

LINKS, 7/20/11

Our Dying Economy

This is a terrible story on Obama's apparent decision that he is helpless in the face of the continued crappy housing market. The story seems designed to support the false claim that the only hope of improvement is a settlement, both by ignoring unused TARP funds, and suggestions like Right to Rent.

David Leonhardt writes a similar (though not terrible) story on how the Administration, rather than doing anything on the jobs crisis, is trying to spin his debt negotiations as an economic win. Emphasis on spin, I guess.

China's long made a killing of its counterfeits. Now they've got counterfeit Apple Stores.

Herb Kohl, the Chair of the Senate Antitrust Subcommittee, has come out against the AT&T T-Mobile merger. It's amazing what not running for re-election can do for a politician's judgment. (A bunch of progressives like John Conyers, Anna Eshoo, and Ed Markey also submitted a letter in opposition.)

Oh, and the big piece of news on the dying economy? Congressional Republicans are going to crash it to make a point in the debt limit debate.

Your Daily Murdoch

David Cameron was asked at least nine times during question time whether he had talks about Murdoch's BSkyB bid; the closest to a denial he got was in saying all his conversations were appropriate.

After yesterday's hearing, News International has suddenly decided to stop paying the legal bills of Glenn Mulcaire, the guy who did a bunch of their hacking for them. Let see if Mulcaire suddenly gets chattier (or discovers some unexpected gifts in his mailbox).

One of the reasons the Murdochs gave for shutting News of the World at their testimony yesterday is that they had lost the trust of readers. But if they spend all their time trying to convince their US readers to trust them still, won't that lead readers to distrust them?

LulzSec says that, in addition to defacing the Sun in their hack of News International, they got some interesting employee emails. As with DOJ indicting a bunch of hackers on the PayPal DDoS attack, this seems like it just sets off an ongoing path of mutual destruction, hackers hacking hackers.

Justice and Injustice

The government claims all the cables leaked by WikiLeaks may not really exist. Or something like that, just so they don't have to declassify a bunch of cables that show they're trying to cover-up torture.

The Fed just signed a consent decree fining Wells Fargo \$85 million for channeling prime borrowers into sup-prime loans, and also for lying about people's incomes on liar loans. I guess the Fed thinks \$85 million is a reasonable fine for all the fraud Wells Fargo did that contributed to the crash. Speaking of slaps on the wrist, a year after settling with the FTC on overcharging people whose mortgages Countrywide was servicing, Bank of American has finally identified all the people it needs to pay.

Three judges in the UK has overturned the convictions of 20 climate activists based on their finding that an undercover cop was acting as an agent provocateur.

A Scottish court issued an injunction against Greenpeace, preventing it from spreading pictures it took during a protest against Cairn Energy. But a bunch of crazy bloggers and tweeps have passed on the photos, effectively breaking the injunction.

Judge Royce Lamberth refused to give a new trial to two DC cops who falsely arrested a woman for

criticizing them. If the city doesn't appeal, the woman in question will get \$97,500.

The American Empire

For some reason that is not entirely clear, Hezbollah leader Ali Mussa Daqduq may have to be transferred to Iraqi custody. Which, given the ties between Iraq and Iran and Hezbollah, probably will mean Daqduq will go free.

Spencer interviews Daveed Gartenstein-Ross about his forthcoming book, *Bin Laden's Legacy: Why We're Still Losing the War on Terror*; Gartenstein-Ross describes the many ways our poor response to 9/11 has played right into al Qaeda's hands, notably on budgetary issues.

Republican Stupidity

Republicans—and some hackish Democrats—are trying to prevent Obama from increasing contractor disclosure using an Executive Order. Some of the Democrats opposed to the disclosure get upwards of 80% of their support from corporations.

House Republicans are trying to defund the OAS, basically trying to get the US to stop engaging in a multilateral way in our own hemisphere. Whoever said John Birch was dead?

Republicans are going to shut down the FAA to make it harder for FAA and railroad employees to unionize. As part of their “negotiating” tactics, they're also trying to make flights to Harry Reid's home town more expensive.

And how could I discuss Republican stupidity without noting that Dougie Feith is giving Rick Perry lessons on foreign policy.

Pre-Trash

75 retired football players are suing the NFL for suppressing the results of a study showing the problems that result from brain injuries.