NAFTA: Obama’s less-than-shocking reversal

Then-candidate Barack Obama was trying to shore up support among Democrats in the industrial Midwest last year when he vowed to rewrite the North American Free Trade Agreement to beef up labor and environmental standards. But that pledge never made much sense. The United States can’t unilaterally rewrite treaties with other nations. Besides, China, not NAFTA signatory Mexico, has become the key source of low-cost labor to make consumer goods for sale in the United States. This week, Obama’s top trade adviser, Ron Kirk, announced the administration will not attempt to modify the trade deal. The decision surprises no one, but Obama never should have made such a transparently political pledge in the first place.

King family: I have a financial motive

The family of Martin Luther King Jr. continues its litigious crusade to “protect” the civil rights leader’s image by demanding tribute from anyone who uses it. In November it was small vendors selling T-shirts depicting King and Barack Obama. This time it’s the MLK National Memorial Project Foundation, which has raised $110 million in private donations to build a statue on the National Mall honoring King’s works. The King family has extracted over $800,000 from the project; the money was paid to the King Center in Atlanta, which family members operate. The family insists its motivation is only to prevent others from exploiting King’s memory. But right now it isn’t the memorial foundation that’s doing the exploiting.

Washington: Not all lobbyists are created equal

If the Obama administration can make an exception to its "no lobbyist" rule in order to hire a former executive of the defense giant Raytheon to be deputy defense secretary, surely it could have found a way to appoint a human-rights activist to the State Department. Purist interpretations of Obama’s campaign pledge not to let lobbyists "run" the White House have tripped up plans to appoint Tom Malinowski, director of the nonprofit group Human Rights Watch, to a senior post, as first reported by Foreign Policy magazine. Obama’s political staff doesn’t want to appear to be bending its own ethics rules. But reasonable people will detect a difference between lobbying for the business interests of profitable corporations and for causes such as human rights. Note to Obama: It’s money that corrupts Washington politics, not ideals.

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gaudete wrote:
Here's a shocker, the globe condoning a flip-flop by one of its favorites.  
Synonym for flip-flopping: lie.
4/22/2009 5:57 AM EDT

citizengreen wrote:
Tom Malinowski would be a great hire at State. Obama should hire him.
4/22/2009 7:56 AM EDT

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