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War Without Strategy

Conservatives will readily support a Democratic president who wants to punish enemies who imperil America's interests. But they will not rally to a tentative president who looks for a go-ahead from illiberal nations in the U.N. and the Arab League in preference to their own elected Congress. *Victor Davis Hanson*



COVER: ROMAN GENN

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Who Will Review the **Judicial Reviewers?**

In his reply to Pamela K. Grow's letter concerning nullification, Allen C. Guelzo states, correctly, "If the founders had wanted to grant nullifying power—to the states or any other body—they would have had more than sufficient opportunity to include it in the Constitution." In the same reply he also writes, "That determination lies in the hands of the courts, under the principle of judicial review."

But judicial review is no more present in the Constitution than is nullification, and the founders had as much opportunity to include it. Even the framers who supported judicial review understood that the mere creation of a federal judiciary (there was none under the Articles of Confederation) was considered radical by large numbers of states'-rights advocates. To grant those courts the power of judicial review would have been to doom the Constitution's ratification.

Guelzo correctly cites the Supreme Court's decisions rather than the Constitution as the source of the power of judicial review, but does not seem to notice the problematic nature of these decisions: One cannot cite oneself as the source of one's authority. Indeed, the Court was so acutely aware that most Americans did not believe it possessed the power of judicial review that it used that power only twice before the Civil War (once in the disastrous *Dred Scott* decision).

The American people certainly never intended to grant a body of unelected, life-tenured appointees absolute power over our laws. This is not only undemocratic but un-republican. The mechanisms the founders inserted in the Constitution as bulwarks against majority tyranny allow one part of the government to check another; they do not allow a single branch to have absolute power over all of the nation's laws. As Thomas Jefferson noted, this is oligarchy, not republicanism.

*Carl J. Richard
Department of History,
University of Louisiana at Lafayette*

ALLEN C. GUELZO REPLIES: Professor Richard is correct in one respect: Judicial review, in the specific sense of the Supreme Court's having authority to review federal legislation, is not specified in the Constitution.

But if the Supreme Court cannot review the acts of the legislature and the executive, then who can? In order for checks and balances to work, someone must do the checking. If there should be no review power located in any branch, then whence comes the balance?

The Confederacy is an example of precisely this problem: The Confederate congress balked at the notion of judicial review, and so the Confederate supreme court was never organized (although the Confederate constitution provided for it). Far from relieving a problem, this only created incessant warfare between the legislative and the executive, and resulted in Jefferson Davis's exercising unilateral power without any check or balance.

Who, then, should review the judicial reviewers? The answer is the ultimate locus of sovereignty, the people themselves. If they find an act of judicial review in error, their mandate is to amend the Constitution.

Letters may be submitted by e-mail to letters@nationalreview.com.

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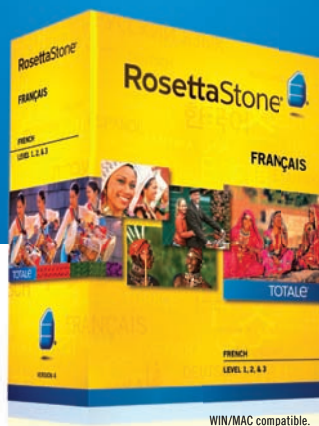
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The Week

■ To be fair, Obama is right: Nowhere in the Constitution does it say that Congress has to declare kinetic military action.

■ The Congressional Budget Office released an analysis of the president's budget. It projects that the last budget of this presidential term will feature a deficit of \$1.2 trillion. Obama will be the first president to run trillion-dollar deficits four years in a row. Federal debt as a share of the economy will rise remorselessly. (It hits 80 percent by 2016.) President Obama is not responsible for enacting the entitlements that are driving these trends. But instead of constructively reforming them—and imposing steeper price controls on Medicare does not count as such—Obama has in recent weeks been lecturing state governments on the need to avoid painful budget cuts. No sale: The states have to balance their budgets.

■ For fiscal year 2011, White House figures show that *mandatory* federal spending (i.e., entitlements) will exceed *total* federal revenues. In other words, even if discretionary spending—stuff like defense, law enforcement, transportation, parks, and imposing race and gender quotas—were cut to zero, there would still be a deficit. What is most impressive is how quickly this has happened: Just four years ago, revenues exceeded mandatory spending by \$1.1 trillion. The old joke was that entitlements were going to make the federal government a senior-citizens' program with a couple of tanks. Increasingly it looks as though we cannot afford the tanks.

■ Two longshots signaled their interest in becoming the next Republican presidential nominee: Donald Trump and Rep. Michele Bachmann of Minnesota. Trump is taking positions well to the right of where he stood the last time he dabbled in presidential politics. So far the themes of his campaign are that President Obama may not have been born in the U.S. and that we can revive our economy by cracking down on Chinese imports. Bachmann is a much more serious figure. Her vigorous critiques of Obama have won her conservative support across the country. Our preference in presidential candidates is for people who have shown that they can win a statewide election, or a world war. We suspect that Republican primary voters, whatever else they think of these candidates' merits, will share that preference.

■ The reelection campaign of Sen. Claire McCaskill (D., Mo.) hit turbulence over her private jet. First, *Politico* reported that the senator had dropped \$76,000 of taxpayer money on jaunts on a plane she partially owned. After McCaskill reimbursed the Treasury, muckrakers discovered that she had used the jet for political purposes—a big no-no in congressional ethics books. Then the senator confessed that she owed \$287,000 in property taxes on the plane. Three days later we learned—whoops, sorry—she meant \$320,000, including interest and penalties. Now McCaskill has resolved to sell “the damn plane.” But Republicans are gleefully

See page 6.



reminding her of her remarks during the 2006 campaign, when she styled herself the Mrs. Clean candidate: “If my walk doesn’t match my talk, then shame on me and don’t ever vote for me again.” If you say so, senator.

■ An ABC/*Washington Post* poll found that 53 percent of Americans support same-sex marriage. But don’t believe it. For one thing, respondents seem to tell interviewers that they favor same-sex marriage because they think it’s what they are supposed to say. Their answers are more negative when voting or responding to robo-polls. The question was also flawed: “Do you think it should be legal or illegal for gay and lesbian couples to get married?” Of course nobody is proposing to throw same-sex couples in jail for getting a friendly Unitarian minister to hold a ceremony for them, or for calling themselves married in social settings. We do not think that this behavior should be “illegal” or, to use another misleading word bandied about in this debate, “banned.” What we oppose is official recognition of these unions, since such recognition would undermine the core purpose of marriage law, which is to link procreation to stable households. The poll is not evidence that a majority of Americans support same-sex marriage. It is, however, evidence that its supporters have succeeded in setting the terms of debate.

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■ Target, the retail chain, tries to be good, it really does. But it has gotten crossways with gay activists. To quote from a news report, “Last summer, Target CEO Gregg Steinhafel apologized for one of the company’s campaign contributions, which benefited a Minnesota gubernatorial candidate who supported economic growth and job creation but opposed same-sex marriage.” Heaven forbid. Last month, Lady Gaga, the entertainer, pulled out of her marketing deal with Target, because, in her judgment, the company was not “LGBT”-friendly enough. Target responded that it “remains committed to the LGBT community as demonstrated by our contributions to various LGBT organizations” and other actions. Also last month, the company sued gay activists in San Diego, because those activists have been harassing shoppers about same-sex marriage. Target pleaded that it merely wanted shopping to be “distraction-free.” “Target has taken similar action against a number of organizations, including churches.” The company can protest its innocence all it wants. It touts its “domestic partner” benefits, and its thousand-member “LGBT Business Council,” which advises it about “LGBT” employees and customers. None of that matters: When the activists decide you’re bad, you’re bad. So Target is a target.

■ We’re not fans of the mainstream media either, but Scott Powers, an *Orlando Sentinel* staffer who was covering a \$500-a-head

■ Eric Cantor, the House majority leader, wants to let companies based in the U.S. bring their profits back home at a temporarily low tax rate so they can invest the money here. The Obama administration says this tax holiday would be a “distraction” from a permanent tax reform. We would prefer a permanent reform, too: one that both lowers corporate tax rates to the developed-world norm and confines corporate taxes to activity that takes place on U.S. territory (which is the global norm). Tax holidays do not generate the long-term investment that a permanent reform would, and might lead CEOs to lose what interest they have in such reform. But the economy is still in poor shape, and congressional Democrats seem even less likely to agree to a long-term reform than to a holiday. Take the bird in the hand, Mr. President.

■ The fate of Wisconsin governor Scott Walker’s budget bill could be determined by an April state-supreme-court election. Justice David Prosser, a respected former GOP legislator, faces JoAnne Kloppenburg, an environmental lawyer. The once-sleepy contest has become a proxy battle for rage-swollen progressives. The governor has beaten them at the polls and in the legislature; to topple his signature law, they need a black-robed coup. An appellate panel threw up its hands in late March, so pressure has mounted on the seven-

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the judgmental said that ‘white flight’ was caused by racism, not an unwillingness to live in a city where you had to be afraid. What do they say of **black flight**?

Democratic fundraiser as a pool reporter, did not deserve the treatment he received at the hands of Vice President Joe Biden’s staff. To keep him from bothering the high-income lefty guests—and from munching on the fancy appetizers—the staff set Powers up in a storage closet, guarding the door and letting him out only to watch the VP’s speech. If the goal was to avoid embarrassment to the Democrats, surely the instructions should have been reversed?

■ The currents of stupidity in the U.S. corporate-tax regime run deep and wide: We set the rate very high—35 percent, highest in the developed world—and then fill the code with special offsets to encourage particular kinds of business—manufacturing, say, or “green energy.” And then we complain when companies in those industries make use of the favors we have offered them. We are the only major country to impose that high national rate on all the international earnings of domestic companies, and then we complain that companies keep those profits overseas to avoid punitive taxation. Exhibit A at the moment is G.E., the manufacturing/green-energy behemoth whose CEO currently heads President Obama’s competitiveness council. G.E. paid no corporate-income tax last year, a fact that has produced particularly loud keening among the same progressives and would-be industrial planners who have long supported the very tax policies that firms such as G.E. use to reduce or eliminate their tax bills. If this situation is unsatisfactory, and it is, blame the people who wrote the tax laws rather than those who comply with them.

member high court to weigh in. For the moment, judicial conservatives hold a 4–3 edge. But that could flip if Prosser falls. Lefty activists, smelling blood, have poured millions into the effort, smearing Prosser as an enabler of pedophiles. With union dues on the line, anything goes.

■ AT&T wants to buy T-Mobile, merging the second- and fourth-biggest mobile-phone companies. Consumer groups are worrying that higher prices will follow the merger. What they ignore is the economies of scale in a network industry. Besides, T-Mobile wasn’t competing in 4G wireless. The merger, by boosting AT&T’s capacity, will actually make for more competition in this space. Let the phone companies lease spectrum from broadcasters, and we will be on our way to having capacity, and service standards, that can keep up with fast-rising demand.

■ “Detroit’s Population Crashes,” read the *Wall Street Journal* headline. “Census Finds 25% Plunge as Blacks Flee to Suburbs; Shocked Mayor Seeks Recount.” The population of Detroit is now under 714,000, the lowest since 1910. That was only two years after the introduction of the Model T. It was four years before Ford Motors’ famous, revolutionary “five-dollar day.” Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the judgmental said that “white flight” was caused by racism, not an unwillingness to live in a city where you had to be afraid. What do they say of black flight?

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■ According to various leaks, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives knowingly allowed gun dealers to sell weapons to Mexican drug cartels. This was known as letting the guns “walk,” and it apparently began as part of a plan called “Project Gunrunner.” The idea was to let some guns go, track where they went, and take down the cartels. Problem is, the bureau persisted in this strategy so long

that around 2,500 guns “walked,” despite protests from ATF agents and even the participating gun dealers. One of these guns, evidently, was turned on Border Patrol agent Brian Terry, who died following a December 2010 shootout with a drug cartel. This story has simmered for weeks, and the ATF has yet to offer a full explanation for its behavior. Having walked, it needs to talk.

The Return of Rosy Scenario

ON March 18, the Congressional Budget Office released its preliminary review of President Obama’s budget request for the next fiscal year. They estimate the deficit embodied in the budget to be \$9.5 trillion over the next ten years, a whopping \$2.3 trillion more than the Obama administration claimed when it presented the budget in February.

According to the CBO report, approximately \$1.3 trillion of the difference is due to “differences in the underlying projections of what would happen under current law,” meaning that the OMB chose assumptions about economic performance that were overly optimistic. On the White House OMB blog, budget director Jack Lew defended the administration’s choice of assumptions, describing them as “more cautious than the consensus forecast for 2011” and “well within the range of the Federal Reserve’s assumptions in all years.”

The remaining \$1 trillion of the \$2.3 trillion difference between the two agencies is due to differing estimates of the impact of the president’s proposals. The two largest discrepancies are due to so-called magic asterisks, where the administration estimates savings from programs that are not specified.

