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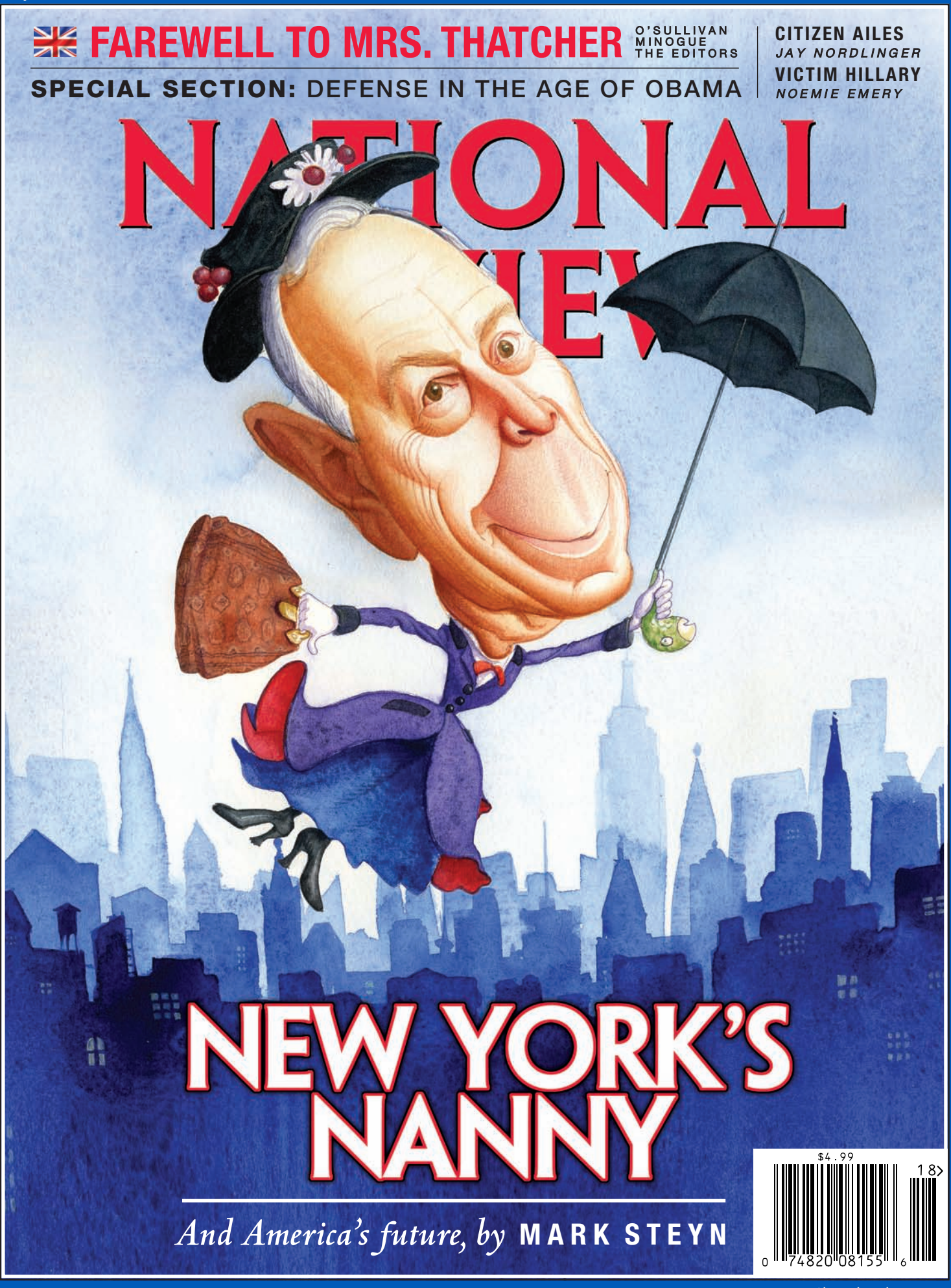

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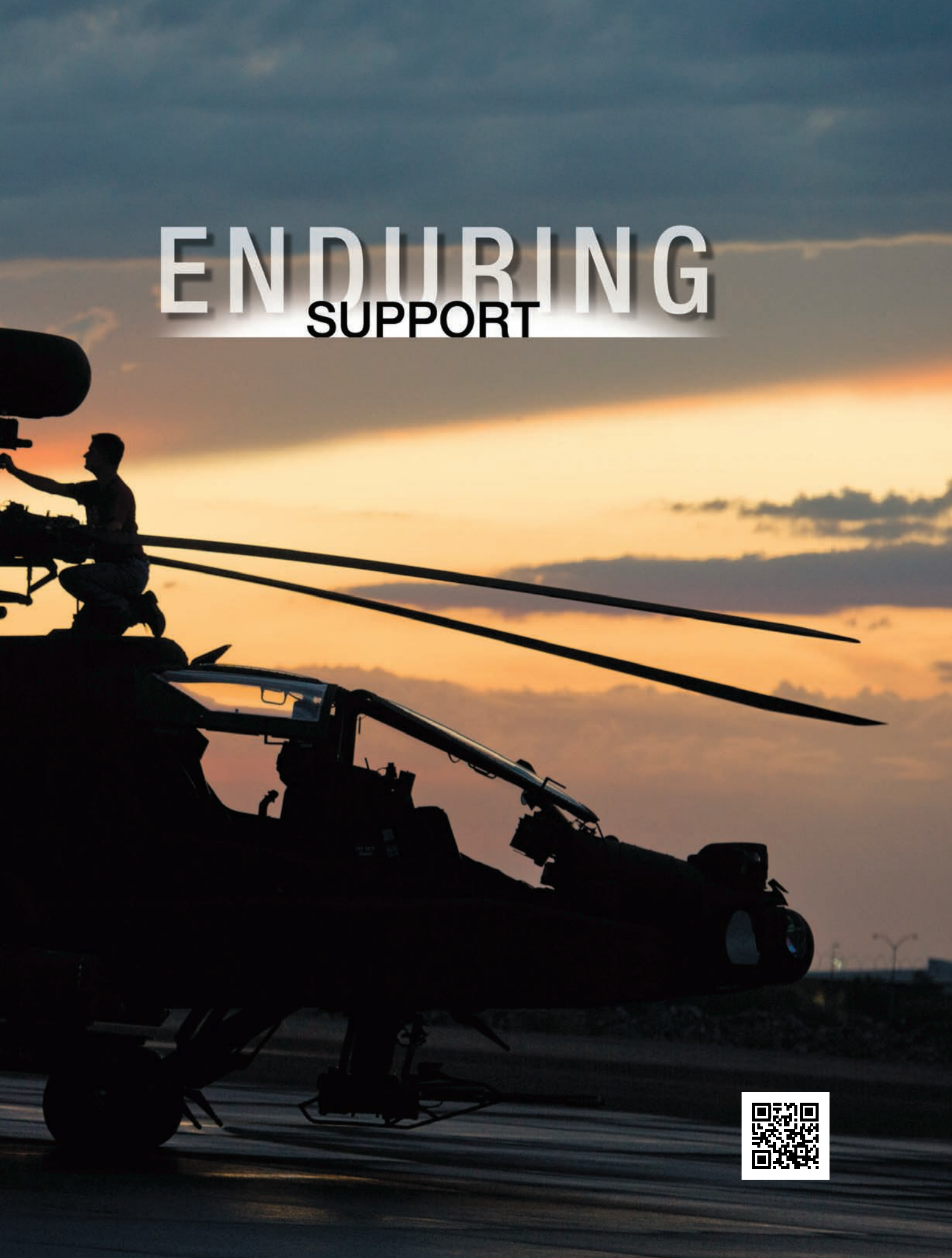
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NATIONAL REVIEW

MAY 6 ISSUE; PRINTED APRIL 18

Letters

On Location

In "Where She's Coming From" (April 22), Florence King asserts that the movie *Love Story* "was actually filmed at Fordham." Perhaps some of the scenes were filmed at Fordham, but I was at Harvard when *Love Story* was filmed there and personally witnessed the filming in Harvard Yard. Several of my classmates and friends appear in the hockey-game scene, which was filmed at Harvard's rink. I have attended alumni meetings where the film was shown and we all pointed out the Cambridge places familiar to us. So Harvard should get at least partial credit for the movie.

Richard F. Collier Jr.
Belle Mead, N.J.

Back in the U.S.S.R.

Thanks for the recent notice about the passing of Galina Vishnevskaya (The Week, December 31). I was unfamiliar with her, being proudly, even defiantly, not a fan of opera. I found a copy of her book on Amazon and have found it to be everything you described. I've read a lot of Russian history through my decades and fairly widely in Russian literature. Her memoir is a refreshingly brutal depiction of life in the U.S.S.R. I most likely would have paid little attention to it when it was published and reviewed. I can't imagine that much of the American Left was very happy with it.

Thanks again for calling our attention to this book.

Tom Strother
Fort Worth, Texas

Justifiably Excited

After several years of looking forward to Tuesday nights at ten almost as much as we look forward to the fortnightly Friday mail that brings NATIONAL REVIEW, we finally, with Kevin D. Williamson's exegesis in the April 8 issue, feel, like Raylan Givens, "Justified." Maybe Boyd and Ava will get their Dairy Queen franchise. Maybe not. But if Boyd has such bourgeois aspirations, why didn't he ask instead for ten Class A shares (about $155 per share as of this morning) of parent company Berkshire Hathaway?

And here's hoping Boyd will stick some Emulex under *Downton Abbey*.

Robert Olds
St. Augustine, Fla.

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The Week

■ As one wag has said, "The worst part about being a domestic terrorist is all those midterms you have to grade in 20 years."

■ The bombing of the Boston Marathon was a savage attack on a public festivity in the heart of a major city. The prayers of every decent person go out to the dead and the maimed, their families, and the city of Boston itself. The bombs (two exploded, two defused) were pressure cookers packed with nails and ball bearings—a simple concept, used in Iraq and Afghanistan, and described in 2010 in the al-Qaeda online magazine *Inspire*, in an article titled "Make a bomb in the kitchen of your Mom." Anyone, of course, can follow a recipe, and as we go to press, no one knows whether the bombers were jihadists, right or left anarchists, or mere nuts. Civil society is vulnerable to leaderless resistance—individuals and grouplets carrying out mini-attacks on their own. We must respond with prudence, diligent intelligence work, stoicism, and good spirits. We are better than they are, and stronger.

■ The Senate's "Gang of Eight" is introducing a bill on what is now called "comprehensive immigration reform" and used to be called "amnesty." The normalization of the status of illegal immigrants is supposed to be contingent upon the government's satisfying certain empirical measures of border security. An early look at the proposal suggests, however, that legal status will come well before any real evidence of security at the border and workplace—and that legal status, however theoretically provisional, will stick. This is particularly alarming because legalization can be expected to stimulate more illegal immigration unless security measures are working. As more details emerge, it will be important to see if the bill reforms legal immigration to make it less heavily weighted toward unskilled labor. And, bearing in mind that the United States is not just a market but a nation, our immigration system should be designed with full assimilation in mind—a goal that is not compatible with the presence of a permanent class of imported labor without the rights and responsibilities of Americans. Our immigration policies are haphazard, dysfunctional, and sometimes perverse. That doesn't mean they can't get worse.

■ President Obama ceded his weekly television address to Francine Wheeler, mother of Ben, who was killed along with 19 schoolmates in Newtown, Conn. "We have to convince the Senate to come together and pass common-sense gun-responsibility reforms," Wheeler said. Victims and their relatives come forward in the wake of crimes and other horrors to bear witness to their or their loved ones' pain. They also hope that public action can wring some meaning out of woe. For that to happen, however, the actions they propose must be reasonable and just. Whatever our suffering, we cannot and should not escape normal political discussion. Otherwise the bully pulpit becomes the bully's pulpit. This leaves President Obama, who gave Mrs. Wheeler her opportunity. To the extent he believes in gun control, he is right to call on advocates who will be effective. To the extent he is taking an opportunity to hit his political enemies by means fair or foul, he is—a normal politician.

ROMAN GENN

■ Retirees' Social Security checks are adjusted each year to keep up with inflation, and so are the thresholds for tax brackets. Most economists agree that the government overadjusts for inflation. President Obama has said he would be willing to move to a more accurate measure, which would reduce Social Security spending and raise tax revenues. Republicans should say no. The tax thresholds should rise more, not less, every year: They should keep up with inflation and with real income growth, so that average tax rates do not rise automatically when the economy expands. And there is a case for letting retirees' checks rise over the course of their old age: 85-year-olds need more help than 68-year-olds. Obama says the inflation-measurement change is contingent on Republican acceptance of other tax increases: They are expected to trade one tax hike for another. No deal.

■ Pro-lifers browbeat the mainstream media into covering the trial of Kermit Gosnell, a Philadelphia abortionist who ran a filthy clinic where some women died and newborns were mur-

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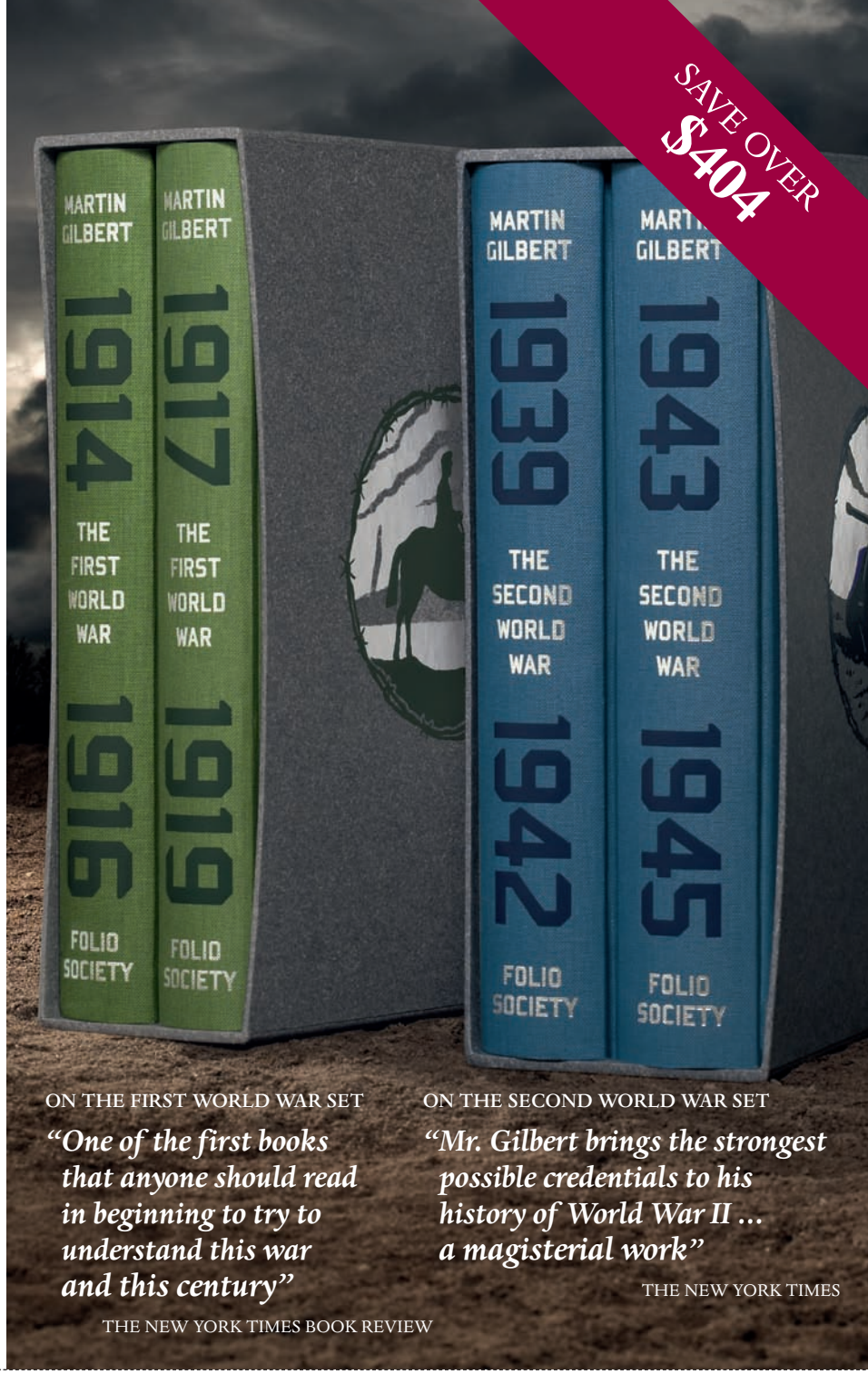

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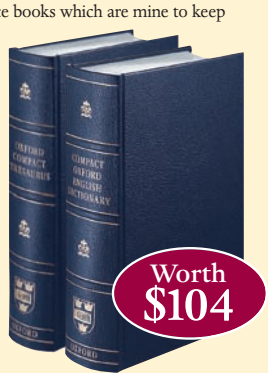

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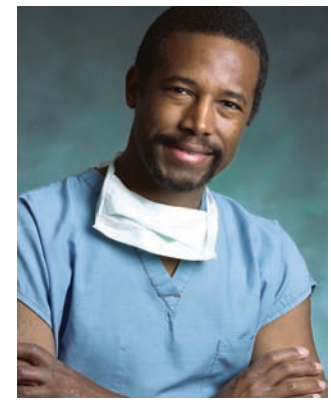
dered. Pro-choicers argued that the case illustrated the need to relax laws against late-term abortion, which, as a result of Supreme Court decisions, are almost never enforced. (Gosnell's is the second case we have ever heard of in the entire post-*Roe* period.) The grand-jury report concluded that it was the reluctance of pro-choice state governments to monitor clinics that allowed Gosnell's practice to fester. One angle we would be amazed to see the press cover: President Obama has argued that late-term abortion should be legal, and has argued and voted for letting newborns delivered in, for example, the fourth month of pregnancy be killed. That isn't an aspect of his record he wants to advertise, since he understands that these issues make the public recoil from the abortion lobby. Which helps explain why journalists recoil from the story.

■ *Mother Jones*, which apparently has developed a Nixonian taste for secret tapes, recently published an account of a political-strategy meeting of Senator Mitch McConnell and his advisers in which they contemplated a possible challenge from Hollywood liberal Ashley Judd. The Republicans, according to *Mother Jones*, were plotting to make Ms. Judd look like an emotionally unbalanced, out-of-touch extremist who could not possibly be trusted with political power. Unfortunately for her political career, Ashley Judd has been doing precisely the same thing, as anybody who has followed her pronouncements will have noticed. While we sympathize with the mentally ill, we cannot imagine that if, e.g., Sarah Palin had been obliged to spend a month and a half in a mental institution, as Ms. Judd did, the ladies and gentlemen who staff Democratic campaigns and magazines such as *Mother Jones* would have exercised tender discretion regarding that fact—and it is a relevant fact, after all. And not all of Ms. Judd's strangeness is related to the diagnosable or the clinical: She has a penchant for saying oddball things in public, and for expressing political opinions acutely at odds with those of a great many Kentucky voters. What the tape shows is that challenging Mitch McConnell is not for amateurs.

■ Senator Rand Paul, the Kentucky libertarian, spoke at Howard University to try to find common ground between Republicans and blacks. He managed to find some, as when he criticized the excesses of the drug war. He was less successful when he pointed out that historically the Republican party was more hostile to segregation than the Democrats: The students knew perfectly well that Strom Thurmond joined the Republicans. Paul himself temporized on the Civil Rights Act of 1964, claiming he had "never wavered" in supporting it and not mentioning that he had criticized one of its key provisions, the prohibition on private acts of racial discrimination. Senator Paul should be commended, and emulated (especially by those many Republicans who lack his history on the Civil Rights Act). How many black voters can be persuaded to vote for Republicans is an open question, but we know it will not happen if Republicans do not try.

■ Dr. Ben Carson, the celebrated pediatric neurosurgeon, withdrew from the commencement ceremonies at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, where he was to speak. After Carson criticized gay marriage in a TV interview, students and faculty circulated a petition protesting his appearance. Carson explained in a statement that he did not want to "distract from the true celebratory nature of the day. Commencement is about the students and their successes." His stand-down was gracious, modest—and wrong. It gives the heckler's veto to every busy grievance collector. One of the things commencement celebrates is the ability of students, fortified by their educations, to begin independent adult life. Life is complicated and full of controversy. Evidently Johns Hopkins grads have yet to learn that.



BENJAMIN S. CARSON, SR., M.D./CARSONSCHOLARS.ORG

■ The academic honors are raining down on Kathy Boudin. The Weather Underground terrorist, who already has an adjunct professorship at the Columbia School of Social Work, was named by New York University Law School as Rose Sheinberg Scholar in Residence (for "working on cutting-edge issues of gender, race and class"). Boudin knows about cutting edges. In 1981 she drove the getaway car in the hold-up of a Brink's truck in which two police officers, Sergeant Edward O'Grady and Officer Waverly Brown, and one guard, Peter Paige, were gunned to death. After a decade on the lam, Boudin served 22 years in jail. She never truly repented for her role in these murders (she says she wrote letters of apology to the families of her victims but never mailed them). Yet none of that matters to an academic establishment that's still starry-eyed about 1960s radicals.

■ The Department of Health and Human Services announced that it will need twice as much money as it thought to help the states that are setting up exchanges to implement Obamacare. It announced as well that a part of the law that was supposed to help small businesses will be delayed. Kathleen Sebelius, the head of the department, said she did not expect as much opposition as the law continues to inspire. The great triumph of Obama's first term is turning into the great headache of his second.

■ Gun control is struggling in Congress. It has much more support at the U.N., where the Obama administration is backing an arms-trade treaty. The State Department had originally supported the treaty conditional on its passing by consensus, meaning that every nation would be considered party to it. But even after Iran, Russia, and other nations declared that they would vote against it or abstain, the Obama administration signed it anyway, bringing the U.S. a step closer to submission to whatever "international norms" emanate from the process, while letting rogue nations do what they like. Were the U.S. to ratify it, the document would burden American sovereignty and provide a legal bludgeon for enemies of the right to bear arms. But treaties require a two-thirds majority in the Senate—a threshold that this treaty cannot meet, if senators are well-informed about its effects.

■ When he saw "Catholicism" and "Evangelical Christianity" in a list headed "Religious Extremism," a soldier at an Army Reserve training session last year in Pennsylvania asked for a copy. He then lodged a complaint. The Army has apologized, explaining that the list was produced "without anyone in the

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chain of command's knowledge or permission." Not only were the religion of Mother Teresa and the religion of Billy Graham grouped with, inter alia, al-Qaeda and the Ku Klux Klan, but "Sunni Islam" and "Islamophobia" were both on the list, an association that offends logic. The geographical provenance of Sunni Islam was identified as "Iraq," while al-Qaeda got to be "transnational." Catholicism was a "U.S." religion, never mind that man addressing the world from his balcony in Rome. The Army, which was embarrassed by all this, understands that it's charged with national security, not the spreading of confusion about religion. That's the media's job.

■ "The science is settled," the global-warming alarmists keep telling us, even as evidence continues to undermine many of their assumptions. No one is shocked that Texas has more droughts than, say, Seattle, but the Lone Star State's droughts have been especially severe in recent years. In his February 2013 testimony before Congress, John Nielsen-Gammon, the Texas state climatologist, claimed that the most recent drought is the second worst on record. All of the usual suspects happily blamed global warming for the drought, which caused numerous forest fires. President Obama mocked Texas governor Rick Perry for being "a governor whose state is on fire, denying climate change." But a newly released study from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) says that global warming did not cause the drought: The Gulf of Mexico's jet stream failed to transport the necessary moisture. Martin Hoerling, a research meteorologist at the NOAA and the report's lead author, said, "Climate change was not a significant part, if any, of the event." This news comes after the finding that global temperatures have not risen in 15 years. It's the alarmists who are in a dry spell now.

■ Tensions on the Korean peninsula are as high as they have been in years: North Korea has threatened its neighbors and the United States with nuclear attacks, and it has cut off lines of communication with the South and abrogated the two countries' non-aggression pacts. This is not unprecedented, and the U.S. has responded predictably. Secretary of State John Kerry traveled to Asia recently; he pressured China to pressure North Korea (a tactic that has never worked and won't until the North is on the verge of collapse), and in South Korea he suggested that the U.S. would be open to bilateral talks with the Kim regime (which have also never succeeded in winning any concessions). With the situation so fraught, and the Defense Intelligence Agency confident that North Korea has a nuclear missile, it is especially important for the U.S. to abandon the failed policy of engagement it has pursued for two decades now and recognize that denuclearization of North Korea via negotiation is a fantasy. One wise decision of the Bush administration, the expansion of our Pacific missile-defense systems, only belatedly implemented by the Obama administration this year, has had lasting benefits. We should also resume the financial and diplomatic pressure the U.S. began putting on the Kim family regime during the Bush administration.

■ Once again, Palestinians appear to be letting the opportunity for statehood slip through their fingers. The United Nations General Assembly gave Mahmoud Abbas, president of the Palestinian Authority on the West Bank, a green light to get on with it, and Washington evidently believes it's time for those final negotiations with Israel that will allow everyone to live happily ever after. President Obama declared that Mahmoud Abbas and Salam Fayyad, the PA prime minister since 2007, are "true partners" of Israel for these intended negotiations. That was unlucky timing. Abbas speedily sacked Fayyad, so the two aren't even partners of each other anymore. Since Abbas's mandate expired four years ago, he has lost such legitimacy as he had, and relies instead on strong-arm methods. That's by no means all. Fayyad, who was educated in America and employed by the International Monetary Fund, was a genuine rival to Abbas and might have set in place the sort of state the West could have approved. Financial transparency would have put an end to the statelet's corruption. Ridding themselves of Fayyad, Abbas and his cronies keep their hands on the immense subsidies the world thinks it is paying to Palestinians. In all likelihood, they will have sabotaged the prospect of negotiations, made Obama look foolish, and left themselves at the mercy of Hamas, rivals even more mercenary and ruthless than they.

■ Egypt looks more and more like a failed state in the making. President Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood now in power are creating conditions of poverty, extremism, and lawlessness from which all—and, first and foremost, the Coptic minority—will suffer. Eastern Christians, Copts are estimated to number at least ten million in a country of 85 million. For centuries they've been treated as second-class citizens. Islamism raises the level of violence. In El Khusus, about ten miles north of Cairo, a dispute escalated into a gun battle that left four Copts and one Muslim dead. Hundreds of Copts and Muslim sympathizers gathered for the funeral of the four in Cairo's St. Mark's Cathedral, a building that predates the arrival of Islam. Fighting broke out between the mourners and young Muslims. Summoned, the riot police either fired tear gas into St. Mark's or just stood around. Two more Copts were killed, 84 injured. Soon afterwards, four Copt activists were arrested. Morsi promised to protect Copts but a spokesman from the Ministry of the Interior blamed the violence on them. "We want action, not words," said Pope Tawadros II, recently elected head of the Coptic Church. The action so far has been dismaying and is likely to get worse.

■ There are 1.3 billion people in China, and the state does brutal things to many of them. One can hardly cite every case. But let's consider one of them: that of Shen Hongxia. We learn of her through an admirable group, Women's Rights Without Frontiers. She lived in a village called Dabancheng in Hubei Province. She died in one of those forced sterilizations. As the aforementioned organization says, "a doctor [in] Tongshan County warned that sterilizing Shen Hongxia would be life-threatening. Nevertheless, local Family Planning Officers forcibly sterilized her, in order to avoid an 'illegal pregnancy.' Shen Hongxia, 42, died, leaving behind her husband and two children, one of whom is two years old." When people say China is no longer a totalitarian state, remember stories like this one.

