government spends, it saddles our children and grandchildren with an additional 34 cents of debt.

So much for promises of "not adding to the debt anymore."

Lew's nomination to the Treasury post probably won't receive the opposition it should. There would



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have been a ton of fireworks on Capitol Hill had Obama proceeded with his original plan to appoint U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice to succeed Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State. But the Administration wisely decided that it didn't want to face the barrage of negative questioning that would have occurred over Rice's repeated deceptions about the terrorist attacks in Benghazi, Libya in September.

The last thing anyone in the Administration wanted was more attention placed on the murder of Christopher Stevens, our ambassador to Libya, and three other Americans. So Rice was persuaded to withdraw her name from consideration. Instead, Obama went with the very safe nomination of the liberal senior Senator from Massachusetts, John Kerry.

Kerry's vision of what this country's role in the world should be is certainly vastly different from mine ... and probably yours. But it isn't strikingly different from that of his new boss. He is generally respected by his colleagues in the Senate, or at least not too heartily disliked. After some tough questioning at his confirmation hearings, I predict that he will be easily confirmed to become our latest Secretary of State.

That won't be the case for Obama's third nomination that the Senate will have to consider. There will be some heated opposition for Chuck Hagel to succeed Leon Panetta as Secretary of Defense.

Normally, when a President nominates someone from the other party for an important post, it is smooth sailing all the way. This won't be the case for Hagel, the former Republican Senator from Nebraska. Not only is he to the left of his Republican colleagues, but on some important issues he is to the left of Barack Obama — as hard as that may be to believe.

Hagel has gotten a lot of criticism for comments that made him appear to many as being anti-Israel. How else would one interpret things like "I'm a United States Senator, not an Israeli Senator" or "the Jewish lobby intimidates a lot of people up here [on Capitol Hill]"?

A decade ago, after Yasser Arafat has launched his Second Intifada against Israeli, it was not the Palestinian terrorists whom Hagel condemned. No, he said that "Israel must take steps to show its commitment to peace."

Charles Krauthammer, the popular FOX commentator, had this to say in response:

Good God. Exactly two years earlier, Israel had proposed an astonishingly generous peace that offered Arafat a Palestinian state — and half of Jerusalem, a previously unimaginable Israeli concession. Arafat said no, made no counteroffer, walked away and started his terror war. Did no one tell Hagel?

Regarding cutbacks in the defense budget, Hagel in the past has called the Pentagon "bloated" and says our military "needs to be pared down." Those views are pretty much in accord with those of Obama. But they are sure to lead to some sharp questioning at his confirmation hearings.

But expect the most heat to be generated over Hagel's squishy soft attitude toward Iran. Not only has he been outspoken against any military action to end the threat of a nuclear Iran, but he has also opposed American economic sanctions against the terrorist-sponsoring state. He even voted against designating Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization.

Krauthammer rightly calls Hagel "a fringe Senator who left no trace behind." And he adds, "Hagel matters only because of what his nomination says about Obama." And he concludes, "The lessons are being duly drawn. Iran's official media have already cheered the choice of what they call this 'anti-Israel' nominee."



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In March, Obama whispered to then-President Dmitry Medvedev of Russia: “This is my last election. After my election, I have more flexibility.”

Judging by the first three nominations for his new term, we now know what Obama meant by “more flexibility.” He will be even more demanding, hard-nosed and unyielding than he was during his first term. And he will push harder and faster in his quest to transform the country that has twice elected him to our highest office.

You all right to be worried, my friends, about what this means for our once-great Republic. Very worried indeed.

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 weekly. This article first appeared in [PersonalLiberty.com](#) and has been reprinted with permission.*



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