The relative silence over the Obama administration’s astonishing budget chutzpah is deafening, especially in comparison with the treatment received by Republican presidents. Ronald Reagan’s first budget was pummeled so effectively by the American media in 1981 that people used to joke that Rosy Scenario was the highest-ranking member of the Reagan administration.

Today, Rosy is well over 300 pounds and clothed in a revealing dress made of magic asterisks, and she couldn’t get an ounce of media attention if her life depended on it.

Reagan’s forecasts were not ridiculed because they were wrong. Since they were forward-looking, who could tell? They were ridiculed because they were “unconventional,” differing markedly from the forecasts of that ultimate arbiter of convention, the Congressional Budget Office. More recently, President George W. Bush also was often accused of dishonest budgeting.

So who has been most dishonest? Each year, a president puts out a budget forecast by his own economic team, and that same set of policy proposals is then scored by the CBO. The accompanying chart looks at the difference between the presidents’ scores and the

CBO scores. It is based on five-year forecasts, since the George W. Bush administration did not release ten-year numbers.

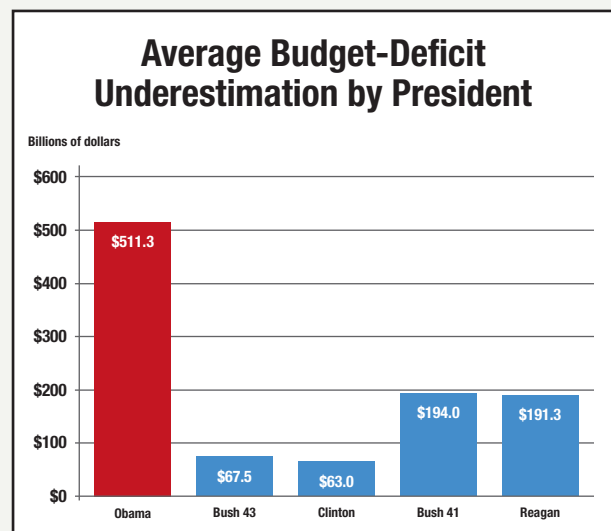
If one accepts the view that the CBO is a paragon of honesty and virtue, then the height of the bar is a measure of which president is the most dishonest, and President Obama is the clear winner. On average over his first three budgets, the CBO has corrected his estimates by increasing the deficit estimate by more than \$500 billion.

To put that correction in perspective, a 1981 article in *The Atlantic* reported that the first-pass, pre-Rosy Scenario estimate for the total Reagan deficit for 1982 was \$82 billion. Even if the Reagan team had gone with that estimate, today’s typical annual CBO correction would still be bigger than the entire Reagan deficit.

To be sure, the story is less dramatic if we adjust for growth in the overall economy. Relative to GDP, the typical Obama correction is about five times as large as we saw for Clinton or George W. Bush, and about the same scale as Reagan’s.

But even by this measure, we are left with the question, if Reagan’s budgeting was so newsworthy, why isn’t Obama’s?

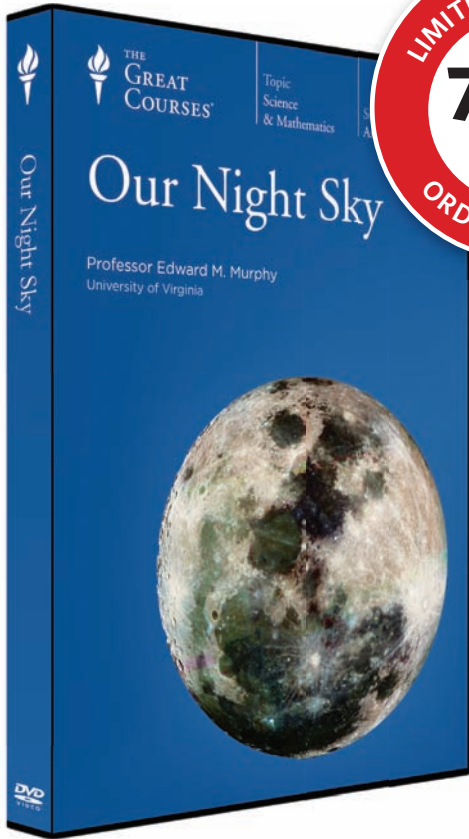
—KEVIN A. HASSETT



SOURCE: OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB) AND CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE (CBO). NOTE: THE CHART DEPICTS THE AVERAGE OVER EACH PRESIDENT’S TERM OF THE CBO “CORRECTION” TO THE OMB’S FIVE-YEAR DEFICIT PROJECTIONS.



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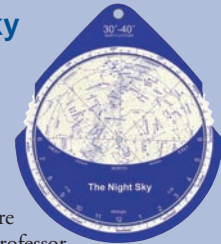
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■ After a 36-day hiatus in Illinois, the Indiana House Democrats have returned. They claim their exile made for big wins. But in the end, all they won was the right-to-work legislation being taken off the table (a concession made a day after the Democrats initially left) and a reduction in the number of school vouchers, along with a compromise on a labor agreement. The cost of those concessions, which might have happened even without the Democrats' flight? Over \$400,000 in taxpayer money for maintaining a legislature unable to vote, and disapproval by two-thirds of voters for the Democrats' decision to abandon their legislative duties. With numbers like that, the Indiana assembly may not even need Democrats to make a quorum after 2012.

■ Stephen Lerner is a muckety-muck at Barack Obama's favorite labor lobby, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). He has a plan to wage economic warfare on the United States, which he managed to commit accidentally to audio, after speculating darkly to the audience about possible "police agents" in attendance. Mr. Lerner's plan is to organize mortgage borrowers to default on loans from JP Morgan in order to destroy that bank and thereby, he hopes, spark a repeat of the 2008 financial crisis. In the ensuing panic and economic disorder, he says, his organization and its allies have a good chance of stepping in to impose their own economic and political agenda on the country. Apparently the next crisis is a terrible thing to waste, too.

■ Under the Railway Labor Act (RLA), a railroad or airline union needs votes from a "majority" of the "employees" it seeks to represent. This means that if there are, say, 100 flight attendants at a given airline, 51 need to cast "yes" votes for the union to take power—even if only 80 of them vote in the election. This puts the onus on unions to get the word out and increase turnout. For the first 75 years of its existence, the National Mediation Board (which decides RLA disputes) interpreted the law to mean what it says. Last year, however, at the unions' urging—and after President Obama tipped the board's balance to 2–1 Democrat—the NMB changed its "interpretation" of the law, declaring by fiat that a majority of *voters* would now suffice for unionization. As of this writing, the House is set to consider a version of the FAA Reauthorization Bill that would reverse the ruling. There is no downside: Congress needs to reassert control over this issue, and there is no reason that a union should have the authority to represent a group of employees in which it lacks majority support.

■ Sen. Rand Paul (R., Ky.) made his liberal colleagues uncomfortable the other day. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee was holding a hearing on the familiar incandescent light bulb, which Congress, in a 2007 law, has doomed to an unnatural death in 2012. "You busybodies always want to do something to tell us how to live our lives better," Paul chided an official from the Department of Energy. "I find it really appalling and hypocritical . . . that you favor a woman's right to an abortion but you don't favor a woman or a man's right to choose what kind of light bulb, what kind of dishwasher, what kind of washing machine [to use]." Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D., N.H.) leapt to the mandarin's defense: "I think it behooves us all to not engage in name-calling of those officials carrying out the work that Congress has asked them to do." She's right: Congress is the busybody.

AURELIA VENTURA/LA OPINIONNEWS.COM

■ Life imitated a bad sitcom for Joe Boardman, the CEO of Amtrak, who had to take a car to the ceremony dedicating Amtrak's new Wilmington, Del., station because the train he was riding on broke down. As the blogger Doug Powers points out, though, the real irony is that the new station is named for "Joe Biden, the man charged with ensuring that every stimulus project comes in on time and on budget," when "naturally this particular station came in \$5.3 million over budget." What's not so funny is that Biden and his fellow railfans want the federal government not just to continue its wasteful subsidies for Amtrak—an average of \$32 per passenger, and much higher outside the Northeast corridor, the only place the system makes a profit—but to build a vast new nationwide network of high-speed trains, at a cost of \$500 billion or so (before cost overruns and future operating subsidies). Any way you look at it—technological, economic, environmental—the plan is absurd, yet a coalition of nostalgists and visionaries is doing its best to bring American transportation back to the 1940s.



■ Chief Charlie Beck of the Los Angeles Police Department has ordered a change of policy at LAPD "sobriety checkpoints," where drivers are pulled over to be checked for intoxication. Formerly a driver found to be unlicensed had his car impounded for 30 days, whether he was sober or drunk. From now on *only U.S. citizens and legal resi-*

dents will have their cars impounded. Illegal immigrants will be spared. The chief's logic is that citizens and residents have the choice to get a license, while "undocumented immigrants" do not, and so cannot be blamed for their transgression. The chief's new policy met with applause from at least one quarter. Said Mexican consul general Juan Carlos Mendoza: "We really support this initiative by Chief Beck because it's in favor of the Latino community." So it is, and what could be more important than that? Surely not the principle of equal protection under the law.

■ Parents, teachers, and administrators everywhere have nightmares of a Columbine-style shooting at their school. How to prepare for such a dire event? Well, you might plan an exercise to see how emergency services respond. That kind of thing costs money, though. Will the federal Department of Homeland Security help out with funding? Only if your exercise clearly involves terrorism under the DHS definition. Having learned this, the emergency-management agency for Iowa's Pottawattamie County, with DHS assistance, set up an exercise at the high school in the town of Treynor, pop. 919. Who were the fictional shooters to be? Why, young white-supremacist gun enthusiasts angry at an influx of illegal immigrants and other minorities—who else? From the printed plan for the exercise, which is apparently the work of the DHS: "Suspect 1 approaches a small group of minorities in the northeast corner of the cafeteria . . . begins blurting racial slurs . . . pulls a handgun from his waistband, shooting one of the minority students . . ." No mention in this exercise plan of the shooters' clinging to their Bibles, but perhaps that is just a DHS oversight.

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■ Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act requires employers to accommodate the religious practices of their employees when doing so does not impose “undue hardship on the conduct of the employer’s business.” The school authorities of Berkeley, Ill., considered that it would indeed impose undue hardship on them and their students if teacher Safoorah Khan, their only math-lab instructor, were to take 19 days’ leave at peak exam-preparation time. They accordingly turned down her request. Ms. Khan wanted the leave to perform her *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca that pious Muslims are enjoined to take at least once in their lives. Ms. Khan took the leave anyway, resigned her post, and complained to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on grounds of religious discrimination. Eric Holder’s Justice Department is taking her side. Now little Berkeley—pop. 4,885, of which 59 percent are black and Hispanic—faces expensive litigation, likely leading to an expensive settlement. Who says Muslims aren’t assimilating?

■ One of the Democrats’ most ineffectual, and thus least harmful, innovations after taking over Congress in 2007 was to make the House of Representatives cafeteria “green.” Among other changes, plastic knives and forks were replaced with cornstarch-based utensils that, although able to cut nothing firmer than room-temperature cream cheese, had the virtue of being biodegradable—though in real-life landfill conditions, their biodegradability is as purely theoretical as the perfectibility of human nature. According to Rep. Dan Lungren (R., Calif.), the “green” regime actually increased the cafeteria’s energy consumption and greenhouse-gas emissions—not that it mattered, because, like so many “green” initiatives, this one was done for show and for self-love: Like the monastic practice of mortifying the flesh, the constant annoyance a “green” lifestyle imposes is a way to make oneself holy through suffering.

■ Portugal is headed for either a default or a bailout or both. Having failed to muster sufficient support for a last-ditch austerity package, prime minister José Sócrates has taken the political hemlock, and a new government is to be elected. But Portuguese law requires an interval of 55 days before holding the next election, which means that the country will be pressing up against a June deadline for redeeming a large package of bonds—which it does not have the money to do—before it has a new elected government to negotiate a bailout deal from the European Union or the International Monetary Fund. If, that is, any deal is in the making: Europe’s creditor nations are not so keen on stepping in to save a spendthrift basket case that just declined to save itself, and the mood of European electorates is positively hostile. Bond yields are rising along with the pressure on Lisbon. Portugal is so illiquid that an EU court has suspended a fine of a mere \$5 million, handed down for Lisbon’s failure to comply with European government-contracting laws. As Washington considers some mild austerity measures of its own, the Portuguese show the price of putting off hard decisions.

■ In his time as president of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak faced the Muslim Brotherhood as his main opposition. The Brotherhood aims to make Islam a universal movement and the secular Mubarak would have none of that. After his forced resignation, commentators began to speculate that the Brotherhood would have its revenge by forming the next government. A referendum in Egypt suggests that this might well be the case. Voters have

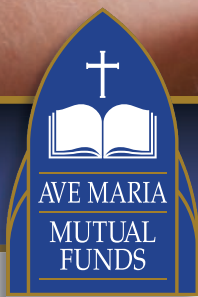
approved constitutional changes. As a result of their vote, legislative elections are to be held in September, and the presidential campaign soon after. The Muslim Brotherhood leaders believe that this sped-up timetable will give them an advantage. They are organized already and can command their fans to turn out, while the secular or liberal parties are in despair because they are unable to get their act together in time. Previous elections in Egypt have all been rigged blatantly, and these look likely to be rigged insidiously.

