

PR: Be sure to follow us on www.twitter.com/uncknowledge that's www.twitter.com/uncknowledge. Dr. Thomas Sowell has taught economics, intellectual history, and social policy at such institutions as Cornell, UCLA, and Amherst. The author of more than a dozen books, Dr. Sowell is now a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution. His newest work *Intellectuals and Society*. Tom, we'll begin with a quotation. Then candidate Barrack Obama in July 2008, "It's like these guys' republicans take pride in being ignorant. They should go talk to some experts and actually make a difference".

TS: Well talking to experts does make a difference. Many of the great disasters of our time have been committed by experts. You may remember FDR's "Brain Trust" which according to later studies prolonged the depression by several years. The wiz kids at the pentagon under McNamara who managed to mess up the Vietnam War, you can run through an impressive list of things, of disasters brought about by people with very high IQ's.

PR: All right, segment one. The species of the intellectual. When you refer to intellectuals in *Intellectuals and Society*, whom do you mean?

TS: I mean people whose end products are ideas. There are other people with great intelligence whose end products are things like the Salk vaccine.

PR: A research scientist does not necessarily an intellectual.

TS: That's right.

PR: And an engineer is not necessarily an intellectual.

TS: That's right because the engineer is judged by the end product which is not simply ideas. If he builds a building that collapses, it doesn't matter how brilliant his idea was or he's ruined. Conversely, if an intellectual who has a brilliant idea for rearranging society that ends in disaster, he pays no price at all.

PR: I see, let me quote an *Intellectuals and Society*, "The fatal misstep of intellectuals is assuming that superior ability within a particular realm can be generalized to superior wisdom or morality overall. Chess grand masters, musical prodigies and others who are as remarkable within their respected specialties as intellectuals within theirs, seldom make that mistake." Explain that, well lets an example, Noam Chomsky whom you write about in *Intellectuals and Society* whose work in linguistics, in the first place I can't understand it but as best I can tell, everyone who understands his technical work within the field, within his discipline of linguistics, considers him one of the great figures of the twentieth century. And his work in politics?

TS: Absurdity, the same could be said of Bertrand Russell and his landmark work on mathematics and other people in other fields but they step outside their field and

when you step outside your level of specialty sometimes that's like stepping off a cliff.

PR: And why is it that intellectuals, that is to say people whose end product is ideas, should succumb to that temptation more than, to use your example, a chess grand master?

TS: Because a chess grand master can be world famous for doing absolutely nothing more than winning chess tournaments and making displays, as many of them do of playing five chess games simultaneously while blindfolded.

PR: So Bobby Fischer had no need to opine on the politics of the day because he was getting rich and famous and making a brilliant career for himself within his narrow profession?

TS: That's right.

PR: But intellectuals what, they languish in obscurity?

TS: Well, the whole question of, when is someone well known or not came up during a visit Jim Flynn from New Zealand here a few years ago. He's one of the world's authorities on IQ tests. People you know, in India know about Jim Flynn. People in England, he made a world tour but I doubt if the people in the next block from where he lives don't know who he is.

PR: I see all right. It is far easier; again I'm quoting from *Intellectuals and Society*. It is far easier to concentrate power than to concentrate knowledge.

TS: Yes

PR: What bearing has that got on the influence that intellectuals have over society as a whole?

TS: Because they believe that since knowledge is concentrated in people like themselves, what needs to be done is, in that quote from President Obama is to put more power in the hands of the experts.

PR: So the intellectual temptation is to say, look we already know everything.

TS: That's right.

PR: If only we also had all the power, everything would be just fine.

TS: Yes

PR: And what's wrong with that view? Why isn't that a sensible view?

TS: One, they don't know everything, they don't know one tenth of everything, in fact I have argued that they probably don't know one percent of the consequential knowledge in a society.

PR: Consequential knowledge is a concept that runs through this book, explain that concept?

TS: Knowledge whose presence or absence has consequences, serious consequences. I mean I was once in a plane and it was coming down for a landing at the Ithaca Airport and suddenly the pilot gunned the motor and went up again because someone in the control tower told him, and reminded him that he hadn't lowered his landing gear. So the was consequential knowledge, yes. I was just delighted that that person had his eyes open and his mind on his work.

PR: So, the notion here is that the kind of knowledge, the kind of consequential knowledge required to prove effective in governing a nation of such as the United States with the biggest economy in the world, three hundred million people, you can put together quite a large group of professors and they're still not going to possess the knowledge that would enable them to run General Motors for example, or to run the nations healthcare system for example?

