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201028 OBITER DICTA: END OF THE YEAR 2010

Steven Alan Samson

Liberty University, ssamson@liberty.edu

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Steven Alan Samson

Sunday 12

<http://shine.yahoo.com/event/green/beijing-architect-lives-in-egg-shaped-house-on-sidewalk-2425090/#photoViewer=1>

Here is a fun piece. Another Chinese architect, the one who designed the Bird's Nest Olympic Stadium, is associated with China's new Nobel laureate.

<http://weburbanist.com/2008/02/10/10-amazing-tree-houses-from-around-the-world-sustainable-unique-and-creative-designs/>

John and I were talking about tree houses. He mentioned a spherical one, which is shown here with others. One of my favorites remains the glass one in Sweden.

<http://www.ecofriend.org/entry/self-sufficient-oasis-tower-will-feed-40000-people-each-year/>

Here's another concept that reminds me of Ai Weiwei's bird's nest stadium design.

[http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2010/12/guiltyislamorealism as hate sp.html](http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2010/12/guiltyislamorealism%20as%20hate%20sp.html)

A Danish MP is convicted of hate speech after stating that the law allowed no evidence to be given in his defense. His plea of guilty was meant to show that the truth availed nothing.

George Orwell was already well-acquainted the sort of New Speak and doublethink that has now become enshrined in statutes, administrative law, court rulings, and the major human rights declarations (1948, 1990).

http://news.yahoo.com/s/yblog_newsroom/20101212/od_yblog_newsroom/putin-finds-his-thrill

Vladimir Putin loses his heart and finds his voice (?) on Blueberry Hill.

<http://lastdayswatchman.blogspot.com/2009/06/in-cold-blood-what-truman-capote-did.html>

I have been reading a number of articles by a Brazilian evangelical and opponent of the gay rights agenda who now lives in exile. This piece alleges that Truman Capote covered up the homosexual relationship between the two murderers in the book that made him famous. Another inconvenient truth? I am passing along an article from *Crime Magazine*, which is cited by the writer.

<http://crimemagazine.com/cold-blood-dishonest-book>

Monday 13

<http://gizmodo.com/5712481/fool-the-tsas-scanners-with-pancakes>

Here is a note on the body-scan technology TSA is using.

http://www.americanthinker.com/printpage/?url=http://www.americanthinker.com/2010/12/the_theft_of_ground_zero.html

Pamela Geller on the dilemma of what to do with someone who fences stolen property: the stolen property of remembrance. It is a political crime of almost sacramental dimensions.

Wednesday 15

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/12/14/AR2010121404031.html>

Henry Morgenthau's plan to convert Germany's industrial heart into pastureland might do wonders for DC. The original idea of the founding generation was to keep money and power separate by locating the seat far government from the malefactions of wealth. If DC is now the No. 1 magnet for the upwardly mobile, it is time to send the capital to cold storage. There once was a time when the capital of the Holy Roman Empire followed the peregrinations of the imperial court. My suggestion is to move the capital from DC to Detroit, which was largely destroyed by a lethal cocktail of taxes, compulsory arbitration, featherbedding, subsidies, the general drift of public policy, and other emanations (to use Justice Douglas' term) from DC. If I were president, I might require every bureaucrat and member of Congress (but I repeat myself) to read Carl Keyser's *Spare None: The Federal Octopus and How It Grew*, etc.

Thursday 16

<http://www.nationalreview.com/articles/print/255320>

I have a number of relatives who began transplanting themselves to California's Central Valley and the Bay Area in the 1950s, a process that continued until the late 1990s when my own visits to the area began to fall off sharply. Victor Davis Hanson, by contrast, comes from generations of farmers in the Fresno area. When I started my surgeries at Stanford in 1998, I picked up Hanson's book entitled *Who Killed Homer?* He still taught at Cal State-Fresno before he became a columnist after 9/11. When *Mexifornia* was published a few years later, I bought it in San Francisco and used it as a case study in my State and Local Government class, just as I used *An Empire Wilderness* and, later, *Democracy in California*.