■ When the British want to encourage someone to persevere against insuperable odds, they say, "Remember Rorke's Drift." It's the sort of stirring, heroic military episode from Britain's glorious imperial past that David Cameron probably wishes had never happened: In 1879, in South Africa, 150 of Her Majesty's

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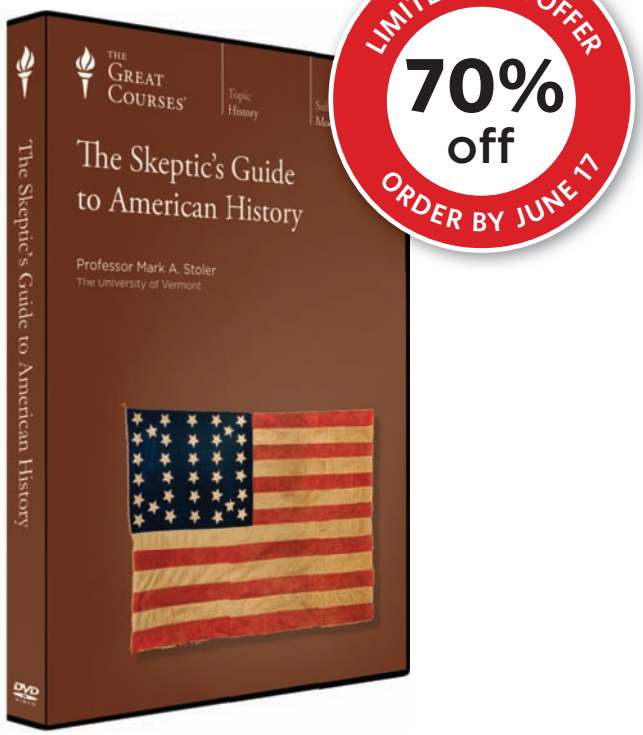

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tired, ill-equipped soldiers miraculously held off 4,000 Zulu attackers (freedom fighters, in modern parlance) for twelve harrowing hours. For many years the family of Private David Jenkins has insisted that he was one of that gallant band of defenders, but the army refused to recognize the Welshman, citing a lack of evidence. Recently, though, the National Army Museum used a pencil sketch of a kneeling rifleman at Rorke's Drift to publicize a contest it was holding. The sketch was made after the men returned home by Lady Elizabeth Butler as a study for her painting of the battle. She was known to have used actual Rorke's Drift veterans as her models, and when Jenkins's great-grandson saw the sketch, he noticed that the kneeling man had the same features as those in a photograph of Jenkins. He notified the museum, and now Private David Jenkins has, at long last, been added to the Roll of Honour for Rorke's Drift. Well done, soldier.

■ It's always awkward to receive gifts while traveling: The useless slow-cooker that's too bulky to bring home, the hideous sweater that you won't put in your suitcase for fear someone might see you unpacking it. President François Hollande of France found himself in just such a situation when he went to Mali to receive thanks for suppressing an Islamist rebellion there. (France was deposed as a colonial power in the 1960s but still intervenes in Africa when needed, like a divorced husband who drops by for the occasional bit of fraternization.) The grateful Malians gave Hollande a camel, which from a Malian's perspective has manifold uses but to a modern urban Frenchman is distinctly de trop. They clearly expected him to take it home, so he muttered something about picking it up the next time he was in town and then packed it off to lodge with a local family—which, "evidently misunderstanding the purpose of the custody arrangement" (reports the *New York Times*), "fashioned [the camel] into a tasty tagine, a regional type of slow-simmered stew." But no matter; the Malians have promised to procure another camel and this time deliver it to Paris.

■ Princeton alumna Susan Patton, a member of the class of 1977, urged Princeton co-eds in a letter published in the *Daily Princetonian* to make use of their time on campus to "find a husband." Never again, she argued, would they be surrounded by "this concentration of men who are worthy of you." This, she said, was the advice she would give her daughters if she had any. A few days later, in a *Slate* piece titled "Marry Young: I got married at 23. What are the rest of you waiting for?" Julia Shaw made the case against delaying marriage until after achieving career success and financial security. "Marriage wasn't something we did after we'd grown up," she said of her own marriage, "it was how we have grown up and grown together." The pieces set off a firestorm, with professional feminists lining up to pour vituperation on the pair. Patton expressed astonishment at the "extreme reaction" to her letter. She could legitimately be criticized for snobbery. The sin for which both women were pilloried instead was daring to suggest that anything other than a career might be the "cornerstone" of women's "future and happiness."

■ On March 29, the *Wall Street Journal* gave the country a breath of fresh air. It came in the form of an op-ed by Suzy Lee Weiss, a high-school senior. It began, "Like me, millions of high-school seniors with sour grapes are asking themselves this week how they failed to get into the colleges of their dreams. It's simple: For years, they—we—were lied to." Young people were told to be themselves—which was fine, said the author, as long as their true selves had "nine extracurriculars, six leadership positions, three varsity sports, killer SAT scores and two moms." If she had known before what she knows now, she wrote, she "would have gladly worn a headdress to school. Show me to any closet, and I would've happily come out of it. 'Diversity!' I offer about as much diversity as a saltine cracker. If it were up to me, I would've been any of the diversities: Navajo, Pacific Islander, anything. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, I salute you and your 1/32 Cherokee heritage." On she went, in this delightful vein. She put some noses out of joint—offenders of the pieties always do. But we look forward to more writing from this refreshing source.

■ Columbia University has awarded Bret Stephens of the *Wall Street Journal* the Pulitzer Prize for commentary. Their citation praises "his incisive columns on American foreign policy and domestic politics, often enlivened by a contrarian twist." Stephens's work at the *Journal*, and as editor of the *Jerusalem Post* before that, is some of the most incisive thinking on the issues the United States faces abroad. When the Pulitzer Prize committee brings itself to honor a conservative voice, the honor is the greater. Congratulations, Mr. Stephens.

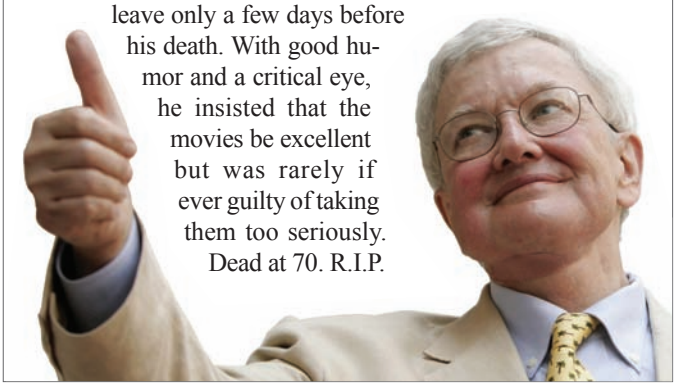
RICHARD AVEDON, 1965

■ Joan Baez, the folk singer, went to Hanoi for the first time since 1972. In that year, the Associated Press tells us, she and her friends undertook a "peace mission." That may be true, but most Baez types were less interested in peace than in a Communist victory. The North Vietnamese government, says the AP, "was happy to welcome those prepared to listen to its side of the story." It welcomed those who would advance its propaganda aims. During her return visit, Baez "closed her eyes and sang out the African-American spiritual, 'Oh Freedom.'" Baez explained that Vietnamese people must not blame American soldiers: "They were just kids; they were just following orders." Yes, and they were also trying to keep Vietnam from the fate that in fact befell it. When the Communists conquered all of Vietnam, they killed about a million people and instituted "re-education" camps and other horrors. If that spiritual had been sung by anyone subject to the regime's power, it would have been treated as an act of subversion.

■ Many have documented the ridiculousness that passes for education in our nation's colleges, but "What Does Bowdoin Teach?"—a study of a liberal-arts college in Maine, conducted by Peter Wood and Michael Toscano of the National Association of Scholars—is particularly thorough and alarming. Not only did the authors take note of the various goings-on on campus, but they compared the school's current course offerings with the classes taught decades ago. Basic survey courses are much rarer

than they used to be, but students looking for a freshman seminar might try "Queer Gardens," a course about the gardening of lesbians, and about "the link between gardens and transgression." Wood identifies the college's turning point as 1969, the year in which it dumped universal requirements; today, the only courses that are required are those needed for a student's major. The report is a must-read for students considering the school and for their parents—and, more broadly, for those concerned about the liberal arts.

■ Roger Ebert was the nation's preeminent film critic, having brought the genre to television through his collaboration with Gene Siskel. He held the same newspaper job—at the *Chicago Sun-Times*—from 1967 until his death, and was the first film critic to win the Pulitzer Prize for criticism, the first to be given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, one of the most widely syndicated columnists of his time, and an inescapable cultural presence. He was also a man of the Left who encouraged the antics of Michael Moore; a partisan Democrat; a crusading atheist who refused to describe himself as an atheist; and, to the surprise of many, mildly pro-life—not to the point of seeking to ban abortion, but sufficently so to appreciate the horror of terminating an innocent human life, regardless of the circumstances of its conception. Cancer of the salivary glands left him speechless and disfigured toward the end of his life, but he continued to write relentlessly, announcing his intention to take a leave only a few days before his death. With good humor and a critical eye, he insisted that the movies be excellent but was rarely if ever guilty of taking them too seriously. Dead at 70. R.I.P.



■ John McCandlish Phillips played his life by ear. On his way home to Boston one day in 1952, he heard God tell him to disembark from the train in midtown Manhattan. Following a trail of bread crumbs to the offices of the *New York Times*, he applied for a job as a copyboy there, and the next thing he knew he was "the Ted Williams of the young reporters," as his colleague Gay Talese described him, "a natural. There was only one guy I thought I was not the equal of, and that was McCandlish Phillips." The superstar of the city desk, Phillips retired from full-time journalism at the top of his game, in 1973, to tend the church he had co-founded a decade earlier up in Morningside Heights. From his home in a building half a block down the hill from the main gate of the Columbia campus, he directed a small Christian publishing house while with the other hand he typed out occasional freelance gems for the *Times* and the *Washington Post*. He mentored Christian journalists and prayed for his neighborhood. His faith was stronger than his vanity. "A man of dignity and honor which is very much uncommon," Talese added. "A very honorable person." Dead at 85. R.I.P.

■ There was a time, children, when Mouseketeers did not grow up to be drug-addled sex toys. Annette Funicello, most popular of the original 1955 cast, became an iconic child and young-adult star. After three years in the Mickey Mouse Club, she handed in her ears to appear in a number of movies and TV shows. At age 21, she began starring in beach movies; since the main draw was seeing Miss Funicello in ample two-piece bathing suits, she had become a sex toy of a sort, though not a sort that we would now recognize. In the mid-Sixties she married her agent and concentrated on their three children. After being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, the disease that ultimately killed her, she set up a foundation to study neurological diseases. Her career was lighter than air, yet it was neither lurid nor tabloid fodder. Dead at 70. R.I.P.

■ It is easy to forget that until the 1990s, Texas politics was dominated by Democrats. George W. Bush was only the fourth Republican ever elected governor of Texas, and only the second since Reconstruction. Turning the state around took a great deal of work, big political ideas, and tremendous amounts of the life's blood of politics: money. Houston real-estate developer Bob Perry helped a great deal with the last of these, and thereby enabled the other two. Perry began his career as a political financier in 1978, with a $5,000 investment in the campaign of Bill Clements, who became the first Republican governor of Texas in more than a century. From there, Perry took an interest in a number of candidates, including Rick Perry (no relation), who was at the time the agriculture commissioner, and became active in issues such as tort reform, an area in which Texas's aggressive approach has become a national model. In 2012, he contributed some $23 million to groups supporting Mitt Romney and other Republican candidates, and he poured money into Karl Rove's American Crossroads super PAC. He was a key supporter of the unfairly maligned Swift Boat Veterans for Truth, which countered John Kerry's heavy reliance upon his service record in the 2004 election. His life was intertwined with public affairs, but he was himself an intensely private man. Dead at 80. R.I.P.

OBITUARY

Margaret Thatcher R.I.P.

MARGARET THATCHER was the greatest peacetime British prime minister of the 20th century, and perhaps of all time; and her achievements in foreign policy were second only to those of Winston Churchill.

In domestic policy, she reversed the decline of the previous 30 years and revived both the British economy and the British spirit. She brought inflation under control and established sound money; brought the unions under law, so dispelling the idea that Britain had become "ungovernable"; defeated the miners' strike, so entrenching her reforms; revived the enterprise culture that Britain had pioneered a century earlier but lost; and started what became a worldwide revolution of privatization. Ten years after the strike-ridden "winter of discontent," Britain's economy had become the fourth-largest in the world.

In foreign policy, she was instrumental to the free world's vic-

tory in the Cold War—a victory achieved "without firing a shot," as she put it. She was steadfast and vocal in her support of the NATO policy of installing cruise and Pershing missiles in Western Europe. The success of that policy, against the vehement objections of both the "peace movement" and most parties of the European Left, marked the point at which the U.S.S.R. lost the Cold War. She improved on that success by identifying Mikhail Gorbachev as "a man we could do business with" and warmly recommending him to Ronald Reagan as such. Her early endorsement of the Soviet leader was one reason the Cold War ended peacefully, almost on friendly terms.

In addition, she won the Falklands War, defending popular sovereignty and asserting British will against incompetent bemedalled dictators.

Mrs. Thatcher—we prefer to call her by the name she was known by in the days of her glory—made enemies who remain bitter to this day, as some comments on her death from the British Left miserably illustrate. Her shade must be content with the praise that is rising from the formerly Communist nations in which she remains a heroic and loved figure—and from the United States, which was second only to Britain in her affection.

To sum up such a remarkable life is not easy. We cannot improve upon the attempt by Lord Saatchi, head of the think tank she founded and the shaper of her victorious election message in 1979: "Everyone wants to be immortal. Few are. Mrs. Thatcher is. Why? Because her values are timeless, eternal. Tap anyone on the shoulder anywhere in the world, and ask what Mrs. Thatcher 'believed in,' and they will tell you. They can give a clear answer to what she 'stood for.' She developed all the winning arguments of our time—free markets, low tax, a small state, independence, individuality, self-determination."

GUNS

Checking the Bill

THE central feature of the bipartisan gun bill, introduced by Republican senators Pat Toomey and Mark Kirk and Democrats Joe Manchin and Chuck Schumer, is unlikely to work. We remain fans of Toomey, but on the issue of expanded background checks, he is in the wrong.

Currently, background checks are required only when federally licensed dealers sell guns. Many gun sales occur outside this context. The Toomey/Manchin legislation would require background checks to be conducted before a sale at a "gun show" or "pursuant to an advertisement, posting, display or other listing on the Internet or in a publication." The bill does not require background checks for exchanges between family members, friends, and neighbors, or, it appears, for any sale through the grapevine (although the implications are unclear on the question of sales advertised on the church bulletin board).

The provision would create new hurdles for law-abiding gun owners, requiring two private parties to seek out—and pay—a federally licensed intermediary before they could carry out a simple transaction. Worse, the vagueness of the legislative language would make it difficult for private sellers to determine whether a given sale required a check. Even the most innocently intentioned of firearms transfers would acquire significant legal risk.

The provision is likely to prove as difficult to enforce as to follow. Police and prosecutors would have to devote considerable resources to the parsing of close cases and the ferreting out of intent: Was that sale covered by the requirement or not? This mess would likely lead to the reappraisal of today's legitimate and uncontroversial exclusions as tomorrow's unacceptable loopholes. Indeed, the very same "gun-show loophole" that Toomey/Manchin attempts to close was once a perfectly respectable member of the class of private sales the bill makes a show of protecting.

As a condition of its (by all accounts still limited) Republican support, Toomey/Manchin attempts a few conciliatory gestures for gun owners. It exempts individuals who already have valid concealed-carry permits from background checks. It allows the interstate sale of handguns under certain conditions. And it reaffirms the illegality of a federal firearms registry, creating stiff penalties—15 years in prison—for any government official who misuses or illegally retains firearms records.

The registry provision is symbolic, and if Toomey/Manchin becomes law, there will be a considerably more extensive federal paper trail on gun ownership than there was before. In any event, none of the conciliations ameliorate the flaws in the background-checks provision that make it unworthy of support.

Preventing criminals and those who are dangerously mentally ill from obtaining guns is a worthy goal of law. But such a law should stand a credible chance of success, and refrain from unduly burdening lawful citizens in the exercise of their constitutional rights. The Toomey/Manchin bill does neither.

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Victim Hillary

Her career is a story of dependence, not empowerment

BY NOEMIE EMERY

"It Takes a Village" is the title of the book that Hillary Clinton wrote as first lady, and it took the death of Margaret Thatcher, one of the great prime ministers of all time, to show Hillary up as a Potemkin village when it comes to historic and feminist achievement.

True, Hillary grew up in, with, and of the feminist movement and Thatcher despised it, but when it comes to hope, change, gravitas, shattered glass ceilings, and other accomplishments, it is simply no contest: The former prime minister wins hands down. She changed, saved, and revived a great country, won a war (a small but symbolic one), and helped win the Cold War. As for Hillary Clinton—well, not so much. Hailed as a force of nature, great mind, and political genius when she first came into the eye of the public 20 years ago, she has consistently failed to live up to her billing in all ways but image. Campaigning with Bill as part of a two-for-one package, she made it clear she intended to be a full partner, and for two years, she was: Her drive for "diversity" in the president's cabinet—translation: a female attorney general—led to Zoë Baird, Kimba Wood, and then Janet Reno (which led to the Waco catastrophe), and her year-long attempt to impose national health care led to the first wholly Republican Congress in 40-plus years.

Tied to the administration's embarrassments, she had little to do with its successes, such as free trade, a healthy economy (brought about with the help of the Republican Congress), and welfare reform, which most of her allies opposed. Given a Senate seat from New York for her numerous trials, she was a solid, reliable, workman-like member, with no big bills to her credit, no noteworthy speeches, no interesting thoughts. In the 2008 race (as the book *Game Change*, by John Heilemann and Mark Halperin, informs us), she ran an appalling campaign that was long on expense, disarray, and confusion, and short on adaptation, coherence, and strategy; though she put up a remarkable display of grit near the end, when it was too late. As secretary of state, she was again the good soldier, carrying out policies she may not have agreed with. None of the policies produced important results or made the country more popular, and Benghazi, which we have not heard the last of, is an unanswered question and a still-open sore.

As an executive, she makes a pretty good lawyer, and as a politician, her main draw grows out of her unique situation as the helpmeet, and victim, of Bill. Bill giveth—in the form of access to power—and Bill taketh away—in the form of embarrassment—but it all added up to power for Hillary, who was able to bond for two different reasons with her feminist fan base, first on the grounds of ambition in the sheer scope of her drive for power, and second on the grounds of victimization, as they all had been done wrong by men.

Hillary sells herself as a hard-charging fighter, but much of her strength comes from playing the strong woman who is also the wronged woman, and these two themes interplay. She subordinates her career to her husband's, and is given part of his power as governor. She pays the bills, greases wheels, suppresses the bimbo eruptions, and then for two years becomes the co-president. She stands by her man through impeachment and scandal, and is given her Senate seat from New York as a reward for having survived the humiliation, from which she emerges stronger than ever, empowered by having been betrayed. In 2008, her campaign falls apart, but her fortunes revive in the New Hampshire primary, when she cries gently on camera about how hard it all seems, and rallies a large corps of middle-aged women, who find it unfair that after a lifetime of drudgery she is being bested by an untested, cool-looking, and much younger man.

The man wins, hires her in order to neutralize her and her husband, and sends her off to lead from behind in troublesome venues, in which his African name, Muslim relations, and exotic background don't carry quite as

ROMAN GENN

Noemie Emery is a contributing editor of The Weekly Standard *and writes a weekly column for the* Washington Examiner.

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much clout as he hoped. Her public life so far has been bracketed by two installments of the TV show *60 Minutes*, one in January 1992, when she made her debut in front of the American public in appearing with her husband to help him deal with the mess made by Gennifer Flowers, the second in January 2013, when she appeared with Obama and they giggled and laughed like an old married couple as they struggled to deal with the mess made by the deaths of four Americans under their watch in Libya on September 11, 2012. She withdraws from national attention, for now, as she entered it, cleaning up messes made by the opposite sex. "It's her turn" seems to be Hillary's slogan, and the subliminal text seems to be, "It's Hillary's turn, and does she ever deserve it after all she has gone through with guys."

Hillary began what is presumably her new campaign early in April before exactly the same fan base, at Tina Brown's "Women in the World" summit and back-scratching gabfest, where she touted her life's work for "gender equality," to sustained and ecstatic applause. But as Jennifer Rubin points out in the *Washington Post*, as secretary of state she had done very little, playing up to various strongmen and tyrants and failing to protest egregious examples of oppression and violence directed at women (and men). "The U.S. under Hillary Clinton's stewardship was virtually mute during the Green Revolution when a young woman, known as Neda, was beaten and killed, becoming the symbol of Iranian tyranny. She instead pursued 'engagement' with Neda's murder[ers,] who torture and rape women in the hell hole of Evin prison." Rubin continues, "[In Egypt] her male successor John Kerry has done more to protest and condemn the ongoing sexual violence and discrimination against women." Also, "She for months and months insisted Syrian President Bashar al-Assad was a 'reformer.' Under her foreign policy oversight, tens of thousands of women and children died and rape on a massive scale is now an instrument of war."

Do not expect this to have much effect on the fashionistas and the journalist-divas who have been growing old along with her, but the question is how it will sell to a new generation who do not remember the Clintons' ascendance, to whom Bill Clinton is a frail-looking man with white hair on a vegetarian diet, and Hillary a round-faced, rather elderly woman who looks like their mother, or aunt. Hillary may be counting on running against an old, white, male ticket, but she's likelier to face one a generation younger than she is, with one or more female or brown faces on it, in which case she may appear to be a rather outdated establishment candidate, all too familiar, and set in her ways.

AP/MANUEL BALCE CENETA

Hillary and Bill swept into office in 1992, in the tailwind of the "Year of the Woman," when it seemed there would be many more years and more women, all kindred to Hillary. But the liberal women in power right now—the Pelosis, Mikulskis, Boxers, Feinsteins, Murrays, and Stabenows—are of her generation and none too inspiring, and their replacements seem nowhere in sight. The midterm elections of 2010 produced the year of the Thatcherite women—Kelly Ayotte, Kristi Noem, Nikki Haley, Susana Martinez, and others—who stand good chances of attaining national stardom and run counter to Hillary, too. Like Thatcher, they come from modest backgrounds; like Thatcher, they're grounded in common-sense virtues; like Thatcher, they understand the value of the free market; like Thatcher, they rose with no help from the Sisterhood; like Thatcher, their care for the feminist social agenda is nil. Their interests are economics, and, in Ayotte's case, foreign policy. They don't claim to be speaking for or to women, or to be doing things tailored to help them. They think, like Thatcher, that when you make the world safe and the economy prosperous, it tends to help everyone, and that includes women.

What Thatcher showed women is that a woman can rise on her own, minus "role models," powerful friends, or the feminist movement, and change the world for the better. This is option one. What Hillary shows is that a woman can marry a good politician and rise on his coattails to power, and it may be still better if he misbehaves. If she stares down Gennifer Flowers, he may give her a chance to lose Congress; if she stands by him when he is impeached (over charges related to sex with an intern), she may emerge as a martyr; and if this goes on even longer, she may become a "survivor," a grande dame of her party, a queen. As option two is open to very few women, the Thatcher model is likely to be the more viable one—and the one that more women will take. NR

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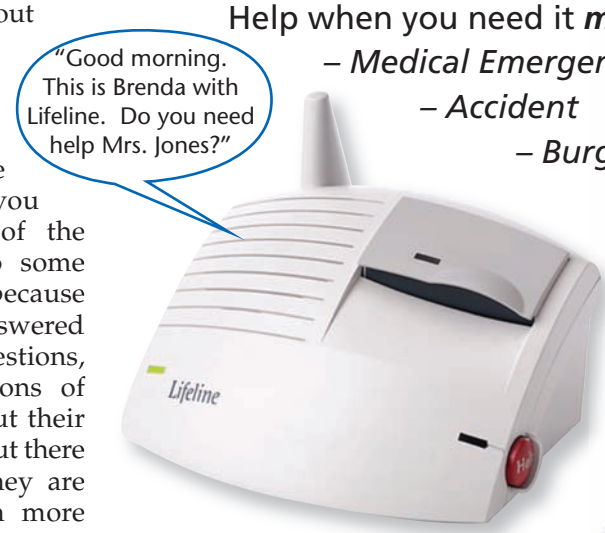

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Marriage and Adoption

Traditionalists do not slight the latter

BY RAMESH PONNURU

I had not thought that there was anything new to say in the debate over same-sex marriage. Credit, then, to *Esquire* writer Tom Junod, who advanced a novel thesis a day after the Supreme Court concluded hearing oral arguments in two same-sex-marriage cases. He argued that opposition to same-sex marriage has become a "war on adoption," which he takes personally as an adoptive father (married to a woman).

The opponents, he accurately notes, routinely hold up the biological family—a mother and father raising the children they conceived together—as an ideal. In doing so they insult and even threaten his own family. Ross Douthat, of all people, is cited as one of the anti-adoption warriors, specifically called out for writing that "the share of children living in married households with both their biological parents" is a "meaningful indicator of family solidity." A view like that one, writes Junod, "dooms our marriage and our family to second-class status."

Walter Olson, a libertarian writer and activist for same-sex marriage—and also a friendly acquaintance from whom I've learned a great deal over the years—echoed Junod's argument, calling his essay "powerful." The campaign against same-sex marriage, Olson wrote, "is resulting in the belittlement of non-biologically-based family forms—and among the targets to suffer collateral damage are adoptive families whether straight or gay. . . . Any parental structure other than a married biological mother and father, it is now argued, should be presumed to inflict damage on kids."

I think adoption is a wonderful thing and admire people who have adopted children. In this respect, I am, I think, like almost everyone else, including almost all opponents of same-sex marriage. Yet there is an important sense, is there not, in which adoptive families are not ideal? Unlike the raising of children by biological parents, adoption is always a response to less-than-ideal circumstances, for example to the unreadiness, unfitness, or death of the biological parents. You do not have to have any desire to belittle adoptive parents to say that where such conditions do not exist we should not favor adoption.

And studies have found that adopted children do slightly worse than children of married biological parents on a range of variables. Adopted children appear to have higher-than-average rates of behavior problems in schools and psychological difficulties, for example.

It's not necessary to read or believe such studies, though, to agree with Douthat: He is not only right, but obviously right, to think that the percentage of children living with their biological parents tells us something about a society's health. If 50 percent of children in a society were living with adoptive parents, for example, we would conclude that that society was recovering from some deep trauma.

If more children were being raised by biological parents who were married to each other, more of them would have a better shot at a good life. Most of the time, when people say or think such things, they do not have in mind same-sex couples or adoption: They are thinking instead about single parenthood and divorce. The social science is much clearer that children tend to do worse when raised by single parents than that they do worse when raised by same-sex couples. That doesn't mean that we should think of single parents, or divorced parents, or their families as having "second-class status." But neither should we let our fear of being taken to be belittling them prevent us from facing the truth.

"If we have equal protection under the law, how come only criminals *go to jail?"*

The following three propositions are logically compatible with one another: 1) Society has an interest in raising the proportion of children in intact biological families. 2) Adoption should be encouraged. And 3) the government should recognize long-term same-sex unions as marriages. The way to reconcile the first and second views should be obvious: It's better for kids to be adopted than to languish in foster care or in overseas orphanages, or suffer unfit biological parents.