TS: Absolutely, in fact one of the things that has happened all around the world in the 20th century was that all sorts of countries have tried central planning. Now the guys that run the central planning usually have advanced degrees from prestigious institutions. You have, mountains of statistics are sitting there and they have all the experts in the country at their beckon call and yet when you take the power out of their hands and return it to the market, then all of the hundreds of millions of people who don't have any of those things usually end up with a higher rate of growth and a more rapid decline in poverty.

PR: Because consequential knowledge by its nature tends to be diffused, widely diffused.

TS: Yes, yes.

PR: Segment two, intellectuals in economics. We've already touched on this. Two quotations number one, Paul Krugman "Rising income in equality isn't new, but what happened under Bush was something entirely unprecedented. For the first time in our history so much growth was being stiffened off to a small wealthy minority that most Americans were failing to gain ground even during a time of economic growth". Second quotation, Dr. Thomas Sowell in *Intellectuals and Society*, "The statistics that the intelligentsia keeps sighting are much more consistent with their vision of America than the statistics they keep ignoring".

TS: That's a tough one to capsule but; basic confusion is between statistical categories and flesh and blood people. Its true that if you look at the percentage of the

income that went to the top 20% year A, then later on, a decade later you'll find that that percentage has gone up, and you say, well that shows disparity between the people.

PR: The rich are getting richer.

TS: The rich are getting richer, but when you follow statistics generated by the internal revenue service, which can follow particular individuals over time, you find the people who are in the bottom 20% of taxpayers in the first year, their income has nearly doubled by this later period while the income of the people who were initially at the top had increased by less. You get down to the very top it has actually gone down, so that people are simply moving between these brackets from year to year and the number of people who were in the bottom 20% lets say in 1975, who are still there in 1991 is 5% of them. Twenty nine percent of them have already gotten all the way to the top. The absolute majority are in the top half and so you're comparing what happens to these abstract categories rather than what's happening to actual flesh and blood people.

PR: So there's an enormous amount of churn and dynamism within the American people.

TS: Yes, almost everybody's own personal life. I mean look, what were making when you were 20 years old compared to what you're making when you were 40.

PR: Negative, I was spending my parent's money when I was 20 years old.

TS: Well there you are.

PR: Okay, so why would the intellectuals, which you've just made is an intellectually rigorous case. Why would an intellectual as you use the term, be loath to look at that intellectually rigorous argument, be loath to examine the data the way that you did?

TS: Well he's happy with the data that he got. Why would he examine it, why would he go further? He looks at the numbers and if the numbers say what he thinks it should say, hey that's it. Then he moves on to the next great crusade.

PR: *Intellectuals and Society* once again, "The very phrase income distribution is tendentious. Wealth can be created only after capital and labor have reconciled their competing claims and agreed to terms on which they can operate together in the production of wealth". Income distribution, the very phrase is tendentious how come?

TS: Income is not distributed, and newspapers are distributed. Social security checks are distributed and one time milk was distributed. Income is not distributed, people earn it directly from those for whom they provide some good or service. And, the argument made by many people you see, is that the, it's a question of capital and labor have conflicting interests and dividing up the income. No, no, there is no

income to divide up before they first reconcile their conflicting interest and decide on what terms they're going to produce that income. There is no preexisting, there's no manna from heaven for them to fight over.

PR: You make the point, what I'm coming to is the economic crisis that we went through 18 months ago, but we'll start with the Great Depression where all discussions of economic crises should start probably and you make the point that there are two large features of the Great Depression. One was the stock market crash and the other was the enormous government intervention which began under Herbert Hoover and continued and expanded under FDR, but began quickly in other words. And so you said, you have two large facts here, it's a very good question which actually caused or prolonged the Great Depression, and it's a question that very few intellectuals actually like to examine.

TS: Well, one way to examine it would be to just look at the time period. The stock market crash occurred October 1929. Now there's data on unemployment month by month. Two months after the stock market crashed unemployment peaked at 9%. It then began to decline irregularly until about 6.3% by June of 1930.

PR: Indicating the economy was attempting to recover?

TS: Yes, and June 1930, the government stepped in with its first massive intervention with the Smoot-Harley tariff, passed despite a public appeal by more than a thousand economists at leading Universities saying, don't do it. They did it any way so that's how much influence the economists have. Within six months after that, unemployment hit double digits for the first time and it never came down for the remainder of the decade, even for one month. So, the stock market crash brought you up to 9% and that was starting to fizzle out. The government steps in to help and that hits double digits and it eventually got up to a peak of 25% and it didn't fizzle out until the end of the decade.

