



ONE YEAR IN: CHICAGO ON THE POTOMAC

Obama White House Using Chicago-Style Hardball Tactics To Get Their Way, While Campaign Pledges Fall By The Wayside

OBAMA: “What I Haven’t Been Able To Do In The Midst Of This Crisis Is Bring The Country Together In A Way That We Had Done In The Inauguration. That’s What’s Been Lost This Year ... That Whole Sense Of Changing How Washington Works.” (Ben Smith, “What’s Been Lost,” *Politico’s* “Ben Smith” Blog, 1/13/10)

IN HEALTH CARE FIGHT, DEMS QUICK TO “DEMONIZE” AND BULLY OPPONENTS

On Campaign Trail, Obama Criticized “Broken Politics In Washington. ... A Politics That Says It’s Ok To Demonize Your Political Opponents When We Should Be Coming Together To Solve Problems.” (Sen. Barack Obama, Response To The State Of The Union, 1/28/08)

DNC Running Ad Smearing Americans Concerned About Obama’s Agenda As “Angry ... Rabid ... Extremists.” “The Democratic National Committee will amplify its charge that Republicans are responsible for ‘inciting angry mobs of a small number of rabid right wing extremists ... to disrupt’ town hall meetings in a new 65 second Web video that will release Wednesday morning.” (Mark Preston, “Democrats Accuse GOP Of Inciting Mobs,” *CNN’s “Political Ticker” Blog*, 8/5/09)

White House Aides Gave Democrats “Battle Plan” For Recess Meetings. “Top White House aides gave Senate Democrats a recess battle plan on Thursday, arming the lawmakers with tips for avoiding disastrous town hall meetings while showing them polling on popular aspects of the reform effort.” (Carrie Budoff Brown, “White House To Democrats: ‘Punch Back Twice As Hard,’” *Politico*, 8/6/09)

- **Deputy Chief Of Staff Jim Messina Told Senators “If You Get Hit, We Will Punch Back Twice As Hard.”** “Senior White House adviser David Axelrod and deputy chief of staff Jim Messina told senators to focus on the insured and how they would benefit from ‘consumer protections’ in the overhaul, such as ending the practice of denying insurance based on preexisting conditions and ensuring the continuity of coverage between jobs. ... ‘If you get hit, we will punch back twice as hard,’ Messina said, according to an official who attended the meeting.” (Carrie Budoff Brown, “White House To Democrats: ‘Punch Back Twice As Hard,’” *Politico*, 8/6/09)

Obama’s Spokesperson Smears Dissent To Health Care Plan As “Manufactured.” “White House press secretary Robert Gibbs said Tuesday that he thinks the anger some of the congressmen have experienced is manufactured.” (Kristi Keck, Mark Preston and Paul Steinhauser, “Democrats Say Republicans Staging Town Hall Protests Story Highlights,” *CNN*, 8/5/09)

NBC White House Correspondent Says White House In Campaign Mode And Think “You Get Attacked, You Attack Right Back.” “The larger issue here, what we’re really seeing here, a theme develop, is this is a white house that’s in campaign mode. And you can debate whether or not that’s a good thing. I think their view right now is “let’s fight back hard. that’s a campaign mentality. You get attacked, you attack right back”... Instead now we have a food fight, don’t we?” (Savannah Guthrie, *MSNBC’s “Morning Joe,”* 10/23/09)

Dem Leadership Resorting To Strategy Of “Broken Bones” And “Twisted Arms” To Get Bill Done. “‘Why are we rushing it?’ asked Mr. Melancon, a Blue Dog on the Energy and Commerce Committee. ‘Let’s get it right.’ And he effectively dared House leaders to press ahead without fully addressing his group’s concerns, noting that the Blue Dogs potentially had enough votes in Energy and Commerce to stall the bill and that leaders would have to resort to pressure tactics. ‘We’re going to need some orthopedists around here to take care of the broken bones and twisted arms,’ he said.” (David Herszenhorn And Robert Pear, “Concerns On Plan Show Clashing Goals,” [The New York Times](#), 7/22/09)

State Medical Associations Hint Doctors Being “Bullied Into Submission.” “[Todd] Atwater’s group circulated a much tougher letter among its members in early June, calling a public option the first step ‘down the road towards indentured servitude’ and hinting that physicians’ groups have been bullied into submission by congressional Democrats and the Obama administration.” (Carrie Dann, “Physician Unrest Flares Over AMA Stand,” [National Journal’s Congress Daily AM](#), 7/16/09)