The first and third could be reconciled by arguing that official recognition of same-sex marriage won't actually reduce the proportion of children being raised by their biological parents but will confer benefits on the children who are being raised by same-sex couples. This isn't a convoluted position: Every supporter of same-sex marriage I have ever met believes it will have exactly these effects. For similar reasons, someone who thinks that the intact biological family should remain our social model, and be strengthened as such, could favor letting gay couples adopt and even encouraging them to.

It may even be that there is nothing that we can or should do to raise the proportion of kids in intact biological families. Nobody has advanced policies that would clearly reduce the rate of unwed childbirth at an acceptable cost. It's not clear how the culture can be changed to encourage heterosexuals to marry before having children. Pessimism on this front, however, does not invalidate the goal.

I take the core concern of thoughtful opponents of same-sex marriage to be that it makes it harder to explain, to a culture that has lost sight of the fact, that kids generally do better with their biological mother and father raising them; that it makes it harder to advance cultural or political proposals that just might strengthen that family structure without being treated as a bigot; that it formally repudiates the biological-family ideal. A thoughtful supporter of same-sex marriage, it seems to me, should not want the triumph of his cause to have that social meaning.

Junod and Olson have not discredited that concern of the opponents. With the best will in the world, as far as I can tell, they have illustrated it. **NR**

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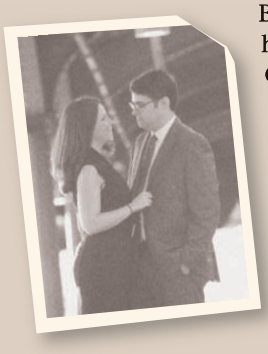

But the world was tough on long-distance relationships and leaving her behind was never easy. I did what I could to keep her smiling. One day I pulled a necklace from my pocket. The strand of luminous pastel orbs, in all her favorite shades, took her by surprise. "It's beautiful," she said. Tears rolled down her cheeks and I wiped them away. "This necklace is a promise," I told her. "Wear it and know that I'll always come back for you."

The train whistle blew. Time to go. One last kiss and I hopped onto the train. "I'll miss you every minute," she cried. "Don't you forget me!" I shouted back, "It's only New Jersey, sweetheart. I'll be home for supper."

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Opportunity Conservatism

It is the answer statism should receive

BY STUART M. BUTLER & MATTHEW SPALDING

A ROBUST debate is under way about the future of conservatism, and there are plenty of lessons to be learned from the 2012 election and current trends in American politics. Unfortunately, the conversation so far has largely consisted of calls for modifying basic conservative positions, especially on social policy, and for targeting government spending and programs to appeal to particular demographic groups.

But layering new programs on top of an existing bloated framework is little more than low-budget liberalism. This approach fails substantively and will not widen support for the conservative message. Conservatives should reject the assumption that government handouts are the way to win friends and influence people.

The better and more confident way forward lies in America's principle of limited government and its promise of unlimited opportunity. We need a smarter application of these ideas to the hard challenges of our day.

The liberal model has been a disaster. Government, far from acting as a catalyst for opportunity as intended, has become opportunity's chief barrier. Government spending, taxing, and borrowing are killing the American economy, and we are wrapped in endless rules and regulations. Poverty rates remain high, our public-education system fails the least fortunate, and the family—the key to the well-being of children—is falling apart among poor and low-income Americans. Meanwhile, our ever-growing welfare state crowds out the very private activities and institutions that make up not only society's best safety net but also its seedbed for self-improvement and advancement. And the government's uncontrolled costs and unsustainable promises threaten long-term economic growth and will pass on crushing debt and social burdens to our children and grandchildren.

Conservatives must fundamentally reject the administrative, redistributionist, and creepy "Life of Julia" statism of modern liberalism. But what does an appealing conservative opportunity agenda look like?

Conservatives must fundamentally reject the administrative, redistributionist, and creepy "Life of Julia" statism of modern liberalism.

First, we should continue to insist that we cannot have opportunity and prosperity without constraining and reducing the size and scope of government. Rather than engineering society to try to guarantee economic outcomes, government should ensure a positive environment for economic growth and human flourishing. That means clearing away the red tape that impedes enterprise and breaking down the artificial structures that prevent competition; it means keeping tax rates low and reducing government spending, which crowds out private ventures and piles up debt. A growing economy puts more money in families' pocketbooks and charities' budgets, helps the poor and unemployed find jobs, and helps families save for retirement and their children's education.

Second, conservatives should lead the public debate about the structural changes in entitlement programs—not only because such programs are the largest drivers of government spending but also to save those entitlements from complete collapse. Conservative reform can be fiscally sound as well as socially responsible. The Heritage Foundation's "Saving the American Dream" fiscal plan, for example, calls for a fundamental shift in Medicare and Social Security from the current benefit model (which is unsustainably costly) to one of true insurance—one that provides better security for those who actually need it while not providing Social Security or subsidizing Medicare for affluent retirees.

Third, conservatives should engage aggressively and honestly in the debate over income and wealth inequality. The Left obsesses over those at the very top and won't discuss how its own approach has devastated those at the bottom. Making Warren Buffett a little less wealthy will do nothing to stimulate wealth creation in poor households that don't save, and more spending will not help those trapped in dismal inner-city schools with no job prospects. The conservative response should not be a little less redistribution or more efficient programs, but policies to strengthen the social and human capital that will empower everyone to move up the ladder of success. That focus, and those solutions, will appeal to key demographics in the future just as they have in the past.

This conservative message works in principle, works in practice, and would work politically too. It's how we changed the debate and the politics of welfare. The great majority of poor Americans despise the numbing dependency of welfare, and the core conservative principles of strengthening families, expecting work in return for assistance, and regarding welfare as a springboard rather than a way of life enjoy broad support.

We should not let up in stressing the importance of the married-father-and-mother household as the foundation for the successful child, and should take further steps to strengthen families as the seedbed of social capital. We began during welfare reform to remove disincentives to marry. We need to press further.

Mr. Butler directs the Heritage Foundation's Center for Policy Innovation. Mr. Spalding is its vice president of American studies.

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An education that teaches the skills required for success is critical to economic upward mobility. Subsidies and income redistribution are not the answer. We should be relentless in insisting that bottom-up "customer" control of education and competitive innovation be the driving forces in education reform. School choice, charter schools, home-schooling, blended learning that combines online information with conventional teaching: These approaches epitomize American ingenuity and competition and strike at the heart of the dull, bureaucratized, unionized public-school system. Likewise, in higher education the way forward is not to acquiesce in the current system of rising tuition costs, debt-financed education, and a cozy higher-education establishment, but to let loose the powerful forces of transparency, competition, and innovation to drive down the cost of college while increasing its efficiency and spurring new business models.

And we should preach the principles of capitalism everywhere, including our inner cities. We speak from experience in saying conservatives will find a receptive audience. Nonaligned and even many self-described liberal organizations realize that building a culture of savings in poor communities is critical to upward mobility. We should work with them to change regulations at all levels of government that inhibit savings and wealth preservation. We should also unleash enterprise in depressed areas by reducing regulations and taxes on neighborhoods rather than bulldozing them for the benefit of politically connected developers.

All of this means having the confidence to engage a wider range of Americans. This is not the time for self-limiting retrenchment or a retreat into political pragmatism. Conservatism fails when it is timid and small-minded, and wins when it is truly reformist and offers solutions for all. Conservatives should not tinker around the edges, satisfying themselves with making the welfare state better managed or slightly less expensive. Instead, they should adopt an ambitious reform agenda that is fiscally responsible and puts government once again at the service of opportunity and mobility. **NR**

The New Anti-Atheists

Believers are getting some reinforcements

BY JONAH GOLDBERG

PROSELYTIZERS of atheism seem to have concluded that if they're big enough jerks, they will seduce the faithful into abandoning God. It's sort of like asking Don Rickles to run your customer-service desk. Christopher Hitchens was a friend, but when he talked about religion, he could be—to use a technical term—a Grade-A Schmuck. Likewise, Sam Harris, Richard Dawkins, and the other champions of a soulless, antiseptic world have all the charm of a toothache when they lecture people to kick the habit of the opiate of the masses. And then there are their shock troops. When pastor Rick Warren's depressed son committed suicide recently, an army of the unfaithful took to Twitter to assure the grief-stricken father that there was no heaven, God was a myth, and his son was gone forever. When *USA Today* wrote about the mind-bogglingly hateful attacks, one commenter on that article counseled that Warren should "abandon primitive superstitions and accept the universe for what it is—a place that is utterly indifferent to us."

One reason the atheistic horde has grown so aggressive and nasty is that they feel the wind at their backs. The pews are emptying and science is declaring, more and more loudly, that it has Figured Everything Out. Another reason is that conservatives, mostly conservative Christians, have been pretty much the only ones fighting back.

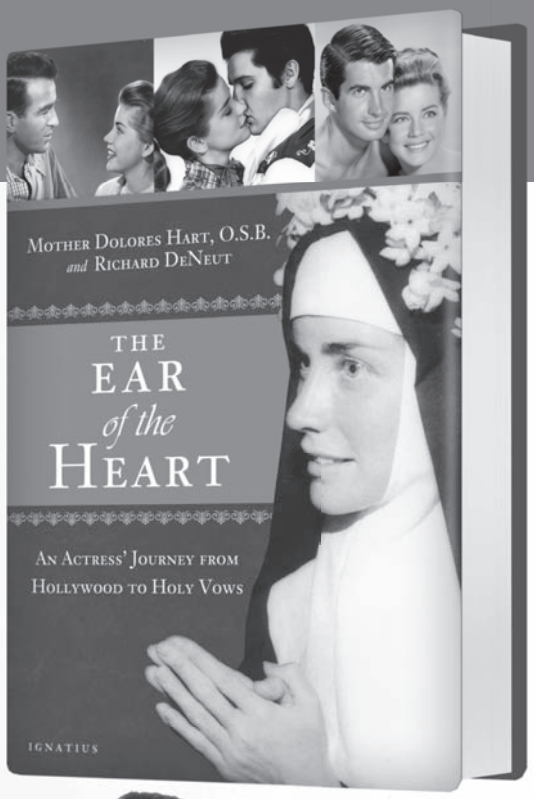
Perhaps just in time, some allies seem to be walking onto the field. Thomas Nagel—no Christian conservative—recently published *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False*. It generated an enormous controversy because the (once) respected philosopher has come to the conclusion that boiling all life, all existence, down to a bunch of atoms and molecules bumping around doesn't make much sense. He doesn't come right out and embrace God or anything wacky like that. But he says there's just got to be something more to things than what the materialists can measure and quantify. Predictably, the discrediting has begun. Expect Nagel to be paraded around in a dunce cap any day now.

Another quasi ally is Jonathan Haidt, the psychologist who studies, among other things, how political attitudes are formed and who has come to the apparently controversial conclusion that conservatives are not crazy. Indeed, Haidt argues that conservatives tend to be more morally sophisticated than liberals, in part because we are better at understanding the liberals' position than liberals are at understanding ours.

The latest entrant to the fray, and probably an unwitting one, is Frans de Waal, the world's foremost primatologist and a heavyweight in the neo-Darwinist camp. A big chunk of his new book, *The Bonobo and the Atheist: The Search for Humanism Among the Primates*, is aimed at telling the atheists to chill out.

"What good," de Waal asks, "could possibly come from insulting the many people who find value in religion?" While a nonbeliever himself, he respects people of faith and is quite simply bored by efforts to disprove the existence of God. (Imagine how bored God is.) He rejects the importance of the question posed by Nietzsche, "Is man only a blunder of God? Or is God only a blunder of man?" If forced to choose, de Waal would answer yes to the latter. But he thinks little will be gained by forcing everyone to accept that God is dead.

The way to cut through the knot, according to de Waal, is to accept that morality originates from within. De Waal persuasively argues that morality is part of our factory-installed software. In the chicken-or-egg argument about which comes first, morality or religion, de Waal argues it is morality by a mile. It entered our genetic software "at least a hundred millennia" before anything recognizable as modern religion manifested itself (though I'm not sure how he knows what religion looked like 100,000 years ago). He believes his findings refute what he calls "veneer theory"—the idea that morality is simply a thin overlay of words and laws



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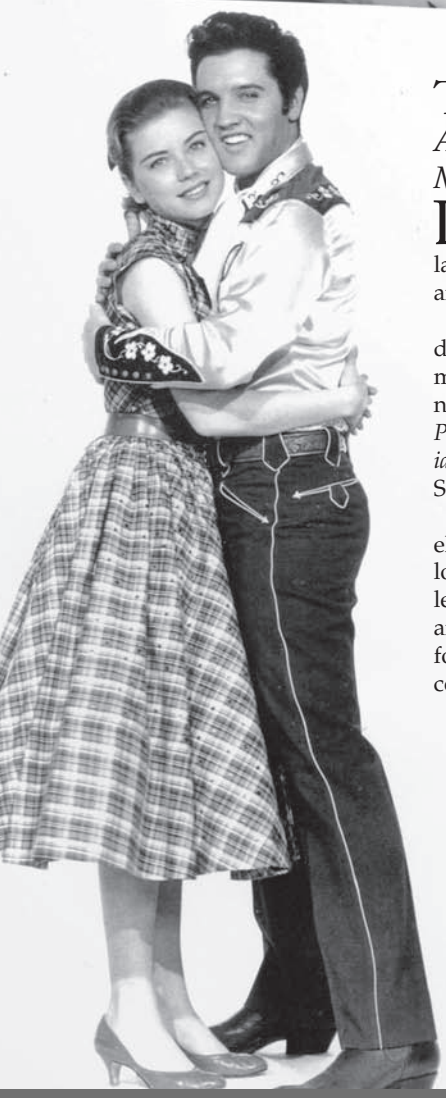

The Ear *of the* Heart

An Actress' Journey from Hollywood to Holy Vows

Mother Dolores Hart, OSB, and Richard DeNeut

Dolores Hart stunned Hollywood in 1963, when after ten highly successful feature films, she chose to enter a contemplative monastery. Now, fifty years later, Mother Dolores gives this fascinating account of her life, with co-author and life-long friend, Richard DeNeut.

Dolores was a bright and beautiful college student when she made her film debut with Elvis Presley in Paramount's 1957 *Loving You*. She acted in nine more movies with other big stars such as Montgomery Clift, Anthony Quinn and Myrna Loy. She also gave a Tony-nominated performance in the Broadway play *The Pleasure of His Company* and appeared in television shows, including *The Virginian* and *Playhouse 90.* An important chapter in her life occurred while playing Saint Clare in the movie *Francis of Assisi,* which was filmed on location in Italy.

Born to a complicated and colorful Chicago family, Mother Dolores has travelled a charmed yet challenging road in her journey toward God, serenity and love. She entered the Abbey of Regina Laudis at the peak of her career, not to leave the glamorous world of acting she had dreamed of since childhood, but to answer a mysterious call she heard with the ''ear of the heart''. While contracted for another film and engaged to be married, she abandoned everything to become a bride of Christ. **Lavishly illustrated with many photos.**

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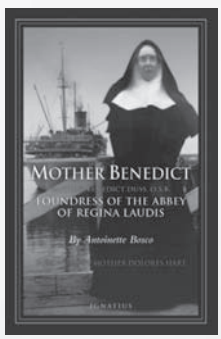
Antoinette Bosco • Foreword by Mother Dolores Hart



This is the inspiring story of Mother Benedict Duss and the famous Benedictine monastery she founded in Bethlehem, Connecticut, the Abbey of Regina Laudis, a large flourishing community of contemplative Benedictine nuns. The Abbey is home to many accomplished women from all walks of life and fields of study. **Lavishly illustrated with many photos.**

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that we need to keep us from doing terrible things. As Ivan Karamazov says, "If there is no God, everything is permitted."

And here we have something of a problem, and I think it would be helpful for conservatives and perhaps our newfound allies to flesh it out a bit. De Waal seems to think that religious people, social conservatives, traditionalists, and philosophers "reason [themselves] toward moral truths. Even if they don't invoke God, they're still proposing a top-down process in which we formulate the principles and then impose them on human conduct." He seems to think that by demonstrating that morality comes from below, that we—and by "we" he means not just humans but all primates, and many other animals—are born with moral sentiments, he can move both sides to common ground. Morality for De Waal isn't an abstraction, it is in effect a bodily function.

I'm not sure he'll succeed. A. C. Grayling, an ardent atheist who claims to be polite about it, has nonetheless poured scorn on de Waal. On the other hand, conservatives would have a short trip to common ground with de Waal. The parts of his book aimed at traditionalists and believers are likely to elicit a "Yeah, so what?" It may be—or have been—controversial among scientists to say that apes and some other animals have feelings, but I don't think anyone at this point doubts it, particularly dog owners.

More important, using studies of chimps to prove that morality has a genetic component in humans too, while interesting, will have exactly zero effect on how most traditionalists view morality, because most traditionalists would not object to the assertion that humans are endowed by their creator with moral sentiments, although they might find it incomplete. As far as I know, there's nothing in Christianity or Judaism—never mind generic conservatism—that would cause adherents to recoil at the news that we're born with an instinct to do good. You will look in vain to find a Christian conservative denouncing Adam Smith's assertion that we are endowed with moral sentiments. Almost 20 years ago, James Q. Wilson wrote a wonderful book demonstrating that humans are born with a moral sense. (The book was called, fittingly enough, "The Moral Sense.")

But saying that we are born with a moral instinct is not to say that we always instinctually know what is moral. Not everyone believes in Original Sin, but most traditionalists believe we are built from crooked timber. We are flawed creatures, vulnerable to temptation. Moreover, life is complicated and confusing, and as a result we sometimes need help finding our way in the darkness. Men aren't angels, which is why, Jews believe, God gave us the Torah—so we could understand what God wants from us. (Angels don't need instruction: They know right from wrong from Day One.) And Christianity teaches that man has the capacity to know right from wrong. He has a sense of repugnance, the sense that some things are wrong, but also has the faculty of reason. The Church tries to use reason to help people rightly form their consciences.

In interviews and in the book, de Waal puts a lot of emphasis on experiments that show that primates have a sense of fairness. If you feed two chimpanzees slices of cucumbers to get them to do a task—put pegs in holes, identify the right object, write Tom Friedman's column, whatever—they will happily do it. But if you suddenly start rewarding one chimp with grapes while continuing to pay the other with cucumber wages, the cucumber-eater will throw a fit and stop working. De Waal and his fellow researchers call this "inequity aversion." The same phenomenon has been documented in dogs, which surprises me not in the least.

But is this really about inequity? Isn't it more about what we traditionalists might call "envy" (which is a sin)? Even if it's also true that the grape-eater would be admirably altruistic if he shared his higher wages? This is a nice illustration of much of what was wrong with Occupy Wall Street: Some of these howler monkeys were ooo-ooo-eee-ahh-ing over not getting grapes from the government; their complaints about bailouts were focused on how unfair it was that they didn't get bailouts, too. People and chimpanzees alike may shout their version of "No fair!" when they don't get what they want, but that doesn't show that they have been treated unfairly.

Of course, sometimes they have been. Which is why religion, philosophy, and traditional morality are so vital—because they help us think about and if necessary revise our immediate moral reactions.

In other words, the claim that we have moral instincts is great as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough. What is fascinating about not just de Waal's work, but aspects of Haidt's and Nagel's as well, is the degree to which it cries out for conservatives to say, "We told you so." In the language of social science, conservatives have been saying this sort of thing for generations. A half-century ago, Will Herberg had already

VANESSA WOODS

described man as *Homo religiosus* in these pages and elsewhere. Similarly, Robert Nisbet was writing about man's innate need for community long before the neo-Darwinists got in on the action. And of course F. A. Hayek was warning of the perils of scientism—the smuggling of scientific concepts and language into the realms of politics and morality as a means to claim objective authority for subjective value judgments—decades ago.

And then there was Eric Voegelin, who warned that man's religious nature cannot be denied. But we can deny, or at least forget about, the existence of God. "When God is invisible behind the world," Voegelin writes, "the contents of the world will become new gods; when the symbols of transcendent religiosity are banned, new symbols develop from the inner-worldly language of science to take their place." This might explain why the New Atheists behave like the old zealots of yore: They are firebrands for a new faith, and their god is a jealous one. **NR**

Borg Queen

She is coming for your children

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

It is a rare thing when human events run ahead of science-fiction predictions. Usually, we're years behind: According to George Orwell, we should have been living under the boot heel of a high-tech fascist panopticon state since the Reagan administration, while Philip K. Dick had cyborgs digging away as extraplanetary miners during the first Clinton term. But we are running well ahead of *Star Trek*: According to canonical sources, we were not supposed to encounter the Borg until sometime in the '60s—the 2360s—but here is Melissa Harris-Perry of Tulane University and MSNBC, some 350 years or so ahead of schedule, announcing that we will be assimilated—and that resistance is indeed futile.

In April, Professor Harris-Perry declared herself at war with the "private notion of children," in favor of a "collective notion" of child-rearing. "We have to break through our kind of private idea that kids belong to their parents, or kids belong to their families, and recognize that kids belong to whole communities," she declared. Once the private notion of family has been abolished, then every child is "everybody's responsibility," and objections to the progressive political agenda inevitably evaporate. The reaction on the right was electric, but she remained fixed in her ideology. When critics pointed out that she was in effect calling for the political abolition of the family and its replacement with the state, she reiterated her point in classically progressive language, harkening back to Rousseau: "We as a society, expressing our collective will through our public institutions, including our government,

have a right to impinge on individual freedoms in order to advance a common good."

In other words: Prepare to be assimilated.

The Borg, who make their original appearance in the second season of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, are the perfect expression of the general will, a concept that to my ear is expressed with more appropriate grandeur in the original French—*volonté générale* (sort of like hearing Shakespeare in the original Klingon). The Borg will is always the general will because there is no private will. The Borg have no private conception of family because they have no private minds. They don't even have personal pronouns: "We are the Borg" is their standard greeting. Borg children are not born but manufactured, like widgets. The Borg are a synthetic species composed of billions of members of the humanoid races that populate the *Star Trek* universe, with each individual consciousness obliterated in favor of a "hive mind," the collective will of the Borg civilization, a process facilitated by the violent insertion of cybernetic implants into members of any species unfortunate enough to come into contact with them. They are the perfect collectivists—in fact, it would be more accurate to describe them as the perfect *collectivist*, singular: They are no more autonomous individuals than are the neurons in the brain; they will send an individual to certain death with no more moral reservation than you or I would have in clipping our fingernails. But they are multicultural in their way, as expressed by their standing promise: "We will add your biological and technological distinctiveness to our own." *E pluribus unum* with extreme prejudice.

The use of the word "hive" to describe the Borg social structure has led to comparisons with apiary societies, a comparison that is deeply unfair to our beneficent friends the bees, whose elegant and deliberative social structure is described in Thomas D. Seeley's fascinating 2010 study, *Honeybee Democracy*. The use of animal social structures as a screen upon which to project human fears and aspirations is a common literary device: In T. H. White's *The Once and Future King*, a young Arthur, transformed by Merlin into sundry creatures of the field, finds himself happily at home among the libertarian geese but oppressed among the jackbooted ants, who practically goosestep with all six legs.

Melissa Harris-Perry

But the Borg are a more perfect expression of the collectivist tendency than any animal known to man, inasmuch as it takes something human, or at least humanoid, to conceive of a horror on the level of comprehensive collectivism. Our nearest relatives, the chimpanzees, may be shockingly violent, and female mantises may sometimes eat their mates, but the act of imprisoning a mind—and the dark dream of doing so—is a uniquely human embition. It takes a special kind of fanatic to propose what Professor Harris-Perry proposes; the critical factor is that such a fanatic must believe—and believe *hard*—that he is doing good. When the crusader Arnaud Amalric issued his infamous (and probably apocryphal) order—"Kill them all; the Lord will know His own"—he believed that he was performing both an act of justice and an act of mercy. Thy will be done.

The idea of the general will is most commonly associated with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and it is in the modern mind an instrument of *political* power. But like many of the worst progressive ideas, its roots are found in theology, in this case a debate about the nature of the divine will. The first use of the term "general will" was in this context, in the writings of the theologian Antoine Arnauld. M. Arnauld's thinking was expanded upon and transmitted by his colleague and admirer Blaise Pascal, from him to the rationalist philosopher Nicolas Malebranche and to Montesquieu, thence to Rousseau. Malebranche detected the general will in the harmonies of nature, while Montesquieu saw it as necessary to the design of proper laws. By the time Rousseau made the phrase famous, it had been transmuted completely into a secular political concept rather than a theological one. But it is a secular concept that still leaves room for a priesthood: Just as medieval divines worked to discern the will of God, their modern counterparts—intellectuals such as Professor Harris-Perry—claim similar authority to pronounce upon the general will, the

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common good, and public institutions: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit of their new trinity.

When the Borg "impinge on individual freedoms in order to advance a common good," they do so with explicit recourse to the use of force. Democratic politics does so with implicit force—in general, the violence becomes explicit only after some period of non-compliance with the general will as interpreted by such as Professor Harris-Perry. Progressives rarely think of themselves as partisans of violence, but it is through violence that the collective will prevails over the individual will, which is a very large part of the reason that conservatives endorse limited government: One resorts to the use of force only on the most important issues, and when doing so is necessary. For progressives, the general will acts as a sort of open-ended warrant for the use of force to make their social preferences mandatory. Like the Borg, they never wonder whether those they are assimilating might define the common good differently—and the only collective will that concerns them is the will of their own collective. For all their odes to diversity, progressives fear and loathe intellectual heterogeneity, which is why they fear and loathe the "private notion of children"—outside the careful tutelage of the state, parents might fill their children's minds with any old private notions of right and wrong, liberty, or responsibility, any of which might be out of accord with the general will.

That general will often ends up smelling a great deal like the progressive will. At roughly the same time the nine law professors who rule our country emerged from their meditations with the revelation that engaging in sodomy is a sacrosanct constitutional right—based on a private notion of life in the home—a Georgetown law professor was arguing that parents who home-school their children should be thrown into prison—based on a collective notion of life in the home. Which of those notions should prevail in any particular instance? Our political class is broadly sympathetic to Professor Harris-Perry's hostility toward the "private notion of children"—unless those children are to be aborted—and therefore homeschooling remains heavily regulated and closely scrutinized by the agencies of the state, which in other domestic cases are scrupulously laissez-faire. What goes on in the home is a private matter, unless it isn't. Says who? Says the collective will, inevitably, which also has some keen insights about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin.

The collective will always and everywhere turns out to have a committee chairman behind it, on this planet and across the galaxy. The most controversial event in *Star Trek*'s development of the Borg occurs in the film *Star Trek: First Contact*. Whereas the Borg had previously exhibited no hierarchy in their social structure, being a distributed network rather like the Internet, in that film we meet a new entity: the Borg Queen. Here, the writers have obviously taken the hive metaphor to its logical conclusion, and botched it: Bee queens, as Thomas Seeley notes, are often misunderstood as ruling their hives with monarchical powers, when in fact they do not even get a say in political decisions. (Bees deliberate among themselves about the relocation of hives, for instance, but the queen is not heard from in the process.) The Borg Queen is a unique individual, the only Borg to use the word "I," and serves as the mistress of the consciousness of the collective.

Her presence strongly implies that the underlying Borg ideology is a sham, that the collective will is a fancy piece of camouflage for the will of the ruler. Subsequent *Star Trek* writers have labored manfully to undo this narrative violence to the perfect collectivism of the Borg, but many of us had long suspected that there was a politburo out there, somewhere, with Borg dachas along the intergalactic Caspian and signs reading "All Borg Are Equal, But Some Borg Are More Equal Than Others."