PR: All right, listen to a list and then I'll ask you a question. The Chairman of the Fed. Benjamin Bernanke, BA at Harvard, PhD at MIT, Professor of Economics at Princeton, Director of the National Economic Council, Lawrence Summers, undergrad degree MIT, Dr. at Harvard, youngest tenured professor of economic in Harvard history, eventually President of Harvard. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geifner, AB Dartmouth, MA Johns Hopkins, he's the under performer in the group. How did this group of intellectuals equip themselves in handling the nation's economic crisis in 2008?

TS: Well first of all, they didn't handle it, the politicians handled it.

PR: Ahh!

TS: And so even if you were to say that these guys really could have done a great job had they had the unbridled power and so forth, they don't have unbridled power. One

of the problems with experts is that experts are hired by other people and so you never know what the expert would have done. In fact there was an article in the *Wall Street Journal* sometime back that the policies that are being followed in Washington are the direct opposite of the policies that Summers advocated when he published before he got to Washington. So we should never assume that experts are just people they're supplying information to politicians that are trying to do good.

PR: Surely though the intellectuals had some notion that the government should step in? Is it a hangover from the understanding that took place during the New Deal, right?

TS: Oh yes.

PR: Okay so in other words, the intellectuals, the politicians are acting within a world of options that intellectuals have created over the decades right?

TS: Yes

PR: And are you impressed by the intellectual framework?

TS: No

PR: No, all right. Segment three, intellectuals and vision, *Intellectuals and Society*, "The vision around which most contemporary intellectuals tend to coalesce has features that distinguish it from other visions prevalent in other segments of contemporary society or among elites or masses in earlier times." What is the vision to which contemporary intellectuals subscribe?

TS: That intellectuals should influence if not control the kinds of decisions that are made in society and more especially that they should promote the transfer of the decisions from the masses to those who have "more intellect". And what I'm giving, how I conceive of knowledge being its distribution, that would mean transferring decisions from where there's 99% of the knowledge to where there's 1% of the knowledge. Against that background it is not at all surprising that things like central planning simply don't produce as good results as allowing all the millions of people to react in the marketplace.

PR: All right, let me ask you a question that came in from Twitter. Travis814, all these questions are limited to 140 characters so get ready it's coming at you and it'll go fast. Why does the liberal progressive mindset have such a stranglehold within the intellectual academic world? Why should the vision that you just described be so prevalent among intellectuals?

TS: Well among the many reasons, most academic intellectuals have no experience, no serious experience outside the academy. I mean I remember I was once an economist for AT&T when it was the world's largest corporation and when I returned

to the academic world they welcomed me as the protocol son who returned from the evils of corporate America, to the true nirvana of academia. So, not only don't they have experience, they have every incentive to believe that they are brighter than other people and know more than other people because they've been told that all their lives. You become a top intellectual because you've passed all these successive filters. You've gotten in to the best colleges, you've gotten into the best graduate schools.

PR: Even from second grade on the teachers are responding to you as the kid who passes tests especially well.

TS: Oh yes, yes, and so you have all of that in your background.

PR: You write in *Intellectuals and Society*, if you happen to believe in free markets, judicial restraint, traditional values and other features of what you call the tragic vision, there's no personal exaltation arising from those beliefs. But to be for social justice and saving the environment puts you on a higher moral plane.

TS: Yes

PR: So the question here is, can it really be that simple that intellectuals across the American landscape tend to embrace the vision that you've described, surely out of self flattery and self pleading.

TS: Yes

PR: It is?

TS: Don't we humans have an enormous power of rationalization. Think of all the absurd things that have been believed throughout all of history and I guess the one common denominator is that those absurd things typically were very flattering to those who believed them. They had the one true faith. They were the Vanguard of proletariat, you know, you just run through the whole list of things.

PR: By the way, I've been reading some Marx, I can't understand how anyone ever took that seriously, I mean ever took it seriously.

TS: Well what are you reading?

PR: Sentence by sentence its, oh well, I actually began with the *Communist Manifesto* that he and Engle's wrote.

TS: Oh it's a magnificent, if you want a model for propaganda it is the masterpiece.

PR: But there's absolutely no contact with actual economic reality.

TS: No, there's no need for that as many people have shown me. You can become President of the United States with no contact with economic reality.

PR: All right, two quotations, *Intellectuals and Society* "The intelligentsia often divide people into those who are for change and those who are for the status quo. Candidate Barrack Obama, "We are the change we have been waiting for," Tom?

TS: People who say things like this act as if they are saying something new. This is what was being said back in the 1790s and ever since then. You know, there's nothing older than the idea that this is new.

PR: Thomas Payne, "We have it in our power to make the world over again".

TS: There you are, but in point of fact, there's; again this is one of those totally unquestioned, unsubstantiated statements. John Doherty would say you know, made the same thing some 60 years ago that those of us who are for change, have to fight against those who are for the status quo. Now the people he was talking about, people like Adam Smith. Adam Smith was not for the status quo.

PR: Of course not.

TS: As I mentioned in the book that, why would Adam Smith spend a whole decade writing a 900 page book to say how contented he was with the way things were? When you spend a decade writing a 900 page book, something is bugging you. You know, I mean anyone who ever bought or read Adam Smith will see he is pretty ticked off about a lot of things.

PR: Once again, two quotations, you quote, and the number of points any *Intellectuals and Society* you quote Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, here's one of them. "As Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said, the word right is one of the most deceptive of pitfalls and a constant solicitation to fallacy." That's quotation one, here's quotation two Barrack Obama "Healthcare should be a right for every American."

TS: Well there's the fallacy. No it's a, the word right it's amazing and in one sense I simply can not explain it. People say we have a right to affordable housing, decent healthcare, there are rights to all kinds of stuff, and the question is, where did this right come from?

PR: And by the way, it is literally the case that I heard on the radio the other day, one of the questions in healthcare is plastic surgery, whether it'll be taxed or, I literally heard someone say that women have the right to Botox treatments.

TS: There you are.

PR: Just thought I'd mention that for you.

TS: Yes, well that's no more arbitrary than all the other things that are called rights. I mean right now we're going to have this trial of these terrorists at a court of law which is absolutely unprecedented and absolutely absurd, and the question, where did that right come from? Well it's not in the constitution; it is certainly not in the Geneva Convention. It's just that by loose thinking, people say, well, prisoners of war get treated that way. Yes, they're not prisoners of war; the Geneva Convention said what prisoners of war were. People always adhere to the Geneva Convention because of the protections of it. But during the Second World War when some German soldiers at the Battle of the Bulge put on American uniforms, infiltrated the US line and they were captured. They were simply lined up against a wall and shot and killed right there and it was not something secret, the army filmed it. I've seen the films on the history channel. It was not question, if you don't play by the rules, you don't get the protection of the rules, it's that simple.

PR: This leads us to segment four, intellectuals and war. From *Intellectuals and Society* discussing the role intellectuals play between the two world wars "One of the most remarkable developments of the 1920's was an international movement among intellectuals promoting the idea that nations could get together and publicly renounce war". What were they thinking?

TS: I guess they weren't thinking, they were reacting. They were reacting to the horrors of the First World War, which most of those intellectuals had supported by the way, and now they decide that that was so awful we ask to renounce war. Yes, you can renounce war that does not stop your neighbor from building up the biggest army in the world and coming in and killing you. It's much like the thinking about gun control you know, that you say, well listen, I don't think people should have guns. Hey, I wish people didn't have guns but the fact is that by passing a law does not stop them from having guns, it just makes you defenseless. One of the things I think I mentioned in passing is that in Britain, burglary rate is far higher than in the United States and more over, British burglars do not case the place before they go in. now if you're in the United States and you're gonna bust into someone's house in the middle of the night, you may be met by a hail of bullets. And Britain, they have made burglary a safe occupation, it's like OSHA for burglars.

PR: Vietnam, *Intellectuals and Society* again, "Among the many implications of the war in Vietnam was that it was once again illuminated the role of the intelligentsia in influencing the policies of a society and the course of history." We didn't lose the war, the intellectuals surrendered on our behalf.

TS: Yes, in fact the communists themselves in later years admitted that there was no way that they could have defeated the United States on the battlefield and in fact the Tet Offensive, which was the turning point, that the communist gorilla movement was virtually wiped out of the south but the intellectuals saw that as a victory for the communists and that the war was un-winnable and once a democratic country decides that war's un-winnable, it becomes un-winnable.