The railroads may very well have made California late in the 19th century, but what Hanson describes here is a California that went off the rails years ago. But even now the engine of Progressivism keeps thrusting forward, plowing deeper into this rich farmland. What John Steinbeck described in the *Grapes of Wrath* is now further *East of Eden* than ever. The Joads that are migrating into the area today are ripping out the fruit orchards and leaving derelict vehicles strewn along roadsides while converting the area into a rural ghetto as bleak in its own

way as Detroit. California needs to be placed into receivership. So does Washington, DC, from which so much of the blight emanates.

What Hanson observes in his unscientific survey of his neighborhood illustrates what Carl Keyser put so elegantly on the dust jacket of *Spare None* (1972): "The libertarian is specially troubled by the ravaging of resources to which there must be common title: air and water. Here the government should have intervened in force years ago, but being so preoccupied with matters beyond its legitimate interest it has failed to concern itself with this matter of pollution and waste. . . . The basic charge to a limited government is the protection of life, liberty, and property, without which protection the pursuit of happiness is impossible." Keyser appears to be referring to what Garrett Hardin was already calling "the tragedy of the commons." Walter Williams's new autobiography, *Up from the Projects*, illustrates these points powerfully.

<http://www.breitbart.tv/ucla-prof-dream-act-will-help-illegal-immigrants-replace-old-white-men-in-congress/>

Here is a one-minute argument in favor of defunding California's state higher education system. Professors and students alike seem to have no conception of what it takes to run a state – except into the ground. Virginia is starting with public broadcasting but, then, Virginia is still a relatively solvent part of a country whose debts are being garnished by the Chinese.

http://www.americanthinker.com/2010/12/the_obamacare_ruling_time_bomb.html

The good news about the ObamaCare ruling may turn out to be the bad news. The spirits seem to be gathering before coming home to roost. The ghosts of unkept promises are clawing for every nostrum in their snake-oil wagon along with every trick to extend their miserable tenure. It is time to toss them off the wagon before they dash the rest of us over the cliff.

<http://www.globalpolitician.com/26691-jordan-iran>

Mao once referred to the United States as a paper tiger. Now we have become the weak show-horse. Our missiles and nuclear warheads have been rendered useless in face of an aggressive Tehran that will never back down. By now it is now generally admitted that Hezbollah can inflict serious damage on Israel. This is no comfort to the Jordanian king. "Live free or die" is not likely to catch on as a motto in the Middle East.

Friday 17

Note to a Colleague:

I just finished Walter Williams's autobiography, which I started yesterday. It is nice to read a book at home, nearly uninterrupted. Except that I also sent out at least 40 e-mails, read a number of articles on-line, and worked on getting the house in order for Christmas. Still, the down time is a blessing. Next book: Jamie Glazov's recent collection of interviews, although several others are demanding attention, too.

Saturday 18

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/130-million-strong-al-qaedas-deep-muslim-support/?singlepage=true>

The cancer of Islamic radicalization is not only widespread: it is highly concentrated among Muslims in such places as Nigeria, Jordan, and even Indonesia. Radical Muslims have now had a fifty year head start toward establishing a Fifth Column. If Stalin had been permitted that much time, the outcome of the Cold War might have been different. Who knew then that the Left would prove to be the stalking horse for Islamic imperialism? The anarchists, Fabians, Marxist-Leninists, and Maoists all advanced the tactics of revolution. In places where appeasement has become a matter of principle, the Muslim Brotherhood and Hezbollah are now threatening to sweep everything before them. Jamie Glazov's new book of interviews fleshes out the larger picture.

http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2010/12/austria_another_small_cultural.html

In Austria, yodeling is a no-no if it competes with the muezzin's call to prayer. Perhaps equal time should be granted for yodeling from the church spires that surround the naked public square.