The self-serving crusade for the common good is the oldest and most profitable con going, a medicine show of epic imagination and audacity. There is such a thing as the common good, which is what makes those who claim to speak for it so dangerous. To deny their authority is not to deny the existence of the common good; you do not have to be an atheist to doubt that televangelists have a direct line to the Almighty.

"This isn't about me wanting to take your kids," Professor Harris-Perry promises. No, it's about the "collective will" and "public institutions" and the "common good" and anything else but that. But it is worth remembering that her criticism of the "private notion of children" came in the context of an argument for channeling more resources to educational institutions, i.e. institutions of the sort that employ Professor Harris-Perry and her fellow Borg (her father was the dean of African-American studies at UVA) and launder tax dollars into political campaigns for candidates who will advance their economic and political interests. Encountering a devastated planet, one *Star Trek* character explains: "Before the Borg departed the planet, all of its natural resources would have been converted to energy appropriate to their technological needs." "Resources" is a favorite MHP word, and on Planet Harris-Perry, those are money and power, which is always what politics is about—except when it's "about the children," in which case the agenda is intellectual and political conformity, prerequisites for assimilation into the Collective.

Melissa Harris-Perry, faced with hooting and derision over her remarks, very quickly retreated into hurt ruminations about "hateful personal attacks"—because, God knows, nobody else in political commentary ever gets mean e-mails—and then pulled a straight-up Borg move, abjuring the first-person singular: "This isn't about me. It's about us." So said the Borg Queen. Resistance may be hard, but it is not futile. **NR**

For progressives, the general will acts as a sort of open-ended warrant for the use of force to make their social preferences mandatory.

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The Promised Land of Milk and Honey

Could it have been? Could the dream still come true?

In 1947, the British, who had the Mandate over Palestine, decided that they had enough of the decades of fighting and slaughter between Arabs and Jews. They washed their hands of the Mandate and turned it over to the United Nations.

What are the facts?

A solution not accepted. Wishing to end the bloodshed and to create a stable and, hopefully, permanent solution to the decades of conflict, the U.N. decreed a partition of the country west of the Jordan River into an Arab and a Jewish state. In deference to Arab Muslim insistence that it was their "third holiest city," the city of Jerusalem, the focus of all Jewish aspirations for two millennia, was to be "internationalized." For the Jews this was bitterly disappointing. Still, in order to create their dreamed-of state, to normalize the lives of the Jewish inhabitants, and to make possible the ingathering of the Holocaust survivors, they accepted the partition plan. They declared their state, *Eretz Yisrael* – the Land of Israel – and became a nation. Forever to his credit, US President Harry Truman recognized the nascent state of Israel within minutes of its declaration of independence.

> "Then the dream could finally be fulfilled . . . Milk and Honey could indeed flow."

The Arabs rejected the partition proposal out of hand. Instead, six Arab armies invaded the country from all sides. They vowed to wage a war of extermination. The Jewish population of only 650,000 people was lightly armed and almost hopelessly outnumbered. But in an almost Biblical miracle, the ragtag Jewish forces defeated the combined Arab might. They suffered horrendous casualties – about 1 per cent of the population. It was as if the United States were to lose 3 million people in a conflict. The Arabs also suffered greatly. Goaded mostly by their leaders to make room for the invading armies, about 650,000 fled the fighting. They were not accepted by their Arab brethren. They were interned and live to this day in so-called refugee camps, slum cities, in which they lead miserable and totally unproductive lives, dependent on the dole of the world. They are consumed with hatred against the Jews who, they believe, have deprived them of their patrimony.

Prosperity despite unending attacks. But Israel was not allowed to live in peace. Virtually without interruption, it was victimized by attacks from Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and Egypt. There were two major wars: the Six Day War of 1967 and the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Israel prevailed in both. It acquired major territories, most of which, in its never-ending quest for peace, it returned. Following these unsuccessful wars, the Palestinians subjected Israel to almost uninterrupted "intifadas," essentially one-sided civil wars, in which suicide bombings and other assorted terrors were the main weapons.

Despite these unending tribulations and absorbing close to 4 million migrants from all parts of the world, Israel prospered mightily. Its population is now close to 8 million. Over 1 million of them are Arabs. They are Israeli citizens, have all the rights of their fellow Jewish citizens, serve in the Knesset (Israel's parliament) and in the diplomatic corps. They are full participants in the economic prosperity that permeates Israel. Israel's product per person is on the same or higher order as that of most European countries. It is a center of science and of culture. Its industrial output encompasses some of the most advanced technology and sophisticated production in the world. Next to Canada, Israel is the most represented country on US stock exchanges. Most major high-tech companies have facilities – factories and research establishments – in Israel.

All of this is admirable, of course. But there is a flip side to this edifying story. That is the fate of the Arab descendants of those who fled Israel in the 1948 War of Liberation. Had they followed the example of the Jews and agreed to the partition decreed by the U.N., they could today be in the same advanced position as Israel, instead of the misery in which they live. Because there is no question that Israel would have been more than willing to enter into a federation with Palestine, in which citizens of both countries could peacefully partake in common prosperity.

Can that dream still come true? Of course it can! Israel has accepted virtually all of the "conditions" for reconciliation on which the Palestinians have insisted, with the sole exception of the demand for the "right of return." That "right" would swamp Israel with hundreds of thousands of Arabs. And it would with one stroke be the end of Israel as the Jewish state. Even for the thorny question of Jerusalem a compromise could be found. But, having been misled by the thuggish Arafat for decades, Arab Palestine needs a wise leader in order to finally make peace with Israel. In view of Israel's experience in Lebanon and Gaza and because it would be fatally vulnerable if an armed enemy occupied the Judean heights, the state of Palestine would have to be totally demilitarized and controlled (probably by US military) for compliance. It would be a difficult condition to swallow, but it would have to be the price to gain their own country. But the dream could then finally be fulfilled and peace and prosperity could be extended over all of the Promised Land. Milk and Honey could indeed flow.

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Michael Poppins

When the nanny acquired a police force . . .

BY MARK STEYN

A FEW years ago, after an enjoyable match at the nearby Victoria Cricket Club, I arrived at Rustico, a fine restaurant in the small village of Flatts at the western end of Harrington Sound in Bermuda. The fellow just leaving seemed vaguely familiar, albeit more luridly dressed than usual, and my dining companion informed me that, yes, indeed, it was Michael Bloomberg, the famous Mayor of New York City. "He's here all the time."

"All the time?"

"Well, he's a regular." Our waiter confirmed that he knows them all by name. Sir John Swan, the former premier of the British colony and the fellow who turned it into a global financial center, is a frequent dining companion. I don't mean to imply that the Mayor spends all his time in Bermuda: He has homes in Vail, Colorado, and Cadogan Square, London, too. And what with the Internet and so forth an offshore mayor can keep in touch with events back in the Bronx all the more easily than one could in, say, Van Wyck's day. Thirty years ago, Bloomberg made it big with his eponymous "Bloombergs," purpose-built computer terminals that provide the global jet-setting debt-betting types with real-time market-data analysis from anywhere you happen to be: They're installed in offices, homes, and regular haunts like the 21 Club. They could presumably be installed at Rustico, except the locals might object. And, if it works for global finance, why shouldn't it work for municipal government, too? A modern mayor can toy with his crab cake or crispy stuffed dates and check in electronically to see whether 800 miles away his subjects are following his injunctions on trans fats in their cheeseburgers and maximum Sprite intake. And, if you really need to, you can always fire up the old Falcon 900 and be back at Gracie Mansion in the time it would take you to drive in from the Hamptons on a bad day. Bloomberg was at his Bermuda estate when the big Christmas storm clobbered New York in 2010 but was able to jet in late on Boxing Day (a holiday in Bermuda, and apparently also observed in the five boroughs by snowplow crews) to manage the crisis hands-on as ineptly

as if he'd remained in the middle of the Atlantic managing it hands-off.

Speaking as a foreigner who's spent almost as much of his life overseas as Bloomberg has during his term of office, I'd think the point of New York mayors would be to embody the chaotic pugnacious energy of America's great iconic city. The ones you remember are the scrappy, feisty, in-your-face, streetwise guys, like La Guardia, Koch, Giuliani—men who say things like "How'm I doin'," attitudinal catchphrases hewn from the crumbling roadbed at some potholed intersection in a hellish outer borough where you keep waking up in the city that doesn't sleep because the corner bar is full of chest-puffing toughs saying "Who's bedduh than you? Nobody!" back and forth to each other till four in the morning. Bloomberg has spent more time in European capitals than any New York mayor since Gentleman Jimmy Walker, who in fairness only fled to Paris with his showgirl to escape criminal prosecution. So, when the Big Apple volunteers to spend a dozen years under a colorless antiseptic zillionaire with whiny, hectoring, faux-patrician Boston vowels who weekends in Bermuda and jets back to his nanny state on Monday morning to declare it illegal to put more than three sugars in your coffee, either the city's self-mythologizing has always been a total crock or something is shifting in the American psyche.

Bloomberg's "independence" is such that on anything you care to name—abortion, immigration, gay marriage, "climate change"—he has the conventional views of everyone in his social circle: Party-wise, he votes the dinner-party line.

Mayor Bloomberg would bet on the latter. The other week, the rock was briefly lifted on the city's traditional political culture when state senator Malcolm Smith, a Democrat, got charged in federal court with trying to buy a spot on the Republican line on the next mayoral ballot. Mr. Bloomberg tutted that we wouldn't have all this corrupt party politics if we just dispensed with party politics. "All of this comes out of the fact," he explained, "that we have partisan elections when cities aren't partisan." And nor is Bloomberg. A lifetime Democrat who joined the GOP because the mayoral primary was less crowded on the right, Bloomberg the Republican campaigned in 2001 as a self-proclaimed "liberal," which no Democrat would have been crazy enough to do back then. When the GOP brand headed south after the 2006 midterms, he quit the party and declared himself a principled "independent." His "independence" is such that on anything you care to name—abortion, immigration, gay marriage, "climate change"—he has the conventional views of everyone in his social circle: Party-wise, he votes the dinner-party line. As for "principled," since he quit the Republican party and turned "independent" he's been the biggest single donor to all five GOP borough committees, just to make sure they don't make trouble for him.

A decade ago, Bloomberg's defeated charter amendment proposed making the New York mayoralty a non-party office, as it was back in first mayor Thomas Willett's day (1665), when things seemed to run pretty smoothly around town. But, if cities aren't partisan, presumably states and nations aren't, either. The party system, as he sees it, deprived America of a Bloomberg presidency. All the smart people wanted him to run: The now defunct *Newsweek* ran a cover story on him, headlined with a straight-face "How a Mike Bloomberg Presidential Run Could Remake 2008." But parties mean primaries, and primaries mean you have to go to New Hampshire and Iowa and South Carolina and pretend to the rubes that you like guns and God more than the 15 other guys on the ticket. So no President Bloomberg.

Nevertheless, he is a portent of the future. To a man like Bloomberg, believing in global warming and gun control is like believing the sun rises in the east and water runs downhill: Why should it be part of a party platform? In that sense, he is testament to the triumph of liberalism—for, if liberal values are so universal among the upper reaches of American society, why should they require the Democratic party? The founder of *Bloomberg* magazine, Bloomberg News, Bloomberg Television, Bloomberg News Radio, Bloomberg.com, and Bloomberg Tradebook quite reasonably would rather have a Bloomberg party all his own, unsullied by the grubby little ward-heelers, race-baiters, grievance-mongers, shysters, and perverts who infest career liberal politics. Bloomberg has spent over a quarter-billion dollars selling himself to New Yorkers as a post-partisan can-do technocrat, and, if he can do it, there's no reason the checkbooks of other, less charmless liberal billionaires shouldn't be able to pull it off in cities and states across the land.

As the Mayor sees it, the people are pining for the smack of firm paternalism. Responding to the judge who struck down his soda ban, Bloomberg declared, "We have a responsibility as human beings to do something, to save each other, to save the lives of ourselves, our families, our friends, and all of the rest of the people that live on God's planet." By "we," he doesn't mean you—you're too feeble and easily seduced. So, since the citizenry are too weak-willed to exercise self-discipline in such matters, why should a wise ruler not take the temptation out of their reach?

Tocqueville, you won't be surprised to hear, foresaw the age of Bloomberg. Under the pre-Bloombergian despot, "although the entire government of the empire was concentrated in the hands of the emperor alone . . . the details of social life and of individual existence ordinarily escaped his control." What would happen, Tocqueville wondered, if administrative capability were to evolve to make it

possible "to subject all of his subjects to the details of a uniform set of regulations"?

Well, you'd wind up with an emperor who put all the data into a grand Imperial Terminal and then issued decrees like Bloomberg's. As Jacob Sullum of *Reason* pointed out, under the Mayor's "arbitrary and capricious" law (in Justice Tingling's words) a Starbucks venti white hot chocolate with whole milk and whipped cream (640 calories) would be perfectly legal, but a venti black coffee with four teaspoons of sugar (60 calories) would be criminal. So New Yorkers would still get fat, and get heart disease and diabetes and die, but they would do so under the pitiless gaze of a regulatory bureaucracy whose whimsical and contradictory edicts are adjudicated by unionized bureaucrats who retire at 53 with gold-plated benefits. In other words, not a can-do technocracy but New York politics as usual.

And so it goes. Like his fellow "technocrats" in the European Union, the Mayor prefers attitudes to policies. Six years ago, *Time* ran a story on "The New Action Heroes," with Bloomberg and Arnold Schwarzenegger looming on the cover in bespoke monochrome and glowering like a couple of mob enforcers, or a same-sex couple who've just been told the reception suite's been double-booked with a pray-away-the-gay convention. With Governor Schwarzenegger's return to playing celluloid terminators, the Danny DeVito half of *Time* magazine's *Twins* is now the Last Action Hero. What "action" was he taking back in 2007? Why, he was "opening a climate summit," and "talking about saving the planet."

He still is. Meanwhile, how about the tiny sliver of the planet for which he's actually responsible? On February 9, a winter storm walloped the city, including Staten Island residents still living without power, without heat, without light four months after so-called Superstorm Sandy hit them. If Bloomberg were still a nominal Republican, it might have made the papers. But he isn't, so it didn't, and somehow we accept that in a supposed First World city it would be unreasonable to expect the power to be restored within a third of a year. This is Big Government Big Apple–style: Come the big snowstorm, the municipal colossus who can regulate the salt out of your cheeseburger is utterly incapable of regulating any of it onto Sixth Avenue. While Bloomberg enacts Coke barriers, other cities build flood barriers. London has one, the Dutch coast has one, and Hamburg, and even St. Petersburg in Russia. A five-mile storm-surge barrier across the mouth of New York's harbor would cost about $10 billion. If you're saying, "Whoa, that sounds expensive," well, Bloomberg is one of a select few individuals who could afford to pay for it himself. He would have called it inevitably "the Bloomberg," and his mayoral term would be remembered for an actual accomplishment. And, even if he'd spent public funds, it's about a fifth of the cost of the Sandy Relief Bill, which is all the usual mumbo-jumbo—money for bureaucracy and paperwork.

But, if we're honest with ourselves, in today's sclerotic America, you can't even imagine anyone building a New York flood barrier, can you? The can-do guys can't do that, can they? Bloomberg is emblematic not only in his benign despotism but as an action hero unable to act. As the *Daily Telegraph* in London reported: "But with so many prescient warnings, city authorities are struggling to explain why so little was done. Mayor Bloomberg has said it was difficult to translate such warnings into concrete action."

YOUNG Michael read *Johnny Tremain*, Esther Forbes's children's yarn of revolutionary Massachusetts, and dreamed of greatness. He certainly found success. But, in his rise from the attendant's booth at a Boston parking lot through Salomon Brothers to his own global empire, Bloomberg has always preferred servicing a small elite to the mass market. Even his private parties felt like corporate hospitality. In Britain, to the amusement of the snootier locals, he ferried friends by helicopter to Royal Ascot and afterwards sent them a customized souvenir album with photographs of themselves sipping his champagne in his box in his company—the sort of thing you do for valued donors at a political event. When the mogul decided he fancied being mayor, connecting with the 99.4 percent of New Yorkers who don't listen to 1130 Bloomberg Radio looked set to be his biggest challenge. But he never really tried. He has kept his distance, whether literally offshore or merely psychologically. Many American politicians despise their base, but Bloomberg is one of the few who've managed to dispense with one.

And in that, too, he seems to prefigure where U.S. politics is headed. He does not live as his subjects do, and doesn't see why he should fake it. Running in 2001, he was asked that standard New York political question—Mets or Yankees?—and was honest enough to answer "Red Sox." If you asked him his favorite outer borough, there's a sporting chance he'd reply "Bermuda." His disdain for the pseudo-populism, the ersatz common touch, of electoral politics would be admirable were it not for his unshakeable conviction that he knows better than you how you should live. "This is a setback for the people who're dying," he said when his drink ban was overturned by the courts. "In case you hadn't noticed, I watch my diet. This is not for me." It's for you, you ingrate. "In case you hadn't noticed," for an unprepossessing shrimp, he looks fabulous. He skis at Vail, he golfs at the Mid Ocean Club in Tucker's Town, he packs a health-conscious hamper for Ascot. You cannot hope to live like that, but, by improving your cheeseburger and shrinking your Mountain Dew, he's doing what he can for you, even if you're too dumb to appreciate it.

Same with guns: You don't need them, you're better off calling 911. Just like he does when he's a private citizen in Bermuda. Oh, no, wait: On a small island where most of Her Majesty's Constabulary are unarmed, Bloomberg's security detail has been given a special dispensation to pack heat. It's different for him. Likewise, he's done such a grand job of reducing private-aircraft access to LaGuardia that Bloomberg Services (his jet fleet) is now the single largest user of the ever fewer slots at the airport. He took his Falcon to the Copenhagen climate-change summit, where he listened to other high-flying global warm-mongers propose a maximum "carbon allowance" for the citizens of freeborn nations to force them to rein in their vacations to Disney World. And then he got in the Falcon and flew back to one of his homes.

In a republic of limited government, the least a citizen-executive could do is feign the lifestyle he prescribes for everyone else. Instead, in a poorer, sicker, more dysfunctional

America with less social mobility, the gap between the ruling class and the ruled is likely to widen in the years ahead, and the billionaire who determines his subjects' maximum calorie intake will not seem such an outlier. Somewhere along the way, Michael Bloomberg forgot the most stirring scene from that favorite boyhood novel, *Johnny Tremain*. James Otis, the Massachusetts assemblyman who coined the "taxation without representation" line, is in a tavern addressing John Hancock, Paul Revere, John Adams, Sam Adams, and the rest of the gang. "There shall be no more tyranny. A handful of men cannot seize power over thousands," he roars. "The peasants of France, the serfs of Russia. Hardly more than animals now. But because we fight, they shall see freedom like a new sun rising in the west."

Bloomberg must have been holding the book upside down. In the Mayor's world, there's little talk of freedom. Like the peasants of France and serfs of Russia, we are "hardly more than animals," creatures of our appetites on whom, sex aside, restraints must be imposed. He takes it as read that a handful of men should exercise power over thousands, millions. "To cave to popular sentiment," he thundered, "would be to hand a victory to the terrorists." He was talking about the Ground Zero mosque, but the thought could just as easily apply to anything else: If we don't ban guns and Coke, the terrorists will have won. None of the people who matter in American life think "popular sentiment" should prevail on these or a multitude of other issues. Some Bloombergians, like Bowdoin professor Sarah Conly, write books with titles like "Against Autonomy: Justifying Coercive Paternalism." The rest can't even be bothered justifying it, and are anxious to get on with the coercing. In his business days, disgruntled members of his mostly female sales team alleged that on open display in the Bloomberg offices were blow-up sex dolls and giant rubber breasts with squirting nipples. (I've no idea what they were squirting, but presumably it wasn't more than 16 ounces.) Back then, he had a striking knack for attracting sexual-harassment suits from female employees—three in five years, one of them withdrawn, another dismissed on appeal, the third settled out of court. Since switching to politics, he's opted for non-sexual harassment: In Bloomberg's New York, if you can make it there, you can make it with anyone you like and the Mayor will provide your contraception and your abortion and officiate at your same-sex marriage. But in anything other than sex the harassment never ends.

He's not wrong on the problem. If you fly in from overseas, as often as he does, you can't help noticing America is extremely obese: It's the first thing foreigners remark on, and, if they then prod a little deeper and notice the trillions of dollars of debt, there's a general sense that a population this unhealthy-looking is not what prudent lenders would airily assume to be a good credit risk. The decline of America's human capital is not pretty. And, indeed, there is something sad about a crusade for individual liberty over the right to waddle down the street slurping sickly sweet children's drinks out of giant plastic cups with oversized straws, as poignant an image of societal infantilization as anything.

Nevertheless, slurp free or die. No citizenry worth the name would be produced by a state that does not trust them to choose their own beverages—not even French peasants or Russian serfs. But Giuliani was tough on crime, so much so that he made the city safe for a successor who was tough on Coke. In the old days, the scrappy, feisty types like La Guardia and Koch wound up the subjects of rowdy Broadway musicals, *Fiorello!* and *Mayor*. In the absence of *Hello, Bloomy!* or *Les Bloomerables*, go see *Mary Poppins* at the New Amsterdam, and ponder that in New York's nanny state Michael Poppins has ruled that no more than three spoonfuls of sugar are permitted to help the medicine go down.

Maybe it all sounds more heroic over gin slings on the veranda at the Mid Ocean Club . . . **NR**

Farewell to an Iron Lady

Margaret Thatcher left us her example

BY JOHN O'SULLIVAN

In the week between her death and her funeral, Margaret Thatcher suddenly became a body worth stealing. There had always been speculation about what would be the public attitude to her in Britain once death had put her above and beyond conventional political partisanship. Most people assumed that she would be quietly shoved into a respectable patriotic pantheon of famous British warrior queens and, like most British history these days, promptly forgotten. What the week following her death proved, however, was that she was always going to be too big for that.

The sheer weight of Mrs. Thatcher in post-war British politics explains much of the reaction to her death. She was the first major-party leader to stand against the social-democratic consensus forged by the Labour government of 1945–51 and entrenched by the Tory party's manifest acceptance of it following its 1951 victory. Even in the later stages of its decomposition, this consensus could count on the support of most members of the Tory establishment—though the Tory grassroots were always largely critical of it. Thatcher took her stand on the side of the Tory rank-and-file on the common-sense grounds that without such firm opposition Britain would drift deeper and deeper into an enervating statism.

As she writes in the introduction to her memoirs: "Almost every postwar Tory victory had been won on slogans such as 'Britain Strong and Free' or 'Set the People Free.' But in the fine print of policy, especially in government, the Tory Party merely pitched camp in the long march to the left. It never seriously tried to reverse it. . . . The welfare state? We boasted of spending more money than Labour, not of restoring people to independence and self-reliance."

Thatcher stood firmly and in small but good company against this Left consensus. She was backed by only one other member of the shadow cabinet, the noble Sir Keith Joseph, when she ran for the Tory leadership. For the four years of her role of opposition leader, she was in a shadow cabinet dominated by rivals and opponents. But she gradually edged them towards a more robust election manifesto than most liked. And when the election came, she had the spirit for it.

"Maggie Thatcher? Reactionary?" she asked in a 1979 speech. "Well, there's a lot to react against." But she did more. She won three elections against the social-democratic consensus. She defeated it "in the fine print of policy, especially in government," on key issues too: labor-union reform, the "big bang" that made the City of London the main financial center for Europe, the privatization of 26 major state-owned industries . . . the list goes on. It does not include the welfare state, where she put off reform until it was too late, or Europe, where she was brought down in part because she was beginning to turn her attention to reforming it by opposing the same leftward drift she had fought in her own country. Still, she created a new consensus—not quite what she wanted but better than what she had fought, and far better than if the Tories had continued drifting thoughtlessly left under an uninterrupted succession of Heaths, Majors, and Camerons.

That accounts for an odd paradox in the reactions to her death: The extreme left, which hates her most, gives her the most credit for her achievements. At times they even exaggerate them, crediting her with savage cuts in the welfare state that never occurred. These delusions fuel the repulsive responses to her death: the street parties and the chanting of "Ding Dong! The Witch Is Dead," which always turn out to be led or inspired by middle-class public-sector people in non-jobs. They are one vivid symptom of the cultural decline of Britain that she did not manage to stem, thinking it necessary to defeat the labor unions and the Soviets first. Her successes in that regard are among the reasons she is hated today. And she herself would see these outbursts as evidence that she had deeply wounded the Caliban Left's causes if not destroyed them altogether. Ten years after losing office, she responded to a mob chanting "Thatcher, Thatcher, Thatcher, fascist, fascist, fascist, out, out, out!" by turning to her speechwriter, Robin Harris, and saying, "Oh, Robin, doesn't it make you feel nostalgic?"

Her other opponents—moderate Labour, the cultural establishment, the BBC, etc. etc.—take a different tack. They suggest—historian David Cannadine in the *New York Times* is an example—in a world-weary way that she wasn't that important really, a conventional Tory politician until the electoral defeats of 1974, when she saw an opportunity to rise and adopted an economic liberalism that was then in the air. She was more a symptom of global changes than their inspirer. She didn't make much of a difference.

Maybe it's more comforting to be defeated by a trend than by a person. But two things should be said in reply. In 1968 she gave a major lecture to the Tory party conference in which almost all the ideas that later became known as Thatcherism were clearly laid out. Seven years before that she had told a meeting of despairing Tory MPs brought together by the Institute of Economic Affairs that they should go into a different business if they couldn't persuade the voters that Marks and Spencer gave them a better deal than the Post Office. She was the Real Thing. The second point is: If we are talking about global trends, maybe we should look at what the world thinks about Margaret Thatcher. She bestrode too many worlds for the Brits alone to determine her importance.

That is why "the most important peacetime British prime minister of the 20th century," albeit a true description, is inadequate and limiting. In this judgment I am not referring to the Falklands. Her triumph in the Falklands does not make her a great wartime leader on the scale of Churchill and Lloyd George. The war itself was on too small a scale. But the diplomatic skill and military resolve she demonstrated on that occasion, not to mention her success, do make her a more formidable war leader than all but those statesmen who led Britain to vic-

tory in the four world wars of the last 250 years—namely, Chatham, his son Pitt the Younger, Lloyd George, and Churchill.

Nor are wars the sole test of international power and influence. Preventing wars and winning decisive conflicts without wars are even better indicators. Mrs. Thatcher's record here was stellar in two respects.

In the first place, she was President Reagan's most resolute and reliable ally in the last stage of the Cold War. She was by far the strongest critic in Western Europe of Communist repression in Poland and throughout the Soviet bloc. She joined Reagan in assisting Polish Solidarity to outwit the authorities and continue operating as, in effect, a national liberation movement. She played a decisive role in getting U.S. missiles stationed in Western Europe, stiffening the spine of other Western European governments so that they would resist the peace movement and accept the missiles. When that was achieved in 1984–85, it produced an almost instant change in Soviet policy. It persuaded the Soviets that they could no longer win the Cold War by military intimidation. She was therefore an active force in ensuring that the West did not lose the Cold War.

It was then that Mrs. Thatcher played her second important role in the Cold War: She acted as a go-between for Reagan and Gorbachev in their crabwise dance towards its peaceful end. Her search for a new type of Soviet leader had already settled on Mikhail Gorbachev, still a relatively junior member of the Soviet Politburo, when he visited Chequers on a stop-off air flight in 1984. She debated him over the lunch table, pronounced him "a man we can do business with," and recommended him warmly to the president. Reagan reached the same conclusion and acted accordingly. He worked with Gorbachev to end the Cold War peacefully in a series of Soviet-American summits; Thatcher, though absent, had set the stage for the gradual Soviet surrender on arms control at the Geneva, Reykjavik, and Washington summits.