■ A photograph to be seen on the Internet shows a Syrian soldier in uniform urinating on a portrait set into a wall of Bashar Assad, his president. That sums up the feelings of many, perhaps most, Syrians. Bashar has no shred of legitimacy. He is president only because his father seized power and contrived to hand it on to him. Father and son have kept in place an emergency law that allows them to do as they please. Like the masses in other Arab countries, Syrians have had enough. Protest began in the southern town of Deraa, but has since spread all over. Bashar’s natural instinct has been to order his security forces to open fire. So-called snipers have killed and injured unknown numbers. Bashar’s spokesmen say that armed gangs are doing this shooting but of course they are unable to identify who these gangs might be. At the same time, Bashar is hinting that he will give way to at least some of the protesters’ demands when clearly he has no intention of doing so. The only person who credits him as a “reformer” is Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. She could learn something from the photograph of that disrespectful Syrian soldier.



■ Bahrain is a small spot in the Arab world but a large problem. King Hamad al-Khalifa and other members of his family are the rulers. Some are considered open to change, others resistant to it, but in any case they and the island’s elite are Sunni. The poorer and excluded two-thirds of the population are Shiite, and their representatives have long been asking to meet the Sunni on equal terms. Inspired by protest in other Arab capitals, the Shiites took over a central square in Manama, the island’s capital. Several people were shot dead. For a moment, the al-Khalifas and Sunnis seemed about to be dispossessed. Then the army cleared the protesters away, and troops from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf emirates entered—invaded, as the Shiites say. The hardliners have the upper hand for the moment. Opposition leaders and Shiite activists have been arrested, and even their few Sunni sympathizers shed crocodile tears. Emergency rule is to last three months. The al-Khalifas maintain that Shiite Iran is plotting to subvert and eventually swallow Bahrain. That’s also the Saudis’ belief, which is why they sent in troops. The Iranians reply that the entry of troops cannot be justified but otherwise they are suspiciously quiet—for the time being.

■ A rally of the Left got badly out of hand in London. For months trade-union leaders had been planning to hold a mass



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protest against cuts in government spending. Here was “class war,” in the challenge one of them threw down. An estimated 250,000 people duly assembled. In a speech to them, the new Labour-party leader, Ed Miliband, said that the proposed cuts went too far and were destroying “the fabric of our communities.” However, his party has a very comparable program to deal with the mounting national deficit. Worse was to come. Hijacking the rally, some hundreds of anarchists, many of them masked, set about smashing up totemic targets in London’s fashionable West End. They vandalized banks and ATMs, attacked the Ritz Hotel, occupied the luxury store Fortnum & Mason, and scribbled graffiti on Nelson’s Column, that proudest of historic landmarks in the city. They also set fires, and in the course of pitched battles with the police threw light bulbs filled with ammonia. Over 200 arrests were made. Embarrassed leftists are pretending that these masked thugs have nothing to do with them.

■ V. I. Lenin, né Ulyanov, had no children. But he had a niece, Olga Ulyanova, who has died in Moscow at 89. She is the last known living relative of the old monster. She lived her life as a chemist and a writer. (We assume that she was a real chemist, unlike the late Romanian first lady, Elena Ceausescu, whose husband’s regime promoted her as a chemist.) Ulyanova was a true believer, a keeper of her uncle’s flame. And of his body, in a way. When the country Lenin created died in 1991, Ulyanova was one of those insisting that his embalmed corpse remain in Red Square, encased in holy display. And so it does. The important thing is not that Lenin and his kinfolk die. The important thing is that Leninism, which has killed so many—as it is doing even now in North Korea, Cuba, and elsewhere—die.

■ Trey Parker and Matt Stone, creators of *South Park*, have premiered a Broadway musical, *The Book of Mormon*. Terry Teachout, drama critic for the *Wall Street Journal*, noted that the TV scamps pride themselves on being “equal-opportunity offenders.” Yet “if the title of this show were *The Quran* it wouldn’t have opened.” On *South Park* they did try to make some anti-Muslim jokes, until Comedy Central shushed them, so perhaps Parker and Stone are not quite as hypocritical as Teachout says. What they are, are bullies. Mormonism has just a handful of adherents in New York City; it is the religion liberals can most safely mock. After a rough start, Mormons have obeyed the laws for over a hundred years. For this they get to be punch lines? American entertainment can be rip-roaring. It can also be coarse, stupid, and cruel. Count your gross, boys.

■ Here’s the latest from Hollywood: an MGM remake of John Milius’s 1984 cult classic *Red Dawn*, in which a group of American teenagers wage guerrilla war against invading Soviet and Cuban forces. Not a bad idea; but with the USSR long defunct, who are the bad guys in this remake? When MGM embarked on the project in 2009 they settled on Communist China as the invader, and shot the film accordingly. By the time they were through, though, China had acceded to a World Trade Organization ruling to allow in more foreign movies, and an already substantial market for our media companies looks set fair to become colossal. Some digital remastering was done, and the *Red Dawn* villains are now North Korean. Moviegoers at the NATIONAL REVIEW level of sophistication might find a North

Korean invasion of the United States somewhat implausible, but presumably MGM’s attitude to its target audience is that of the Duke in *Huckleberry Finn*: “These country jakes won’t ever think of that.” Bearing in mind Google Corp.’s recent accommodations, the first rule of American commerce now seems to be that one must not offend the Chinese Communist party. There hardly seems any need for an actual invasion.

■ One of WFB’s subjects, in the early 2000s, was the pornification of our culture. He particularly examined Abercrombie & Fitch, the clothier, which, in its advertising, was a prime offender. Given A&F’s preference for skimpiness, maybe we should call it a non-clothier? But now the company is adding clothes, in a way. The spring line of its youth division, Abercrombie Kids, features the “Ashley,” an itty-bitty bikini. Abercrombie Kids is pitched to girls aged 8 to 14. The Ashley, in the words of one report, “comes complete with thick padding for breast enhancement.” For years, the squares have decried adults’ sexualization of children. The squares must keep decrying, because the barbarians don’t let up.

■ David Brock, founder of the left-wing watchdog group Media Matters, has been thinking of Fox News and how to combat it. “The strategy that we had had toward Fox,” he told Ben Smith of *Politico*, “was basically a strategy of containment.” Brock wants to move on to “guerrilla warfare and sabotage.” But come, sir, you will have to spread your pinions a bit. Try this: “Cry ‘Havoc!’ and let slip the dogs of war.” Or this: “What though the field be lost? All is not lost; the unconquerable Will, and study of revenge, immortal hate, and courage never to submit or yield.” Or this: “To the last, I grapple with thee; from hell’s heart I stab at thee; for hate’s sake I spit my last breath at thee.” (But beware of this: “I can call spirits from the vasty deep.’ ‘Why, so can I, or so can any man; but will they come when you do call for them?’”)



■ Here is a true case study some business school might like to introduce into its Personnel Management course. Employee X tells her manager that employee W is a witch who has put a spell on her. To be precise, W’s hex caused the heater of X’s car to malfunction. (This is a northern town in a northern state.) What action should the manager take, other than of course to acquire for himself a protective garlic necklace and silver crucifix? Managers for the Transportation Security Administration at Albany International Airport in upstate New York fired—no, not *burned*, only terminated—the witch, one Carole A. Smith, who indeed describes herself as “a proud Wiccan.” There being no issue in the republic so infinitesimally trivial as to be of no concern whatever to the federal authorities, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is on the case. No doubt they will, after mighty legal labors, restore Ms. Smith to her former position, if a house doesn’t fall on her first. Calls for a new broom at the Albany TSA office have so far gone unheeded.

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■ Rose Flynn DeMaio was not quite present at the creation, but almost: She came to NATIONAL REVIEW shortly after we were founded in 1955. She was a Queens girl; she has spent her adulthood in Long Island. And she has now retired—having worked at NR even longer than WFB did. She was on the business end of things, looking after money and other vital matters. Rose is vital herself: attractive, snappy, a bowler, a dancer. Someone here said the other day, “Rose has looked 39 for decades.” And may she keep her bowling scores over 200. Thanks for everything, sweet Rose.

■ Was Geraldine Ferraro qualified to be Walter Mondale’s running mate in 1984? She was a 49-year-old, three-term congresswoman from Queens. To inexperience, she added a liberalism as pure as Mondale’s own. And once she stepped into the klieg lights, her realtor husband, John Zaccaro, turned out to have had some dodgy tenants (a gambling den, a porn operation, and a Gambino capo). She was tapped to be the first woman on a national ticket so that she could be the first woman on a national ticket: the affirmative-action candidate. Ronald Reagan’s 49-state sweep kept her in the footnotes. As the years passed, she showed her better sides: When the supporters of another affirmative-action candidate flayed her for supporting Hillary Clinton in 2008, she stuck by her guns. She battled multiple myeloma gallantly. Dead at 75. R.I.P.

■ The life of Elizabeth Taylor, in ascending order of importance: For the last few decades, she was that most modern of celebrities, the wreck of herself: tabloid fodder for illness, weight gain, and her Madonna-and-child relationship with Michael Jackson. Her two causes were Israel (a liberal icon when she took it up, embattled now) and AIDS (a PR risk at first, later to become a religion); it is a tribute to her consistency that she stuck with both through their downs and ups. Her romantic life was a satire on romance. She could act, in several different styles: smoldering, comedy, and Albee. She was a phantom of delight. And: *Oh those weepers, how they hypnotize.* Dead at 79. R.I.P.

LIBYA

Whose War in Libya?

NOT surprisingly, over the last two weeks President Obama has proven himself a highly ambivalent warrior. Bizarrely, he says he’s putting the U.S. military at the service of the U.N.’s mission in Libya (protection of the population) rather than at the service of his own goal as president of the United States (the ouster of Moammar Qaddafi). We have high tolerance for diplomatic mumbo-jumbo to win allied support and soothe the political sensibilities, so long as we don’t fool ourselves that there’s any substitute for American leadership and don’t let form dictate substance. President Obama at times seems dismayingly sincere in believing that in the ramshackle Libyan coalition he’s forged an entirely different mode for America’s engagement in the world.

This is silly, and ultimately pernicious. The United States military is not an armed department of the United Nations, nor is it meant to be sent willy-nilly around the world preempting atrocities, as it would be under modish theories of the “responsibility to protect.” The most important reason to move in Libya was to pre-



Anti-Qaddafi fighters celebrate on a destroyed tank.

serve the rebellion there, toward the end of weakening Qaddafi and ultimately toppling him. He’s proven himself a menace to us, to the region, and to his people. We believe in redemption, but not in the case of a miserable little dictator whose conversion in recent years to more reasonable behavior was clearly driven by fear of George W. Bush. We should be actively seeking the end of his regime.

That means continuing to destroy his military on the ground. It means attacking his command-and-control operations, in the hopes that a lucky strike kills him. And it means reaching out through every possible diplomatic avenue to offer him an escape in the form of a one-way ticket out of Libya.

The only force available on the ground to move on Tripoli is the rebels from the east. We shouldn’t romanticize them. Not only are they highly disorganized, they will surely commit abuses of their own as soon as they have the upper hand. As can be expected in such a society, some of the fighters are jihadis whom we’d be seeking to kill in different circumstances. Their chief virtue is that they are anti-Qaddafi. But we should be gaining as much knowledge of the particular players on the ground as possible so we aren’t flying so blind.

Meanwhile, we should be engaging with the Transitional National Council in Benghazi and helping it build its capacities, so it can better govern the areas it controls and be better prepared to govern—or share in governing—the country in the event of Qaddafi’s fall.

But we should have realistic expectations for any post-Qaddafi Libya. It is a society much better primed for an insurgency and bitter division than for a functioning democracy. Since we are not going to send ground forces to police Libya if Qaddafi falls, have done no post-war planning, and have limited knowledge of the social and political terrain, our ability to control the ultimate outcome is very limited. As a practical matter, our goal is primarily the end of Qaddafi, a terrorist with the blood of Americans up to his elbows and a dictator so heinous even the club of Arab dictators could no longer abide him.

If his ouster is the final outcome, every diplomatic dodge will have been worthwhile, and President Obama will be able to claim victory in this “kinetic military operation.”

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Replacement Plan

Devising the alternative to Obamacare

BY RAMESH PONNURU

ON health care, Republicans have unified behind a slogan rather than a policy. The slogan, “repeal and replace,” describes what they want to do to the Democrats’ health-care law, also known as the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare. So far, the emphasis has been on repeal. By the fall of 2012, however, they are going to have to spell out what they want to replace Obamacare with. And that’s where things get tricky.

