

LINKS, 7/25/11

Our Collapsing Empire

Remember how much better Hillary was on trade than Obama in the primary? She gave a really depressing speech—[talking up free trade](#)—in Hong Kong today.

Oh. Sorry. Bob Baer was only [mostly serious](#) when he said Israel would attack Iran in the fall. But who needs to attack Iran? After five Russian scientists who contributed to Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant [died in a plane crash](#) last month, one of Iran's top nuclear scientists was just [gunned down](#) outside his home. [Or maybe not.](#)

This interesting take-from Gregory Johnsen, who knows a bit about Yemen—[says](#) our use of drones there are making AQAP stronger.

Jason Leopold [describes](#) how David Addington and Jim Haynes pushed David Hicks charges through to help out Prime Minister John Howard.

Our Collapsing Economy

Dan Froomkin [reviews](#) the big money being spent to pass three more NAFTA-style trade deals.

According to [this post](#), the average duration of unemployment just shot up to a new high: 39.9 weeks. And there are now more than 2 million 99ers—folks who have been out of work for more than 99 weeks. This is not the time for austerity, but unfortunately the bozos in Washington can't help themselves.

Everyone's talking about [this long piece](#) on the insanity of our debt limit crisis, "What were they thinking." My favorite line, from an anonymous ex-White House employee? "It's not a place that welcomes ideas."

In which Republican David Frum [lectures](#) Obama about trusting banksters.

This is an interesting piece on how Wall Street

[has gotten suspicious](#) of Microsoft's tax shell game.

Corporatists v. the Environment

Hungary is [destroying](#) 1000 acres ([or much more-see joberly's comment](#)) of land that got planted with Monsanto's GMO corn, apparently without the knowledge of the farmers. What's particularly interesting about this, IMO, is the company that sold the GMO seeds that is now bankrupt. Under what business model does a company sell more expensive Monsanto seeds, particularly if the company is not viable? It almost seems like the company was a ploy to get the seeds in there.

Big Carbon is [miffed](#) about the statue at University of Wyoming suggesting that coal has ties to the explosion of pine beetles in the state. The effort to pressure the University is bad enough, but I think the statue is pretty cool on its own right.

Grist finds an [interesting way](#) to visualize what the GOP budget would destroy: by describing what it would do to 10 great vacation spots.

Your Daily Murdoch

The ACLU and Gawker [are partnering to sue](#) Governor Chris Christie for "correspondence, phone records, and calendar entries" of conversations between him and Roger Ailes. NY Magazine had reported that Ailes had pressed Christie to run for President. ACLU is arguing that Christie did not properly invoke executive privilege, and privilege wouldn't cover such conversations in any case. I can't help but wonder whether Gawker, at least, is going for something else, such as mention of [why Christie didn't prosecute](#) News Corp for a US-based hacking incident with Floorgraphics.