Those summits in effect ratified the West's peaceful victory in the Cold War. But they did not bring an end to Communism. Indeed, from the Soviet standpoint, they were part of Mikhail Gorbachev's strategy to rescue Communism from its internal stresses and strains by freeing up resources locked inside his military budget for civilian purposes and by attracting aid and investment from the West. What brought about the end of Communism was competition from the revived capitalism in the West—and that was at least as much the work of Thatcher as of Reagan.

THATCHER had been clearly the subordinate partner in their relationship on military and diplomatic policy. She fought and won some battles with Reagan, but in general he laid down the lines of policy and she broadly conformed to them. And given the relative size of the two economies, that should also have been true of economic policy. So why did such a shrewd observer as Owen Harries, the distinguished Australian editor of *The National Interest*, once remark that Thatcher would probably be regarded by history as more important than Reagan as an economic reformer?

Well, first, the recovery of the British economy in the 1980s was more impressive because it started from a lower economic point and occurred in a more left-wing country. Then, Thatcher had harder opposition to overcome—her labor-market deregulation, for instance, had to overcome resistance from timid Tory "wets" as well as from Labour MPs. Next, they had to defeat major non-parliamentary challenges from the labor unions, above all the 1984–85 miners' strike. That was a victory for Thatcher as important in domestic politics as the Falklands War was in foreign policy. It removed the last lingering, nervous fear of both the voters and the markets that labor unions could render Britain ungovernable. Though Labour took some years to realize the fact, Thatcher's victory entrenched her economic and labor reforms as the new consensus of British politics.

Once that happened, as Harries pointed out, the British economy began its long boom, combining economic growth with price stability. Above all, the privatization of inefficient state-owned industries turned them into dynamic private-sector ones. In general, Thatcher's British economy, like Reagan's revived U.S. economy, was characterized by change, profitability, growth, the better allocation of resources (including labor), and the emergence of new industries, indeed of an entirely new economy, based on the information revolution.

And that transformation did not stop at the Atlantic's edge. Both economies became demonstration effects of what free-market reforms could accomplish in a remarkably short time. Though very similar, these demonstration effects were not identical: Tax cuts were America's principal intellectual export; privatization was Britain's. And of the two, privatization was the more important globally, since both Third World and post-Communist economies were burdened by a large number of inefficient state industries. As a result, privatization expertise became one of the City of London's most profitable services over the next two decades. The Soviets and—still more remarkably—Western European Communists were forced to change course by the increasing evidence that privatization produced good results.

While researching my book on Reagan, Thatcher, and Pope John Paul II, I found this unwitting tribute to Thatcher in the Politburo archives: It's a 1986 conversation between Mikhail Gorbachev and Alessandro Natta, the general secretary of the Italian Communist party:

> *A. Natta*: At the same time we, the Communists, having either overestimated or underestimated the functions of the "welfare state," kept defending situations which, as it became clear only now, we should not have defended. As a result, a bureaucratic apparatus, which serves itself, has swelled. It is interesting that a certain similarity with your situation, which you call stagnation, can be seen here.
>
> *M. S. Gorbachev*: "Parkinson's law" works everywhere. . . .
>
> *Natta*: Any bureaucratization encourages the apparatus to protect its own interests and to forget about the citizens' interests. I suppose that is exactly why the Right's demands of re-privatization are falling on a fertile ground in Western public opinion.

For that reason Thatcher, even more than Reagan, posed an economic challenge to the Soviet Union. The challenge was: Either fall ever farther behind the capitalist West or reform. As the pope remarked, however, "Gorbachev is a good man, but Communism is unreformable." And it was destroyed by the attempt to reform it.

Accordingly, once the command economies of the Soviet bloc collapsed in 1989, revealing the extraordinary wasteland of state planning, it was the Thatcher model that the new democracies mainly sought to emulate. She, Reagan, and John Paul II were all

heroes in post-Communist Europe, but it was Thatcher to whom the new economic ministers, such as Poland's Leszek Balcerowicz, Czechoslovakia's Vàclav Klaus, and Estonia's Mart Laar, looked as their model of how to reform a bankrupt socialist economy. And the more they followed the Thatcher model, the more quickly their economies rose from the dead.

It was not only in the post-Communist world that Thatcher was seen as an inspiration, however. In both the lagging Third World economies and in the rising, newly industrializing countries of Asia, she was a kind of economic heroine. She was frequently invited to Asian countries and frequently consulted by their governments. Thus Martin J. Sieff, in a wide-ranging column for the Asia Pacific Defence Forum, describes and analyzes the reaction in China to her death—and the relationship between her reforms and those of Deng Xiaoping:

> Thatcher did not inspire the launching of Paramount Leader Deng Xiaoping's Four Modernizations program in 1979. Deng was already determined to follow a policy of domestic free market pragmatism before she took power halfway round the world in May 1979.
>
> However, the extraordinary success of Thatcher's reform policies in transforming and reviving a Britain that appeared on the brink of economic collapse, impoverishment and even civil chaos when she took power had a direct and profound impact on Deng, his colleagues and their heirs over the next decade. It was also studied closely by a new generation of Chinese bankers and economists who were eager to learn and apply the most successful lessons of the world's advanced industrial economies.

In short, the world outside Britain is generally of the opinion that Mrs. Thatcher had a profound impact on global affairs—her last effect being the rapid increase in living standards enjoyed by billions of poor workers in the Third World since 1989.

When Antonio Martino, an Italian friend of sound monetarist views, was elected in the 1990s as a member of the first Berlusconi administration, Lady Thatcher wrote him a congratulatory note, pointing out the mountain of difficulties that the new Italian government would have to climb if it were to succeed. Martino responded that the difficulties, though great, were not more formidable than those she had faced in 1979. He added that he and his colleagues had one great advantage that she had never enjoyed: They had her example. Lady Thatcher liked this compliment sufficiently to get his agreement to borrow it for the final words of her eulogy of Ronald Reagan. Its time has now come again.

As Mrs. Thatcher's coffin is lowered into the ground, the mourners around the grave will include many admirers who, like Mark Steyn in a recent column on NRO, have concluded regretfully that the Thatcher administration was a brief glorious respite between two different kinds of failing Britain. And to be sure, evidence for the failure of Britain's current economic, foreign, and social policies is piling up as relentlessly as the rubbish in Leicester Square during the Winter of Discontent. Ditto Americans and the failing policies of the Obama administration. It is tempting in the face of all this to pull the covers over one's head, take a sleeping pill, and set the alarm clock for 2025—except that we have her example. There are no final victories in politics, she once said, and therefore no final defeats either. The best tribute to her is to remember this and to act accordingly. **NR**

Leading With Luck

Thatcher had virtue and good fortune

BY KENNETH MINOGUE

Margaret Thatcher was an exemplary figure, and there are endless dimensions to her interest. One of them is that she had both a lot of virtue and a lot of luck. Virtue and luck do not always go together, but they are certainly connected in her case, and they may tell us something about contemporary politics. She had an influential father, who taught her to be a good girl, work hard, and make something of herself, and she obeyed. And, as we shall see, she did so without the priggishness that this summary might suggest.

She succeeded early in life, acquiring a career, marriage, children, and a seat in Parliament. In femspeak terms, she rapidly "had it all." Throughout her career she was extremely kind to her associates, and in very feminine ways. Britain's scandal-crazed tabloids looked in vain for cracks in the Thatcher façade. They found none. At the same time, she was notably tolerant of the moral wanderings of colleagues.

Now for luck: After the Conservative defeat at the 1974 elections, she and Sir Keith Joseph led a movement to adopt more free-market solutions as Conservative policy. Both had been in the cabinet, but Joseph, as the senior figure, would normally have been the standard-bearer of that movement in the election for party leadership that followed. But Keith had made an unfortunate speech in which he had suggested that the lower classes should have fewer children, and was thus not the ideal standard-bearer.

It is today generally agreed that the delightful and saintly Keith Joseph would not have made a successful prime minister in any case. And Thatcher already had strong supporters who thought she would probably be a better choice. But had Keith not fallen briefly by the roadside, she probably would not have won the leadership, for she would loyally have supported Keith. She was nominated, and she won. And it had nothing at all to do with some popular campaign to get more women into the higher reaches of British politics.

That is perhaps one reason why feminists are in general ambivalent at best about Thatcher. This was a time when gender was thought to rule women out of contention for political leadership, a view that Thatcher herself sometimes thought was correct. The point is, as always, that quality also counts in these matters. The Labour prime minister of the time remarked on hearing of her leadership: "We've won the next election." He did not know what he faced!

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Thatcher had several years before the 1979 election in which to learn the mechanics of statesmanship—voice, tone, dress, speech, and so on. And by 1979, the mad ambitions of the trade unions that had been so fatal to Britain's vitality had got entirely out of hand. In the widespread strikes of the time, rubbish filled the streets and (as the legend has it) the dead went unburied. The "winter of discontent" created perfect campaigning conditions for an opposition, and the Conservatives won. It was then that Thatcher began to face the marvelous set of enemies whose defeat set her on the course to greatness.

We might begin with the 364 academic economists who judged that her economic policies could not work. Today, an assemblage of 364 economists attacking a government would merely be taken as evidence that the government must be doing something right, but in 1981, most people had not yet begun to understand the degree to which right-thinking and partisanship had been sweeping through the groves of academe. It took courage for Thatcher to defy them, but she did, and she was of course right to do so.

Next, the Falkland Islands were invaded by the Argentines—and not just by any Argentines, but by the military of one of the nastiest regimes of recent times, one whose monstrous conduct is still emerging. The "wets" in Thatcher's cabinet, like those today, were dedicated internationalists and wanted the problem handed over to negotiation and international committees. This would, among other considerations, have risked subjecting British subjects to a vicious despotism. Thatcher took the enormous risk of sending military forces to expel them, and the decade-long feebleness of British life was clearly at an end. She had some American help, but American policy was distracted by its concern with Latin American opinion.

It was a further part of her luck to have Ronald Reagan in the White House. They obviously saw eye to eye on many things. Indeed, they had one remarkable moral characteristic that should be noted: They were both conviction politicians who knew very clearly what they supported (freedom above all), but who also had no trouble in talking to people with very different views. There was no waffle about negotiation and open-mindedness—merely a sensible (and up to a point amused) view of the variety of human judgment. It is to this, and to the greatness of Mikhail Gorbachev, that we owe the end of the Cold War. There were giants around, we might say, at that time, and they have shaped some of the better parts of our world.

Thatcher's last bit of luck in this area came with the challenge from Arthur Scargill and the miners' union, which had the power to plunge Britain into darkness and had already bent the government to its will on several occasions. Thatcher had withdrawn from an earlier challenge because she had known she could not win, and in the meantime she had built up stocks of coal. When challenged again, she was ready for the contest, and the miners were overconfident—indeed, Scargill did not even ballot his members. It was a bruising struggle, and much bitterness remains. But she won, through being smart, and lucky in her opponent, and the irony is that had those coal mines not closed, it would today be the Socialist Greens who would be agitating to close them on environmental grounds. Such is politics.

Thatcher, then, revived a moribund Britain—and many people still hate her for it. In fact the dimmer creatures on the left have twisted her words out of all recognition in order to construct a figure they can satisfactorily hate, and much can be learned about political evil in the way it was done.

Interviewed in a popular magazine, Thatcher happened to remark: "There's no such thing as society." This was simply to observe that "society" is an abstract concept, the sum of myriad individual interactions, and does not itself operate as a cause in human affairs: "There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people " For devout socialists, however, the idea of society has taken the place of God in some theologies: It is the ultimate cause of everything. Thatcher's remark was thus to them the equivalent of a declaration of atheism, and it caused uproar. It was absurdly taken to advocate a dog-eat-dog attitude of competition between the members of any society. This is so wild a distortion as to be almost pathological, and it tells us something about the rhetorical condition of politics in contemporary Anglophone states.

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Finally we might observe that among the Thatcher virtues is patriotism, and this virtue is a standing challenge to the strongest fashion of our time. Not many people still take Marxism seriously, but the passion to find some way of perfecting the world is no less powerful than it was in the past. One of the most powerful salvationist currents of our time is the belief that democratic national states are merely self-interested and that the way to a rational world is to be found in transferring power to international organizations, lawyers, and bureaucrats. But Thatcher, like Reagan, had the confidence of a modern free society—one that would not tolerate being overridden by the votes of often despotic statelets making up the current international system of our time. **NR**

The Diffidence Doctrine

President Obama's neo-isolationist foreign policy

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

Is there an Obama Doctrine? That is an understandable question, given that over the past four years President Obama has not articulated a comprehensive foreign policy, and that his supporters haven't offered a system of guiding principles for foreign policy over that period.

Nevertheless, American behavior abroad is becoming predictable. One constant is the general consensus that a war-weary America must avoid use of ground troops overseas. Second, there is the familiar assumption that anti-Americanism abroad, especially given our recent past under George W. Bush, is both understandable and often proof of a foreign leader's authenticity and legitimacy. And third, there has been a pivot away from foreign affairs to focus instead on fundamentally transforming American society at home. If we keep those three themes in mind, much of what America has done since January 2009 makes remarkable sense.

Afghanistan and Iraq ceased being campaign issues by midsummer 2008, despite Barack Obama's loud assertion of his anti-war credentials in the Democratic primaries. After the 2007 surge, Iraq had become relatively quiet (14 U.S. soldiers died in Iraq in the month before Obama took office). To emphasize his national-security bona fides, Obama also campaigned on finishing the "good" war in Afghanistan, apparently under the assumption that the Taliban were about defeated, or at least would be once we put our eye properly back on the right ball. Most in the administration sensed that the U.N.-approved, and less costly, Afghanistan War had not yet contributed, in the manner of Iraq, to the growing American weariness with foreign interventions in general.

But by early 2009, Iraq had gone quiet while Afghanistan had heated up. In response to those realities, Obama opted for complete withdrawal from Iraq, even as he was now trapped by his own pro-war rhetoric into staying a while longer in Afghanistan—an awkwardness reflected in his simultaneous announcement of withdrawal dates and a temporary surge to quell the violence. Obama also acted as if the Bush-administration origins of Afghanistan's Hamid Karzai government and Iraq's Nouri al-Maliki government made both suspect, in a way that the more anti-American Middle East regimes, such as those of the Palestinian Authority's Mahmoud Abbas or Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan (or, later, Egypt's Mohamed Morsi), were not.

The administration talked up the ongoing insurrections of the Arab Spring, in understandable hopes that a Nobel peace laureate's presidential sanction might be seen retrospectively in the Middle East as an original catalyst of reform. Perhaps Obama felt that corrupt, tottering, pro-American autocrats, such as Egypt's Hosni Mubarak or Tunisia's Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, were doomed anyway, and so he belatedly supported the North African insurgents in order to "be on the right side of history." Or maybe the administration saw Islamists such as the Muslim Brotherhood as moderates and thus valuable bridges to an inevitable European-style parliamentary democracy. Or the administration may have simply not understood the nature of the choices in the Middle East, most of them between bad and worse, that had confronted all prior American presidents. In any case, Washington did not realize that, in the absence of a costly and unpopular American presence on the ground, Middle East popular upheavals usually follow the Bolshevik model of the better-organized extremists' crushing moderate reformers to seize absolute power, whether in 1979 Iran or 2011 Egypt.

In any event, by "leading from behind" in Libya, the Obama administration helped to remove the monster in rehabilitation Muammar Qaddafi, only to leave the mess that followed to warring Islamist tribes. The administration did its best to pretend that the Libyan chaos was at least better than the horrific order of the Qaddafi regime, and was unwilling later to beef up security in our consulate in Benghazi, with catastrophic results. Egypt is now undergoing "Pakistanization," as an anti-American regime lectures us that any reduction in our ample foreign aid will result in a far worse alternative. France—happily so for the Obama administration—is now the only Western actor in North Africa, and perhaps in the Middle East in general.

As the Arab Spring next reached Syria, Obama talked loudly about the need for Bashar Assad to depart, even as he did nothing to carry out his threats. One can agree or disagree with his reluctance to enter such a quagmire, even to stop the mass slaughter, but Obama's Syrian problem is the now familiar com-

ROMAN GENN

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bination of loud sermons followed by mousy actions. No expert quite knows what to do about stopping the Iranian nuclear program other than continuing sanctions of questionable efficacy. And yet most accept that threatening Tehran with nonbinding but serial deadlines, and failing to support the hundreds of thousands of Iranian protesters in the spring of 2009, only emboldened the theocracy.

In other parts of the world, the Obama administration is outsourcing formerly American responsibilities to U.S. allies. One reason that North Korea may be so boldly threatening to send missiles into South Korea and Japan is a growing sense that America's defense umbrella is not so reliable anymore. The southeastern Mediterranean—a cauldron of disputes—is all but devoid of U.S. leadership.

The Obama administration sounds diffident about the 70-year post-war order that the United States created and preserved. Vice President Joe Biden has talked of formulating a "new world order" to replace the one that gave the world unprecedented peace and prosperity. Conservatives have jumped on the president's trivial gestures—the "apology tour," the bows to foreign authoritarians and monarchs. In isolation, these would be irrelevant, but they reflect an underlying policy of multipolarity and multilateralism.

Obama's apparent neutrality in the matter of the "Malvinas," his initial pressure on Israel about the settlements, his courting of Erdogan's neo-Ottoman Turkey, his seeking of the permission of the Arab League and the United Nations (but not the U.S. Congress) to intervene in Libya—all send signals that there is no privilege to be derived from being a supporter of America or its values.

Two recent developments—defense cuts through sequestration and the increased use of drones—fit the Obama blueprint and are becoming cornerstones of American foreign policy. The Obama administration was not terribly disappointed by sequestration's scheduled $500 billion in across-the-board defense cuts over the next decade. Indeed, it had already proposed hundreds of billions of dollars of reductions on its own. Sequestration offered the best of both worlds: An ideological reluctance to act abroad could now be cloaked by the congressional imposition of overdue fiscal prudence.

And Obama, in one term, may have expanded targeted assassinations by drones tenfold over the tally of the eight-year Bush presidency. As judge, jury, and executioner, Obama has, in drones, a politically popular substitute for the deployment of U.S. ground troops. Drones avoid the messy circumstances and legal controversies involved in capturing terrorist suspects and bringing them for interrogation to Guantanamo. In cynical fashion, the administration assumes that prior liberal criticism of the Bush-Cheney anti-terrorism policy was largely partisan—given that Obama, with silent acquiescence from his base, embraced and expanded almost all of the protocols he inherited and once derided. In sum, the administration rightly assumes that the American public wants the War on Terror continued, but out of mind and out of sight. Vastly expanding the kill list—in rare circumstances to include renegade U.S. citizens—will hardly bother most Americans, and not bother at all the former liberal critics of George W. Bush.

The U.S. remains the world's preeminent economic and military power—a fact that will not change in just the eight years of the Obama administration. If Obama at times expects foreign nations to listen to his sermonizing, such confidence is based on the reality that both he and his audience understand the historic power that he inherited. Even a neo-isolationist America will, for now, remain the indispensable world power.

Still, where does all this diffidence abroad eventually lead? The Obama administration has adroitly fashioned a policy that reflects the mood of a war-weary public that prefers its borrowed money to be spent on entitlements. Likewise, in the 1930s, our isolationist grandfathers were still demoralized by the costs and ambivalent results of World War I and traumatized by a long depression—and thus in no mood to anticipate foreign threats.

The problem, then and now, with American retrenchment is not just that others—all less ethical and legal-minded—will eventually police the world, but that inevitably they will want to police us as well. **NR**

The Peril of Sequestration

It has undermined our national security

BY FREDERICK W. KAGAN

SEQUESTRATION has done material harm to America's national security at a dangerous moment. The predictable crisis resulting from Iran's pursuit of nuclear-weapons capability is evolving in a way that requires a serious and credible American military threat in support of negotiations and other non-military efforts to resolve it. An unpredictable crisis has emerged on the Korean Peninsula, where a state that already has nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them is testing American resolve. The cancellation of scheduled deployments of eight U.S. Navy ships, including an aircraft carrier destined for the Persian Gulf, and the grounding of 17 U.S. Air Force combat squadrons—all of this the result of sequestration—is thus a devastating blow to American global credibility just when our enemies and friends are watching most closely.

Sequestration has had an impact on the combat elements of all of the armed services. By far the most significant was the cancellation in February of the deployment of the carrier strike group built around the U.S.S. *Harry S. Truman*. That cancellation has created a window in 2013 during which the United States will have no aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf, a departure from the posture adopted in 2010 as tensions with Iran increased. Iran's military immediately took notice; an editorial in *Mashregh*, a paper controlled by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, explained: "At a minimum, one can conclude from this decision that the United States does not imagine any military operations in the Persian Gulf in the short term, because in this situation the reduction of military forces would be foolish."

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Hagel and Dempsey brief the press about Obama's budget request and sequestration, Pentagon, April 10, 2013

In addition to canceling the *Truman* deployment, the Navy has grounded four carrier air wings and restricted the flying time of two more. It canceled the scheduled deployments of a guided-missile destroyer, two guided-missile frigates, an attack submarine, a hospital ship, and a salvage tug, as well as curtailing the tours of another guided-missile destroyer and another guided-missile frigate after only two months at sea.

The Air Force has announced the grounding of an F-22 squadron and an F-15E squadron, and the closing of one A-10C squadron. In addition, three more F-15E squadrons, four F-16 C/D wings and three squadrons, two more A-10C squadrons, two B-1B squadrons, and one B-52 squadron have stood down. A number of other combat units have been restricted to minimal flying hours. These decisions have an immediate impact on American military capability, since the grounded units are not available for missions. But they also have a longer-term impact, since it can take as long as six months to get a unit back to combat-ready status after it has stopped flying.

It is harder to measure the impact of sequestration on the ground forces because their training schedules are not normally publicly available, but both the Army and the Marines have announced the curtailment of training for units that are not scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan. Even units that are deploying have seen some of their preparations reduced—conferences and seminars that are a normal part of pre-deployment training have been canceled for some units, for example.

Public discussion of these operational consequences of sequestration has naturally focused on the partisan political fight over the federal budget and fiscal policy, creating an odd partisan role reversal. Democrats and liberal media have been more inclined to defend the military rhetorically, holding up the damage being done to the armed forces as evidence that sequestration must be reversed, while some Republicans and conservative media have accused the uniformed military of grandstanding to support the president's domestic agenda. The entire discussion has been overshadowed, of course, by the continent-spanning blame game about who exactly is responsible for the sequestration in the first place.

Without assigning blame or debating the wisdom of sequestration, let us consider the question of military "grandstanding." It is important for several reasons. The accusation that the uniformed military has deliberately chosen to reduce the armed forces' ability to defend the nation in a time of war in order to promote the president's domestic political agenda is quite a serious one. It should not be made lightly or without careful examination of the evidence. Since the military is precluded by law and custom from involving itself directly in domestic politics, such an accusation is tantamount to an assertion that it has become so politicized and partisan that it is willing to subordinate its own constitutional obligations to the pursuit of domestic political advantage for one party or another. If the Joint Chiefs of Staff did, in fact, choose to undermine their own combat forces to help President Obama obtain a political benefit, then they have violated the oaths they swore, which are carefully crafted to create an obligation to "protect and defend the Constitution of the United States" rather than to be loyal to the commander-in-chief. Anyone who seriously believes that the Chiefs have acted in this manner should be demanding an investigation and prepared to demand their dismissal.

Any such investigation would show, however, that the military's recommendations to the secretary of defense (who, with the president, alone has the power to make decisions such as canceling deployments, since the Chiefs are not in the

DOD/ERIN A. KIRK-CUOMO

chain of command) were not grandstanding. The Department of Defense is a half-trillion-dollar business. Congress has evolved a tortuous process for micromanaging the defense budget to the greatest possible extent. Some programs are favored because they create jobs in important congressional districts, others because they support policy agendas on matters not properly the concern of the Defense Department at all. For these and other reasons, Congress does not simply give the secretary of defense half a trillion dollars every year to disburse as he pleases. On the contrary, defense appropriations specify exactly how much money is to be spent on a myriad of very particular areas, projects, programs, and bases and deny the executive branch the ability to move money freely among these accounts.

Take the case of the DOD's biofuels initiative. The Defense Department will reportedly spend $60 million this year on efforts to convert to and use biofuels rather than fossil fuels. That money could have been used instead to allow the *Truman* to deploy. But DOD does not have the legal authority to divert funds from the biofuels account to the operations and maintenance (O&M) account that pays for deployments. Senator Pat Toomey (R., Pa.) offered an amendment last month that would have transferred the $60 million. It was defeated in the Senate 59–40. That $60 million was therefore not, by law, available to DOD for use in this emergency. Similar constraints apply to defense-budget line items supporting breast-cancer research and various other non-defense-related expenditures. Fixing this problem generally would require Congress to give the executive branch the legal right to shift money among defense-budget line items, which is a very unlikely prospect indeed.

The continuing resolution to fund the government passed by Congress at the end of March gave the Defense Department some flexibility in its spending to allow it to better cope with the situation. But for Congress, "flexibility" is a limited notion. The section of the CR related to the Defense Department covers 63 close-set pages. It specifies, among many other things, exactly how much DOD can spend on the O&M accounts for each service and exactly how much can be transferred into those accounts from other programs. Critics who say that the Air Force has fought to preserve the F-35 program rather than to keep its current aircraft flying must recognize that Congress specified that it should do so by allocating precisely $11,774,019,000 to "aircraft procurement." That is a sum, it should be noted, that is distinct from the $4,962,376,000 allotted to "missile procurement" or the $594,694,000 set aside for "ammunition procurement."

Even in the continuing resolution, Congress sweated the small stuff. The resolution requires that DOD spend at least $8 million on HIV-prevention education in Africa, for example. Another provision stipulates that all "carbon, alloy, or armor steel plate" used in any government-owned facility be "melted and rolled in the United States or Canada"—although it allows the secretary of defense to waive this requirement if there is not enough rolled steel available from these countries for DOD's needs. A similar stricture requires all "ball and roller bearings" to be purchased domestically. Still another provision authorizes the modernization of heating systems at U.S. facilities in Kaiserslautern, Germany, as long as the Germans agree to the use of "United States anthracite" to fuel them.

We consider these details not to identify or criticize "pork" or earmarks, but rather to note the attention that Congress lavished on certain aspects of the defense portion of the continuing resolution. Had Congress sought to ensure that sequestration would not harm national security—or to prevent the military from grandstanding on behalf of the White House—one simple provision would have done it: "Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the secretary of defense shall have the authority to transfer monies from any other defense account into the operations and maintenance account of any of the several services if it is his judgment that such transfer is essential to preserve the current combat capability of the active and reserve elements of the armed forces of the United States and following his formal notification to Congress of his intent to do so and the reasons for the transfer." There is no such provision in the continuing resolution—nothing like it, in fact. On the contrary, its language reflects a business-as-usual approach to the defense budget that has left the secretary of defense and the uniformed leadership severely constrained in their ability to mitigate the impact of sequestration on the military's readiness to fight.

The Department of Defense is a half-trillion-dollar business. Congress has evolved a tortuous process for micromanaging the defense budget to the greatest possible extent.

None of which is to say that either the civilian or the military leadership of the Defense Department has acted perfectly. As my colleague Mackenzie Eaglen has written, DOD's consistent refusal (reportedly driven at least in part by White House guidance) to plan for sequestration and accordingly adjust its spending during the first part of this fiscal year has unquestionably magnified the damage sequestration has caused. It is possible—indeed, likely—that creative ways to get the *Truman* to the Persian Gulf could have been found.