David Axelrod Urged Supporters To Push Back Against “Lies And Distortions” In Health Care Debate. “In an e-mail to supporters posted on the White House Web site Thursday morning, David Axelrod, a senior adviser to Obama, said critics of the administration’s health-care proposals were spreading ‘all sorts of lies and distortions’ through ‘viral e-mails’ that were flying around unchecked. He urged supporters to help start ‘a chain e-mail of our own’ to rebut what Obama has called ‘these wild misrepresentations that bear no resemblance to anything that’s actually been proposed.’” (Anne Kornblut, “Obama To Take On Health-Care Critics,” [The Washington Post](#), 8/15/09)

Following Up On Obama Pledge, DNC Launched “Call ‘Em Out” Blog To Attack Republicans “Who Stray From The Truth.” “The launch of the Obama-focused ad aimed at the party base coincides with the launch of ‘Call ‘Em Out,’ a new site devoted to highlighting Republican leaders who stray from the truth on reform. (I’m assuming the name comes from a line in Obama’s recent speech to a joint session of Congress: ‘If you misrepresent what’s in this plan, we will call you out.’)” (Steve Benen, “Taking The Offensive....,” [The Washington Monthly’s Political Animal Blog](#), 9/18/09)

AND THOSE THEY CAN’T BULLY, THEY JUST BUY OFF

White House Chief Of Staff Rahm Emanuel Urged Sen. Harry Reid To Cut Deals To “Pass Any Health Care Bill, No Matter How Weak.” “Rahm Emanuel visited Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid in his Capitol office on Sunday evening and personally urged him to cut a deal with recalcitrant Sen. Joe Lieberman, two Democratic sources familiar with the situation told the Huffington Post. Emanuel, President Obama’s chief of staff, has long been identified as leading a faction of White House advisers who have been pushing the Senate simply to pass any health care bill, no matter how weak.” (Ryan Grim, “Rahm Emanuel Personally Pressed Reid To Cut Deal With Lieberman: Sources,” [The Huffington Post](#), 12/14/09)

- “‘It was all about “do what you’ve got to do to get it done. Drop whatever you’ve got to drop to get it done,’ the aide said. All of Emanuel’s prescriptions, the source said, were aimed at appeasing Lieberman—not twisting his arm.” (Brian Beutler, “Rahm To Reid: Give Lieberman What He Wants,” [Talking Points Memo’s “TPMDC” Blog](#), 12/14/09)

So Reid Used His Manager’s Amendment To “Craft [Bill] One Favor At A Time.” “For Reid ... Democrats’ concerns will be addressed in individual amendments, but many others will be crowded into an omnibus ‘manager’s amendment,’ a package Reid is expected to offer at the end of the process that will include many of the perks and fixes that members of his caucus are requesting. As a longtime member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, where crafting bills is done one favor at a time, Reid is hardly a stranger to deal-making.” (Shailagh Murray, “Reid’s Recipe For Getting Health-Care Deal Done,” [The Washington Post](#), 12/4/09)

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood Admits “Every Cabinet Member” Is Selling Health Care Reform And That He Uses Transportation Funds As Bargaining Chips On The Bill. “I asked LaHood about health care and he told me that every Cabinet member has been enlisted in selling the package... ‘Part of the reason I have this job is because I can help bring in Republican votes,’ LaHood says. He helped recruit former GOP congressman John McHugh to be Army Secretary. ‘When people call me on their road projects, I take their temperature on health care.’” (Matt Cooper, “LaHood: 10 House Republicans Could Back Health Care Bill,” [The Atlantic’s “Politics” Blog](#), 9/28/09)

Administration May Have Used Merit-Based Education Funding To Dole Out Favors For Health Care Bill. “I understand the calls from Emanuel and Sebelius, but why exactly was the secretary of Education leaning on a Pittsburgh congressman to

vote for the healthcare bill? What did he say?... Could \$100 billion in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds and the enticement of \$5 billion about to be given away in Race to the Top and i3 funds give the secretary leverage, especially if he promises to ensure that this or that proposal gets 'full and careful consideration'? Of course, such inducements would be a huge no-no—but the behavior merits the question.” (Frederick M. Hess, “Why Is The Secretary Of Education Lobbying On The Health Care Bill?” [The American Enterprise Institute's "The Enterprise" Blog](#), 11/9/09)

DESPITE PLEDGES OF BIPARTISANSHIP, OBAMA'S DOOR CLOSED TO GOP IDEAS

OBAMA: “I will continue to seek common ground in the weeks ahead. If you come to me with a serious set of proposals, I will be there to listen. My door is always open.” (President Barack Obama, [Remarks To A Joint Session Of Congress On Health Care](#), Washington, DC, 9/9/09)