So far the heavy emphasis on repeal has made sense. Only if Obamacare is not here to stay, after all, do discussions of what will replace it have a point. The practical political appeal of this emphasis for Republicans is also obvious: There is more opposition to Obamacare than there is support for any specific alternative. This is true both among voters at large, who are naturally unfamiliar with specific proposals, and among Republican congressmen, many of whom have their own pet ideas.

In the 2010 election, the conservative challenge was to register a protest against both Obamacare and the larger governing philosophy it represents. The 2012 elections present the opportunity to replace both. Moral obligation and political neces-

sity alike counsel Republicans to spell out what replacement would entail.

In doing so they should avoid some past Republican mistakes. Sen. John McCain ran on a bold free-market health-care platform in 2008. But he seemed unfamiliar with and uninterested in his own health-care plan, and did nothing to defend it from ferocious Democratic attacks. And even if the debate had been truly joined, the plan might well have proved unpopular.

Its key provision was to end the tax preference for employer-provided health insurance, and thus encourage the growth of the market for individually purchased insurance. Free-market policy analysts make a compelling case for the virtues of this approach. It would, among other things, give individuals more control over their health care, provide them an incentive to control costs, and make it easier for them to take their insurance from job to job. People who are locked out of the employer-based system would get more options. McCain’s plan is both simple and, compared with the current system, fair.

The drawback is that it is potentially very disruptive. If young and healthy people dropped their employer-based

insurance for the cheap premiums they would likely find on the individual market, everyone who stays with company plans would be stuck paying much higher premiums—causing more people to exit them, and possibly unraveling the employer-based system altogether. For some conservatives, that’s a feature rather than a bug: The fact that a truly free market wouldn’t tie insurance to employment is a sign that it makes no sense to do so. But most people are satisfied with their existing health insurance and wary of any grand plans that would upend them. That sentiment was a major reason voters opposed Clintoncare and Obamacare, and it would surely stymie free-market reform as well.

In 2009, House Republicans offered an alternative health-care plan that steered clear of this problem. Their bill included malpractice reform and freed individuals to buy health insurance across state lines, but it did not change the tax treatment of health insurance. As a result of this omission, it also had limited potential to help people without insurance. (The Congressional Budget Office, perhaps too pessimistically, estimated that the plan would increase the insurance rolls by only 3 million people.) The Republicans may have assumed that the insured majority of voters care more about affordability and avoiding rationing than about helping the uninsured, and if so they were correct. But voters would like to make a dent in the problems of the uninsured, too, if they can do so in a way that does not threaten their own care or pocketbooks.

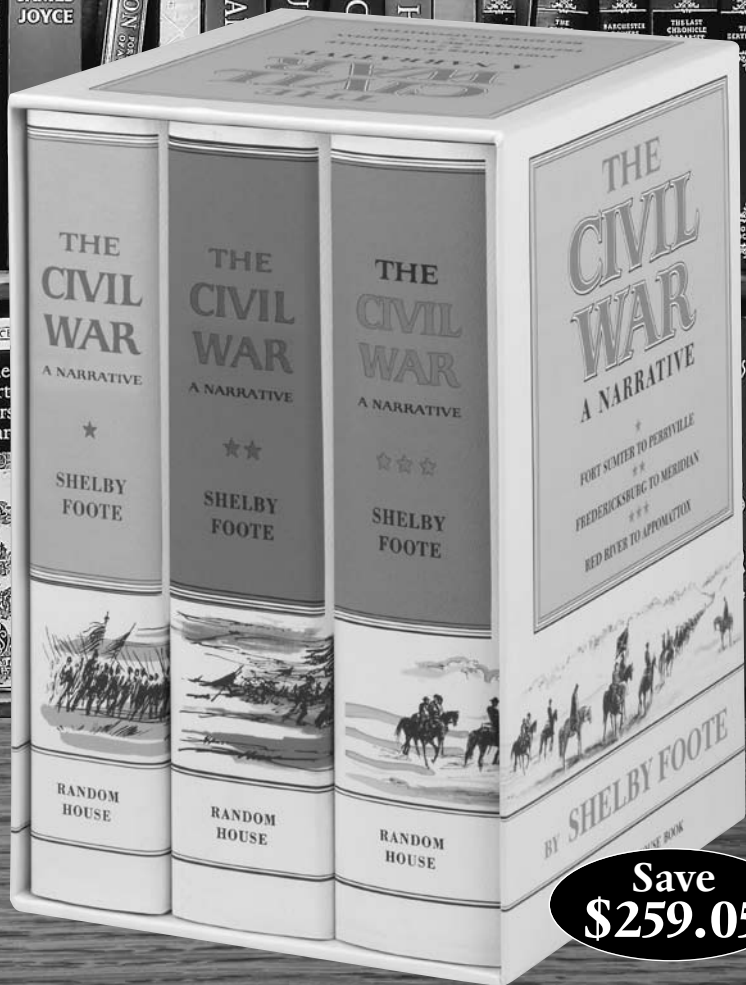
A new conservative health-care plan should offer a gradual transition rather than a sudden shove to a market less reliant on employer provision of insurance. Currently the biggest tax breaks go to the highest-wage employees, and the most expensive insurance plans get the biggest tax breaks. The tax break should be converted into a flat credit, so everyone gets the same tax benefit and nobody has an incentive to overspend. Employees should be able to use the credit toward their company plans, and allowed to use them for self-purchased plans only if their company does not offer them coverage. This compromise, floated in these pages by Ethics and Public Policy Center scholar and Bush-administration budget official James Capretta, would help the uninsured get coverage while keeping the disruption of the policies of the currently insured to a

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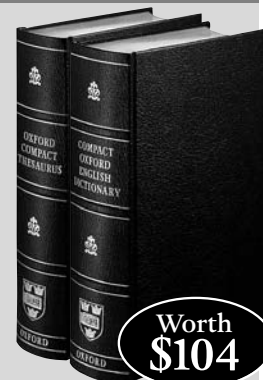
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minimum. In time, the growth of the individual market might make bolder reform possible.

The second component of conservative health-care reform is one that most Republicans have already embraced: allowing individuals to buy health insurance across state lines. In 1944, the Supreme Court ruled that insurance, as a form of commerce among the states, should be regulated by the federal government rather than the states. The federal government promptly passed a law handing the matter back to the states. Each state has its own regulatory requirements, such as mandates spelling out what health insurance has to cover. (Congress lets large companies out of these requirements.)

This set of state-by-state regulations has prevented the emergence of a national market for individually purchased insurance policies. Both the McCain plan and the House Republican plan proposed to force the states to allow people to buy insurance sold in other states. Competition among insurers would increase, and states' cost-raising regulations would do less damage.

In the long run, a robust individual market should shrink one problem of the current system: When people with chronic illnesses lose their coverage, they have trouble getting new policies. If they were buying insurance themselves instead of relying on their workplaces, they would be able to select renewable policies (or buy insurance against changes in their health status). Until that market has matured, however, Republicans advocate that the government fund "high-risk pools" for the uninsurable. They have not, however, been willing to put up enough money. It's a penny-wise policy. The needs of people with "preexisting conditions" were the chief rationale for Obamacare, which is much more expensive. So a third component of a conservative alternative to Obamacare should be much higher funding for these pools.

In 2012, Republicans should also pledge to reform the two big health-care entitlements, along the lines that Rep. Paul Ryan (R., Wis.) proposes. Medicaid, the program for the poor, is a dysfunctional partnership between the federal government and the states. The federal government foots half the bill even though the states are free to increase benefit levels and expand the rolls. This arrangement only seems like a good deal for the states,

since it leaves them in a bind during recessions: They spend too much on Medicaid, but cutbacks impose a dollar of pain on their constituents for every 50 cents they save the states. The insurance Medicaid provides, meanwhile, is crummy. Many doctors don't take it.

If we were going with the McCain plan, it might make sense for the federal government to take more control of the program, cash it out, and give the money to the program's beneficiaries in the form of insurance vouchers, as some conservative health wonks have recently proposed. But a more politically realistic reform would be for the federal government to cap its total spending on the program and give it to the states to spend on health care for the poor as they see fit. In addition to minimizing disruption, a program of block grants could win the active support of some governors, especially Republican governors.

Medicare, on the other hand, is a fully federal program, and its growth is the most alarming part of the budget outlook. It has also terribly distorted health markets, both by attempting to set prices and by encouraging a fee-for-service model of medicine that experts of all political stripes consider economically wasteful and medically counterproductive (because it creates an incentive to perform procedures of limited value). The program should be converted into vouchers for tomorrow's senior citizens, with the size of the voucher varying based on the recipient's health status and lifetime income and total spending kept within budgetary limits.

Squeezing savings out of Medicare won't be popular, and voucherization can easily be caricatured as "privatizing" or "gutting" the program. But the alternative is augmenting the least popular features of Obamacare: tax increases and rationing through price controls. We have followed this approach to shoring up Medicare for decades, Obamacare doubles down on it, and trying to get to solvency this way would require much, much more of the same—and probably still wouldn't work.

The liberal version of health-care reform is highly Washington-centric. The Obama administration's recent promise to grant states more flexibility turns out to amount to allowing them to establish Canadian-style single-payer programs within their borders. Republican governors and state legislators can and should

play a more active role in promoting free-market medicine.

Many states have reformed their medical-malpractice rules, and continued experimentation should be encouraged. Some states have ended their policies of requiring medical facilities to get "certificates of need" before investing in new equipment; others should follow suit, these policies having proven ineffective at cost control or, really, at anything other than discouraging competition. States can also take many steps to free up the supply side of health markets. Lifting restrictions on telemedicine, allowing advanced-practice nurses to perform more procedures, and easing training requirements for physical therapists and audiologists are among the suggestions of health-care economist Shirley Svorny.

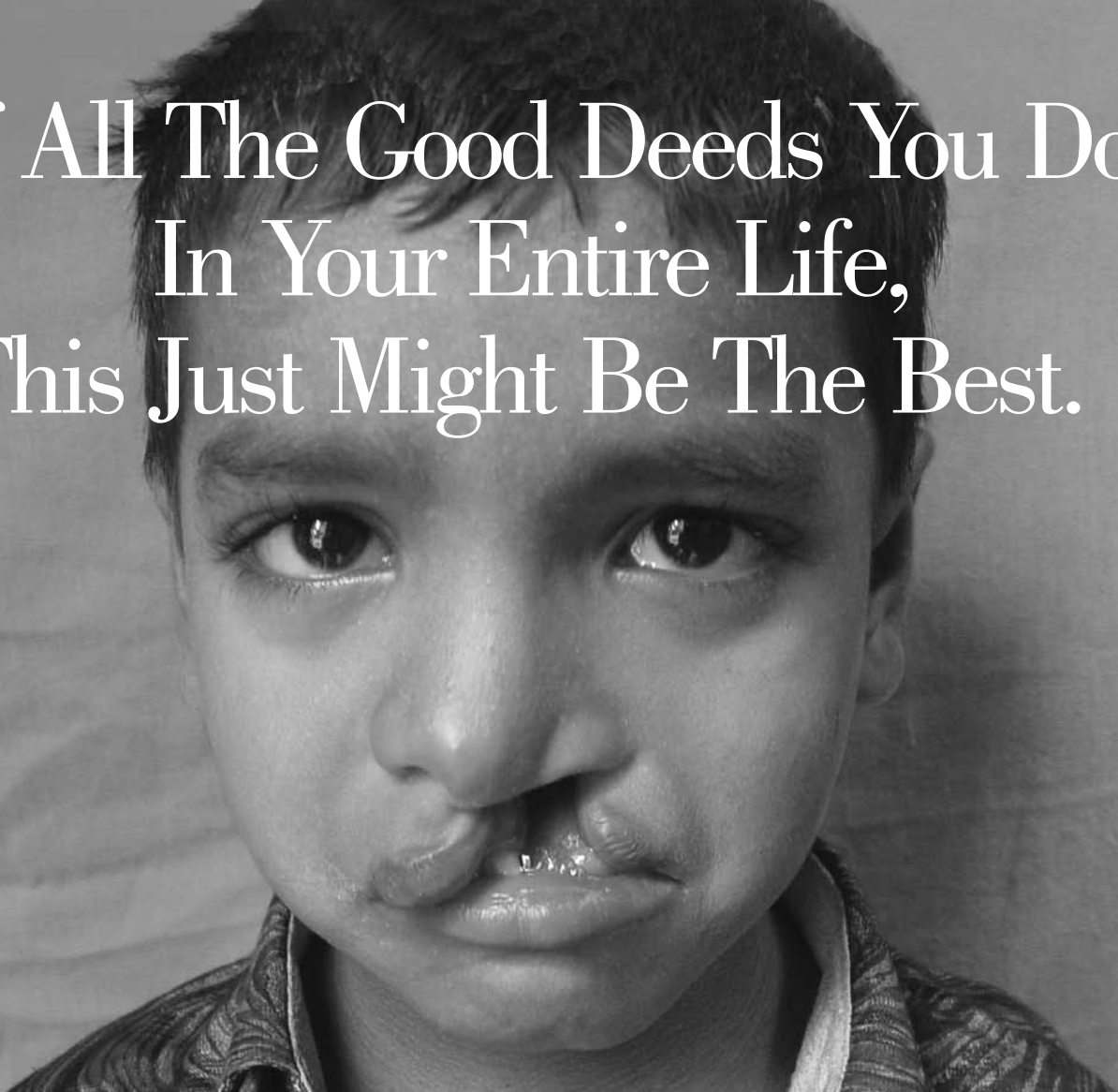
While the federal government may rightly make state governments let their residents buy health insurance across state lines, the states do not need permission to allow it themselves. Any state can pass a law stipulating that meeting the regulatory requirements of any other state will satisfy its own regulations. State governments have typically preferred to maintain their own regulatory fiefdoms and cosset protected provider groups, but the new interest among conservatives in interstate commerce in health insurance may change this habit.

