

With Nero in the (US) house we should be worried. By Maurice Newman, *The Australian*, 7 January 2014.

NOTHING symbolises the depths to which the American democratic process has sunk than the testimony of Jonathan Gruber, the architect of Obamacare, to a House of Representatives inquiry. “The (Affordable Healthcare) bill was written in a tortured way to make sure the (Congressional Budget Office) did not score the mandate as taxes,” he said. “If CBO scored the mandate as taxes, the bill dies, OK? Lack of transparency is a huge political advantage ... call it the stupidity of the American voter or whatever ... that was really, really critical to get the thing to pass ... I wish ... we could make it transparent, but I’d rather have the law than not.”

Full marks to Professor Gruber for his candour. His subterfuge worked a treat. It conned the Supreme Court and moved House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to say, “We have to pass the bill so you can see what is in it.”

Such is the nature of the Obama administration. Opposed by a clear and consistent majority of citizens, the dishonestly titled Affordable Healthcare Act passed. It means, contrary to President Obama’s countless assurances, millions of Americans cannot choose their doctor or hospital and will have to pay higher premiums. To cover the costs of this socialised medicine, tax increases on everything from Medicare to capital gains were voted in by the Democrats.

Obama is the quintessential product of the progressive elites. As Mark Steyn writes in *After America*, “he seemed like one of their own. Columbia, Harvard Law, sort of editing a journal yet the only editor in its history never to publish a single article, giving a lecture or two on constitutional law, handing out leaflets on the south side of Chicago ... Obama has passed his entire adulthood in a very narrow unicultural environment where your ideological world view doesn’t depend on anything so tedious as actually viewing the world.”

To criticise Obama is to risk being characterised as racist. As black essayist and talk show host, Mychal Massie put it, “The only distinction in this president is his race, which has been used to disparage those who seek to discover truth and expose unconstitutional, criminal, immoral and unethical behaviour. His race has been used to suppress the media and any opposition, since no one in any public position wants the label of ‘racist’ applied to them.”

For example, when Smith College president Kathleen McCartney said “All lives matter” following police shootings of young black men, she was forced to apologise by those pushing the slogan “Black lives matter.” Rather than ease tensions, Obama claimed that blacks were right to believe that the criminal-justice system was stacked against them, while Harvard President Drew Gilpin Faust said “injustice (towards black lives) still thrives”, notwithstanding that police killing of black men is rare. Obama, despite being president of all Americans, openly champions his own ethnicity.

Obama, who Massie describes as “Nero in the White House”, stands accused of abusing his authority and setting dangerous precedents for future presidents. Executive power is regularly used to bypass congress — Australian republicans take note. For example, his order to release nearly 10,000 illegal immigrants from jail and grant full amnesty to another 5,000,000 illegal aliens, ignored congress and arguably assumed authority he constitutionally doesn’t have. Senator Chris Stewart from Utah, one of the states most affected by the decision, said, “The Constitution is clear — it’s congress’ responsibility to write the laws and the president’s job is simply to enforce those laws.”

But Obama disagrees. Last November, in an interview with *60 Minutes*, he clearly signalled his intentions and contempt for the democratic process. “What I’m not gonna do” he said, “is wait for congress. So whenever we have an opportunity and I have the executive authority to go ahead and get some things done, we’re just gonna go ahead and do ‘em.”

And so he is. Establishing diplomatic relations with Cuba was Obama’s decision. In what was described by Heritage Foundation’s Todd Gaziano, as a “tyrannical exercise of power”, he defied the Senate and 100 plus years of established practice by appointing Richard Cordrey to serve as director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. The Senate had blocked appointments until reforms to the CFPB were made.

It’s the same with climate change. Obama is using his executive authority to ram through emission abatement measures. His assault on coal continues and his naive secret agreement with President Xi Jinping handed a massive advantage to the Chinese.

When George W. Bush was president, Obama, then a senator, criticised executive orders saying, “There is no shortcut to politics and there is no shortcut to democracy.” But as president he has embraced Clinton adviser Paul Begala’s — “Stroke of the pen, law of the land, kinda cool” — approach, with enthusiasm.

A lot of time and energy of the congress and the courts will be spent counteracting Obama’s power grab.

Summing up Obama’s five years in office, Massie writes, “Take a good look at America today — a long, hard, honest look ... Regardless of whether you support Obama or oppose him, if you don’t hold a position in the federal government, you are considered a serf, just like the rest of us. Obama turns on his supporters when it is advantageous for him and throws individuals under a bus when it suits him”. (Tony Abbott found this out at the Brisbane G20.) “All the ‘labelling’ being applied makes no difference. We are all in the same boat; a sinking Titanic where few third-class passengers will survive because of inadequate lifeboats and the ‘oppression’ committed by those in charge.”

This is the leader of the free world? We should all be worried.