But GOP Congressmen Were Rebuffed When They Told Obama They Want To Work With Him To Achieve Reform. “Boehner told reporters that the president has not invited House GOP leaders to the White House for meetings on healthcare reform since the end of April. Earlier this year, GOP leaders sent a letter to the president in May stating that they would like to work with the administration to find ‘common ground’ on healthcare reform. But the administration responded with a tersely worded letter indicating that they had healthcare reform under control.” (Molly Hooper, “Boehner: GOP Leaders Haven't Met Obama For Health Talks Since April,” [The Hill's "Briefing Room" Blog](#), 9/9/09)

Rep. Jim Cooper (D-TN) Confirmed House Dems Were Told Not To Work With GOP. “Tom Daschle, Bob Dole and Howard Baker did what Congress is failing to do... And the White House released a statement praising this bipartisan leadership. In the House of Representatives, meanwhile, we are explicitly told not to work with Republicans.” (Rep. Jim Cooper, “Reconciliation Rules - Not Bipartisanship - Will Kill Health Care Reform,” [The Huffington Post](#), 6/18/09)

And Sen. Chris Dodd (D-CT) Said “Bipartisanship Almost Reflects A Lack Of Leadership.” “Leadership is more important at this juncture in my view than bipartisanship,” said Mr. Dodd. ‘In fact, bipartisanship almost reflects a lack of leadership; in trying to hide behind bipartisanship... We’ve allowed this to become the goal. At this juncture we need leadership in the country.’” (Tom Braithwaite & Matthew Garrahan, “Fear That Democrats May Lose Chance For Healthcare Reform,” [The Financial Times](#), 7/22/09)

AFTER PLEDGING TO CLEAN UP “MUDDY WATER” IN DC, OBAMA OFFERS TOP DONORS “VIP ACCESS TO WHITE HOUSE”

When Announcing His Campaign For Presidency, Obama Pledged To End Special Interest Access. “Special interests have turned our government into a game only they can afford to play ... They get the access while you get to write a letter ... The time for that kind of politics is over. It's through.” (Sen. Barack Obama, [Remarks Announcing Campaign For President](#), Springfield, IL, 2/17/07)

Obama Pledged Clean Up Of “Muddy Water” In Washington. “Obama pointed to his record of helping push ethics reform legislation through the Illinois Senate and Congress, and pledged to do more as president... ‘I've fought for these issues,’ he said... ‘The argument is not that I'm pristine, because I'm swimming in the same muddy water,’ Obama said. ‘The argument is that I know it's muddy and I want to clean it up.’” (Mike Glover, “AP Interview: Obama Says He Swims In ‘Muddy Waters’ Polluting Washington, Pledges Cleanup,” [The Associated Press](#), 8/17/09)

Obama Awards Top Donors With “VIP Access To The White House.” “During his first nine months in office, President Obama has quietly rewarded scores of top Democratic donors with VIP access to the White House, private briefings with administration advisers and invitations to important speeches and town-hall meetings... High-dollar fundraisers have been promised access to senior White House officials in exchange for pledges to donate \$30,400 personally or to bundle \$300,000 in contributions ahead of the 2010 midterm elections, according to internal Democratic National Committee documents obtained by The Washington Times.” (Matthew Mosk, “EXCLUSIVE: Democratic Donors Rewarded With W.H. Perks,” [The Washington Times](#), 10/28/09)

DNC Created Menu Of “Exclusive Access Opportunities.” “The DNC has presented a menu of exclusive access opportunities to top givers, according to internal DNC documents provided to potential donors and obtained by The Times.” (Matthew Mosk, “EXCLUSIVE: Democratic Donors Rewarded With W.H. Perks,” [The Washington Times](#), 10/28/09)

Obama Invites “Top New York Bundler” Golfing In Martha’s Vineyard, Treats Donors To “Lavish White House Reception.” “Mr. Obama invited his top New York bundler, UBS Americas CEO Robert Wolf, to golf with him during the president’s Martha’s Vineyard vacation in August. At least 39 donors and fundraisers also were treated to a lavish White House reception on St. Patrick’s Day, where the fountains on the North and South Lawns were dyed green, photos and video reviewed by The Times and CBS News also show.” (Matthew Mosk, “EXCLUSIVE: Democratic Donors Rewarded With W.H. Perks,” [The Washington Times](#), 10/28/09)

