

“Shutdown”, Deferring a Debt Default. “Done Deal” in the US Senate. But War Goes On, No Winners, Only Losers

By [Danny Schechter](#)

Global Research, October 17, 2013

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#), [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

Behind the Shutdown was a politics of right-wing movement building to raise money and visibility by raising hell. Obamacare had nothing to do with it.

So what was it all about? The Senate deal ending the shutdown and deferring a default until the next time has solved nothing. It is as if we have been given a break for Thanksgiving and the Christmas shopping season until the partisan wars resume. The fighting and arguing have only ceased.

It is unlikely that any of the instigators have learned anything other how a handful of parliamentary savvy kamikazes can bring the government to its knees in the name of a righteous cause—not to bring about change but to try to stop changes they don't like.

When the Ted Cruz missile against Obamacare helped trigger the melee that closed national parks, limited government services and disrupted the livelihoods of 800, 000 federal employees and the lives of millions, many wondered why when it was clear the extreme right was pursuing an unachievable goal.

Senator John McCain warned them that they couldn't stop the health care reform as did others in their Party. The White House stood firm as did most Democrats. The Tea Party offensive was widely seen as offensive, or as an extortion ploy, an attempt to nullify a law but also a non-starter.

That didn't stop the true believers. Like the Light Brigade of old, they charged on. Clearly this was a case of ideology uber politics, but behind it was a strategy.

First, they wanted to weaken the Republican center and they did, making Speaker Boehner look powerless and out of control. The best media line about him was that he was “herding cats.”

Second, they wanted to prove that if they don't get their way, no one else can or will.

They conceded a short term tactical set back but lived to fight another day for longer-term goals. In that way, they can to be “responsible” and continue to enjoy business support.

As some Democrats celebrated, AP reported. “Hold the champagne. Even after lawmakers

complete their pending deal to avert a federal default and fully reopen the government, they are likely to return to their grinding brand of brinkmanship – perhaps repeatedly.”

“Brinkmanship” is another word for systematic political warfare. This spasm of rebellion emboldened the fundamentalists among them; it did not weaken them.

Sure, they overreached tactically—if you assume what they were saying was their real agenda.

As former federal regulator William Black explained in an article about their “tactical brilliance but strategic incompetence,” their demands could not be met, but that was never the point.

Black writes, “the means by which the GOP sought to extort Obama to sacrifice Obamacare made it impossible for Obama to surrender to the Tea Party. The Tea Party was openly threatening to use very short-term extensions of the debt ceiling to repeatedly extort Obama to make enormous, humiliating concessions. This meant that if Obama gave in to their extortion he was dooming his presidency.”

If you assume they knew this, what was the real strategy?

They created a crisis to show that they could create a crisis and milk it as long as they could. It was a way that Junior members of Congress could get press attention.

It was also a way of energizing their base, not just politically, but financially.

The Daily Kos commented on Instigator in Chief Ted Cruz’s claim that two million people signed his petition noting that he now has a much larger list of potential donors. In this respect, he sees himself as a winner, not a loser.

He used the crisis to build a media profile with a self-promotional filibuster that excited supporters, whatever it lacked in clarity, logic and analysis.

Noted Felix Salmon, a financial blogger for Reuters: “The Ted Cruz [“filibuster”](#) ... served no actual legislative purpose, and at the end of his idiotically long speech, Cruz ended up voting yes on the very bill he was trying to kill. That’s [zombie politics](#), and the problem with zombies is that — being dead already — they’re incredibly hard to kill.”

To him the Tea Party is a zombie army, a movement, not a person — and it’s an aggressively anti-logical movement, at that. So he argues, “You can’t negotiate with a zombie.” (Many Americans identify with zombies these days because of their overexposure on TV and in the movies.)

So, we need to understand, this confrontation was never about logic or even a clear political agenda; it was about movement-building and dominating the discourse through hostage taking to bully and intimidate centrist Republicans and Democrats alike. Most of all, they wanted to snub the Nation’s father figure—President Obama.

Behind their slogans, they were saying to the folks at home: ‘look at me.’

In that respect, the zealots were wildly successful in keeping their faux rebellion going, cheered on by Faux News and the underbelly their visibility attracts, including the guy

grinning like an idiot and waving the Confederate flag in front of the White House,

The Atlantic, and many liberal media outlets, have convinced themselves that the “Republicans Shut Down the Government for Nothing” but it was always all about them, not specific goals.

This strategy is, at bottom, about interests, not issues, power, not political advantage.

Republican consultant and former Boehner aide Terry Holt admits:

“The differences are not about objectives, the differences are about tactics. This is the muddle through Congress, We are going to lurch from disaster to disaster until we have the prelude, which is 2014 and then the next presidential election.

There is no incentive for either side to give in, period,” vows Hunt.

So there you have it, a declaration of permanent war in which, like guerillas in combat, the point is not to hold ground but to keep moving and harass the enemy, keeping them off guard whatever the costs to the economy or the morale of the country.

They expect many Americans will surrender just to have peace, and that’s how a relentless minority can impose its agenda.

The Vietnamese General Giap who died last week at age 102 used similar tactics that were grounded in the idea that war is politics by other means.

Bloomberg interviewed a moderate Republican, Charlie Dent of Pennsylvania who explained, “There are no winners in this process, everybody loses. The only question you guys are trying to figure out is who loses more? And how long-term the damage will be?”

Former veteran newspaperman Bernard Weiner, now the co-editor of The Crisis Papers tried to explain all this to friends in France, writing:

“Even in the best of times, American politics rarely makes rational sense. But right now is almost the worst of times. From Europe it may appear that you are witnessing recess at a school for naughty, malicious children. While that’s true, we need to enlarge the frame of that portrait to get closer to the whole picture and to assign proper blame rather than just accept the mainstream media’s false meme that “both sides are equally responsible” for the governmental shutdown and debt crisis.”

*News Dissector **Danny Schechter** blogs daily at Newsdissector.net and edits Mediachannel.org Comments to Dissector@mediachannel.org [Twitter@DannySchechter](https://twitter.com/DannySchechter)*

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Danny Schechter](http://www.globalresearch.com), Global Research, 2013

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: **Danny
Schechter**

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca