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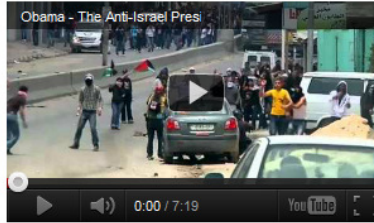
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Boston Bruins Goaltender Tim Thomas Snubs Obama White House

Posted By Josh Brewster On January 24, 2012 @ 12:32 am

FrontPage

[Editor's note: The author of this article, Josh Brewster, is the host of "Duck Calls" Anaheim Ducks postgame radio show and the Editor-in-Chief of Hockeytalk.biz.]

Hockey's culture of conformity took a hit Monday when Boston Bruins goaltender Tim Thomas snubbed an invitation from the Obama White House, declining to visit the President during his annual meeting with the NHL's reigning Stanley Cup Champion.

One of only three Americans on the Bruins roster,* Thomas is one of the sport's biggest stars. Thomas, from Flint, Michigan, is a two-time Vezina Trophy winner (2008-09 and 2010-11) as the league's best goaltender, also a Stanley Cup Champion and Conn Smythe Trophy winner as most valuable player in the playoffs (both 2010-11). He has represented his country in six world championships and won a Silver Medal at the 2010 Olympics. He is featured in a very funny Visa commercial during which an obsessed Boston cabbie worships his photo, but fails to recognize him in person.

She'll recognize him now, alright.

Jack Edwards, the TV voice of the Bruins on NESN, told FrontPage that Thomas is a patriotic American, but whether this is the right platform for Thomas' politics remains to be seen.

"There's no doubt Tim knew what he was doing," Edwards told Frontpage, noting that the meeting with Obama comes just one day prior to the Bruins' visit to Washington, DC for a game in Obama's backyard, against the Capitals.

His teammates will respect and support his right to speak, says Edwards, but with the Bruins heading into the second half of the season as one of the league's better clubs, the defending champions don't need a distraction.

"This will surely create a firestorm, a media circus," Edwards said. "And the thing that concerns me as someone who follows the Bruins closely is that this could be to the detriment of the team."

Sources tell Frontpage that Thomas made the decision to reject the White House invite over a month ago.

"We are disappointed that Tim chose not to join us, and his views certainly do not reflect those of the Jacobs family or the Bruins organization," team President and former player Cam Neely said in a statement that served to distance the club from the politics behind the remark, without chastising its number one goaltender.

No different from any other major pro sports, the NHL doesn't involve itself in political issues. It serves too broad a community and alienating half the political aisle would be unwise.

The only initiative in which the league is involved that hints at ideology is its "NHL Green" program, focused on recycling and sustainability alongside the Natural Resources Defense Council. The program buys in with the fashionable notion of man-made global warming, a viewpoint accepted by so many that it seems almost apolitical to most—but not to Thomas and many of his fellow conservatives (not to mention hundreds of scientists).

Sources tell Frontpage that inside the Bruins' locker room, Thomas has engaged in friendly debates on global warming with defenseman Andrew Ference, who is actively involved with NHL Green. The program offers NHL players an opportunity to purchase carbon credits, purportedly to offset the emissions from their travel over the course of the season. Thomas does not purchase carbon credits.

The 37-year-old netminder is deeply concerned about the economy and its impact on his hometown of Flint. Thomas is also a hunter and concerned about Second Amendment issues. He has remarked publicly of his enthusiasm for talk show host Glenn Beck, expressing a secret wish to one day be a guest on his show.

In general, the media will likely respect his right to speak, but whether Thomas is vilified by a left-leaning media for daring to voice conservative views it finds less than fashionable remains to be seen.

Will they wring their hands and wave a scolding finger for his snubbing the President? Would they have felt differently had the player been a leftist and the snub been directed toward, say, President George W. Bush?

It's worth noting that a number of NHL players come from former Soviet bloc countries, where such freedom of speech was unknown. Jaromir Jagr of the Philadelphia Flyers raised eyebrows over twenty years ago when he revealed his support for U.S. President Ronald Reagan's fight against communism. Jagr wears Jersey number 68 to commemorate the "Prague Spring" when his native Czechoslovakia revolted against Soviet domination. Both Jagr and fellow Czech (and fellow Flyers) wore "VH" insignias on their helmets when anti-communist hero Vaclav Havel died. Generations of Russian, Czech, Slovak and other Eastern bloc players before Jagr—some of the world's greatest of their time—were never permitted to flee their communist homelands for western freedom.

Snubbing an invite from Leonid Brezhnev could have gotten a hockey player killed back in the 1970s. Therein lies the beauty of Thomas' decision. He's free to do as he chooses, whether it's fashionable or not. It doesn't hurt that he is regarded as the indispensable man in the Bruins' Stanley Cup win.

While his snub of Obama is a bold statement, it shouldn't come as much of a surprise. Thomas has expressed his support for the Tea Party movement by wearing a mask emblazoned with "In God We Trust" on its front, and the Gadsden ("Don't Tread on Me") flag on its back panel. He has also donated to FreedomWorks.

Monday night, Thomas released his own statement via his Facebook page: “I believe the Federal government has grown out of control, threatening the Rights, Liberties, and Property of the People,” Thomas announced.

“This is being done at the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial level. This is in direct opposition to the Constitution and the Founding Fathers vision for the Federal government. Because I believe this, today I exercised my right as a Free Citizen, and did not visit the White House. This was not about politics or party, as in my opinion both parties are responsible for the situation we are in as a country. This was about a choice I had to make as an INDIVIDUAL. This is the only public statement I will be making on this topic.”

While Thomas promises that the statement will be his last on the subject, Edwards begs to differ.

“Nobody’s had a one-statement political career,” Edwards told Frontpage. “Either you’re right and it turns into a groundswell, or there are a lot of people who disagree with you and they feel an obligation to answer you in a louder voice.”

**Defensemen Joe Corvo (Oak Park, IL) and Steven Kampfer (Ann Arbor, MI) are the other two US-born Bruins.*

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Posted by [Josh Brewster Bio](#) on Jan 24th, 2012

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