These policy proposals may seem like a grab-bag, but they have several features in common. They proceed from the assumption that what ails our health-care system is less market failure than a failure to have free markets. They attempt to match levels of authority with their competencies. (The federal government is no good at forcing health-care providers to be efficient. It is rather good at writing checks.) They involve gradual change: Today's seniors can stay in traditional Medicare, and younger people can stay in their company plans. While the proposals complement each other, they do not all have to be implemented together in one huge piece of legislation. They tackle discrete problems rather than trying to impose a rationalizing vision on a complex social system. They neither assume nor require superhuman wisdom from program administrators.

Republicans should still place most of their emphasis on the case for repealing Obamacare. But as part of that case they should be able to point to something better.

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Where the Jobs Aren't

Public-sector cartels are choking off economic growth

BY REIHAN SALAM

ONE of the bright spots in our otherwise dismal recovery has been the strength of U.S. exports, which have risen to 12.8 percent of GDP from 10 percent a decade ago. States dominated by factories and farms have fared relatively well as booming emerging markets have gobbled up American industrial equipment and agricultural goods. There is no guarantee that exports will continue to climb as the global economy slows down. Yet it remains striking that the strongest part of the American economy is the part that faces the most vigorous international competition.

In March, the economists Michael Spence and Sandile Hlatshwayo published a report called “The Evolving Structure of the American Economy and the Employment Challenge,” a detailed account of how the American labor market changed between 1990 and 2008. Many, including columnist Steven Pearlstein of the *Washington Post*, believe that the report bolsters the case for activist government. But Spence and Hlatshwayo have also offered ammunition to those who believe that public-sector cartels threaten to choke off economic growth.

The central premise of the report is that there has been a dramatic divergence between the parts of the economy that are internationally tradable and those that are not. U.S. firms that sell goods and services that can be shipped or delivered electronically face lean and hungry competitors and potential competitors around the world. The good news is that U.S. firms have risen to the challenge, sharply increasing output while keeping costs contained, largely through greater specialization.

But the need to contain costs has meant that large numbers of low- and mid-skill jobs have been shed or sent offshore. While knowledge-intensive industries have seen big gains in employment, tradi-

tional blue-collar manufacturing work is vanishing at an accelerating pace. On balance, employment in the tradable sector was flat from 1990 to 2008.

The nontradable sector, in contrast, has seen rapid employment growth over the same period. There were 27.3 million more jobs in 2008 than in 1990, and 26.7 million of those were in the nontradable sector. This sector, which includes government, health care, retail, accommodation and food, and construction, operates in a very different environment from that of the tradable sector. The largest employer in the nontradable sector is government, which accounted for 22.5 million of the 149.2 million U.S. jobs in 2008, and 4.1 million of the new jobs that were added between 1990 and 2008. Health care, a sector heavily subsidized and regulated by the government, accounted for an additional 16.3 million jobs in 2008, 6.3 million of which had been added since 1990.

As Spence and Hlatshwayo acknowledge, it is extremely difficult to measure productivity in these sectors, because there is no way to tell what consumers would pay for such services in an open market. The best we can do is measure the inputs: Public schools, for example, are evaluated on the basis of how much local taxpayers spend on them, not how much parents would pay to enroll their children in them.

Spence and Hlatshwayo are careful not to speculate about the drivers of the expansion in government and health-care employment. But one could argue that the last decade saw a kind of undercover fiscal stimulus, particularly at the state and local level. Productivity growth in high-end services and manufacturing translated into income gains for high-skilled workers and asset-rich households, which swelled state and local tax revenues. This revenue was then channeled into politically popular efforts to reduce class sizes and expand the reach of Medicaid, among other measures. As the number of taxpayer-financed jobs increased, so too did the constituency for the growth of government.

One reason we see so much protest when state and local governments have tried to roll back spending may be that many public employees who insist that they've endured steep pay cuts relative to what they'd make in the private sector recognize that this is very far from the case. For them, thanks to the hidden stimulus, the personal stakes are high.

Politics aside, Spence and Hlatshwayo suggest that the growth in public-sector employment will not continue unabated as public-debt levels and taxes rise. Other nontradable industries, such as real estate and construction, are also unlikely to grow rapidly, in employment or in total output. And while employment levels have remained fairly high in the accommodation and food sector, total output is relatively low, which accounts for the sector's low wages and incomes.

The authors leave us with a bleak picture of the future employment landscape. While the tradable sector has in some sense flourished, it has not generated enough middle-class jobs to absorb the country's large and growing number of less-skilled and mid-skilled workers. It doesn't help that many of these workers are Latino and black, a fact that could deepen existing cultural and political divides. Growth in the nontradable sector, particularly in government and health care, has proven unsustainable, and no amount of fiscal stimulus will change that fact.

At the end of their report, Spence and Hlatshwayo offer a familiar litany of policy proposals to address the death of good middle-class jobs, ranging from infrastructure investments to more federal research-and-development spending to tax reform.

These ideas fail to get at the heart of the problem, which is the sluggishness of productivity growth in the nontradable sector, and in particular in education and health care. Had productivity in the nontradable sector increased as quickly as it did in the tradable sector, the United States would be far richer than it is today.

To be sure, many existing firms and employment categories would have shed jobs. But the wealth created by this productivity boom would have increased the demand for labor-intensive services. That is roughly what happened in the 1990s, when the retail sector experienced an unprecedented productivity boom that helped lower prices of consumer goods while also raising wages. The extreme inefficiency of the public sector is a product of the same rigid work rules and compensation schemes that hobbled the private sector in the era of stagflation. While politicians from the president on down have given lip service to the public-sector-productivity problem, all but a

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handful have failed to understand its source.

In a highly illustrative July 2009 interview with *Bloomberg Businessweek*, President Obama recounted a conversation with leading corporate executives. “We talked about the fact that, in the 1980s, when everybody was afraid Japan was going to eat our lunch, a lot of companies did a 180 in terms of quality improvement, efficiency, increasing productivity.” As the president explained, “there was a change in corporate culture that significantly boosted corporate productivity for a long time and helped create the boom of the ’90s.”

What the president ignores is that this “change in corporate culture” was more like a revolution. Firms didn’t embrace quality improvement, efficiency, and increasing productivity merely because fear of the Japanese lit a fire under their behinds. Shrewd executives understood that “corporate raiders” would seize their assets if they didn’t. Thousands of workers were laid off as firms embraced pay-for-performance compensation for managers and front-line workers. The best managers experienced huge gains in earnings as a result, a phenomenon the president has decried as a driver of rising inequality. But the rise of pay-for-performance didn’t reflect a perverse disregard for the working stiff; it reflected a desire to retain foot-loose talent, and to survive in the face of fierce competition.

Later in the interview, the president explained that he wanted to see the same productivity revolution transform health care and education. One can make a strong case that part of the reason the “change in corporate culture” did not spread to these nontradable sectors is that they are sectors in which the productivity-enhancing dynamic of competition, liquidation, and innovation was dampened by the heavy role of the state and high levels of union membership. Yet Obama has described Wisconsin governor Scott Walker’s efforts to pare back collective-bargaining rights for state workers as an “assault on unions.”

That the president would defend the status quo in the public sector makes perfect sense, given the political incentives at work. But his desire to insulate public workers from competition will doom all efforts to increase productivity in the most critical parts of the nontradable sector. And that, very bluntly, will make us all poorer than we might otherwise be. **NR**

‘The Right Side of History’

It’s bunk

BY JAY NORDLINGER

IN politics, as in clothes, there is fashion. And that includes fashion in political language. About 15 years ago, everybody in Washington started to say “kabuki dance.” I don’t know why—they just did. Every process or procedure or exercise was a “kabuki dance.” My impression is, that term is fading out a little. But it is still in frequent use. Last month, a writer for *The Atlantic* spoke of “the kabuki dance that is our justice system.” The term has even crept into the sports pages: “NFL Talks Were a Kabuki Dance,” read a headline, also from last month.

“Double down” is an expression very, very recent. Until about a year and a half ago, I don’t think I had ever heard the expression in my life. It comes from gambling, from blackjack in particular. Suddenly, the expression was in every political conversation and every political article. President Obama and the Democrats, despite some setbacks, were “doubling down” on their health-care efforts. Anyone who was intensifying his activity, in any direction, was “doubling down.” Seldom are people more herd-like than in matters of language.

Lately, “the right side of history” is everywhere. We have long had the phrase. But people are doubling down, or tripling down, on their use of it. A close cousin of this phrase is “the tide of history”—a tide not to be resisted. When Jody Williams won the Nobel peace prize in 1997 for her campaign to ban landmines, she said that President Clinton was “outside the tide of history”—because, under him, the United States refused to join the Mine Ban Treaty (chiefly because treaty organizers refused to make an exception for the demilitarized zone between the Koreans). The laureate also said that Clinton was “on the wrong side of humanity”—and a “weenie.”

Back to “the right side of history.” When they say it, what do people mean? They may mean “my side,” or “the good

side,” or “the side that posterity will smile on.” People may be alluding to the ultimate triumph of liberal democracy. Or they may be alluding to the ultimate triumph of socialism, or a stricter form of collectivism. For generations, the Left has assumed that history marches with them: Get out of the way, or be crushed.

Robert Conquest, the British historian, notes that “the right side of history” has a “Marxist twang.” (He knows a thing or two about twangs, being married to a wonderful Texan.) Andrew Roberts, another British historian, says that “the right side of history” is “profoundly Marxian,” although the phrase is used by people of varying political stripes. Yet another historian, the American Richard Pipes, says, bluntly, “The whole notion is nonsensical.” History does not have sides, although historians do.

The recent upheavals in the Arab world have occasioned an outbreak of right-side-of-history-ism. Obama, defending his erratic posturings on Egypt, said, “History will end up recording that at every juncture . . . we were on the right side of history.” Commenting on the Libyan drama, he said, “I believe that Qaddafi is on the wrong side of history.” Speaking more broadly, he said, “I think that the region will be watching carefully to make sure we’re on the right side of history, but also that we are doing so as a member of the world community.” That means (if I may interpret), “George W. Bush was right about the power and necessity of freedom, but I’d rather swallow cyanide than say so.”

At a White House press briefing, a reporter had a little fun with the presidential press secretary, Jay Carney: “You mentioned . . . that Mubarak [the ousted Egyptian leader] was on this ‘wrong side of history.’ Is the Bahraini monarchy also on the ‘wrong side of history?’” (This monarchy is another American ally, embattled.) Faced with this, the press secretary had to do a little dancing.

Travel back to 1984, when Jesse Jackson was running for president. He said that the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, who were self-declared Marxist-Leninists, were “on the right side of history.” He also had some thoughts on the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. “Unfortunately,” said the reverend, “sometimes the best of people lose their way.” These particular best of people lost their way by murdering over 20 percent of the Cambodian population.

Condoleezza Rice had, and has, a view of history much different from Jackson's. In a 2000 speech, she recalled her days in the White House of the first George Bush: "I was working very long hours, but I was working on the right side of history. And I started to wonder what it must be like to go to work every day in the Soviet Union, working on the wrong side of history."

When the subject is racial, or even vaguely racial, you can expect talk of history, and its "right" and "wrong" sides. In 1983, Chicago had a mayoral contest. Walter Mondale, gearing up to run for president, endorsed Richard M. Daley (as white as his father, Richard J., the late mayor). A group of black leaders, in which Jackson was prominent, was highly displeased. They were supporting Harold Washington, a black congressman (and the eventual winner). And they had a warning for Mondale: "It is imperative that you detach yourself from [the Daley] campaign at a minimum. At a maximum, you should reconsider and identify with the right side of history and support Congressman Harold Washington." Many years later, in 2007, Daley *files* was mayor, as he had been for a long time: He was running for his sixth and final term. Illinois's junior senator, Barack Obama, endorsed him—which stung a black candidate challenging Daley. Obama, said this candidate, William "Dock" Walls III, had endorsed "the wrong side of history."