And our discussion should not lose sight of the fact that the president remains the commander-in-chief and is ultimately personally responsible for all decisions regarding the deployment of American military personnel, aircraft, and vessels. There is no public evidence to suggest that he was sufficiently concerned about the cancellation of the *Truman*'s deployment to demand any action, from the Defense Department or Congress, to avert it. It is hard to imagine that if the White House had asked Congress for a short bill transferring the money required to support the *Truman*'s deployment from one bucket to another within the DOD budget, Congress would have refused to pass it. It is equally hard to imag-

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ine that if Congress, on hearing of the impending cancellation, had itself initiated and passed such a bill, the president would have vetoed it. All parties are to blame for this national-security debacle, and no one has benefited from it except, possibly, our enemies.

Our discussion has gone deep into the defense-budget weeds because that is where decisions are made about how defense money is actually spent. But we should also give brief consideration to the context within which $500 billion is to be cut from the Defense Department over the next nine years because of the sequester. Alone among major government agencies, DOD did not benefit from any of the stimulus spending at the start of the Obama presidency—despite the fact that the overwhelming proportion of money spent on defense flows directly back into the American economy, via projects many of which were "shovel ready" in January 2009. On the contrary, defense spending has been cut by $965 billion since 2010 (over a ten-year window) *without counting sequestration*. That is a sum nearly twice the yearly DOD budget. Sequestration would bring that total to nearly three full years' worth of defense spending. No other major government agency or program will suffer anything approaching that level of immediate and longer-term budget cuts under any of the plans now under consideration. Even with all of these defense cuts, moreover, budgeteers on both sides of the aisle are scrambling to find much greater sums of money through either tax increases or major cuts to entitlement programs in order to bring the federal deficit and national debt under control. And so they must, for, as my colleague Nick Eberstadt has pointed out, even if we eliminated the defense budget entirely, growth in entitlement programs would make up the difference within four years.

One need not accuse any of the characters in this tragedy of malevolence in order to explain their actions. Sequestration is being allowed to harm American national security severely because the attention of policymakers and elites is elsewhere. The United States is putting itself, its allies, and the world order that serves America so well at great risk in a fit of absent-mindedness. It is past time to start paying attention again to the consequences of this policy on our security. **NR**

Adrift In Asia

We have neglected what was supposed to be a priority

BY MICHAEL AUSLIN

President Obama has billed his "pivot to Asia" as a diplomatic maneuver, but it is just as much a decision of military and defense policy. Without fears over the rise of China, along with continuing irritants such as North Korea, there would be little reason for the U.S. to announce such a decision, which raises expectations and puts its credibility on the line. Unfortunately the pivot has been not just a risk, but potentially a failure as well: too little done to shift the dangerous trends in Asia, and too little rethinking of America's interests in the region.

What was once lauded as a smart decision to reorient America's security priorities to the world's most dynamic area has now been doubted, derided, and dismissed. This is in part because the initiative has not followed through on its bold aims, in part because there has been little in it to change substantially the U.S. position in Asia, and in part because it has coincided with serious challenges to the region's equilibrium. America's defense policy in Asia requires a far more serious reassessment.

Today there are two major challenges for that policy to address. The first is growing tensions that have called into question America's ability and willingness to help maintain stability in the region. As Europe was in the 19th century, Asia today is rife with territorial and border disputes. From the India-China border in the west to a cluster of disputed islands in the east, all the major countries in the region have some type of dispute with their neighbors. The maritime disagreements between China and its neighbors are particularly worrying, and have increased in frequency and intensity in the past two years. The Obama administration has made clear its determination not to get involved, while China's smaller neighbors have little confidence in resolving their quarrels alone. This is true even of U.S. allies such as Japan and the Philippines, which have requested U.S. support in their ongoing face-offs with Chinese maritime vessels in contested waters and not received it.

Another cause of today's instability is the ongoing North Korean nuclear crisis. Washington has shown itself wholly unable to restrain North Korea's belligerent behavior, whether that behavior takes the form of launching rockets, setting off nuclear explosions, sinking South Korean ships, or threatening war with both America and South Korea. Republican and Democratic administrations alike have taken any excuse to return to "negotiations" with the North Koreans, despite decades of bad faith, while refraining from any long-term punitive action in response to the Hermit Kingdom's aggression. U.N. sanctions have been unable to alter Pyongyang's behavior, and meaningful financial sanctions on the Kim family's personal finances have been sacrificed at the altar of diplomatic negotiation.

The second major challenge is the long-term trend of China's rise, along with greater military spending by all major Asian nations and our own shrinking defense budget. Thanks to 20 years of double-digit defense-spending increases, China now boasts one of the world's largest, if not necessarily most capable, militaries. China's military is far larger than that of any of its neighbors, continues to modernize, and fields planes, ships, and rockets on par with those of the United States' closest competitors. Beijing has used its built-up military to become more assertive, as in the territorial disputes. Its navy now operates thousands of miles from its shore, while its space- and cyber-based capabilities have already been put on display.

In response, nations around Asia are trying to beef up their own militaries. None can match China's modernization, but most are buying more submarines, many are investing in precision-guided

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missiles, and Japan, South Korea, and India are buying advanced fighter jets. In one sense, it is good that America's allies are trying to do more to help themselves. But so many nations' building up their militaries at once is a symptom of the greater uncertainty that these nations feel about their security.

What has been the Obama administration's response to both these trends? Rhetorically, it has stressed the pivot, but in practice it has carried out budget cuts and offered few specific proposals to increase America's role in the region. Officials from the president on down never tire of talking about how America is a Pacific power, but their plans to maintain that status are unimpressive. Other than the moving of 2,500 Marines on a rotational basis to Australia, the temporary porting of up to four new U.S. warships in Singapore, and the basing of 60 percent of the U.S. Navy in Asia (much of it is already there), there is little to show that defense policy in Asia has changed all that much.

The pivot was announced right as the administration and Congress were forcing the U.S. military to cut nearly $1 trillion from its ten-year spending plans, leaving many in Asia to wonder whether there would be enough money for Washington to live up to its commitments. Would the U.S. be reduced to a partner that could be relied upon only in a crisis, if then? In truth, a few more pieces of equipment are unlikely to make a material difference in a region that now spends more on arms purchases than Europe.

The administration has also failed to explain its goals in Asia. Is U.S. policy meant to contain China? Influence, but not intervene in, the maritime disputes? Warn off rogue states such as North Korea? No American official will admit that the U.S. wants to contain China, the biggest player in Asia's security equation; but if assuring allies and partners of their safety remains paramount, then some type of deterrence is required. Similarly, the U.S. repeatedly states that it has an interest in maintaining freedom of navigation in crucial waterways or on the high seas, but repeatedly refuses to get involved in the maritime disputes that so worry China's neighbors.

In the Pacific today, the U.S. bases around 325,000 military personnel, an aircraft carrier and guided-missile destroyers, several dozen fighter squadrons and a bomber squadron, and the majority of its submarines. That is a credible deterrent and symbol of commitment to our allies, but one that is degrading over time. Asian nations that today have few doubts about American power are deeply concerned that, in a decade or so, China may feel less constrained and America will be even more risk-averse than it already appears to be.

What is needed? A clear willingness to hold China accountable for its pressure on smaller nations, and the courage to do more than submit to further U.N. resolutions against North Korea. Adopting a "broken windows" policy—responding to small incidents in order to prevent more serious conflicts—is prudent, not provocative. If America is concerned with the balance of power in Asia, then, for example, it will have to send ships more often to contested areas, vital waterways, and key partner nations. It will also have to share more military intelligence with allies that need to know when their territory is about to be compromised. Finally, putting greater pressure on our allies, especially South Korea and Japan, to work more closely with one another on defense issues is a prerequisite for more effective engagement in Asia.

The U.S. ought to combine that approach on defense with diplomatic measures, such as cutting off meaningless negotiations with North Korea and targeting the Kim family's finances. Nor should Washington shy away from slapping sanctions on Chinese companies tied to the People's Liberation Army or reducing, in response to provocations ranging from government-sponsored hacking to support for rogue regimes around the world, the number of high-level negotations we have with Beijing.

Spending more on defense may be politically impossible given current disputes about the federal budget. So the United States will have to use its existing assets in a different way, making clear that its commitments are real and its capabilities will be brought to bear, in order to create a security environment in Asia in which their full use is unnecessary. **NR**

Minimum Deterrence, More Danger

How not to think about nuclear weapons

BY KEITH B. PAYNE

PROPOSALS for deep reductions in the U.S. nuclear arsenal have been made periodically over the past four decades. Almost always, the proposals promote a doctrine known as "minimum deterrence."

The main premise that the case for minimum deterrence rests on is threefold: U.S. nuclear capability does not deter terrorists; Russia and China are no longer enemies and the United States no longer needs nuclear weapons to deter them; and, for deterrence purposes, U.S. advanced conventional forces increasingly can substitute for nuclear forces. Therefore, a relatively small number of U.S. nuclear weapons is adequate for deterrence and we can reduce to hundreds or even a few dozen without jeopardizing national security. Deep reductions, it is asserted, will reduce nuclear dangers, advance U.S. arms-control and nonproliferation goals, and save billions of dollars.

When these claims are examined against available evidence, it is apparent that they are false, implausible, or self-contradictory.

The primary rationale for the claim that reducing U.S. forces carries no risk is the corresponding claim that Russia and China no longer are foes. It is impossible, though, to predict credibly that U.S. relations with Russia and China will be benign in the future, and it is questionable whether they are so amicable now. Such sanguine hopes are inconsistent with considerable evidence that points to the contrary. For example, Alexei Arbatov, noted Russian defense expert and former deputy chairman of the Russian Duma's Defense Committee, reports that the beliefs underlying Russian policy include the following: Russia is surrounded by enemies led by the United States; the United States and its allies may invade Russia any time to seize its natural riches; nuclear weapons are the basis for Russian security; and, correspondingly, U.S. calls for nuclear disarmament are a malicious U.S. trick. We may see such beliefs as paranoid nonsense, but according to Arbatov, within Russia they are not controversial.

The related claim that, as a rule, nuclear deterrence is irrelevant to countering terrorism is false. We know that terrorists can be deterred in some circumstances, and we have no reason to dismiss the potential for U.S. nuclear capabilities to help deter their state sponsors.

Similarly, the promise that deterrence will work reliably with a small U.S. nuclear arsenal, now and in the future, is based on little but hope. Deterrence simply is not so predictable. Similarly, no one can claim credibly that U.S. conventional threats can adequately substitute for nuclear threats. The increasing lethality of conventional forces may mean much or nothing for deterrence purposes, depending on how opponents now and in the future view those forces—which, again, is not predictable with any precision. Moreover, available public evidence clearly demonstrates that some states, particularly Russia, China, and North Korea, place great emphasis on nuclear weapons as the only means of defeating U.S. conventional-force advantages. Consequently, the U.S. substitution of advanced conventional capabilities for deterrence purposes would likely lead those countries to emphasize even more their nuclear forces, not follow the U.S. lead toward nuclear disarmament.

Available evidence also contradicts the claims that U.S. nuclear reductions would reduce nuclear accidents or strengthen nonproliferation efforts. A detailed study of the U.S. and Soviet Cold War nuclear arsenals shows no correlation existed between the number of nuclear accidents and the number of weapons in their arsenals.

Further, in some cases U.S. nuclear reductions heighten allies' misgivings about the credibility of the U.S. "nuclear umbrella" and increase their desire for independent nuclear capabilities—an outcome that would defeat U.S. nonproliferation purposes. Some key allied voices already are expressing such concerns openly. In South Korea, for example, two-thirds of the population now favors an independent South Korean nuclear capability. The head of South Korea's ruling Saenuri party recently stated, "Possessing nuclear weapons is the best way to counter North Korea's nuclear threats. It would send a strong political message not only to North Korea but also to China." Further deep U.S. reductions could inspire a cascade of proliferation among friends and allies who otherwise would likely continue to rely on the U.S. umbrella.

As for the promise that deep reductions in U.S. nuclear weapons would mean substantial savings, it is demonstrably false. Don Cook of the National Nuclear Security Administration recently testified before the House Appropriations Committee that no substantial saving would be possible because the costs for nuclear weapons are largely independent of the number of weapons. In fact, the minimum-deterrence recommendation that the United States substitute advanced conventional threats for nuclear threats would likely lead to a net increase in U.S. defense spending. For example, one conventional strategic capability typically recommended as a substitute for nuclear capability could cost $5 billion to $20 billion just to become operational, and many additional conventional-force improvements would be necessary.

In addition, minimum deterrence identifies effective deterrence as a priority goal, but its recommended deep nuclear reductions would degrade the characteristics of the U.S. nuclear arsenal that may be most important for deterrence: the flexibility and diversity necessary to adapt as needed to help deter a spectrum of severe threats across many plausible contemporary and future scenarios. The bipartisan Strategic Posture Commission in its 2009 report emphasized the value

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of U.S. nuclear-force flexibility and diversity for this reason and consequently recommended that the U.S. nuclear "triad" of bombers, ICBMs, and nuclear-missile submarines be preserved.

Flexibility and diversity similarly are linked to the size of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, and deep reductions would threaten to degrade those important qualities. In 2010, General Kevin Chilton, commander of Strategic Command, stated in testimony before the Senate that, at 1,550 deployed warheads, the ceiling of the New START Treaty was the lowest he could endorse given the need to preserve U.S. force flexibility and diversity. Since then, no great benign transformation of international relations has taken place to suggest that the much lower nuclear-force levels recommended by minimum deterrence would be adequate. Indeed, relations with Russia and China have since deteriorated, North Korea now makes explicit nuclear threats to the United States and allies, and Iran continues with its nuclear and missile programs.

Some key minimum-deterrence claims are not just false or implausible, they are self-contradictory. For example, it cannot be true both that nuclear weapons are now irrelevant in our relations with Russia and China and that nuclear-arms-reduction agreements with Russia and China would provide any great direct security benefit to the United States. The United States typically is unconcerned about the number of French or British nuclear weapons and engages in no negotiations concerning them, presumably because they pose no threat to the United States. If U.S. relations with Russia and China are so amicable that nuclear deterrence truly no longer is pertinent, then there is no direct security value in focusing on negotiations to reduce incrementally the number of their nuclear weapons. Yet one of the great benefits of minimum deterrence is said to be that it would facilitate such negotiations.

Finally, the functioning of deterrence is not predictable, and in some cases deterrence will likely fail. Consequently, no plausible level of nuclear reductions could protect U.S. civilian centers; yet minimum-deterrence proponents generally reject U.S. capabilities to defend against nuclear attack. They claim that such U.S. defensive systems as missile defense hamper movement toward deep nuclear reductions. As such, minimum-deterrence policies would make deterrence more likely to fail while simultaneously denying the United States defensive systems that might provide some protection in the event deterrence does fail. This would be the worst of all worlds. The recent severe nuclear-missile threats from North Korea are a reminder of the value of such defenses.

Minimum deterrence is a contemporary analogue of the British ten-year rule. In August 1919, British armed forces were instructed to estimate their requirements and budget "on the assumption that the British Empire would not be engaged in any great war during the next ten years." Based on this hopeful prediction and optimistic expectations for naval-disarmament negotiations with the United States, France, Japan, and Italy, British naval allocations were cut by 85 percent between 1919 and 1923. The British government did not rescind the ten-year rule until 1932, when it became painfully clear that its premise did not fit reality. Even then it warned that defense spending should not be increased. Of course, seven years later Britain was struggling for its existence with a resurgent Germany and was ill prepared in part because of the ten-year rule, which deferred prudent military preparation and codified hope.

Although minimum deterrence is very much akin to the ten-year rule, its proponents have yet to reconsider their own hope-based predictions. Their recommendations would produce obligatory U.S. reductions and make recovery and adjustment difficult, lengthy, and costly in the event of a darker future than predicted. And they would do so at a time when Russia and China are modernizing their nuclear capabilities vigorously while explicitly threatening U.S. allies and naming the United States as their primary opponent. Meanwhile, rogue states threaten the United States and its allies while moving forward with nuclear capabilities. If we hope to deter wars as effectively as possible in such an environment, minimum deterrence should not be our policy. **NR**

Robots, Ray Guns, and Cyber War

Three things that will define the future of U.S. defense

BY DANIEL FOSTER

These days the U.S. military likes to think of itself as one big, happy family, and war planning is almost obsessively focused on multi-service, cross-platform synergies. The Marine Corps structures its missions around Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs); the Army trains its leaders at the Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth; the Navy and Air Force are developing a joint "air-sea battle" doctrine to counter regional hegemons; and so forth.

In this spirit, the future of U.S. defense won't be compartmentalized into "the future of the Army" versus "the future of the Navy." It will be about weapons platforms and concepts that can be deployed across service branches, with an emphasis on interoperability and integration. Here are three such platforms that are slated to carry the American war machine into the heart of the 21st century.

FRICKIN' LASER BEAMS

Though we're still waiting for warp drive and light sabers, one part of the sci-fi dream (and Ronald Reagan's) is here in the form of weaponized lasers. Laser technology has, of course, been around for decades, and the U.S. military has made various unsuccessful efforts to develop it for the battlefield. But the tipping point toward our "directed-energy weapon" future might finally be here, with a number of laser-based systems at last showing military viability.

An airborne chemical laser mounted on a modified Air Force 747, for instance, successfully intercepted three ballistic test missiles in 2010, and though that project has since been mothballed, others shine on. The most combat-ready example is the Navy's ship-mounted LaWS (Laser Weapons System) platform, a solid-state laser that can track incoming targets. LaWS was successfully tested off the coast of California in 2012 and will be subjected to a trial by fire this year when it deploys aboard the U.S.S. *Ponce* off the coast of Iran.

Right now the system works only on small targets—it has been tested against surveillance drones and speedboats—by punching finger-sized holes in vulnerable areas. It would take a much higher-powered laser to work against larger and more fortified targets, such as missiles, attack planes, and other warships. But the Navy is testing a different kind of technology, called a free-electron laser, that doesn't rely on a chemical medium to generate its beam and thus can produce a more sustained, higher-energy blast. Naval researchers say the goal is to produce a ship-mounted, megawatt-level laser that can burn through yards of steel, and all from a "magazine" that never has to be refilled, at a cost of about a dollar a shot.

Other directed-energy weapons are under development—from non-lethal crowd-control "heat rays" to the Mach 8 railgun, which uses vast reserves of electromagnetism to propel projectiles at more than a mile a second—but in 20 years the laser is likely to be the most common. Just how big a deal is it? One officer in the Navy's office of research compared it to the arrival of gunpowder in the era of knives and swords.

DRONES: THE SEQUEL

We are already living in the drone era, with the odd contour lines of the MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper firmly stored in the public imagination. But they are just the beginning. The next generation of drones is already on its way, and it will focus on endurance, automation, and stealth.

Take DARPA's (the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's) Anti-Submarine Warfare Continuous Trail Unmanned Vessel (ACTUV), a wedge-shaped catamaran that can track ultra-quiet diesel-electric submarines across a 4,000-square-mile area for as long as 80 days, and can fully integrate with the manned elements of a carrier battle group. Or Northrop Grumman's X-47B, a stealthy, flying-V-style drone designed to do something no other drone has ever done: take off and land on an aircraft carrier pitching and rolling in high seas. The X-47B has already made test flights and could be in operational service as early as 2018, bringing greater range and stealth capability than any of the Navy's current-generation manned strike fighters, and allowing flattops to reach out and touch our enemies from farther offshore. Critically, both ACTUV and the X-47B are distinguished by near-total autonomy. Unlike current drones, they won't be remotely piloted by a lieutenant in a bunker somewhere, but programmed for a specific task and then largely cut loose to execute it. You can think of them as the first "set it and forget it" drones.

The Navy is also in the earliest phases of developing a submersible version of the ACTUV, called the Large Displacement Unmanned Underwater Vehicle (LDUUV), that, besides having autonomy, would be designed for longevity—capable of patrolling as long as its manned counterparts on a single fueling. The same basic idea lies behind the super-efficient, hydrogen-powered Phantom Eye, developed by Boeing. Still in the prototype phase, this 150-foot-wingspan beast is designed to stay aloft for ten days at an altitude of 60,000 feet, and to serve as both a surveillance craft and a communications hub. The Phantom Eye's ability to fly above the weather for days at a time, and its capacity to carry a projected 2,000 pounds in electronic payload, give it non-combat potential as well. Boeing is marketing it as a border/port-security sentinel and a disaster-relief all-star that could coordinate search-and-rescue at the same time as it picked up the slack of downed communications towers.

Nor does "stealth" just mean the radar-resistant coatings and cross sections of the X-47B anymore. Military researchers are in the prototype phase of building a collection of drones that look and *move* like critters—hummingbird drones, dragonfly drones, even a silicon jellyfish drone that flaps its way through the briny deep.

STUX-NEXT

In 2011, elements from all four service branches under the U.S. Pacific Command gathered for Operation Terminal Fury, a massive war game conducted each year to test military teamwork in the

theater. In addition to the usual assortment of contingencies and simulated threats—downed aircraft, disease outbreaks, humanitarian crises—the brass threw a curveball: a "playbook" of 161 separate computer attacks on PACOM command-and-control cooked up by Red Team cyber warriors that compromised the Blue Team's ability to coordinate, maneuver, or even see its physical forces. At the same time, it tested Blue Team digital forces' ability to contain and counter the attacks. It was the first time Terminal Fury featured a cyber component, and it was a sign of things to come.

In March of this year, Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper told a Senate committee that cyber attacks are at the top of the "transnational threat list," suggesting that digital warfare against the United States' physical infrastructure and financial interests could replace the improvised explosive device as the paradigmatic weapon of asymmetrical warfare in the 21st century. But it won't just be terrorists and other non-state actors doing the damage. In real life, the "Red Team" is the People's Republic of China, our greatest competitor for regional (and perhaps global) hegemony, and a state that backs up its formidable conventional and nuclear forces with hacker hordes.

Should it ever decide to get frisky, the PRC has the resources to launch what Leon Panetta called a "Cyber Pearl Harbor"—by crashing governmental and military communications networks, scrambling international financial servers, and turning our transportation infrastructure and power grids against themselves. These last, in particular, are examples of how cyber causes can yield "kinetic" effects. A few well-placed lines of code can make things go boom, derailing trains or overloading substations.

Fortunately, the brass has a plan. In March, Army general Keith B. Alexander, head of U.S. Cyber Command, announced the creation of a "highly trained cadre" comprising 13 "offensive teams" tasked with bringing the fight to our would-be cyber enemies. The new teams are part of a broader expansion of Cyber Command from fewer than a thousand full-time staff to 5,000. A number of "defensive" teams, tasked specifically with protecting Pentagon computer systems and the national power grid, were also created.

Nor is American cyber capability merely theoretical. If China can launch a Cyber Pearl Harbor, then the U.S. (along with Israel) has already launched a Cyber Operation Overlord, a massive, complex, and coordinated attack that set back the Iranian nuclear program by months or years via the now infamous Stuxnet virus.

It is now thought that early versions of Stuxnet were under development as far back as 2005, insinuating themselves into the industrial computers at Iran's Natanz enrichment facility even before it went online in 2007. In a lengthy dossier prepared after Stuxnet had already wreaked its havoc, the computer-security giant Symantec called it "one of the most complex threats ever discovered."

Stuxnet used a "vast array of components," including the first "rootkit" (a package that both gives the hacker privileged access to a target system and masks his presence from hackees) that could hijack the specialized "programmable logic controllers" (PLCs) that run most automated industrial processes. PLCs are almost never hooked up to the Internet, which means Stuxnet had to infect as many of the ordinary Windows computers in use at Natanz as possible—spreading itself like the Black Death through thumb drives, local networks, even printers—to increase the chance that one would eventually interface with the PLCs. Even so, it is believed that the attack must have required old-fashioned espionage—including spies at Natanz and the physical theft of highly protected code from corporate facilities—to go off. It took years for that to happen; but once it did, Stuxnet executed its core mission, reprogramming Natanz's machinery to operate outside of its safe boundaries and ultimately destroy itself.

Natanz could go down as the first great battle, and Stuxnet as the first great weapon, of global cyber warfare. Oddly, the best sign of the military's increased investment in cyberspace might be a simple accounting move: According to Reuters, just this month the Air Force officially redesignated six cyber technologies as weapons, better positioning them to win increasingly scarce defense dollars. More significant still, the six weapons in question are classified. **NR**

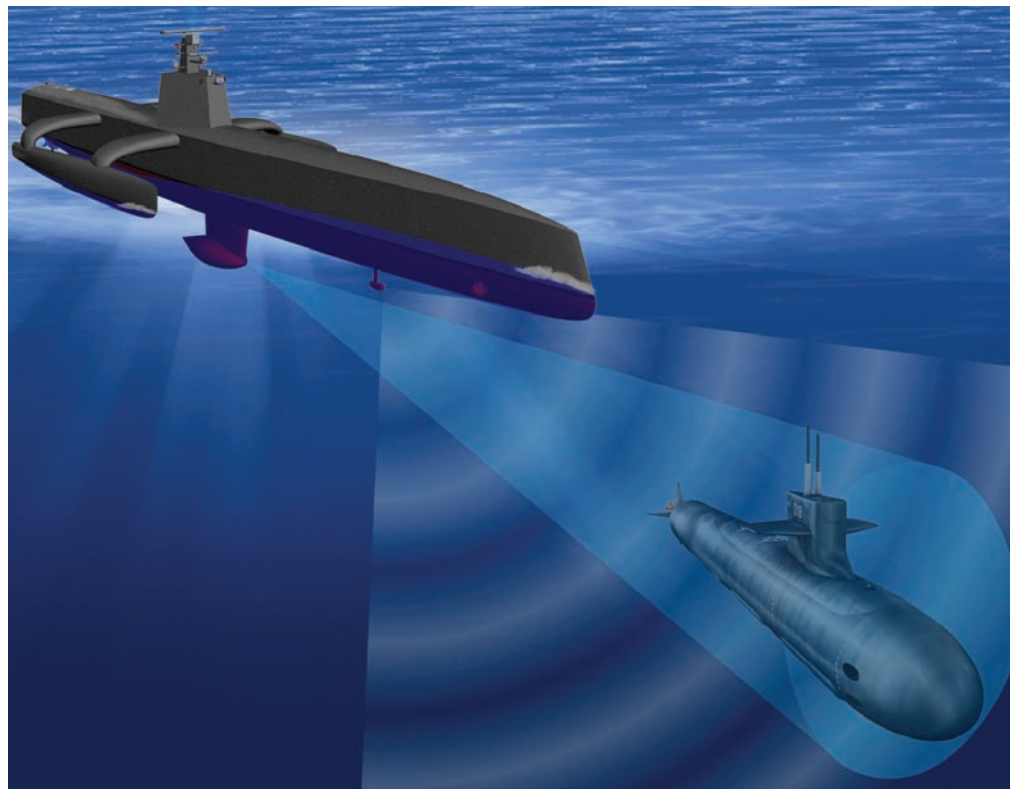


Illustration of DARPA's ACTUV prototype tracking an enemy submarine

DEFENSE ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY (DARPA)

The Long View

BY ROB LONG

From the MSNBC Mailbag . . .

Dear Melissa Harris-Perry:

My partner and I are huge fans of yours. We DVR your show every day and watch it at night, when the kids are in bed and the house is finally quiet. Of course, it's not quiet for long! Boy, you really know how to project your voice! LOL.

But seriously, we love you and your show and especially the mission of your network, MSNBC. You really are the only bulwark against the Faux News onslaught of wingnuts and creeps. So, bravo!

