

LINKS, 7/21

Our Crashing Economy

Obama is going to delay his push for Congress to approve 3 job-killing trade deals until after the August recess in the hopes he can get Trade Adjustment Assistance included. I guess he hopes to continue to pretend these have anything to do with job creation?

GAO's audit of the Fed is out. As Bernie Sanders reports, it shows the Fed gave \$16 trillion in loans to banks, including foreign banks.

Matt Taibbi is horrified that Democrats are treating the idea of a tax holiday as a serious proposal. As he describes, "leading members of the Senate are seriously considering giving the most profitable companies in the world a total tax holiday as a reward for their last seven years of systematic tax avoidance."

Your Daily Murdoch

News Corp has lifted their gag on lawyers Harbottle and Lewis. So we may find out why they sat on damning emails for years.

It took only a few days for James Murdoch to be caught in a lie mistake. Parliament is going to bring James back to see if his memory improves.

Scotland Yard appears to have the goods on Andy Coulson: evidence he knew of illegal payments to the police.

The closest known analogy between News Corp's UK hacking and actions here in the US has to do with a supermarket advertising company that alleged News Corp's competitive subsidiary had hacked it. The company sued, only to be bought out by News Corp, ending the suit. And why weren't criminal charges filed? Because Chris Christie, as US Attorney, didn't bring charges.

Justice and Injustice

In OH, agencies only have to pay \$10,000 if they improperly destroy public records. Golly. I

wonder what effect that law will have?

At Netroots Nation, at a meeting on immigration, Luis Gutierrez revealed that the number of undocumented immigrants deported—400,000 a year—is set by Congressional statute that, in turn, feeds a whole deportation industry. Now, Republicans are trying to eliminate all executive branch discretion on deportation. I wonder which deportation industry donors are pushing that?

Nicholas Shaxson reports that a researcher has won an appeal to get key parts—names of key people, companies, and one country—of an old report on the BCCI scandal via FOIA. Of particular interest, the judges overrode the British desire to keep the country redacted because, “there is considerable public interest in the public seeing the whole of the Sandstorm Report so that it can be seen, not just what happened, but what role was played by the governments, institutions and individuals who were involved with an organisation guilty of what the authors of the Sandstorm Report (paragraph 10.1) described as ‘an enormous and complex web of fictitious transactions in what is probably one of the most complex deceptions in banking history.’”

Yesterday, I noted that judges had thrown out convictions against a bunch of environmental activists because the informant who had built the case against them was an agent provocateur. Craig Murray voices something I thought of too when I read about this: Muslims (I’d say in the UK and here in the US) are not afforded the same ability to make such a case about informants.

Surveillance Nation

Faced with an inability to master the human knowledge about Afghanistan, DOD has once again thrown computers at the problem—this time in the form of a DARPA program called Nexus 7. The logic is, “If you get transparency, you don’t need boots on the ground.” I’m sure they think they’ve achieved transparency. Uh huh.

WA has canceled the driver's license of Jose Antonio Vargas, who revealed publicly last month he is undocumented.

The Aussies are going to take the proceeds that former Gitmo detainee David Hicks makes off his book.

Our Dying Empire

Amidst the more generalized craziness surrounding the debt limit, the House Foreign Affairs Committee has been hosting its own little marathon of crazy as it debates the appropriations for next year. It has already voted to cut the Organization of American States, reinstate the global gag rule on abortion, and now they're talking about declaring the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization (a vote on this will be delayed pending a classified hearing). But don't worry—we'll still fund Pakistan (which I do think we should do, but it does demonstrate the priorities here).