Over and over, Obama has made clear that he considers himself on the right side of history (if not history itself). During the 2008 presidential campaign, he said, "Listen, I respect John McCain for his half century of service to this country. But he is on the wrong side of history right now." In other words, the Republican nominee was in Obama's way. Some criticized the Democrat as too young and inexperienced to be president. Attacking this line of criticism, Bill Clinton said, "It didn't work in 1992, because we were on the right side of history"—he himself was a nominee, for the first time, then. "And it will not work in 2008, because Barack Obama is on the right side of history."

When it came time to effect their health-care transformation, Obama and the Democrats talked a lot about history. "This is history," congressmen would say. When their legislation passed, Obama said, "Tonight, we answered the call of history." Earlier, the *New York Times* columnist Nicholas D. Kristof wrote, "It's now

broadly apparent that those who opposed Social Security in 1935 and Medicare in 1965 were wrong in their fears and tried to obstruct a historical tide"—there's that tide again. "This year, the fate of health care will come down to a handful of members of Congress. . . . If they flinch and health reform fails, they'll be letting down their country at a crucial juncture. They'll be on the wrong side of history." The Senate majority leader, Harry Reid, said, "Instead of joining us on the right side of history, all Republicans can come up with is this: 'Slow down, stop everything, let's start over.'" Reid had an analogy to make, just perfect for Republicans who opposed the Democrats' health-care vision: "When this country belatedly recognized the wrongs of slavery, there were those who dug in their heels and said, 'Slow down, it's too early, let's wait, things aren't bad enough.'"

In the midst of this health-care debate, Reid had an uncomfortable moment, when a book revealed what he had said about Obama's advantages as a candidate. Obama, mused Reid, was a "light-skinned" black "with no Negro dialect, unless he wanted to have one." Obama leapt to his defense, absolving his fellow Democrat by saying, "This is a good man who has always been on the right side of history."

Obama likes to talk, not only about the "right" and "wrong" "sides" of history, but about "the arc of history." For example, he praised the uprising in Egypt as having "bent the arc of history." In this, he is echoing Martin Luther King. Obama had a special rug made for the Oval Office, into which are woven quotations from U.S. presidents and MLK. King's quotation is, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." At the time the rug was unveiled, many pointed out that King was, in fact, echoing Theodore Parker, the abolitionist minister. But attribution was not of utmost importance here; there was no real need for a reweaving.

With every passing day, you hear something else about "the right side of history," or the "wrong side." Gay marriage is inevitable, people say: Better get on the right side of history. I say, gay marriage may be right or wrong, inevitable or evitable, but why drag history into it? The victorious side is not always the right one, is it? Remember what Whittaker Chambers said. After his break with Communism, he told the congressional

committee, "I know that I am leaving the winning side for the losing side." He turned out to be wrong—although Cubans, North Koreans, and others are still being lashed by Communism. Che Guevara was part of the winning team in Cuba. That dictatorship is now over 50 years old. Guevara, a butcher and totalitarian, gazes out from a billion T-shirts. Is he on the right side of history?

The notion that history moves toward the light, says Andrew Roberts, should have died at Auschwitz. Human beings in any age are good at hurtling the world into the pit. Sometimes history, or the trend of affairs, deserves to be reversed, or at least opposed. William F. Buckley Jr. thought so, when he founded NATIONAL REVIEW



Guevara and Castro: Are they on the 'right' or 'wrong' side of history? Or simply monsters?

in 1955. In a mission statement, he and his crew said that they would stand "athwart history, yelling Stop"—particularly because practically "no one" was "inclined to do so."

History may not be bunk, as Henry Ford said it was. But "the right side of history" is largely bunk. Its use may be benign and well-meaning; its use may be sinister and threatening. (We could do a whole essay, or book, on "social justice"!)

In any case, we might ask whether we are on the right side of an issue, or a question, or a problem, leaving history—or worse, History—well out of it.

Like you, maybe, I favor a free-market approach to health care. I think it's better for all. But I don't pretend that history calls it forth.

NR



War Without Strategy

What, precisely, does the president hope to achieve in Libya?

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

PRES. BARACK OBAMA'S reluctant military intervention in Libya followed from a number of logical considerations. First, his administration had been widely criticized for much of 2011 for his contradictory and tardy admonitions to pro-Western Tunisian strongman Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak to step down in the face of mounting domestic political pressure. Too often, the degree of American official support for reformers in the streets of the Middle East seemed predicated only on their chances of success—as if the Nobel peace laureate Obama were some sort of Kissingerian realist rather than a principled proponent of universal human rights.

That charge of moral indifference grew louder as the president again kept silent during three weeks of escalating violence in Libya—at least until February 23, when he finally expressed anger over the unrest. He subsequently dispatched Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to Europe to echo the more muscular rhetoric of our French and British allies and at last announced American intentions to enforce a no-fly zone in reaction to a United Nations Security Council resolution of March 17.

When the nearly victorious rebels seemed to be headed for Tripoli, and even the opportunistic Arab League joined the world chorus of support for them, the president apparently assumed that Qaddafi would, like Mubarak and Ben Ali, depart quietly. After all, the rebellion was ostensibly as noble as the terrorist Qaddafi was savage. Libya's insurgents, heretofore unknown, would presumably prove to have the same Westernized veneer as the

Egyptian and Tunisian professionals who had become the international media face of Middle East protests.

Moreover, in operational terms, pilots flying over Libya, unlike those in Afghanistan, would enjoy clear skies and flat, uninterrupted terrain, and would be pitted against a small and relatively inexperienced military—a probable cakewalk rather than a quagmire. In contrast with Iraq, Libya does not sit on the sensitive Persian Gulf between Sunni and Shiite theocratic oil exporters. Indeed, Tripoli is much closer to southern Europe than it is to the Middle East—which, along with its ample supplies of oil, explains why, for the first time since the Suez crisis of 1956, Europe was out in front of American intervention. Better yet, we had no embarrassing history of official support for a bloodthirsty Libya—unlike the Europeans, who were somewhat eager to do penance for their past close involvement with its murderous regime (and to ensure stable future supplies of oil from a grateful post-Qaddafi government).

Yet almost immediately, the neat and supposedly quick humanitarian effort became messy. The president announced ongoing success but was unable to articulate why and how Libya differed from the other humanitarian crises and Middle East upheavals that heretofore had not warranted American military intervention. In a larger sense, Obama seemed confused by the large gap between loudly proclaiming a new multilateral foreign policy and actually having to implement one.

Moreover, in the modern world, there are no island prisons like Elba or St. Helena to accommodate unrepentant monsters like Qaddafi who might prefer exile to Armageddon. While pro-American authoritarians are responsive to Western pressures and can find refuge in the Gulf or France, the far more savage anti-American totalitarians—Ahmadinejad, Assad, Saddam, and

*Mr. Hanson is a senior fellow in classics and military history at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and the author, most recently, of *The Father of Us All* (Bloomsbury).*

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Qaddafi—accept that their fate hinges on keeping power or facing death. So as soon as Obama declared a Western-enforced no-fly zone, Qaddafi hunkered down and began slaughtering the rebels in earnest.

The administration seemed confused by this mounting bloodshed and Qaddafi's resilience. But even if it had not been caught off guard, the best-run no-fly zone still could not by itself have prevented a Qaddafi victory, since his jets and gunships were not essential to putting down the rag-tag rebellion. So while American forces prepped the no-fly zone with an initial shower of cruise-missile attacks on ground installations, administration spokespeople were hard-pressed to explain a hands-off strategy that confused Americans about our actual war aims.

To save the collapsing rebellion, air attacks had to target Qaddafi's tanks, artillery, motorized columns, and government installations, the way Bill Clinton finally wore down Milosevic after eleven weeks of bombing and plenty of collateral damage. Only by physically destroying the government's superior armed forces, humiliating Qaddafi, and either killing or putting to flight his ruling cadre could regime change work and the rebels have any chance of taking Tripoli.

Yet such escalation beyond a no-fly zone was either outsourced

little about the so-called rebels in Benghazi, thinking (or hoping) only that they had to be better than a murderous Qaddafi. That dream dissipated somewhat when disturbing news filtered out that Libya had sent more jihadists per capita into Iraq than had any other Islamic state. And the more we became acquainted with the insurgency, the more the experienced and skilled rebels turned out to be hard-core jihadists, not the array of pudgy doctors, lawyers, and professors who were as comfortable editorializing in English to Western television crews as they seemed unfamiliar with heavy weaponry.

Further embarrassments arose when all sorts of Western liberals surfaced who had found the post-Saddam Qaddafi and his Western-educated progeny to be not so much monstrous as eager to partner with Europeans and Americans—and to pay grandly for such newfound international acceptance. Celebrities like Mariah Carey and Beyoncé had hired themselves out to entertain members of the Qaddafi family. European militaries had trained the Libyan special forces that were now obliterating the rebels. The Monitor Group publicity firm had found plenty of scholars-for-dollars professors eager to write obsequious testimonials about Libya's reforms in exchange for quite large honoraria. The London School of Economics had granted a doctorate to the ubiqui-

Sovereign countries do not have to be consistent in their use of force, but they do have to offer some logical defense of their selectivity.

to the Europeans or haphazardly done in the dead of night with cruise missiles—as a result of American worries about exceeding a narrow Arab League mandate and United Nations resolution. Or perhaps Obama, the former law-school lecturer, rightly feared ordering a hit on a foreign leader in defiance of American law and international mandates. To square that circle, as the first week of operations ended, the United States loudly maintained that its intervention remained solely humanitarian in nature, and re-adjusted to preventing the use of Libyan government aircraft—even as the U.S. coordinated air attacks on Libyan ground assets, the Arab League hedged on its initial support, NATO dithered, and Security Council members such as Russia and China criticized the Western use of violence.

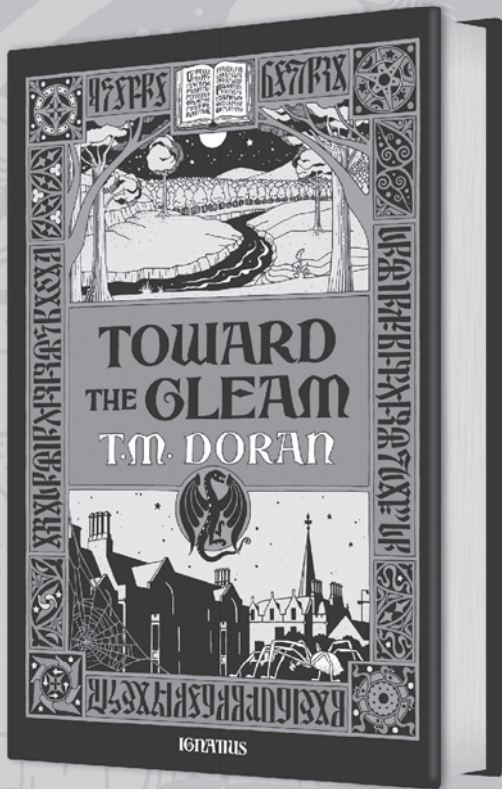
AMID the endlessly expanding pronouncements of a confused administration and Pentagon, conservatives and liberals alike faulted Obama for not spelling out either the ultimate ends of our intervention or the means by which they would be accomplished. In fact, though, the president had done both in a sort of fashion—and that was precisely his problem. Qaddafi had to go, but regime change could not be the expressed intent of our intervention. Apparently, we were to use airborne violence to prevent violence, but in a strategic manner that would ensure neither our explicit aim of stopping the bloodletting nor our implicit desire of replacing Qaddafi.

And by whom would he be replaced, if it happened? Westernized professionals? Islamists? Dissident officers and bureaucrats? The proverbial people? The Obama administration knew very

tous Saif Qaddafi and then mysteriously received a Libyan grant of 1.5 million pounds. One wonders whether the insurgents, when in power, will prove so progressive in hiring Western intellectuals.

Sovereign countries do not have to be consistent in their use of force, but if they are not, they do have to offer some logical defense of their selectivity. Obama, however, for over a week did not even attempt to explain how intervening in Libya could be reconciled with his past sermons about not meddling when a million Iranians sought to topple their country's theocracy, or why he sought "outreach" with the murderous "reformer" Assad in Syria, or how and why we were resorting to violence to help rebels in Libya while keeping silent over the use of force by the Saudi and Bahrain kingdoms to put down reformists. Are we to expect silence, sermons, or F-16s when, or if, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen begin toppling? That the only two democracies in the Middle East—pro-American Israel and American-birther Iraq—were relatively quiet seemed almost embarrassing to the Obama administration. And if genocide was the worry, Libyan rebels were not dying in numbers like the Congolese or those in the Ivory Coast.