So, this is just a letter of support for you, and to let you know that your recent promotional ad—the one about how it's society that raises kids, that it's not just parents, that the government also "owns" kids in a way, that it's all of us who are responsible for each others' kids—was right on target, and we know you came in for a lot of flak from the Usual Suspects in the Re-Thug-Lican party and their henchmen (O'Reilly, Beck, et al.), so, from the two of us, we say: Go Get 'Em! Huge support and props from this small house in Ann Arbor! You go, girl! We could not agree more!!!

That said, my partner and I are stressed out from a lot of issues we've been dealing with lately—some health concerns (I've got anxiety issues, my partner is coming off a powerful antihistamine) and some financial stuff we won't bother you with, but we've finally—FINALLY!!!!—managed to convince my dad to give us the money to go on an adventure trip to Costa Rica (boy, was that a tough one; he loves his money and is pretty tight with it; and for the record, I do have a "job" in the social-activist/group-poetry arena because that's where my passion has led me) and it's going to be a trip of healing and reconnection to each other and it's really really going to help de-stress a very stressful and volatile situation—my partner carries a lot of negative-impacting baggage from the whole childhood thing—and we leave next week!!!!! Couldn't be more excited!!!!!

Through some pretty intrepid Internet investigations—my partner does Web consulting when the bipolar issues are in check—we got your home address. We know you'd want us to have it, especially since we've chosen you as our co-parent! Thanks so much!!!

So here's the deal: We're going to drop our kids off at your house next Tuesday somewhere in the 11ish range, and we really do need to be at the airport for check-in by 1 P.M., so we may not have a lot of time to chit-chat etc. though we promise a major download when we come back from Costa Rica and bunk in with you that night. The kids really are easy and self-directing. All you need to know is that Cesar CANNOT have any nuts or nut traces within 500 yards of him—I know you live in the city and that'll be hard to guarantee 100 percent, but we're thinking that with you in the media, neighbors will be more willing to comply—and that if Elsa wants to wear a black shroud to school and around the house that's okay, but please talk to her about the possible cultural implications of telegraphing to the community that may interpret her actions as mocking Islamic culture, which is something we do not allow in our home. We're a very culture-positive household and we really do insist that the other caretakers of our children—and you're totally right! they are OUR children, ours and yours, at least for the two months we'll be in Costa Rica—keep the energy flowing in the same direction.

Also: Not sure about schools in the area. We're not crazy about having the kids out of school for the two-ish months we'll be in Costa Rica. Can you investigate schools in your area? Thnx!

Last thing: The little one is still breastfeeding and we really do have a thing about that, so we'd like you to keep that up.

Okay, so those are all of the details I can think of right now. I'll keep adding to a list that I'll drop off with you when we see you! Again, thanks for your wonderful work on MSNBC and your wonderful message about raising kids in a community of parents!

Much Love,
Kit and Gerri

PS: Tyler is my partner's son from a previous relationship. He will probably drop in for the month that corresponds to his spring break. Great kid, really no trouble. His college-tuition bill is due at some point soon. Appreciate your help with that.

PPS: Do you have Rachel Maddow's e-mail? Looking into surrogate parenting and would be very interested in getting some of her eggs.

PPPS: Will be Instagramming a lot from Costa Rica. We're @kitandgerriluvourkidz. What's your user name?

Athwart

BY JAMES LILEKS

The Obvious Explanation

CONSPIRACY theories about the Boston Marathon terrorist bombing began immediately. Of course. Just like 9/11. On that grim day, you'll recall, we learned that several foreigners acting on orders from a shadowy Islamist mastermind had hijacked jets and flown them into tall buildings. Whereupon Rosie O'Donnell and all the other smart people said "You believe *that*? No, it was a CONSPIRACY."

As for the April 15 villainy, the usual theories bloomed on Twitter and the Web, where the banging of square pegs into holes of undetermined shapes was deafening. Jihadis! Tax cranks! But a select group believed the event was wreaked by reptilian agents from the planet Saturn who live underground. Let us see who's more credible.

The anti-Saturnians took to YouTube the day of the bombing, pointing out the obvious clues. If you freeze the frame of a CNN video, look at it from a certain angle, and highlight certain parts with red lines, there's the ancient symbol for Saturn. I mean *Duh*. The same symbol also appears on a playing card that shows a woman *jogging*. Case closed? Hardly. As the YouTube video explains:

"Now 88 = PURPLE using simple Gematria (A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, Z = 26), PURPLE referring to the abyss, as Saturnsux and Trampleonsnakes3 have exposed. And don't forget the red hair."

Well, who can? I know what you're saying: If humanoid lizard overlords committed this act, why would they leave clues everywhere? Perhaps because the anti-Saturnians are used to conceal the real conspiracy, which involves slugs from Neptune who live in the clouds. Perhaps they're taunting the few brave souls who spend their days yelling into the camera on YouTube in the hope that *someone* will listen. Which brings us to Chris Matthews.

He does not, as far as we can tell, believe in Saturn-based reptile people who live in the bowels of the earth and control our politics. But let's just say he wouldn't drop dead from surprise if someone tweeted a picture of a Koch brother flicking a forked tongue. He wouldn't be alone if he joined the anti-reptile crowd: According to a recent survey by Public Policy Polling, 12 million Americans believe occluded reptiles control our society. The survey noted that more Romney supporters believed it than Obama supporters, which will probably show up as a story proving Obama people are 2.5 times smarter than Republicans, which the Left no doubt believes.

Back to that in a moment. Besides the clues a *child* could solve with simple Gematria, the Lizard People used their mental power to put up a Facebook page two days before the bombing asking for sympathy for the victims. I've seen the page. Either careless lizards put up a website two days before their "false flag" operation or someone who joined Facebook on Saturday changed the name after the tragedy. When you see the number of people who don't believe the obvious explanation and yell from the rooftops that a Facebook page is proof of a conspiracy, you want to reach for Occam's razor and drag it across your wrists.

But let's not be too quick to judge. At the Free Republic thread about the Facebook pages, someone pointed out that questionable Facebook pages about the Sandy Hook massacre popped up in advance and that the shooter's father was scheduled to testify in the LIBOR hearing. To which I can only add: If you rearrange the letters "LIBOR" and "Boston" you get "Lib Boon Rots," which is an accurate description of the end result of socialistic promises. Another lizard taunt?

Just sayin'. Just asking questions.

Everyone has a template for these events. It's unavoidable. If you've developed an intricate cosmology around Masons, LIBOR, fiat currency, and the cat across the street who blinks Morse-code messages into your brain demanding you sell gold, then any horrible event that involves none of the above makes sense once you apply your theories. The absence of a cat proves it. If you discover a cat in a freeze frame of a news video, it's corroboration.

Sometimes the template is a bit more sophisticated. The *New York Times*' Nicholas Kristof tweeted: "Explosion is a reminder that ATF needs a director. Shame on Senate Republicans for blocking apptment." He later apologized for opening wide the window to his soul, but it's what many no doubt thought. And by "thought," we mean said it in boldface in a website headline. "Let's Hope the Boston Marathon Bomber is a White American," blared the title of David Sirota's piece. Let's not and say you did, Dave.

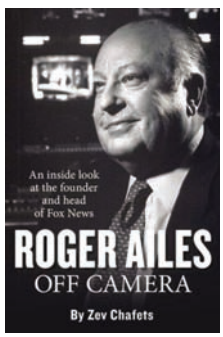
Of course, whenever something blows up in a public place, many let leak their suspicions that aggravated Lutherans are less likely suspects than Islamists, even if reports suggest the suspect left a ticking hotdish at the site. But there's a difference between the two presumptions. One sees enemies who wish America harm because it stands in the way of the glorious Caliphate and the elimination of Jews. Ha! Silly. The other believes that violent protest was totally awesome and tragically romantic in the Sixties and deserves the poetic rue of a Redford-directed movie about time-seasoned rebel bombers. But now it's the natural end result of people who object to the percentage of the economy consumed by the government and to the erosion of liberty that naturally attends the expansion of the powers of the state. Or, as *Salon* no doubt sees them, Tea Party Nazi-Bircher skinhead yahoos yelling on ham radio about the Federal Reserve and Gardasil.

One blames people foreign to American principles; the other finds foes among those who wish to restore them. What's the phrase? Blame America first. But only after you've ruled out the Saturnians. NR

Mr. Lileks blogs at www.lileks.com.

King Roger

JAY NORDLINGER



Roger Ailes: Off Camera, by Zev Chafets (Sentinel, 272 pp., $26.95)

A FEW years ago, Zev Chafets wrote a book about Rush Limbaugh. Now he has written a book about Roger Ailes. He seems to be making a specialty of larger-than-life conservative figures. For some on the left, he says, Limbaugh and Ailes are the "two Great Satans." For others, of course, they are more like folk heroes.

Actually, Chafets is a writer without specialty. He has written a range of books, including novels. Among his topics are Detroit, Israel, baseball, and the Mob. He has a love of American culture, and he handles racial topics especially well, I would say. In any event, he has an eye for an interesting story and an interesting person.

As for his politics, they appear to be centrist—maybe even moderately conservative. I suspect he is a birth Democrat whom the flow of events has dragged right. He speaks of the "liberalism" of CBS News as though he were stating a simple fact—as though he were saying that Topeka is the capital of Kansas. Which it is.

In writing his latest book, he had the cooperation of Ailes, he tells us, but not his authorization. The book is "not a formal biography," Chafets says; it's "a record of almost a year spent watching Roger Ailes in action." That it is, but it also serves as a biography, whatever we call it.

Ailes is president of Fox News, and a king of media. But he's also, says Chafets, a "blue-collar guy from a factory town in Ohio who has stayed close to his roots." At their first meeting, Chafets found his subject "plainspoken, wryly profane, caustic, and anxious for me to know that he doesn't give a good goddamn about fancy parties, political correctness," and so on.

His previous subject, Limbaugh, and his current subject have a lot in common, as Chafets writes. They grew up in similar places with similar values, and came to similar conclusions. They both have buccaneering, joyful personalities. Neither shies from a fight. The author quotes Limbaugh as saying, "Ideologically and culturally, we are two peas in a pod."

The town in Ohio Ailes is from is Warren, in the northeast, near Youngstown. He was born there in 1940. His family, like other families, experienced much drama: war, divorce, loss of social station. This makes for fascinating reading. The chapter on Warren is worth the price of admission all by itself.

Roger was afflicted with hemophilia, in and out of hospitals, but he was hardly stopped. He charged at life. His brother, a doctor, says, "It's very well known in the medical literature that hemophiliacs tend to be daredevils, the kind of guys who wind up jumping over canyons on motorcycles. Roger fit that bill." His mother saw to it that he had some of the graces: piano, elocution, and ballet.

After graduating from Ohio University, Ailes went into television. Before he was an éminence grise, he was a wunderkind. "Roger Ailes was a legend at a very young age," says Marvin Kalb, the veteran newsman. Ailes went to work on *The Mike Douglas Show*. "It was the best hire I've ever made," says the producer who hired him, Woody Fraser. Other employers have had reason to feel the same.

Everyone and his brother appeared on *The Mike Douglas Show*, from a variety of fields. Showbiz types, yes, but also Martin Luther King Jr. "He came on three or four times," Ailes says. "He'd sit in my office waiting to go on and we'd smoke cigarettes and chat about personal things or what was happening politically. I really don't remember anything specific. I wish I could." Not a few reminiscers would make something up.

One day, Nixon came on. This was during his "wilderness years," when he was out of office but trying to come back. (You could never rule him out, till you could.) Also booked that day on *Douglas* was an exotic dancer with a boa constrictor. Says Ailes, "I figured I better not put her and Nixon in the same greenroom. I didn't want to scare him, or the snake."

Ailes went on to do some work for Nixon, and for Reagan, and for Bush 41, and for many another politician. He was a consultant greatly in demand. I thought I had heard every Reagan story worth hearing, but I learned another one from Ailes, through Chafets. I like this one because it illustrates a point too seldom made: Reagan was not putty in his wife's hands, at least not always. He could speak sharply to her.

The two were doing an anti-drug commercial together. She kept instructing him—sort of sniping at him. Finally, he said, "You know, I've actually done this before." She stomped off. Reagan told Ailes, "She'll be back in 15 minutes." They watched some football. Mrs. Reagan returned about 14 minutes and 58 seconds later.

Ailes headed two NBC channels: CNBC and America's Talking (the forerunner to MSNBC). Then came the marriage of Rupert Murdoch and Ailes, and its offspring, Fox News. Chafets quotes some pooh-poohing of this new project by the *New York Times*. He also quotes Jack Welch, who was the chairman and CEO of General Electric, NBC's parent company: "You put a creative genius together with a guy with the guts and wallet of Rupert Murdoch and you have an unbeatable combination."

The question of Fox News is perpetually debated: Is it a news network, "fair and balanced," or a right-wing propaganda outfit? Chafets explores this question in absorbing detail. I will relay a tidbit: In 2011, the CNN White House correspondent Ed Henry was contemplating a jump to Fox. (A jump he made.) He was worried he'd be stigmatized as a

right-winger. He encountered Stephen Breyer, the liberal Supreme Court justice, who told him something interesting, and reassuring: He watched Fox's *Special Report* every night, because he valued its reporting as straight.

There is no doubt Ailes is right when he says, "The first rule of media bias is selection"—what you choose to cover, what you choose to ignore. Probably the oldest of the conservative media watchdogs is AIM, whose initials stand for "Accuracy in Media." Accuracy is indeed a problem. But it is possible to be perfectly accurate and at the same time loaded with bias. Any journalist knows this, and consumers of journalism should know it too.

Last year, Les Moonves did something that a lot of us found sort of refreshing: He attended an Obama fundraiser in Hollywood. If you're a CBS honcho, why not? Moonves remarked, "Partisanship is very much a part of journalism now." He could have done without the "now," for it has long been thus, particularly at his network.

The reaction of establishment media to Fox News has been a wonder to behold. Some winters ago, I was at Davos, listening to a PBS figure speak to the head of al-Jazeera. He said, "If you want to know why the American public is so ignorant and belligerent, you have to understand Fox News. People sit in front of it all day, and it gives them war fever." I have paraphrased, but very closely. At the beginning of this year, Al Gore sold his Current TV to al-Jazeera. He said that he and Jazeera shared the same mission: "to speak truth to power," etc.

It is a melancholy and significant fact that many of our leading liberals feel a greater affinity with al-Jazeera than with Roger Ailes, Rush Limbaugh, and Fox.

After 9/11, some of the Fox personalities began to wear American-flag lapel pins. They didn't have to, but it was their choice. The choice did not sit well with some in the media world: They regarded these pins as unprofessional and uncouth. One of the critics was Morley Safer, the *60 Minutes* stalwart, who let Ailes know what he thought. Ailes answered, "I'm a little bit squishy on killing babies, but when it comes to flag pins I'm pro-choice."

Ailes is indeed anti-abortion, and I might mention too that he is pro-Israel. Chafets tells us there are two framed photographs in his office: One is of Patton; the other shows Ailes shaking hands with Netanyahu. If you know where a man stands on abortion and Israel, you know a lot about him.

I have been quoting Ailes freely, and so does Chafets—so would anyone. Ailes is a quote machine, a fount. I have about 15 I'd like to share with you—15 more—but I'll settle for one. In the tony, liberal community where Ailes lives—Garrison, N.Y.—there used to be a restaurant down by the river. The establishment was torn down in favor of a "passive-use park." Says Ailes, "They took a place where a guy could sit and look at the water and drink a beer or eat a cheeseburger and turned it into a place for dogs to sh**. How the hell is that an improvement?"

There is no doubt Ailes is right when he says, "The first rule of media bias is selection"—what you choose to cover, what you choose to ignore.

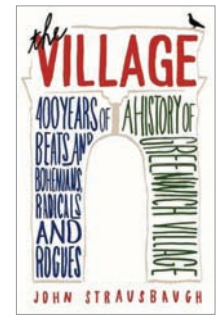
At this point in a review—positive, like mine—you say what you think the author did wrong. I will bring up an issue: Chafets writes, "The use of music intros and outros to the news is now so common that it goes unnoticed. Roger Ailes started it." Maybe I have misunderstood Chafets—but *The Huntley-Brinkley Report* used a portion of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. John Williams wrote his music for NBC News in the mid-1980s.

No matter. Chafets does his usual intelligent, illuminating, and stylish job.

About ten years ago, we at NATIONAL REVIEW were interested in doing a feature piece on Ailes. I requested an interview and he declined, jovially. He said he wanted to save his material—his life story—for his memoirs. Chafets writes that he is indeed planning to write those memoirs, and has undoubtedly held some things in reserve. A book to look forward to. **NR**

Bohemia In the City

RICHARD BROOKHISER



The Village: 400 Years of Beats and Bohemians, Radicals and Rogues: A History of Greenwich Village, by John Strausbaugh (Ecco, 640 pp., $29.99)

THIS lively and entertaining book appears to be a duffel bag stuffed with vignettes, anecdotes, and one-liners, but they are excellent vignettes, anecdotes, and one-liners, and they are in fact arranged and recounted with considerable skill. John Strausbaugh accompanies his material with observations, original and quoted, that are both smart and provocative, and infrequent enough not to become a drone.

The Village is a must-read for two audiences. One is Gotham-philes, who can never get enough about the city. The other is all those who are interested in the phenomenon of Bohemia—the self-defined rebels of the art world who reject the common culture, live off it, debase it, change it, and aspire to lead it. For over a century Bohemia colonized Greenwich Village, and though it is no longer to be found there, it marches on elsewhere. We should all be interested in it, for it is interested in us.

Greenwich Village lies in southwestern Manhattan below 14th Street, west of Broadway (or Fifth Avenue, or Sixth Avenue, depending on who is measuring), and north of Houston Street (though the formerly Italian parts of Soho were once called the South Village). The Village was attractive to Bohemia because it was both close to an urban hub and distinct from it. Greenwich Village started as a true village north of New

York City. In the early 19th century the city grew toward and beyond it, but the street grids of New York and the western parts of the Village did not mesh, giving the latter the appearance of a hidden nook, what Strausbaugh calls "a small eruption of eccentricity and disorder."

And what is Bohemia? The term was coined in Paris in the 1830s; the idea was later novelized and dramatized by Henry Murger, and still later set to music by Puccini. Bohemia the country was by tradition the homeland of gypsies; Bohemia the spiritual country was the homeland of artists leading a gypsy-like existence. Strausbaugh quotes the critic Malcolm Cowley, who wrote in *Exile's Return* that, while poor artists had long clustered together (think of London's Grub Street, where Dr. Johnson got his start), "Bohemia is Grub Street romanticized, doctrinalized and rendered self-conscious; it is Grub Street on parade."

A list of the people and things that have paraded through the Greenwich Village Bohemia would include *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, the New York Dolls, the Provincetown Players, the Whitney Museum, W. H. Auden, Grove Press, Margaret Sanger, Edgar Allan Poe, Folkways Records, Charlie Parker, Kahlil Gibran, *The Little Review*, Jackson Pollock, the *Village Voice*, and the Village People. The first Bohemian hangout was Pfaff's, a pre–Civil War tavern on Broadway; one of the regulars was Brooklyn visitor Walt Whitman. What Strausbaugh calls the Golden Age came before and during World War I; its genius was Eugene O'Neill, its glory was Edna St. Vincent Millay—who was, as one of her admirers put it, part chorus girl, part nun, part Botticelli Venus. Prohibition begat speakeasies and the allure of commercialized transgression. After World War II came abstract expressionists, Beats, folk singers, rockers, and drag queens.

Some of the meanest comments about this cavalcade come from the participants themselves. Here is Emma Goldman (anarchist) on Louise Bryant (Communist): "I do wish sometimes I were as shallow as a Louise Bryant; everything would be so simple." Novelist Dawn Powell shrank Thomas Wolfe's meganovel *Of Time and the River* to eight lines: "Oh Boston girls how about it / Oh Jewish girls, what say / Oh America I love you / Oh geography, hooray / Ah youth, ah me, ah beauty / Ah sensitive, arty boy / Ah busts and thighs and bellies / Ah nooky there—ahoy!" Folk singer Dave Van Ronk said the more commercial and more popular Kingston Trio "threw me into an absolute ecstasy of rage."

Some Bohemians turned right as they aged—Strausbaugh notes the evolution of John Dos Passos, e. e. cummings, and NR contributor Max Eastman. But the Village was overwhelmingly left, because that was the handiest way to disdain the bourgeoisie in America. (France had a Bohemia of the right, as well as of the left, because the bourgeoisie could be attacked from a romantic/royalist/Catholic direction. Since that Bohemia ended in Vichy, it's just as well we never had one.)

Bohemia depended on cheap rents. Villagers lived cheaply because so many of them lived in tenements; after World War II, prices were frozen by rent control. Dirty money also helped keep the pot bubbling. The Mafia invested in jazz clubs, gay clubs, and heroin, all components of the mid-century scene.

"Canon formation," a term of contemporary literary theory, starts with clique formation. The poet Kenneth Koch called the Village "fizzy with collaboration," and all those *artistes* in proximity did stimulate one another. But they also used one another to pat backs, blow horns, and give legs up the greasy pole. Strausbaugh's account of the relationship between Bob Dylan and Allen Ginsberg recalls two European powers in the board game Diplomacy, negotiating the entente that will benefit them both; Dylan and Andy Warhol, another fame whore, could not come to an understanding.

Every Bohemian wanted to be famous. But fame, when it came, worked in mysterious ways. After the triumphant publication of *On the Road*, the author Jack Kerouac and David Amram, a jazz-musician friend, dropped into the Figaro, a Bleecker Street café whose walls were papered with pages of the French newspaper for which it was named. They found the back room filled with kids, all dressed in black, the girls wearing sweaters and fishnet stockings, the guys sporting goatees and clasping brand-new bongos. "It's like Catholic school," Kerouac marveled. "Everyone is in uniform." Everyone except the two actual Beats themselves, whom the youngsters tagged as creepy old guys from Jersey trying to score. The manager asked Kerouac and Amram to give an impromptu poetry/jazz performance, but the kids sniffed. Strausbaugh writes: "They refused to believe that Kerouac was Kerouac." No wonder he drank.

The iron law of talent—a few have it, some have some, and most have none whatsoever—held for the Village. It is noteworthy how few of the many characters in this thick book were first-rate. Edmund Wilson lived in the Village; Scott Fitzgerald did not. Yet another function of cliques was to simulate ability with numbers. A room full of half-wits could look like a room half-full of wits. Besides the talents-*manqués* there were hordes of frauds, gawkers, and plain lost souls. Addictions were rife. Naïve or disturbed young women were chewed up by predatory men. Gay men burst out of the closet in the Seventies to a dance of death. Strausbaugh quotes the movie-maker John Waters—whose movies make *Django Unchained* look like *The Sound of Music*—reminiscing about the meat-packing district in the West Village, once infested with transvestite hookers and gay sex clubs, now high-end. "I think, 'If you knew what went on here.' The Toilet [an aptly named sex club] is a fancy restaurant. I've seen people *eating* there."

Bohemia renews itself by offering easy indulgence, a subway ride to Cythera. Visiting or living there is also a badge of artiness, and a rejection of normality—I am not as that plutocrat. And sometimes, the taste buds just crave a change, and a termite colony of experimenters can supply it. Jazz was great American music, but there came a point when it simply wore out; to go on was turning over and over in bed. Bring on the Childe ballads and the three-chord guitar players.

And—rarely—something real gets made. Beauty can happen anywhere: in small towns; in show biz; in journalism (Poe and Whitman were newspapermen). It can also happen in Bohemia.

The turn-of-the-millennium cleanup of Manhattan, courtesy of Mayors Giuliani and Bloomberg, had the effect of pricing Bohemia out of the Village. Strausbaugh ends with a local's rant against the Magnolia Bakery, a pricey cupcake shop featured in *Sex and the City*. Weep not. The kids went to Brooklyn, and their elders are adjunct faculty. **NR**

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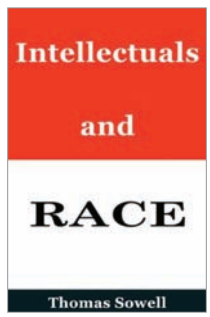
Clear Thinking on Race

ABIGAIL THERNSTROM



Intellectuals and Race, by Thomas Sowell (Basic, 192 pp., $25.99)

THIS book is a wonderful spin-off from Thomas Sowell's magnificent 2009 volume *Intellectuals and Society*. For those who want a short introduction to Sowell-think, this small book is a perfect place to start. His main message—amply illustrated—is that, on the subject of race, intellectuals are useless. Indeed, they don't even ask the right questions. Thus, they're woefully lost when it comes to analyzing America's most important domestic issue: the status of blacks and the state of race relations. Of course his point about lame-brained intellectuals extends far beyond their writings on race. Indeed, his book is a primer on rigorous thinking about social and economic issues in general, here and abroad.

"There is no subject that is more in need of dispassionate analysis, careful factual research and a fearless and honest discussion than is race," Sowell writes. Precisely those qualities are exceedingly hard to find in the mass media, or in academic and popular writing. His book is a gold mine of invaluable insights; he is the teacher most of us never had and badly needed—indeed, still need.

Abigail Thernstrom is a co-author (with Stephan Thernstrom) of America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible, *an adjunct scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, and the vice chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.*

Two very important cases involving race are before the U.S. Supreme Court this term. The Court's woolly thinking is a minor thread in the tale Sowell tells, but the Court is not a minor American institution, and the opinions of the justices shape our seemingly never-ending debate on race. *Intellectuals and Race* should be mandatory reading for those who hand down wisdom from their high judicial perch.

Too often the arguments of at least some on the bench are full of gaping holes. Take *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Court's most important decision in the 20th century. Sowell does not discuss it, but the Court's unanimous opinion was a mess. With its reliance on the results of an experiment involving black children who showed a preference for white over black dolls, it barely qualified as constitutional reasoning. Let's leave the Constitution aside: What was the evidence that black children, as a consequence of segregation, acquired "a feeling of inferiority . . . unlikely ever to be undone"? Or that their preference for the white dolls was a sign of low esteem? The doll study had numerous flaws, including the sample size and the lack of a control group. But, most important, a study by the same researcher, Kenneth Clark, found that black children in a northern state without segregated schools were even more likely to prefer the white doll than those in the Jim Crow South.

Evidentiary problems are high on the list of things that rightly infuriate Sowell. Got evidence? Most often the answer is no.

But who needs hard evidence when the story is always the same? What accounts for today's residential clustering of black families (mislabeled "segregation")? White racism. The disproportionately high rates of black students disciplined for disruptive behavior in schools? Racism. Too many black youngsters who are academically behind their white and Asian peers? Racism. In 1981, the *New York Times* ran an editorial arguing that black unemployment rates and every other "index of misery" showed the degree to which "the devastating effects of racism" linger on. Sowell responds: "Only the fact that the intelligentsia tend to make racism the default setting for explaining adverse conditions among blacks enables such statements . . . to pass muster without the slightest demand for either evidence or analysis."

Sowell asks obvious historical questions whose absence in mainstream discourse should put the intelligentsia to shame. Did the "devastating" and "lingering" effects of racism explain the black riots in Detroit and elsewhere in the mid-1960s? That is the conventional wisdom, and it's not right. Was the Motor City in fact a City of Black Rage? Sowell points to some "inconvenient but inescapable facts of history." Among them: The poverty rate in Detroit before the riots was half that of blacks nationwide; the black homeownership rate there was the highest in the nation; the black unemployment rate was lower than that of whites nationwide.

There were other inconvenient facts Sowell could have cited, absent space constraints: Jerome Cavanagh, the mayor, was a committed liberal, credited by the MSM for much progress in race relations; the city contained a large, affluent, and growing black middle class; if black fury was directed at white oppressors, it was passing strange that rioters did not especially target white-owned shops or restaurants. As one scholar wrote in 1996, the riots remain "one of the most enigmatic social phenomena in American history."

