

Hillary Clinton's wealth gaffes, Speaker Boehner plans to sue Obama, and should the U.S. be more like France? – U.S. national blog round up for 21 – 27 June

USApp Managing Editor, Chris Gilson looks at the best in political blogging from the Beltway. Our round-up of state blogs will follow on Saturday afternoon.

The Democratic Party, the GOP and elections

On Saturday, *White House Dossier* [discusses](#) what they call is 'Obama's metastasizing culture of lawlessness'. They say that the President's doctrine that 'the ends justify the means', with his recent efforts to circumvent Congress and legislative processes is now being taken up in the states, citing Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe's attempts to bypass the state's Republican controlled General Assembly in order to expand Medicaid in the state. On Monday, *National Journal* looks at the effects that President Obama's poor approval ratings are having on the rest of the party ahead of the fall midterm elections. They [say](#) that his current approval ratings of only 42 percent are creating a 'headwind' against Democratic candidates facing difficult races across the country, meaning that the coming election will be far from a fair for fight for the Democrats. Also looking at the Democrats' chances this fall is *Roll Call's At the Races*, who [write](#) on Wednesday that the party has 'upped the ante for the Midterms', by raising more money than the GOP, mostly by putting pressure on their caucus to pay their dues.

Looking ahead to the next Presidential election in 2016, *The American Prospect* says that former Secretary of State and likely Democratic candidate, Hillary Clinton, has a new image – 'Cool Grandma', but they wonder if she will be able to maintain it as a candidate. On Tuesday, *Outside the Beltway* [writes](#) that Clinton has continued to commit the same gaffe about her wealth. Earlier this month she stated in an interview that she and former President Bill Clinton were 'dead broke' when they left the White House in 2001, despite having multi-million dollar homes and large potential speaking fees. They say that new comments in a recent interview with *The Guardian* newspaper where she says that she pays income taxes unlike 'a lot of people who are truly well off', raises questions that she may be out of touch with ordinary Americans.

On Sunday, *Crooks & Liars* looks at two Republican Governors, New Jersey's Chris Christie and Wisconsin's Scott Walker, who are both embroiled in scandals that threaten their 2016 presidential ambitions. They [say](#) that Christie has recently defended Walker, which is not surprising as they are 'two peas in a pod' as far as scandals are concerned. Meanwhile, *The Atlantic* [examines](#) what they say is Chris Christie's 'new compassionate conservatism', which they say is a response to the GOP's worry that they are losing elections because the public views them as inhumane. They say Christie's positions, such as his advocacy of



New Jersey Governor Chris Christie Credit: Gage Skidmore (Creative Commons BY SA)

liberalizing drug policy via treatment, are an argument for a new face for the Republican Party, which could be a winning one. On Wednesday, *PoliticoUSA* [reports](#) that wealthy GOP members are trying to bring Mitt Romney back as their candidate for the next presidential election. They say that Romney feels that he was forced to move too far right in the 2012 election, and would push for fewer GOP primary debates this time around.

This week also saw primaries across the U.S. On Sunday, *Roll Call's Hawkings Here* [focuses](#) on two important races, Mississippi's GOP Senate primary where long standing incumbent Thad Cochran faced Tea Party challenger, Chris McDaniel, and Charles Rangel's New York Democratic Senate primary. They say that both candidates, who are 77 and 84 years old respectively, have made some serious rhetorical missteps in recent weeks, raising questions that they may be out of touch with modern politics.

Cochran went on to win his Mississippi primary on Tuesday. *The Atlantic* reflects on his victory, writing that the Tea Party '[blew it](#)' there and in Oklahoma where Representative James Lankford handily defeated conservative T.W. Shannon. They say that both states will now send GOP Senators to Congress who owe the Tea Party nothing. Most commentators attributed Cochran's win this week to his appeal to Democratic black voters in Mississippi. *The Monkey Cage* [writes](#) that he not the first southern conservative to court the black vote, and that Cochran's campaign for the last three weeks fits into previous patterns of cross-racial mobilization by Republicans from the 1930s to the 1970s.

Government, the Beltway and Congress' agenda

On Tuesday, *United Liberty* reports that U.S. archivist David Ferriero [said](#) this week that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) did not follow the law, when it failed to report the destruction of emails on former official Lois Lerner's hard drive. Lerner is at the center of an investigation into whether or not the IRS targeted conservative groups, and the 'lost' emails are seen by many in the Republican Party as key evidence.

On Wednesday, *Wonkblog* takes a look at the U.S. Import-Export Bank (which provides guarantees and loans to foreign buyers to help U.S. companies sell goods abroad), after it was reported this weekend that the new House Majority Leader, Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) supports allowing the bank's charter to expire later this year. They [say](#) that the bank's potential shuttering has started a debate within the GOP, with some arguing that it doles out corporate welfare, and others that it offers a valuable safeguard for businesses.