PR: Right, now Tom, what's the, Vietnam just raises a point that has to be addressed and that is the special place of intellectuals in the Democratic Party. Isn't that a fair point that the democratic party became, at least in regards to the Vietnam War, become wholly influenced by intellectual opinion, correct?

TS: Yes, but it's also true that Nixon was and its not...

PR: Well that's true.

TS: You see because here's the thing, Machiavelli thought of intellectuals as influencing events by influencing the rulers and changing their minds. Now that isn't the role as Vietnam clearly showed. Nixon didn't care a damn for the intellectuals.

PR: Right

TS: But they created a climate of opinion and which if he continued that war, he would pay too high a political price so he threw South Vietnam to the wolves. Signed a negotiated agreement, and they love negotiated agreements. It doesn't matter what it says so long as you sign it and you win the Nobel Prize, who cares if a few million people get killed in the aftermath.

PR: What's the transmission mechanism from intellectual opinion to the larger climate of opinion? This is where the media comes in.

TS: Oh there are many, there are many transmission bells, the school are all, from the elementary right up through the graduate schools. The media, now increasingly the churches, even churches that we think of as conservative are out there pushing the liberal agenda.

PR: Intellectuals in the cold war, again *Intellectuals and Society*, you talk about Sen. Kennedy. "Edward Kennedy was a leading voice for the nuclear freeze joined by many other political figures and by many in the media". Now this nuclear freeze movement reaches its most potent moment just as Ronald Reagan is setting in place the policies that actually end the Cold War, how come? Why do they...

TS: This goes way back to at least the 20's. The idea that the arms race is wrong and not only wrong but its dangerous that that will lead to war, and of course the counter evidence, like so many things that intellectuals believe, it is not subjected to any kind of empirical test because between the two world wars, you had all these arms agreements and renunciations of war and all of that just to cover the axis power to feel that they could win this war because the west was too gullible to arm themselves and defend themselves.

PR: Tom, we're talking about the Cold War, what do you make of it that Harry Truman who puts in place the containment, the fundamental structure of containment

that remain in place for over four decades. Harry Truman takes office, was vice president for less and a year before taking office. Assumes the Soviet Union is our ally because that was the deal and has within a year he discovers that in fact they have aggressive intentions. He changes and constructs American containment, in my judgment he's a kind of heroic figure I would argue and I think you would agree with that.

TS: Yes

PR: So he begins our position in the Cold War, he stands up to the Soviets and Ronald Reagan is the one who ends it. Now here's, let me tell you about this, the educational background. Harry Truman finished high school. Ronald Reagan's college degree comes not from some ancient eastern university such as those where you studied, but from little Eureka College set in the farming towns of central Illinois. Is that significant?

TS: It may well be, because they didn't have to fight off all the nonsense that they would have been taught at these very prestigious institutions.

PR: Intellectuals in Iraq, you quote in *Intellectuals and Society* you quote *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman, *New York Times* columnist, and Princeton economist Paul Krugman "To understand what's happening, follow the oil money which already knows that the surge has failed".

TS: Yes

PR: So the surge worked of course, Paul Krugman was just plain wrong.

TS: Yes

PR: So what did he think he was doing?

TS: Oh, trying to explain to other people is very tough and in some senses, I mean I am often baffled why, why did Larry Summers you know, try to hang on at Harvard? The man had millions; he could have stood up and said what he thought. The whole notion of people being independently wealthy is very shaky for me because there are people out there with multi millions who are afraid to speak their minds. And there are other people who can barely make the rent who'll say you know, just what they're thinking.

PR: Right, all right, segment five, intellectuals and the rest of us. Again *Intellectuals and Society*, "there is a spontaneous demand from the larger society for the end products of engineering, medical and scientific professions but he demand for public intellectuals is largely manufactured by the public intellectuals themselves," explain that?

TS: Yes

PR: How do they manufacture demand for their own services?

TS: Well one thing is by alarm, making alarming predictions, offering solutions to our problems and if they didn't do that, if Noam Chomsky just kept going and stayed in linguistics, neither of us probably would have ever heard of Noam Chomsky. He would have been just as famous around the world among linguists but nobody else would have heard of him.

PR: What do you make of global warming?

TS: I think it's a classic example of the need for crusades. Now people, many people are shocked by these emails, they're not all shocked by them, I read the original UN study years ago and I was just curious as to how they were going to deal with the question that the temperatures went up first and then there was the increase of carbon dioxide. Because you can't say that A caused B, if B happened first and so I read this and I could see that they were tip toeing and going through the tulips the way they phrased things and so forth. They couldn't confront that and now we're finding out that they knew darn well that they couldn't deal with all evidence.

