HALF-FULL REPORT 01/24/14

Well, Portugal, here we come! On Monday (1/20), we announced The TTP Portugal Retreat, and as of today (1/24), it's almost booked out. Those TTPers who took my advice to move quickly were smart to do so. We only have a couple of spaces left.

So there's no time to waste. Don't miss out on coming to sunny, beautiful, historical Portugal with Rebel and me. We're going to have a fabulous time. (And yes, Rebel has agreed to have a 3-day post-retreat excursion visiting *five* World Heritage Sites and staying in a King's Palace.)

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We have a lot of ground to cover, so let's start right off the bat with the HFR Hero of the Week. He's a professional boxer - the Heavyweight Champion of the World:

He retired undefeated last month, so he could run to be elected president of his country. But to do that, he has to lead a revolution against a brutally corrupt dictatorship - literally, with barricades in the streets, burning tires, and Molotov cocktails. This is for real. This is a scene on the streets of Kiev, Ukraine from yesterday (1/23):

These Ukrainian freedom fighters are getting shot and beat up unmercifully by riot police thugs, and they keep fighting back, demanding their country not become once again an enslaved colony of Putin's Russia. Here is their leader, the six-foot-seven, 242-pound world's heavyweight boxing champion, Vitali Klitscko, at the burning barricades:

The protests began in late November, which you learned about in Russia Recolonizes Ukraine (11/27/13). The more brutal the protests were suppressed, the larger and more violent they grew. Last week (1/16), the regime suspended all basic freedoms of speech, assembly, and press. The freedom fighters are fighting back harder than ever. Here's a series of jaw-dropping pictures taken in the last few days.

Here are pictures from today (1/24) and last night. Yesterday, protestors took over government buildings in several cities in western Ukraine such as Lviv, and at least one in Kiev, the capital. This is what a real revolution looks like, folks.

Let's hope it ends with a President Klitschko, and not Putin sending in Russian tanks. I doubt the latter, as Putin doesn't have the tanks and his soldiers are all drunk anyway. Being a KGB assassin, he'll probably assign a sniper to take Klitschko out. But he can't do that to everyone.

Let's also hope and fervently pray that such scenes will not become necessary in America to retrieve our freedom.

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We are losing our freedom with each passing day now. This week, the fascist persecution of conservatives by the gang of thugs running Washington ran amok.

*Senator Chuck "The Schmuck" Schumer yesterday (1/23) publicly called for the IRS to attack and destroy the Tea Party movement, and for Zero to "bypass" Congress and rule by executive decree.

*The New York Times on Wednesday (1/22) reported that the IRS is attacking a group of conservative actors and people in Hollywood called Friends of Abe. For three years, their application for 501(c)3 non-profit status has been turned down. Now the IRS is demanding their full membership list, which is strictly secret to prevent blacklisting by Hollywood's Regressive Elite.

There are, of course, dozens of leftie-commie-regressive non-profits in Hollywood that have no problem with the IRS. Just Friends of Abe.

*Holder Justice launched a witch hunt against conservative writer and film producer Dinesh D'Douza yesterday (1/23). The indictment accuses him of "illegal campaign donations" of a penny-ante 20K, violations of which by Dems are deemed misdemeanors. And of course, the uncountably massive violations of donors to Zero's and Hillary's campaigns have been 100% ignored by the most criminal Attorney General in our nation's history.

Such political persecution by our mafia-gangster government is simply the opening gambit, the hint of the prelude to what's to come. Always remember we are up against people whose driving purpose in life is the accumulation of power over others - and will use *any* means necessary they think they can get away with to keep and increase it.

Oh, yes, one more item:

*Further proof that America has a two-bit jive-ass racist punk for an Attorney General was provided yesterday (1/23) when he reiterated his claim that our country, the least racist nation on earth, is "a nation of cowards" regarding racial issues.

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Guys - how'd you like to wake up to this in the morning?

It's not easy being married to the First Shrew. So it is easy to see why there are a growing number of stories in the international press about the Zeros planning to divorce. Here's one from Australia on Tuesday (1/21). Another from Israel. Then there's advice from Russia.

Personally, I wouldn't get any joy from this if true. The Zeros have raised two very nice daughters which is to their substantial credit. On the other hand, anything that would a) diminish Zero's standing among the electorate, and b) contribute to the crack-up of his narcissistic ego would be of historical benefit to America.

What I sense from a variety of sources is that for Zero, the thrill is gone from being

president. Everything he does is a failure, he's lost the adulation, he's going through the motions, saying the same tired clichés over and over again with no fire in the belly.

He knows that, as Peggy Noonan writes in the WSJ today, "No one is listening to him anymore." When Peggy is on, she is *so* good - as evinced by her brilliant entitlement of her essay, The Sleepiness of a Hollow Legend.

Stop for a moment to reflect on what putting people to sleep does to a pathological narcissist. You lose the energy, the passion, the drive that the adoring adulating worshipping masses once gave you. You're married to a Xanthippe, you find refuge in adultery, all you want to do is play golf.

This belies the suspicions that Zero is planning on declaring martial law and installing himself president-for-life. Once the thrill is gone for a narcissist, you just can't get it up for that. So let's take a break here, and think of this while we listen to the great B.B. King sing *The Thrill Is Gone:*

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As anyone trying to make a living in America knows, Zero's economy is in the tank and all his happy talk is a deranged lie. One of Wall Street's most respected savants spilled the beans this week: Unemployment is actually 37.2% and the 'Misery Index' (unemployment + inflation) is the worst it has been for 40 years.