Ghettos are generally assumed to be a fact of black urban life, but they came and went and came again. In the last decade of the 19th century, residential segregation eased, but restrictions on black housing choices soon reappeared. "Do the racial predispositions of white people just come and go unpredictably?" Sowell asks. The mass migration of millions of blacks out of the South early in the 20th century affected white racial attitudes, he argues. The massive migration "not only greatly multiplied the black populations living in many Northern cities, the newcomers were seen by both the pre-existing black populations and the white populations of these cities as creating greatly increased social problems such as crime, violence, and offensive behavior in general." In other words, there went the neighborhood, and the new arrivals found themselves unwelcome.

The racial setbacks of the early 20th century thus grew out of a cultural clash between newcomers and old-timers. The role of cultural differences as they have

affected the status of blacks is of particular interest to Sowell. Such cultural clashes are hardly unusual; he gives numerous examples of such tensions around the world. In the American context, putting aside the history of blacks, he could have pointed, for instance, to the dismay with which German Jews of high social status greeted Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe.

Cultures are not easily discarded; they're part of the baggage people carry when they migrate across land and sea. Thus, the immediate circumstances of southern-Italian and Jewish schoolchildren toward the end of the 19th century on New York's Lower East Side were similar, but "each trailed the long shadow of the cultural history and tradition in which they were raised, and those histories and traditions were very different." By the mid-1960s, only half of all blacks still lived in the South, but many features of southern culture lived on as part of the black identity. "Cultures—whole ways of life—do not simply evaporate when conditions change. . . . Long-standing and deep-seated cultural differences can become cultural barriers." Sowell quotes the historian Oscar Handlin, who put the point succinctly: "Men are not blank tablets upon which the environment inscribes a culture which can readily be erased to make way for a new inscription."

Groups with different cultural baggage make for different likely outcomes. "Any serious study of racial and ethnic groups, whether in a given society or in a wide variety of societies in countries around the world, repeatedly encounters the inescapable fact of large and numerous disparities among these groups, whether in income, education, crime rates, IQs or many other things," Sowell writes. And yet disparities "are treated as oddities that need explaining, *no matter how common such supposed oddities are in countries around the world* or in how many centuries they have been common."

Disparities are not odd; they are a fundamental fact of life in every multi-ethnic or multiracial society. The Obama administration believes that the numbers all by themselves tell a tale of discrimination. And thus disparate-impact lawsuits have become a favorite means to enforce civil-rights statutes. In February, the Department of Housing and Urban Development issued regulations interpreting the 1968 Fair Housing Act to prohibit policies that disproportionally affect blacks and Hispanics. Racially imbalanced results are also cited in suits challenging school discipline practices; "too many" black students are being suspended, although (an inconvenient fact) disruptive students stop others from learning.

In reading Sowell's work, I searched, almost entirely in vain, for arguments with which I could disagree. There was just one: His reading of Gunnar Myrdal's classic 1944 study, *An American Dilemma*, is slightly different from mine. Sowell sees Myrdal's monumental work as a "turning point in thinking about race among the intelligentsia." In Myrdal's view, as Sowell summarizes it, socioeconomic differences between races were traceable to the warped minds of whites. It was the beginning of the blame-whitey mantra.

That is certainly Myrdal's central thesis. The "Negro problem," as he saw it, was basically a white problem. "The Negro's entire life" is a reaction to pressures generated by white society, he argued. But the Swedish economist was a little more generous toward whites than Sowell implies. He believed America was not racist to the core: It was a country "continuously struggling for its soul," as he put it in a separate book. "The moral pulse beats much more strongly in the American civilization" than in most of Europe. Racism is un-American, he believed; Americans were a decent people who had allowed horrible things to happen. But most whites had a racial conscience to which blacks could successfully appeal—a conviction that made *An American Dilemma* the main source of ammunition when the NAACP argued *Brown v. Board of Education*.

I didn't think I would learn much from Sowell's wonderful little book, having slogged through the literature on race since I was born—or at least it feels like it's been that long. But I did. Most NR readers will not have been masochistically race-obsessed for years, but this book's tough questions and clear-eyed answers should make them even more disgusted with America's anti-intellectual intelligentsia than they probably already are. *Intellectuals and Race* is a feast of hard thinking about America's ongoing racial agony. **NR**

Tilting Left

ROBERT VERBRUGGEN

Why Are Professors Liberal and Why Do Conservatives Care?, by Neil Gross (Harvard, 400 pp., $35)

THE question is not *whether* college professors are liberal. That much is certain, as one can ascertain by asking any college graduate—or consulting reams of survey data. The gap between professors' political views and those of the general population is especially dramatic in the fields in which one would expect it to be, such as the social sciences.

The much more interesting question is *why* college professors are liberal, and sociologist Neil Gross has studied it for years. His results are worth considering, even if the book in which he presents them will grate on right-leaning readers from time to time.

The leading theories as to why professors lean left are not satisfactory. For example, many conservatives allege that there is discrimination at various points along the pipeline—but Gross presents many reasons to doubt this explanation. The undergraduates who say they want to enter academia are just as liberal as graduate students and young professors, indicating that there's no significant winnowing taking place. And in surveys, the conservatives who have entered academia rarely report experiencing employment discrimination.

To further test the discrimination theory, Gross performed an audit test—a fairly common sociological experiment in which researchers pose as people seeking jobs or other favors. The "can-

didates" are matched in all their attributes except the ones being studied, such as race or (in this case) political affiliation. Gross sent e-mails to the directors of graduate study in the top 75 doctoral programs in sociology, economics, political science, history, and literature, posing as potential graduate students who had worked for either the McCain or the Obama campaign. The school officials were only slightly more likely to respond to the Obama volunteers, and were only slightly friendlier when they did—in fact, the differences were so small as to be statistically insignificant. (An interesting side point: While academics have used these tests to demonstrate racial bias in everything from car-sales techniques to hiring, with nary an ethical concern raised, many of Gross's subjects did not appreciate having their own biases probed. One subject threatened to sue, and Gross removed him from the data.)

Meanwhile, the most common liberal theory—that professors are liberal because smart people in general are liberal (duh!)—doesn't hold water, either. There is a statistical connection between high intelligence and self-identification as "liberal," but Gross's research shows that it's not nearly strong enough to explain the strong leftward tilt of the professoriate. And though Gross doesn't mention it, I found a strange fact lurking in recent General Social Survey data: Americans who score very well on a vocabulary test aren't much less likely to call themselves conservative than the general population—they're just more likely to identify as liberal and less likely to identify as moderate. So even if intelligence can help to explain the strong presence of liberals in academia, it can't explain the absence of conservatives.

A related (and similarly self-serving) theory some liberals present is that personality is to blame: Liberals are more scientific, more open-minded, more willing to sacrifice riches to pursue the life of the mind, and so on. Some of these stereotypes are true, but only some, and only to a limited degree. Conservatives are more distrustful of science than liberals and less open to new experiences, but they're not much more likely to value moneymaking (and it's moderates who value moneymaking the most). At any rate, the differences are not dramatic enough to explain more than a fraction of professors' liberalism.

A more likely explanation, in Gross's view, is that academia has become politically "typed": The general population has developed a notion that professors are liberal, largely thanks to long-ago historical developments—in particular the secularization of the academy in the late 19th century followed by the high-profile roles academics took in the Progressive movement. Once academic work was seen as a liberal thing to do, conservatives opted not to do it, and the status quo perpetuated itself, even when the conditions that had created it disappeared. This theory is plausible enough—the academy really did shift leftward decades ago, people really did notice, and to this day there really is a stereotype that professors are liberal—though of course it's difficult to test.

But it's not merely a case of a self-perpetuating stereotype. Many academics have assiduously worked to maintain the liberal "imprint" on their profession, openly presenting themselves as left-wing to students. In Gross's surveys, few academics admitted practicing "critical pedagogy" (jargon for aggressive Marxist indoctrination), and some said their fields were inherently apolitical (say, engineering); but professors in many fields said they were at least open about their own politics: 86 percent of sociologists, 79 percent of literature professors, and 63 percent of economists.

AT LA BASILIQUE DU SACRÉ-CŒUR DE MONTMARTRE

I looked out on Montmartre and I wept.
So many roofs of straight slate, gray and blue,
the terra-cotta stovepipes all that kept
a hint of warmth and roundness in the view.
I sank against the fencing and I wrote,
pulling down my hat's stiff, woven brim,
to pry the hemline of my overcoat
from where it had been caught on railing trim.
The simple motions of a simple soul
laboring to breathe at such a height—
ashamed, almost, unable to control
what caused the crowds no trouble at this sight.
We ordinary hordes, aboard this terrace:
musicians, jocks, performing artists, mimes,
so casually overlooking Paris
in covert, patient penance for our crimes.
My overwhelming flood of feeling gone,
I joined the pilgrimage, with drier peers,
lacking that protection from the sun
used nonchalantly to disguise my tears.
Requesting, "S'il vous plait, mais votre chapeau . . ."
a greeting usher smiled, ". . . remove it, please,"
forbidding interruption in the flow
of visitants through clerics on their knees.
Thus we filed—uncovered dust—the dim
interior become my second veil.
The usher passed, I gripped my hat's bent brim.
We passed medallion images for sale.
The Virgo Pacis missing one wrought square
within the golden gateway to her shrine,
she nonetheless possessed the only prayer
petitioned from those seekers out of line.
We passed much holiness, but I returned,
revisiting the Virgin with her six
white, massive candles, upright and unburned
above the votives with their low, scarred wicks.

—JENNIFER REESER

These are similar to the survey results reported in *Closed Minds?*, a 2008 book that sought to disprove the notion that colleges indoctrinate students: Forty-five percent of professors (in all fields) said their students could "probably guess who I voted for in 2004"; 57 percent said they did not "try to keep students guessing about my opinions about most issues." Further, as Gross writes, a fair amount of material in the humanities and social sciences is openly left-wing. (A class called "Feminism and Sociological Theory" is unlikely to attract conservative students.) Putting aside the question of whether this style of teaching is appropriate, it certainly does not send a signal that conservatives are welcome in academia.

Unfortunately, as empirically oriented as Gross is, he often cannot resist the subtle jab at conservatives, especially once he wraps up his discussion of why professors are liberal and moves on to the question of why conservatives care. One could fill an entire review with examples—conservative English professor Mary Grabar did just that in her write-up for the Selous Foundation (a right-leaning think tank). But this one is enough to convey the undercurrent of hostility here: "While [civil-rights efforts in the 1960s] placed academic activists on the right side of history, to conservatives who opposed the civil-rights movement they represented an abomination."

Of course, the question of why conservatives care isn't even mildly interesting. Academia is a powerful liberal force, and 60 percent of high-school graduates at least enter a four-year college; conservatives would be insane *not* to care. Gross does provide an overview of the conservative critique of academia, but between the lack of insight and the occasional barbs thrown rightward, it's not a worthwhile investment of reading time.

Gross is at his best when he's explaining his surveys and experiments and using them to evaluate competing theories of professors' liberalism—and fortunately, he spends a lot of time doing that. Readers will gain a nuanced understanding of the subject, and conservative readers in particular will find many interesting nuggets here. The condescension is unfortunate, but a price worth paying. **NR**

Lone Star Model

JOHN DANIEL DAVIDSON

Big, Hot, Cheap, and Right: What America Can Learn From the Strange Genius of Texas, by Erica Grieder (PublicAffairs, 304 pp., $26.99)

TEXAS is a problem for liberals. If the state weren't the economic powerhouse it has become in the last decade, it might not be such a problem. It might be easy to dismiss Texas for all its oddities and arrogance: the infamous textbook wars over creationism and abstinence-only sex education, the persistent use of the death penalty, the president who invaded Iraq and Afghanistan and gave the country No Child Left Behind. If that's all there were to Texas, liberals might be able to dismiss it as another backward southern state.

But there's no dismissing the Lone Star State, no matter what one thinks of it. Five years on from the Great Recession, Texas's low-tax, pro-business policies have largely shielded its residents and businesses from the economic downturn suffered by the rest of the country. Between 2009 and 2011, when unemployment was hovering between 9 and 10 percent nationwide, Texas alone created 40 percent of America's new jobs. Last year, it accounted for nearly 9 percent of the country's economy. Millions of people have moved there over the past decade, drawn by the promise of work.

The plain facts of the Texas economy confound liberals, who have a hard time believing in this so-called Texas Miracle, despite mounting evidence that it is real and durable, that something fundamental about Texas's approach to economic growth is distinguishing it from, say, California.

The glaring contrast between those two states provokes a striking form of cognitive dissonance among coastal liberal elites. One also senses a kind of fear. When Governor Rick Perry's presidential campaign collapsed in a few awkward minutes during a nationally televised Republican-primary debate last year, the Left was quick to mock him. But behind the mockery there was a collective sigh of relief; their man would not have to run against the governor of the state that had almost single-handedly kept the American economy afloat for the better part of two years, who had won almost 40 percent of the Hispanic vote in his last election. That race would have been a lot more difficult than running against the Mormon architect of Obamacare from Massachusetts.

In her 2012 book, *As Texas Goes . . .*, *New York Times* columnist Gail Collins set out to show that Texas, far from being worthy of emulation, is a harbinger of doom for the rest of the country. The state's low taxes and economic growth, she argued, come at the expense of things like welfare and education and the environment. Plus, Governor Perry believes in ridiculous things like abstinence-only sex education and the death penalty. That's a problem, says Collins, because Texas is big and powerful and its policies, which disproportionately influence the rest of the country, will lead America to ruin.

Fortunately, cooler heads may be prevailing when it comes to books about the meaning of Texas: Erica Grieder has no such axe to grind in her new book, *Big, Hot, Cheap, and Right*. A former correspondent on the American Southwest for *The Economist* and now a senior editor at *Texas Monthly*, Grieder is also a native of San Antonio, and comes at the question of Texas with an insider's perspective that Collins's jokey, stereotype-obsessed book sorely lacked. She knows enough about the state to argue, convincingly, that the rest of America ignores Texas at its peril.

Grieder's aim is to explain her native state, patiently and with a sense of humor,

Mr. Davidson is a health-care-policy analyst at the Texas Public Policy Foundation.

to suspicious and hostile outsiders like Collins. It is not an easy task, and Grieder seems to be aware that to defend Texas to liberals she must also apologize for it, or at least concede that there is much to disapprove of about the place. Throughout the book, when she compliments Texas with one hand she often slights it with the other. Noting the state's concessions to civil rights and women's rights, therefore, requires a caveat that "Texans have been, perhaps, so obsessed with profit that they would consider it unfair to deny anyone a chance at the same, and whenever Texas does something unusually egalitarian, that's usually the explanation."

At times, Grieder does this so well that one loses sight of her main point: Texas exemplifies, in an exaggerated way, the American tradition of limited government, individual liberty, and private enterprise—and the rest of the country shouldn't scoff at that. "There's no reason to be scared. There's no reason to be jealous," she writes. "There are, however, plenty of reasons to pay attention."

To make this case, Grieder spends the book's first two chapters unpacking the Texas Miracle and the Texas Model, which have a rather straightforward relationship: The state's stellar economic performance during the recession (the miracle) was possible because of a preexisting kind of governance that favors low taxes and light regulation (the model).

In defense of the first, she easily bests such critics as Paul Krugman, who has opined that "Texan experience offers no useful lessons on how to restore national full employment." The basis of his claim—that the jobs Texas creates are either minimum-wage "McJobs" or the product of filthy oil lucre, which other states cannot replicate—is, as Grieder demonstrates with a fusillade of recent data, simply not true.

In defense of the second, Grieder argues that the principle of "low taxes, low services" has indeed helped create Texas's powerhouse economy, but also that state leaders intentionally diversified that economy after oil prices collapsed in 1986. To do so, the leaders were (as they always have been, and still are) willing to ignore the Texas model when government could be made to serve industry—Texas industry, that is.

If that interpretation flies in the face of all the bluster about limited government in Texas, it also serves to demonstrate one of Grieder's recurring themes: Texas is not as dogmatic, socially or politically, as it sometimes appears to be. An obvious example is the state legislature's establishment, in 2003 and 2005, of two funds designed solely to boost certain industries: the Texas Emerging Technology Fund, which is supposed to attract biotech, aerospace, etc., and the Texas Enterprise Fund, which is basically Perry's slush fund to close deals, sometimes with companies he's lured in from other states. Although they run counter to the ethos of the Texas Model, these sorts of funds are not unique to Texas and, as Grieder points out, Texas isn't "a straightforward probusiness state": "It was (and is) pro–Texas business, whether the business was farming or oil or microchips. And if the government had to get involved to help the private sector along, well, for many Texans, that's what the government was *for*."

This pragmatic approach—let's call it "limited but targeted government"—extends to other issues. Consider illegal immigration: Texas, in contrast to some of its neighbors, has more or less tolerated it, because, despite some drawbacks, it provides a large pool of low-wage labor that the state's economy needs. In all these things, Grieder detects a pattern: "Texans have a tendency to set aside partisanship, bias, even their stated views, when economic goals are at stake." This attitude supposedly makes up a big part of the state's "strange genius," and also helps explain why Texas is often misunderstood by the rest of the country.

To help readers understand, Grieder spends the rest of the book delving into Texas's strange political history, which helps show that, far from being an outlier in the Union, Texas is fundamentally American—and perhaps more so than most other states, in part because of its crooked path to statehood. The founders of the Republic of Texas wanted more than anything to join the Union, and spent a hard decade trying for statehood before Washington reluctantly granted it in 1845.

Sam Houston, who famously served as president of the Republic, U.S. senator, and governor of Texas, denounced other slaveholding states in the run-up to the Civil War when murmurs of secession arose. Texans were not interested; they had always understood their destiny to be with the United States: "Think you, sir, that after all the difficulties they have encountered to get into the Union, that you can ever whip them out of it? No, sir. . . . We shed our blood to get into it, and we have now no arms to turn against it." A decade later, caught up in the fever of war back east, Texas did secede, and Houston resigned his governorship the very same day.

Houston was, writes Grieder, "among the first people to see that Texas was part of the United States, even before the United States was committed to it, and even if Texans wavered along the way." For as much as she apologizes for and questions her home state—its "obsession" with profit, its religious grandstanding, its casual arrogance, and its occasional ignorance—Grieder is among those who see that Texas, for all its faults and contradictions, is not an outlier but a zealous inheritor of the American ideal and a grateful son of the Union, and that its dogged pursuit of prosperity might be blazing a path forward for the rest of the country. **NR**

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Film

A Master's Misfire

ROSS DOUTHAT

Ben Affleck and Rachel McAdams in To the Wonder

REDBUD PICTURES

Terrence Malick's *To the Wonder*, his follow-up to the rapturous and rapturously reviewed *Tree of Life*, has been treated unkindly by the critics, and I'm sorry to say that it deserves that treatment. I had hoped, before seeing it, that the reactions to Malick movies simply moved in cycles, and that the new film was facing a backlash only because *Tree of Life* had earned so much praise—much as Malick's *The New World*, a true masterpiece, was underrated by critics who had overpraised *The Thin Red Line* a few years earlier.

But no, this time the complainers have it right. With *To the Wonder*, the master has delivered a work whose beauty is the beauty of surfaces, with no clear way into the depths that it aspires to plumb.

Those depths, as always with Malick, have to do with God and nature, doubt and belief, sin and grace, suffering and transcendence. But his chief preoccupation this time is love—the love of men and women in the foreground, and then the divine love that our human loves both resemble and fall short of.

The falling short is, for the most part, what happens to the main characters, Neil (Ben Affleck) and Marina (Olga Kurylenko), who meet in Paris, become enraptured with each other on a luminous trip to Mont St. Michel, and then decamp, along with her daughter from a previous marriage, for the wide expanses and subdivisions of Oklahoma. There things crumble, slowly: They live in half-furnished homes where suitcases are always open, her daughter wearies of the States and pines for *la belle France*, they fight and he withdraws from her, and the transcendence of their romance survives only in fragments of memory, shards of vanished time.

There is another woman, a rancher played by Rachel McAdams, as blonde and American as Kurylenko's Marina is dark and European. She may be an old flame of Neil's, and he takes up with her while Marina makes what proves to be a temporary return to France. There is a priest to whom Marina goes for counsel, played by Javier Bardem, who is struggling with his own crisis of faith, feeling Jesus's love slip from him as he tries to minister to his congregation and to the poor. And as always with Malick, there is the extraordinary beauty of the everyday, offering intimations of eternity not only in prairies and rivers, but in ranch houses and fast-food parking lots as well.

All of this may be autobiographical, as was some of the family drama in *Tree of Life*. (Malick had a temporary '70s romance with a Frenchwoman, and is now married to his former high-school flame.) It's certainly meant to be Christian, in a more explicit way than some of Malick's earlier films (though never a didactic one). His vision of the sacred now feels more sacramental than pantheistic, and where *Tree of Life* evoked Genesis and Job, *To the Wonder* reaches more often for the New Testament.

What it doesn't reach for, unfortunately, is personality, individuality, psychology—the stuff of character, a human element around which big themes and ideas and intimations can revolve. Malick's admirers are used to his taking a traditional narrative architecture—in this case a romance, a love triangle, the story of heartbreak—and stripping away much of the dialogue and exposition that filmgoers usually expect. But the stripping goes further this time: There is almost no dialogue apart from mumbles and fragments, and the voice-over belongs exclusively to the women and the priest—Affleck's voice is barely heard at all. The characters' back stories are nonexistent; their motivations opaque; their problems mysterious. We know they all want to love and be loved, but their yearnings lack individuality, personality, detail.

I understand that they're archetypes—male and female, light and dark, the Couple and the Priest. But Malick's characters are always archetypal, and in his best films he's managed to infuse at least some of them with individuality as well. *Tree of Life* was discursive, meditative, nonlinear, but it had the difficult, disappointed father (played by Brad Pitt) at the center of the action—a recognizable, all-too-human human being, sketched precisely in a few swift scenes. Likewise Colin Farrell's John Smith in *The New World*—a figure out of myth, yes, but also a persuasive human type.

In *To the Wonder*, Kurylenko and McAdams, working only with physicality and voice-over, come the closest to giving us glimpses of individuality. Bardem is less effective, mournful and hangdog; Affleck is a nullity, a black hole. A mediocre actor even in easier parts, he is completely at sea in a story that asks him to convey personality through gesture and movement alone.

But I don't want to be too hard on Affleck. It was Malick who cast him, Malick who directed him, Malick who decided to use *To the Wonder* to push his personal aesthetic to its limits. He's reached them. Here's hoping he realizes it. **NR**

Happy Warrior

BY MARK STEYN

The Bickering Genocides

Justin Bieber, my successor as Canada's teen heartthrob, is currently touring Europe. Passing through Amsterdam, he was taken to visit the Anne Frank House and afterwards signed the guest book. "Anne was a great girl," he wrote. "Hopefully, she would have been a belieber"—the term used by devoted fans of young Justin. Miss Frank did not live to become a belieber because she was shipped off to Belsen concentration camp and died of typhus in 1945. But had she lived I feel it safe to say she would have regarded Justin's oeuvre as complete bilge: As a teenager, she liked Liszt, so she was a beliszter; she belonged to the franz club. Anyway, Justin's poignant message set off a Twitterstorm of criticism at what the *Washington Post* called "the insensitivity and the sheer ego" of it.

I'm inclined to cut him some slack here. As the years go by, Anne Frank's supposedly inspiring story makes me a little queasy. Europe venerates its dead Jews even as a resurgent anti-Semitism chases out its living ones. Everyone loves Jews as victims. In other roles, not so much.

I can't wait for Justin to get back home and write in the visitors' book at Canada's own bazillion-dollar monument to victimhood. My sometime boss the late Izzy Asper was a media magnate whose lifelong dream was a world-class Holocaust memorial in his home town of Winnipeg. For the usual diversity-celebrating reasons, it evolved into a more general "Canadian Museum for Human Rights," and is now lumbering toward its opening date under the aegis of Izzy's daughter, Gail. Having been put through the mill by Canada's "Human Rights" Commissions, I naturally despise any juxtaposition of the words "Canadian" and "human rights." But if you have to yoke them, this is the place: To paraphrase Justin's fellow musician Joni Mitchell, they took all the rights and put 'em in a rights museum, and they charged the people a dollar-and-a-half just to see 'em.

But I've warmed up to what the blogger Scaramouche calls the Canadian Mausoleum for Human Rights. It could have been just the usual sucking maw of public monies had it not descended into an hilarious, er, urinating match of competing victimhoods. For those who thought "human rights" had something to do with freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and so forth, it turns out to be about which guy's genocide is bigger. The Ukrainian-Canadian Congress was wary of the mausoleum from the get-go, suspicious that it would downplay the Holodomor, Stalin's enforced famine in the Ukraine 80 years ago. The mausoleum assured them that they were going to go big on the Holodomor, but to guarantee the UCC came onboard offered to throw in a bonus exhibit of Canada's internment of Ukrainian immigrants during World War I. This would be part of "Canada's Journey," a heartwarming historical pageant illustrating how the blood-soaked Canadian state has perpetrated one atrocity after another on native children, Chinese coolies, Japanese internees, Jews, gays, the transgendered, you name it. And, of course, the Ukrainians. Per Izzy's wishes, the Holocaust would have pride of place in a separate exhibit, because, its dark bloody history notwithstanding, Canada apparently played a minimal role in the murder of six million Jews. However, the Holodomor would be included as a permanent featured genocide in the museum's "Mass Atrocity Zone."

Oh, you can laugh at the idea of a "Mass Atrocity Zone" tourist attraction in Winnipeg, but there isn't an ethnic lobby group that doesn't want in. The Polish-Canadian Congress complained that lumping all the non-Jew genocides in one Mass Atrocity Zone meant they'd have to be on a rotating schedule, like revolving pies on the lunch counter. The Armenian genocide was felt to be getting short shrift, considering it was the prototype 20th-century genocide. On the other hand, the Rwandan genocide, the last big 20th-century genocide, and the Congolese civil war don't appear to have got a look-in at all. The Poles wanted room made for the Germans' ill treatment of the Poles, which did not seem to be a priority of the mausoleum.

The floor plan has now emerged, and the Ukrainian-Canadians are furious that their people's suffering has been "ignored or minimalized." The Holodomor has been relegated to "a small obscure gallery near the museum's public toilets." Don't you hate it when that happens? When your genocide gets the lousy seats at the back by the bathroom while those Jews are all at the big power table up front? Adding insult to injury, the bonus exhibit about the internment of Ukrainian-Canadians turns out to be one measly photograph—whether a respectable distance from the toilets or not, I cannot say.

Meanwhile, the Holocaust remains primus inter pares of human-rights atrocities because, said Gail Asper, it had led to the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights. So the two events would be conjoined in the museum in "an inspiring relationship between violation and response." Unfortunately, Dr. Clint Curle, the mausoleum's "head of stakeholder relations," was forced to break the news to the *Winnipeg Jewish Review* that "as content development moved forward, the Museum, with the input of experts in this area, realized that" Ms. Asper's thesis was not true. "In its present conceptual articulation," reported Dr. Curle, "the museum has delinked a direct causal relationship between the Holocaust and the Universal Declaration." They're putting something in between—the Ukrainians, or the toilets, or Canada's systemic discrimination against whoever's left.

I'm sure Canadian schoolkids will be schlepped along in sufficient numbers to keep this thing in business for a while. My advice is stay home and listen to Justin Bieber: He's less trivializing and his "conceptual articulation" is more articulate, too. NR

Mr. Steyn blogs at SteynOnline (www.steynonline.com).

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