PR: So, it fits the pattern of a group of intellectuals, climate scientists who are, have a very narrow competency suddenly proclaiming that there's a crisis scaring the rest of us thereby creating a demand for their services, not as climate scientists alone, but as a kind of high priestly cast that can tell us all how to live and save the entire planet. And in the meantime generate billions of dollars worth of government programs to fund their research initiatives and so it's a racket.

TS: Yes

PR: All right.

TS: But now again you have to take account of the ability of human beings to rationalize. I'm sure there are scientists out there who believe some or much of what they're saying and there are other scientists who believe the opposite but the ones who are pushing global warming are doing their damndest to make sure that those who believe the opposite don't get hurt in their public.

PR: So shouldn't there be a some largish body of scientists who say, the data really does suggest that we're headed into trouble here, but precisely because my saying so as a climate scientist will look like special pleading. We as a community of scientists should be even more careful about being completely transparent, pushing the data out to the public. They should overcome the hurdle that it looks like self-pleading. Why isn't that taking place?

TS: There's no payoff to that.

PR: All right

TS: Imagine if someone's an assistant professor in some department where your senior colleagues are going to vote on your pay among other things have millions of dollars of grants handed out to promote global warming and you say what you just now said. They will all say, this guy is incorrigible.

PR: All right, Tom what explains the exceptions, during the 1930's, intellectual after intellectual visits Russia and says, this is the land of the future. And Malcolm Muggeridge and a handful of others and a tiny number of intellectuals say, no it isn't, Stalin is a barbarian. After the Great Depression, the entire economics profession is dominated by John Maynard Keynes and then along comes Milton Freedman and he just won't have it. What explains these exceptions among intellectuals who stand up?

TS: That's for another book for somebody else to write. In the preface I mentioned that I'll have very little to say about Milton Freedman, not because he's not one of the most important people of the 20th century, but because he's such an exception to the general pattern that I'm trying to explain. I will leave it to someone else to try and figure out the exceptions.

PR: All right, let me try to ask you to figure out one other, one other exception. I'm going to at you one more time on this one, listen to this. Barack Obama holds degrees from Columbia and Harvard and taught at the University of Chicago. Thomas Sowell who like Barack Obama emerges from the African American experience in this country, BA from Harvard, MA from Columbia, PhD from Chicago and has taught at Howard, Brandeis, UCLA, Cornell, and Amherst. What accounts for the difference in visions between Barack Obama and Thomas Sowell?

TS: Oh my gosh, this is like trying to account for every sparrow's fall.

PR: You're two pretty consequential sparrow.

TS: Well, here at least but no, you can't. It's hard enough to account for a general pattern, when you get down to the individual you have to know so much more than any of us has ever known or will probably know for the next thousand years at least.

PR: All right, Bill Buckley quote, "I would rather be governed by the first four hundred names in the Boston telephone book, than by the faculty of Harvard." Very nice encapsulation of the impulse you'd hope that most Americans would show. He's suspicious of the experts. When Bill Buckley made that remark in the 1960's, roughly nine percent of Americans held college degrees. Today the figure is 29% and rising because roughly half of high school graduates go to college. The first 400 names in the Boston telephone book today are likely to include a large number of Harvard graduates and Harvard professors. The question here is simple, are we becoming a nation of intellectuals?

TS: I hadn't thought of that, it's a chilling thought because we're becoming a nation of people who are propagandized from elementary school right on through the graduate school, in a certain vision of the world and only the ones who for one reason or another, either experience or insight or whatever leads them to say, wait a minute. Only those are the ones we that we have to depend on.

PR: Last question, if you had a sentence or two to say to the cabinet assembled around President Obama and this cabinet holds glittering degrees from one impressive institution after another, if you could beseech them to conduct themselves in one particular way between now and the time they all leave office, what would you say?

TS: Actually I would say only one word, goodbye, because I know that there's no point talking to them. It's like ask me, what would I say to the head of the mafia and it, to get them to give up crime. There wouldn't be a thing I could say to them. They would say, give up crime? I make a thousand times what you do, why should I give up crime?

PR: Dr. Thomas Sowell, author of *Intellectuals and Society*, thank you very much and happy New Year.

TS: Thank you and happy New Year to you.

PR: I'm Peter Robinson for *Uncommon Knowledge* and the Hoover institution, thanks for joining us.