PoliticoUSA [writes](#) this week that the Speaker, John Boehner (R-OH) has plans to sue President Obama, potentially as a prelude to impeachment if the GOP retakes the Senate this fall. The reason? Obama's use of executive orders. Staying in Congress, on Wednesday, *National Journal* looks at the effects of Raul Labrador's (R-ID) recent challenge for the position of House Majority Leader, recently vacated by Eric Cantor, after he lost his primary in Virginia earlier this month. They [say](#) that Labrador was virtually unknown beyond the capital a few weeks ago, but that this has now all changed. While he lost the campaign to replace Cantor, he won himself a much larger following among the conservative movement, which has positioned him well for future political maneuvers.

Obama faces trouble from his own side in Congress as well, reports *Roll Call's Hawkings Here*. He [writes](#) that a vote last week on defense spending illustrated that many Democrats who face tough races in the fall are minimally supportive of using military force in Iraq, including nine who voted to authorize the original war in 2002, but have since switched sides.

This week also saw Supreme Court rulings with wide implications. *The Atlantic* [writes](#) on the ruling that police are not allowed to search people's cellphones- and the data contained on them – without a warrant. They say that this shows a surprising level of savviness about technology. On Thursday, *PoliticoUSA* [says](#) that the Supreme Court's decision to strike down buffer zones at abortion clinics, thus allowing anti-abortion activists to protest very close to the clinics, endangers women as it will allow protestors to harass and confront them.

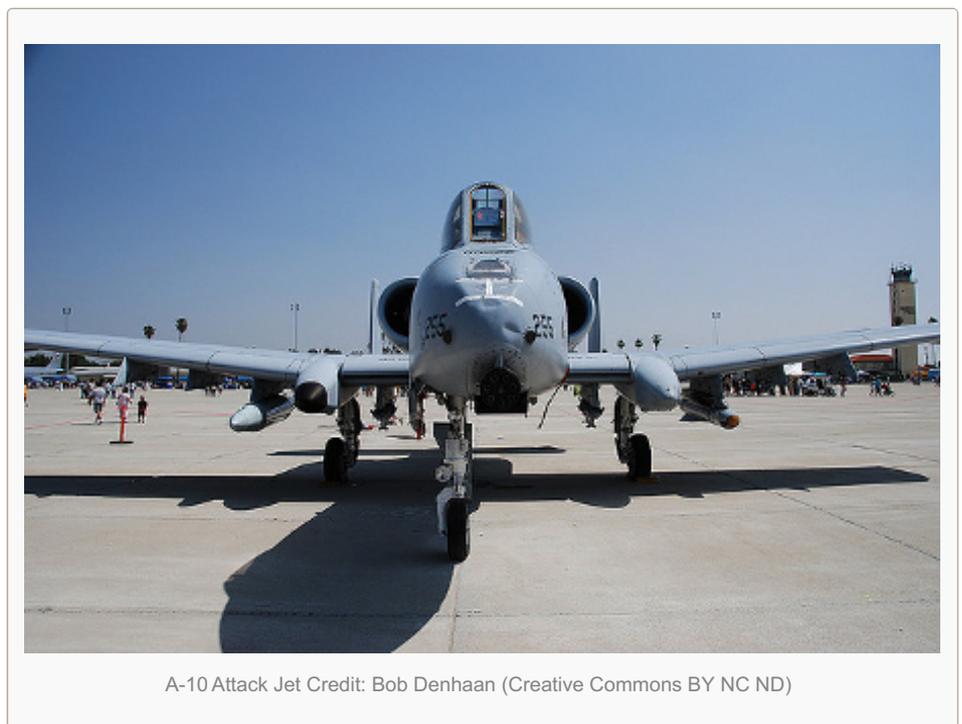
Foreign policy, defense and trade

On Monday, *The Atlantic* responds to a former official of President George W. Bush, Elliot Adams, that President Obama 'broke' the Middle East. They [take issue](#) with Adams' claims that the region was largely at peace when Obama came to power, writing that the region was at war in 2009 and that Obama managed to freeze Iran's

nuclear program, which is something the Bush administration never accomplished. On Tuesday, *Outside the Beltway* reports on a new poll that [says](#) that Americans are largely dissatisfied with the way that the President is handling the situation in Iraq, and that the majority oppose sending ground forces to combat insurgents as well. They say that these polls are helping to drag down Obama's overall job approval ratings and are indicative of his inability to convince the American public that his foreign policy actions are a 'good idea'. *The Daily Signal* takes a more hawkish line, [writing](#) that Obama's 'no war, no way' policy is not working; that by withdrawing from Afghanistan and Iraq he is betting that the resurgent fighting in those two countries will not deteriorate enough to drag the U.S. back in, or lead to terrorist attacks in the future.