As anyone with a 3-digit IQ can thus understand, the *Major Numero Uno Big Kahuna* issue for voters in 2014 is *jobs and the economy* - that and the catastrophe being wrought upon their health by Zerocare.

Even the WaPo is reporting (1/23) that: The Economy and Obamacare Are Getting Worse For The Democrats.

So WHY - WHY WHY WHY WHY - would ANY Republican politician on Capitol Hill not be laser-focused on this, and instead pay the slightest eensiest-beensiest attention to one of the lowest blips on the voters' radar scope - "immigration reform"?

We need to ask at this point: *Is the entire House Pub leadership - not just Boehner, but Cantor, McCarthy, Ryan, et al - all on the take from the US Chamber of Crony Commerce?? Literally being paid off, bribed under the table??*

The sober folks at Investors Business Daily are stupefied that the House GOP Plans to Save Obama with Immigration Reform. The Daily Caller calls it The Coming GOP Amnesty Sellout.

This is beyond crazy, beyond masochism. The only explanation is corruption. So *where are the Tea Party protests hanging Boehner and Cantor and Paul Ryan in effigy?*

The term for anti-conservative wimp-out Republican squishes has been RINOs - Republicans In Name Only. (I think, Democrats, by the way, like Zero and his minions, should be termed AINOs - Americans In Name Only.) "RINO" is tired, passé. The HFR suggests a replacement term for Boehner & Co:

Vichy Republicans. VRs for short. It won't hurt anyone unfamiliar with the meaning to learn the historical context.

At least, Breitbart reported yesterday (1/23): House Conservatives Plot Takedown of GOP Leaders' Amnesty Plans.

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Let's close with something uplifting. Here's a note from Ira Stoll, who was editor of the *Harvard Crimson* when he studied there and now has a website, futureofcapitalism. Ira explains how entrepreneurship is making end runs around the anti-capitalist goons of the government, with some cool examples.

Enjoy and take heart. And maybe this could give you some end-run ideas of your own....

> "The most newsworthy line in David Remnick's 17,000 word article about President Obama is the caption of the cartoon that, in classic *New Yorker* magazine style, appears unrelatedly alongside the article.
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> The drawing shows a family gathered around a Chanukah menorah. The caption: 'The Internet startup had only enough cash for one more day. But miraculously, the money lasted for eight days, until more venture capital could be raised.'
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> Internet startup culture has permeated American life so far that the *New Yorker* can joke about it and compare it to the miracle of the Chanukah oil that lasted for eight days. And, not to take anything away from Chanukah, there is something that seems miraculous about it.
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> The technological revolution may have a deeper and more positive effect on America than anything President Obama accomplishes during his presidency, and it is in its own way more significant than anything the president uttered in his Air Force One interview with Remnick.

The fecundity of the startup culture is on display at a new Web site (where else?) called Product Hunt, which lists dozens of new mobile Apps and Web sites each week. One recurring theme in successful startups is the ability to get around the regulations created by politicians like Obama. Companies are using technology to create a free market.

The foremost example of this is Uber, with its UberX service that turns ordinary drivers in their own cars into taxi drivers. Sidecar and Lyft operate on a similar model.

A Boston lawyer who represented existing taxi services challenging the new entrants, Sam Perkins, told the *Boston Globe*, 'SideCar and UberX have targeted Boston to make the guy next door and his Prius into an unlicensed taxi driver with an uninspected taxis and no safety equipment...Their goal is to eliminate the existing taxi system and its consumer protections.'

The government-imposed licenses, medallions, inspections, minimum wages, regulated fares, and 'consumer protections' turn out to be replaceable, more or less, by an Amazon-style star-rating system and the incentives of independent drivers and ride-provider networks that want repeat business.

And it's not just taxis. Airbnb is doing the same thing to hotels. If you stay in an apartment or house you rent via the Airbnb marketplace, you may not have a clearly marked fire exit map, or a statement of the maximum room rate, on the inside of your room door. Consumers, it turns out, don't mind. Many of us would rather pay less money, avoiding exorbitant hotel taxes and the wages of unionized bellhops and chambermaids.

Eat With and Feastly may yet provide similar disruption in the heavily regulated restaurant industry. These services, recently highlighted by NPR, offer guests the opportunity to enjoy home-cooked meals in private homes. The hosts avoid health department inspections, liquor license requirements, and the need for workmen's compensation, payroll tax, or disability insurance for waiters, dishwashers, or line cooks.

President Obama's approach to countering inequality is top-down and government-centered: raise taxes, increase the minimum wage, spend more on subsidies for education, food, and health care. But there's an alternative, technology-led model that lets the UberX driver, the Airbnb host, or the Eat With cook use the skills and assets they have to connect with paying customers and earn a rating without a lot of government red tape.

The opportunities are not small: Uber, which launched to the public in 2010, was valued last year at a reported $3.5 billion. Airbnb, founded in 2008, raised a round of capital in 2012 at a reported $2.5 billion valuation.

The tech world is not perfect. The e-commerce boom of the late 1990s ended in a burst

Nasdaq bubble (though one that arguably laid important foundations for the current boom). Silicon Valley at its worst can have a herd mentality, an insularity, and mercenary qualities that outweigh loyalty.

But which one offers more hope and change right now, West Coast tech start-up culture or Washington political culture? The question answers itself." --Ira Stoll