President Obama has not offered a consistent typology of American responses to the various popular movements against Middle East military dictatorship, theocracy, monarchy, and oligarchy. Nor did the administration require such rebels to offer any evidence of an agenda, so we could gain some idea beforehand of whether they were better or worse than the authoritarians they sought to replace. Instead, administration spokesmen assured the public that the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt was now reformed and secular in nature, or that Facebook and Twitter users, not scarred veterans from Afghanistan and



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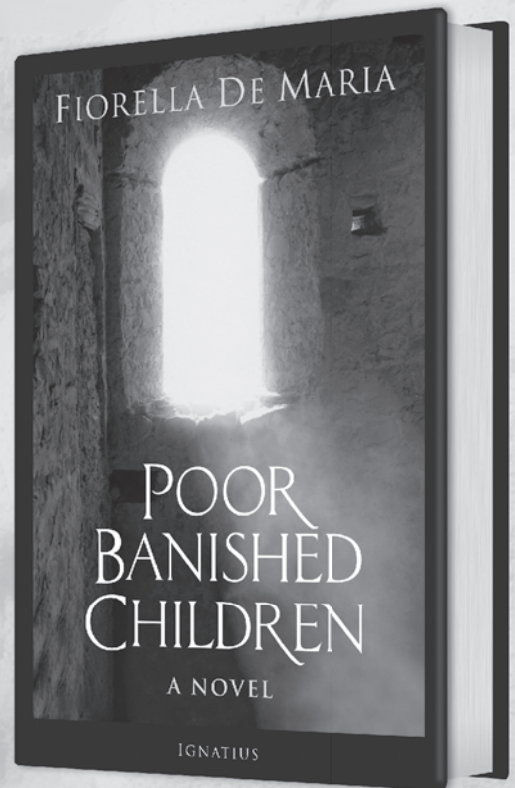
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Iraq, would assume control of these new reform governments.

Obama also put the multilateral cart ahead of the American congressional horse. In the past, most presidents have preferred to seek congressional approval and international sanction for military action, but in that order, and with the first, not the second, the only requisite for action. In contrast with both Bushes, who obtained congressional votes for their Iraq wars, Obama sought both U.N. and Arab League approval without asking the same of the U.S. Congress, whose members, unlike those of the other two bodies, are elected—and by the citizens who man and pay for the military operations in question.

Obama assumed that liberals would support an open-ended humanitarian intervention, since to do otherwise would further harm his weakened presidency and threaten their shared progressive domestic agenda. The fact that America would be killing people on the premise of saving people, sanctioned by various non-Western and often anti-American organizations, apparently reflected the fact that Obama thought he could now say and do whatever he pleased. And indeed, everyone from Howard Dean to the MSNBC talking heads agreed, offering surreal exegeses of why attacking a Muslim Arab oil-exporting nation that posed no direct threat to the United States not only was liberal, but could also proceed without resort to the liberal-inspired War Powers Act. In the administration's further political calculus, neocons who had supported costly regime change in Iraq surely would not be so nakedly partisan as to oppose a lighter version of it in Libya.

Yet for a small but growing number on the left, Libya proved to be a bridge too far. Michael Moore, Ralph Nader, and Dennis Kucinich all damned Obama's final betrayal of the anti-war cause. After railing against George W. Bush's shredding of the Constitution, liberals had gone quiet when Obama embraced or expanded renditions, preventive detentions, Guantanamo, Predator-drone assassination missions, wiretaps, intercepts, and military tribunals. Although Candidate Obama had advocated taking troops out of Iraq by March 2008, President Obama still was very much in the theater three years later. In short, Libya put progressives between the rock of supporting their apostate president and the hard place of being exposed as abject hypocrites who had blasted Bush's anti-terrorism policies and two wars between 2001 and 2008 on partisan grounds rather than principles.

Many conservatives have become more budgetary than military hawks, and thus are reluctant to fund yet a third Middle East war. In 2003, the first year of the Iraq War, the budget deficit was to reach \$377 billion. Eight years and \$6.8 trillion in new debt later, when Obama began launching over a hundred \$1.4 million Tomahawk missiles, it was \$1.6 trillion. If in theory conservatives supported resolute American action to secure freedom for Muslims, in reality they were tired of borrowing billions of dollars to subsidize post-war Muslim societies that seemed to denigrate their liberators' magnanimity as imperialism, colonialism, Zionist-inspired, or mere naïveté.

Conservatives will readily support a Democratic president who wants to punish enemies who imperil America's interests. The mass-murdering Qaddafi has four decades' worth of American blood on his hands. But they will not rally to a tentative president who looks for a go-ahead from illiberal nations in the U.N. and the Arab League in preference to their own elected Congress, and begins a war by listing restrictions on the military rather than promising victory. Non-American NATO commanders of American forces are understandable, but not in a wider landscape in

which an American president daily promises to "tone down" and "turn over" the American role in a war that he has just started—and which has no plausible objective, workable methodology, or envisioned outcome.

WHAT, then, should be the diagnosis and prognosis of Obama's Libyan malady? In some sense, Obama is a multilateral artist, and Libya is his greatest masterpiece. Noble-minded Europeans take the high profile while suspect Americans do the heavy lifting in the shadows. American officers publicly talk more of toning down a war than winning it. Female advisers—Hillary Clinton, Samantha Power, and Susan Rice—clamor for a use of force of the sort that a wobbly metrosexual American president seeks to resist. "Overseas contingency operations" and "man-caused disasters" naturally set the standard for "kinetic military operations" in lieu of "war." A postmodern commander in chief prefers Rio de Janeiro, handicapping college-basketball tournaments, and golf links to the dank White House war room when the bombs hit. Arab dictatorships and United Nations-approved autocracies exercise a veto power over our jets and missiles that American senators and representatives envy.

Yet the confusion and ineptitude of Obama's first week of warring in Libya do not guarantee the mission's failure, since the United States military is rather hard to defeat. There is ample American precedent for snatching victory from the jaws of confusion and misdirection. In the Korean War, the Inchon landing was a work of genius, the subsequent dash to the Yalu River foolhardy, and the final recapture of Seoul by Gen. Matthew Ridgway inspired. A successful Grenada operation was not planned or executed well. The attack on Manuel Noriega easily succeeded despite operational blunders. We killed a lot of innocents to rid the Balkans of Slobodan Milosevic, in a campaign that began without either congressional or U.N. approval.

Our choices in Libya are now at least clear-cut: quit in the humiliating fashion that we did in Lebanon or Somalia; conduct a perpetual no-fly zone to preserve rebel sanctuaries in the manner of the twelve years of aerial vigilance in Iraq; send in the Marines to remove Qaddafi, and for the ensuing decade shepherd a new Libya; or bomb Qaddafi and his forces until he says "uncle" in the manner of Milosevic, before outsourcing the occupation to the nearby Europeans, NATO, and the U.N. Obama may wish to vote "present" on all those bleak choices, but one way or another, with or without him, one of them will be made in his war.

If we choose the Balkan option and decide to remove Qaddafi without the use of ground troops, we will have to change the mission from intercepting his now nearly nonexistent aircraft to systematically destroying his ground assets and command-and-control operations—even if that change in tactics offends the Arabs, Chinese, or Russians. Such a weeks-long, or even months-long, task is still within the power of an American military bogged down in two wars' worth of rebuilding what we have leveled, with an insolvent federal government to boot. Yet the real worry may not be taking out Qaddafi per se, but—as in the case of post-war Afghanistan and Iraq, where the rapid removal of the Taliban and Saddam led to costly reconstructions—ensuring that something better follows.

Such a long Libyan engagement will be as costly and unwellcome for recessionary America as it will be distracting for an increasingly preoccupied and detached president. **NR**

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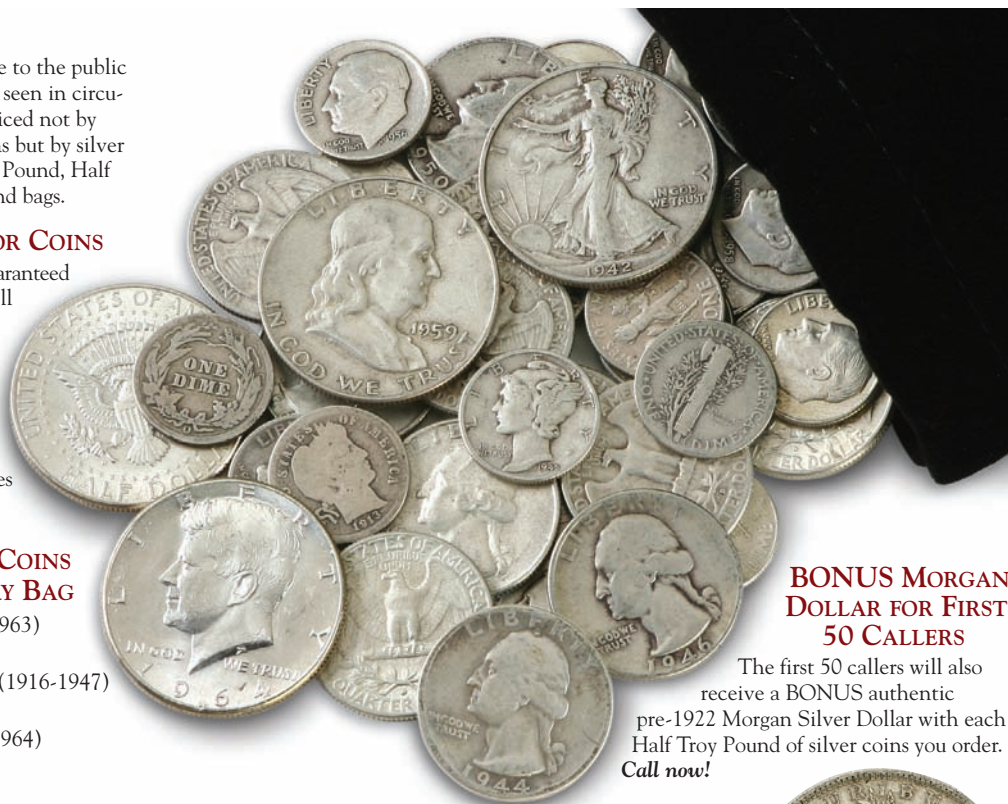
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IRRESPONSIBLE

*Against a 'responsibility to protect'
in foreign affairs*

BY JOHN R. BOLTON

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S use of military force in Libya has come under intense criticism across the American political spectrum. There is widespread disagreement over what U.S. objectives should be, and many fault Obama for his initial hesitancy to act, his incoherence in defining our mission, and his ineptness in rallying domestic political support.

The best reason for using force is to secure the removal of Moammar Qaddafi. Even that objective has its complications, not least the question of what kind of regime will succeed him. But Qaddafi's declared intention and demonstrated capacity to return to international terrorism, and the risk he would likewise resume his pursuit of nuclear weapons, fully justify removing him from the scene.

But this is not why our president ordered U.S. forces into action. His rationale, explicitly articulated in Security Council Resolution 1973, is protecting Libyan civilians. While that strikes many as praiseworthy, others ask how it can be fully realized without removing Qaddafi.

In fact, Obama is pursuing ideological, not geopolitical, objectives. He said in Chile on March 21 that "the core principle that has to be upheld here is that when the entire international community almost unanimously says that there's a potential humanitarian crisis about to take place, that a leader who has lost his legitimacy decides to turn his military on his own people, that we can't simply stand by with empty words, that we have to take some sort of action."

Obama's comment is a paradigmatic statement of the beguilingly known "responsibility to protect," a gauzy, limitless doctrine without any anchor in U.S. national interests. This putative responsibility emanates from the desire to divert American military power from protecting U.S. interests to achieving "humanitarian" objectives. The doctrine had its adherents even in the Bush administration, but they have reached measurable power only now under President Obama. The current U.S. military engagement in Libya, as he has defined it, is the jewel in their crown.

The "responsibility to protect," of course, is limitless by its own terms. Why are we not using force to protect the North Koreans, who've suffered through decades of totalitarian rule? Why are we not using force to protect Zimbabweans from Robert Mugabe, whose abuses are easily on a par with Qaddafi's? What about Syrians, Iranians, Tibetans, etc.?

The endlessness of the responsibility to protect is not a conceptual problem with the doctrine, but its essence. It cannot be "corrected," because that is its core message. And its error lies not

just in its unbounded vistas, but in its critical dirty secret among the international High-Minded: It requires using someone else's troops, usually ours, to achieve moral satisfaction. President Obama revealed this acutely troublesome aspect when he said recently: "It means that we have confidence that we are not going in alone, and it is our military that is being volunteered by others to carry out missions that are important not only to us, but are important internationally." Having our military "volunteered" by others is easy for those doing the volunteering, but potentially fatal for the honorees. Having an American president willingly adopt this expansive view of our military's legitimate purposes is no answer to the basic question of why their lives are being risked. These are unquestionably rationales disconnected from U.S. national interests, and a disconnected president does not bridge the fundamental disjunction.

Advocates of the doctrine respond that military force is only one aspect of a broader theory, but force is inevitably central to any debate about humanitarian intervention. Providing food to a war's starving victims in a permissive environment is something Americans do instinctively; sending their sons and daughters into conflicts that do not affect their vital interests is something else altogether. Moreover, the "responsibility to protect" is not just another euphemism for U.N.-style peacekeeping. Successful peacekeeping operations rest on the consent of the parties to the conflict in question, which obviates any reason for the "protectors" to use force, and dramatically reduces any risks even in providing humanitarian assistance.