On Thursday, *The Hill's Congress Blog* [makes](#) the case for the U.S. to establish an American diplomatic presence in Iran, after recent discussions about the potential for cooperation between the two countries over the crisis in Iraq. They say that while the U.S. does not need to open a full-fledged embassy in Tehran, a small presence could help to report the realities on the ground and help to effectively engage key actors in Iranian society. Still on the topic of embassies, *Roll Call's Five by Five* blog [looks](#) at the growing costs of the U.S.' new embassy compound in Mexico City; the most recent increase takes the total price tag to over \$763 million. They say that the House Appropriations Committee is becoming increasingly concerned at the ballooning costs of the project.

On Tuesday, *Roll Call* reports on another costly item – the A-10 Warthog attack jet. They [say](#) that while the Obama administration would like to retire the fleet of the venerable warplanes, House members voted last week to keep them, meaning that the Air Force may miss out on over \$4 billion in savings. If the armed forces spend large amounts of money on hardware, they are [skimping](#) on the food that they provide for troops, at least according to *The Lonely Conservative*, who is disgusted at the appearance of some of the army's food offerings.



Obamacare and health policy

This week *The Daily Signal* reported that enrollments in Obamacare's exchanges is disappointing – while the Obama administration has stated that 8 million people have signed up, the figure is more like 6.6 million, if those who haven't paid their premiums are discounted. They also [say](#) that fewer than 4 million of the newly insured did not previously have insurance, a very small number, given previous predictions that as many as 26 million would be removed from the ranks of the uninsured. Still on the topic of Obamacare exchanges, *The Lonely Conservative* [writes](#) on Wednesday that the federal government has spent as much as \$5 billion the exchanges, and that there is still more to come, as there is a section in the law that allows the Department of Health and Human Services to have 'indefinite' funding. Meanwhile, *Wonkblog* [wonders](#) if Obamacare will really be able to change the fact that people hate shopping for health insurance. They say that recent surveys have shown that 2/3 of people who had enrolled in Medicare's prescription drug program who had the highest premium increases still stuck with their plans.

A major aspect of Obamacare is the expansion of Medicaid, something that many Republican-run states have resisted. *Daily Kos* [writes](#) that some of the country's largest cities, such as Memphis, Miami and Philadelphia, could reduce their uninsured populations by more than half if their state lawmakers would accept the Medicaid expansion.

The economy and society

On Sunday, *PoliticusUSA* [looks](#) at the increasing trend for corporations to allow people to carry their firearms openly in their place of business. They say that staunch Second Amendment advocates tend to be white, and that conservatives might not be so adamant for the right to carry if the Tea Party were made up mostly of people of color. Continuing the theme of race, *The Atlantic* [writes](#) on Monday that the national death-row population is around 42 percent black, and in states like Oklahoma and Missouri, they are overrepresented on by a factor of four compared to the general population.

Earlier this month, Washington Post columnist, George Will wrote a controversial piece about what he termed the 'epidemic of rape' on college campuses, and the 'privileges' of assault survivors. *Occasional Planet* [condemns](#) Will's piece saying that it is hard enough for victims to come to terms with sexual assault without having commentators such as Will being so dismissive.

This week *United Liberty* [dismissed](#) President Obama's recent statement that the U.S. should aim to be more like France in the way that it gives workers time off for having a child, in order to balance employment and family demands. They say that France's 10.4 percent unemployment rate and poor economy show that it is definitely not a country that the U.S. should try and emulate. On Wednesday, *Outside the Beltway* [reports](#) that recent assessments from the Department of Commerce have revised economic growth figures for the first quarter of the year from a fall in economic growth of 1 to nearly 3 percent. They say that it is a sign that the economy is not nearly as healthy as many would like to think.

And finally...

FreakoutNation [reports](#) on Sunday that a man in Louisiana this week spotted an 11-foot alligator in the street, and decided to wrestle with it, earning himself 80 stitches in his hand.

The Atlantic [looks](#) at whether or not America finally loves soccer, given the national side's 'inspired' group play in this year's World Cup. They conclude that despite record ratings, there is little evidence that people will continue to watch the game outside of World Cup tournaments.

Finally, *Outside the Beltway* [laments](#) that the U.S. is 'woefully behind' Russia in the pizza delivery drone stakes.

Featured image: House Speaker John Boehner Credit: Gage Skidmore (Creative Commons BY SA)

[Please read our comments policy before commenting.](#)

Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of USApp— American Politics and Policy, nor of the London School of Economics.

Shortened URL for this post: <http://bit.ly/1kIXzR>

- CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 2014 LSE USAPP