Tuesday 21

<http://www.debka.com/article/20478/>

DEBKA depicts fraught state of irresolution and denial in Israel at a time when the outside pressure is building up toward an explosion. Perhaps this should be filed under the heading: Demoralization of Israel. The description of a kidnapping-gone-sour, which resulted in the murder of one and the escape of the other woman, testifies to an apparent inability to acknowledge that a war of extermination is being waged.

"Israeli police commanders, after hearing a full, detailed firsthand report on the incident, refused to call it flat out an act of terrorism, although Wilson had a dozen stab wounds and had reached her rescuers with hands bound behind her back. Instead, police officers spoke vaguely about exploring different paths of inquiry and cast implicit aspersions on her testimony." The phrase "blaming the victim" comes to mind.

When will the Israel government start acting like Don John of Austria at Lepanto or King John III Sobieski at Vienna? If it is waiting for the American president, it might as well be waiting for Godot.

http://sports.yahoo.com/nba/blog/ball_dont_lie/post/Video-Shaquille-O-Neal-conducts-the-Boston-Pops?urn=nba-298905

Have fun. The Shaq conducts the Boston Pops.

Wednesday 22

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1340436/Why-cold-warm-Greenland-Diverted-jet-stream-letting-icy-blast-Arctic.html>

The abnormally cold weather here is attributed to a diversion of the jet stream. According to this map, our temperatures have been more than 10 degrees below normal since the first of the month. But it turned mild today and may have approached 50F.

Thursday 23

<http://www.usni.org/vice-admiral-obama-was-outmaneuvered-russians-start>

Retired Vice Admiral Jerry Miller criticizes the START Treaty as a mere political victory for the president. "The treaty prohibits the conversion of an existing ballistic missile system into a missile defense system."

Thursday 30

<http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.com/2010/12/jihad-against-australia.html>

Gates of Vienna has posted a seven minute video of Jihad in Bali and Sydney.

<http://pajamasmedia.com/blog/2010-the-year-of-islamist-infiltration/?singlepage=true>

Patrick Poole, one of the authors of the Team B2 report, reviews 2010 highlights of the stealth jihad in the United States.

<http://pajamasmedia.com/richardfernandez/2010/12/24/binary/#more-11732>

Richard Fernandez discusses an interesting proposal that is being floated: Use interstate compacts to absorb federal functions, such as ObamaCare, and begin to redistribute government power.

http://townhall.com/columnists/MichelleMalkin/2010/12/29/big_nannies_of_the_year/page/full/

Michelle Malkin identifies the Big Nannies of the Year. No surprises here.

On the other side of the Atlantic, Theodore Dalrymple (Anthony Daniels) describes his pick in his latest book, *The New Vichy Syndrome*, and shows that the nannies are actually overpaid pensioners. "Why and how has a union [the EU] that was created to serve interlocking German and French purposes come to have a life of its own, and come to command the allegiance of all the politicians—except a few mavericks of no account—of the whole of Europe?"

"The answer, I think, is obvious: the European Union is like a giant pension fund for defunct politicians, who either cannot get elected in their own countries or are tired of the struggle to do so. It is a way for politicians to remain important and powerful, at the center of a web of patronage, after their defeat or loss of willingness to expose themselves to the rigors of the electoral

process. One of the characteristics of modern political life is its professionalization, such that it attracts mainly the kind of people with so great an avidity for power and self-importance that they do not mind very much the humiliations of the public exposure to which they are inevitably subjected. They are increasingly like Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, of whom John Maynard Keynes was once asked what he thought about when he was alone in a room. 'When Lloyd George is alone in a room,' replied Keynes, 'there's nobody there.'"

-- Theodore Dalrymple, *The New Vichy Syndrome* (2010), pp. 94-95

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/picturegalleries/pictures-of-the-year/8228037/Telegraph-readers-pictures-of-the-year-2010.html>

Here is a beautiful Roman aqueduct-style footbridge.