Select Individuals “Provided Access To A Series Of Invite-Only Briefings By Senior Administration Officials Organized By The DNC.” “I don’t think it’s surprising that people that support the president do go to functions at the White House and have other access, but there are many, many more Americans who attend events and town halls and other things at the White House every single day,’ DNC spokesman Brad Woodhouse said... Only select members of the public, however, were provided access to a series of invite-only briefings by senior administration officials organized by the DNC.” (Matthew Mosk, “EXCLUSIVE: Democratic Donors Rewarded With W.H. Perks,” [The Washington Times](#), 10/28/09)

AFTER FAILING TO RAM CAP-AND-TRADE THROUGH, OBAMA CIRCUMVENTS CONGRESS TO IMPOSE HARSH EPA REGULATIONS

Obama Administration Plays "Trump Card," Will Regulate Carbon Through EPA If Congress Fails To Act. "That 'endangerment finding,' announced on the first day of the Copenhagen talks, requires the agency to regulate emissions under the Clean Air Act (PL 101-549)... The finding is seen as the White House's trump card, because it sends a message to senators -- as well as negotiators in Copenhagen -- that the administration will regulate emissions itself if the Senate balks." (Coral Davenport, "U.S. Senate Becomes Target of Scorn as Negotiations Hit Rough Patch," [Congressional Quarterly](#), 12/14/09)

White House Global Warming Czar Threatening Lawsuits Against Companies If She Doesn’t Get Her Way In Congress. “Former Vice President Al Gore and current White House climate change czar Carol Browner are warning companies and lawmakers that the courts will step in to regulate greenhouse gases if Congress fails to act... ‘The courts are starting to take control of this issue. If they were to follow this out, they would be setting the standards,’ Browner told reporters at a separate briefing in New York Tuesday. ‘Obviously, that’s not something that anybody wants....Everything is moving towards getting legislation done because it is the best way to do it.’” (Josh Gerstein, “Climate Lawsuits Are Coming, Gore & Browner Warn,” [Politico’s “Under The Radar” Blog](#), 9/22/09)

Obama's E.P.A. Regulations "A Nightmare Scenario" For Businesses. "The blunt instrument of EPA regulation is a nightmare scenario for ... major industries. Businesses that have a seat at the table in legislative negotiations would have little opportunity to influence regulations." (Coral Davenport, "EPA Prepares To Classify Carbon Dioxide As Dangerous," [CQ Today](#), 12/7/09)

WHITE HOUSE WANTS MASSIVE EXPANSION OF GOVERNMENT POWER, AND WILL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET IT

U.S. Government Will Take “Unprecedented Role In Reshaping The Auto Industry” With 60% Ownership Stake In General Motors. “It will be the largest industrial bankruptcy in U.S. history and the fourth-largest overall ... A New York dealership owned by General Motors Corp. filed for bankruptcy protection early Monday, beginning the wave of court filings expected in Manhattan bankruptcy court as the automaker starts a complex reorganization that the government insists can be completed within three months. The government will end up with a 60 percent ownership stake and an unprecedented role in reshaping the auto industry.” (“General Motors Files For Bankruptcy Protection,” [The Associated Press](#), 6/1/09)

Obama Auto Team Forced Out GM CEO Rick Wagoner, Planned To Replace Majority Of Board. “At GM, the Obama auto team forced out CEO Rick Wagoner, and named GM board member Kent Kresa as interim chairman and GM Chief Operating Officer Fritz Henderson interim chief executive officer. The task force also disclosed that the automaker planned to replace a

majority of its board of directors in the coming months.” (David Shepardson, “Feds To Take Hands-On Role In GM, Chrysler Restructuring,” *The Detroit News*, 3/30/09)

Democrats Engineering A Government Take Over Of The Student Loan Industry By Eliminating Private Competition For Government-Backed Student Loans. “House approval of an education-financing bill Thursday marks a first step toward sweeping changes in U.S. higher education that would cut out private lenders and leave the government as sole provider of student loans under federal programs ... [T]he measure would eliminate private lenders from originating government-backed loans ...” (Corey Boles and Robert Tomsho, “Bill Upends System For College Loans,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 9/18/09)

Obama Started A Trade War With China Which Is “Bad Economics, Bad Diplomacy And Hurts America.” “[The tire tariff is] a protectionist move that is bad politics, bad economics, bad diplomacy and hurts America ... [T]he president’s decision to slap a 35% tariff on imported Chinese tires looks like a colossal blunder, confirming his critics’ worst fears about the president’s inability to stand up to his party’s special interests and stick to the centre ground he promised to occupy in office.” (“Economic Vandalism,” [The Economist](#), 9/17/09)