In addition, while the "responsibility to protect" seems to present an alluring moral clarity, it dangerously ignores competing moral claims. The highest moral duty of a U.S. president, for example, is protecting American lives, and casually sacrificing them to someone else's interests is hardly justifiable. Imagining a future tragedy of Holocaust-sized dimensions and asking whether we would stand idle even in its face may tug at our heartstrings, but emotion is not a policy. And let us be clear: Even the real Holocaust did not motivate U.S. war planners from Franklin Roosevelt on down. They remained entirely focused on the military destruction of Nazi Germany.

SOME "responsibility" advocates, conceding that their doctrine obviously cannot be applied universally, argue we should at least act in "easier" cases. Thus, they say, while the risks and costs of protecting the people of North Korea or Iran may be too great, instances such as Libya do not pose nearly such grave challenges. This analysis implicitly assumes that assessing the cost-benefit ratio prior to a humanitarian military mission is relatively straightforward. If only this were so.

Painful experience proves that what initially seems uncomplicated can quickly become mortally complicated. As Churchill put it, "Never, never, never believe any war will be smooth and easy." Once war is launched, a combatant "is no longer the master of policy but the slave of unforeseeable and uncontrollable events." This is as true of "protection" missions as it is of regime-change invasions.

Almost inevitably, a military intervention alters the balance of forces in a conflict, advantaging one set of combatants over another. Protecting some will likely mean death for others. In Libya, for example, we might prefer to think we are simply opposing Qaddafi and not "siding" with the opposition, but effec-

Mr. Bolton, a former U.S. representative to the United Nations, is a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

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tively we are doing just that. And are all Qaddafi's adherents, and he has many, as guilty as he for his crimes and deserving of the same treatment? Equally invariably, the disadvantaged side will not take kindly to being intervened against. Terrorist and guerrilla tactics kill humanitarians just as dead as imperialists.

And, as in Somalia, there are no guarantees that the Libyan opposition will not turn out to be as brutal as the ruler it replaces. What do we do then? Police both sides? And what if there are more than two sides, and all of them come to oppose international intervention? At least where there are American interests at stake, there are metrics with which to do our analysis.

And the problems of withdrawal or "exit strategy" are not necessarily less complex in humanitarian interventions than in regime-change invasions such as those in Iraq and Afghanistan—the length and human cost of which have been criticized by many of the leading advocates of the responsibility to protect. Take Rwanda: When would a responsibility-to-protect force have known it was safe to leave Hutus and Tutsis alone together?

The Clinton administration experienced precisely this problem in Somalia, taking a limited Bush 41-administration effort to open humanitarian-relief channels, turning it into an exercise in nation building, and ending the operation in failure after the death of 18 service members in Mogadishu. Clinton-administration policy in Somalia is perhaps the closest parallel to the current situation in Libya: It looked easy, and it turned into a humiliating debacle for America and its president. Let's be blunt. The question comes down to this in every case: How many dead Americans is it worth to you?

The doctrine's political vagueness is as troubling as its limitlessness. Which nations, for example, constitute the "international community" that determines the existence of the responsibility to protect? While Obama said that, for Libya, this community was almost unanimous, five of 15 Security Council members abstained on Resolution 1973, which implemented the "duty." The five abstainers included Russia and China—no surprises there. But they also included India, Brazil, and Germany, which at last report were all at least somewhat free and democratic. Moreover, by speaking of a "potential" humanitarian crisis, the president justified the preemptive use of force, a point worth noting given his criticism of prior administrations for precisely that.

Libya will be a most interesting test case, whether Qaddafi stays or goes, and, if he goes, whoever replaces him. In the happy event that Qaddafi either flees Libya or is killed, the doctrine's advocates will claim success, foreshadowing subsequent missions. They will be wrong but lucky, which may, unfortunately, be more important in their impact on future U.S. foreign policy. If the international Lord Protectors remain in command at the White House, more Libyas will ensue.

The question now, therefore, is whether the American people agree. We should have a national debate on the "responsibility to protect." Congress should discuss whether committing our young service members, at risk of life and limb, for purely "humanitarian" reasons, is legitimate national policy. We can admire the intentions of those who adhere to the doctrine, but we should ask respectfully whether they truly understand the consequences of their morality. And we should say to them unambiguously: If you want to engage in humanitarian intervention, do it with your own sons and daughters, not with ours. **NR**

The Arab World IMPLODES

Will Iran now fill the vacuum?

BY DAVID PRYCE-JONES

THE extraordinary implosion of the entire Arab order has been building for a long time. Something like it was bound to happen one day. A young man killed himself in a small Tunisian city on account of the injustice done to him, and this one local incident was enough to set the whole region alight. Millions of Arabs immediately recognized that they too are victims of injustice and powerless to do anything about it. The speed and uniformity with which their rage has spread proves how deeply they resent and loathe the governance imposed upon them. Some Arab rulers are monarchs, others presidents, but the distinction hardly matters, because all have absolute power. Some of them, or others taking their place, may survive in future, but this unprecedented rebellion against one-man rule is bound to leave its mark on history.

Current Arab rulers have been in power for many years, and even decades in the cases of Ali Abdullah Saleh in Yemen or Moammar Qaddafi in Libya. What might look like stability is actually stultification. The one-man ruler needs security forces to keep him in power, and for the purpose he has to rely on his own kind: on family and tribe, on sect and ethnicity. Injustice, cruelty, and corruption are inherent, as insiders require favors and outsiders have to be kept down. Opposition and free speech are dangers to be tightly supervised and controlled. These past weeks have been a textbook exposition of what happens when dissent rises above the level where it can be either bought off or contained. The ruler has to choose between suppressing it by force or forfeiting his position. The Tunisian ruler is alone so far in resolving the dilemma by fleeing abroad. Hosni Mubarak in Egypt lost power because the army abandoned him, and the force at his disposal therefore became insufficient. In at least four Arab countries—Yemen, Bahrain, Libya, Syria—the ruler's security forces have shot and killed protesters and will continue to do so until the issue of power is settled one way or another. Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Algeria are on the brink of similar violence.

As though war were being waged, the numbers of the dead must be in the thousands, with the injured many thousands more and still more thousands under arrest. Who knows what tortures await those lifted off the streets and from their homes, or whether they will ever be seen again? Humane conventions are suspended, and there is no mercy. Ambulances and hospitals are shot up, mosques are used as ammunition dumps and shelled accordingly. The brutal vitality that has reproduced the traditional absolute order down the centuries may still do its worst.

The protesting crowds deserve all honor for the bravery

with which they confront their rulers and demand justice and freedom. This is not the straightforward issue that it might seem, however, of the oppressed versus the oppressor, because huge historic forces are simultaneously working themselves out. The Islamic world divides between two main sects, the majority Sunni and the minority Shia. The Iranian revolution of 1979 set in motion Shia triumphalism that is destabilizing the Arabs and will continue to do so until the balance of power between the two sects settles one way or the other. That triumphalism further questions the relationship between Islam and the West.

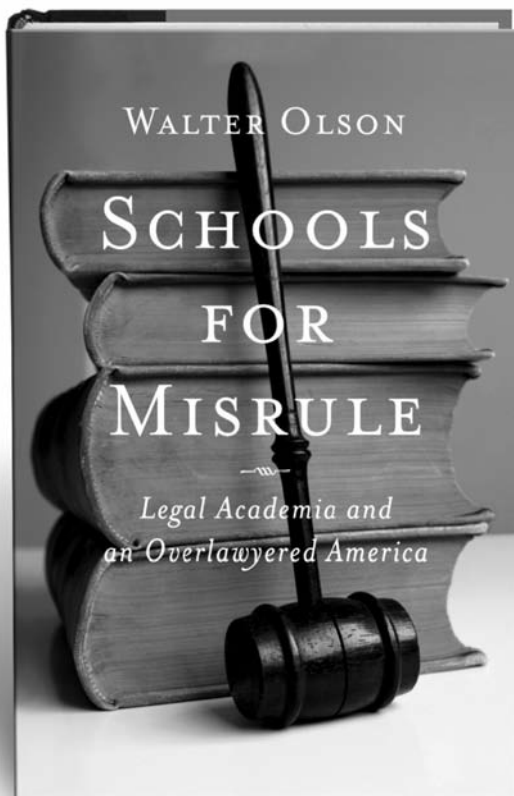
Put in place by Ayatollah Khomeini, the Islamic Republic of Iran is a strange variation of an absolute society, in the hands of a one-man ruler supported by his own kind, in this case a group of corrupt and cruel clerics thriving on injustice. In the years of their rule, they have made sure to stamp out and murder dissidents to the best of their ability. At present they are regularly condemning Arab rulers who order their security forces to open fire, though conducting themselves in much the same way, having recently hanged over a hundred people and arrested many more whose fate is unknown.

Khomeini liked to say that he did not launch a revolution in order to lower the price of watermelons. His grandiose ambition was to transform Islam into a world power. Perceived as hostile, the United States clearly could not be allowed to stand in the way. Many in the West and the Middle East reacted as

though this were a wholesale fantasy. In critical negotiations, Americans and Europeans have shown themselves to be feeble or painfully condescending, mastered time and again by people more wily than they are. In the event, Iran has been phenomenally successful in realizing its designs, in the process becoming a full-blown imperialist power.

In one Arab country after another, Iran has been advancing its own imperial interests under cover of skillful manipulation of Shia populations. Lebanon, in which the majority of Muslims are Shia, was Iran's first colony. In 1982, Iran sent officers to recruit and arm and train Hezbollah, the militia that has pioneered terror and tyrannized other Lebanese. The point has now been reached when Iran, by means of Hezbollah, chooses the government of Lebanon and is the arbiter of war and peace with Israel.

The situation in Bahrain is comparable. Bahrain, a small island linked by a long bridge to the Saudi mainland, has a Sunni ruler—formerly known as the emir but now calling himself the king—but a Shia majority. They are living in a mini-police state and their grievances are genuine. A prominent Iranian minister has declared that Bahrain is rightfully an Iranian province. The American Fifth Fleet is stationed at a naval base there, and Iran's overriding purpose in whipping up the Shia is to have it closed. When the Bahraini Shia demonstrated in favor of reform, the Sunni king fell into the trap and allowed his security forces to open fire. In panic at the casualties, he then invited a thousand Saudi and Gulf soldiers and



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police to drive across the bridge into Bahrain, thus acknowledging the Shia threat and his determination to meet it head-on.

Until the arrival of these thousand soldiers and policemen, the clash between Iran the Shia champion and Saudi Arabia the Sunni champion had taken place in several countries, but covertly. Saudi Arabia is one of the most unjust societies in the world, and its king appears to think the remedy is to buy his subjects off with money. The Saudi Shia are treated as second-class citizens. They happen to live in the provinces with the oilfields, and exploitation of their grievances carries the potential of a global economic crisis. Violence in Iraq or Yemen might appear political, but realistically it is a test of where the balance lies between Shia and Sunni. Since President Obama lets it be understood that the United States has no coherent policy to oppose Iran's drive to regional supremacy and not even the intention actively to support regime change there, Saudi Arabia has to take the strain. It is on its own. Its shield and support used to be Egypt, but that is no longer the case. Iran marked its delight in the downfall of Mubarak by sending warships through the Suez Canal, and by reactivating its one and only Sunni proxy, the Hamas movement in Gaza, already another arbiter of war and peace with Israel.

Syria is the latest Arab country to be overtaken by protest. Half a century ago, Hafez Assad seized power and set in place a classic example of one-man rule. He was an Alawi, that is to say one of the heterodox Shia who constitute approximately 15 percent of the otherwise mostly Sunni population. In 1982, the Sunnis started a revolt in the town of Hama. Assad ordered heavy artillery to shell Hama, killing at least 25,000 people, and possibly many more. Their corpses remain cemented under the town's central square. The Syrian constitution was shamelessly rigged in order for his son Bashar to succeed him. He too murders opponents or condemns them to life sentences in underground prisons.

The Assads and the Iranian regime share the belief that aggression is more rewarding than friendship. More than Iran's ally, Syria has become its dependency, offering a naval base on the Mediterranean and shelter for the numerous terrorist movements that advance their joint foreign policy. Obama's stated hope to peel Syria away from Iran is unrealistic to the point of delusion.

Tens of thousands of people have broken through what is rightly called "the wall of fear" to demonstrate in Damascus, Deraa, and a score of other towns. They are dicing with death. Bashar is as cruel as his father. To him, the protesters are "armed gangs" to be shot. Security forces are already reported to be firing automatic weapons into the crowds. Nobody knows how many have been killed or arrested.

Nobody knows either whether these demonstrators would set up a future government that freed the country from the horrific injustice of the Assads' one-man rule, or whether they are simply Sunnis bent on massacring Alawis in revenge for Hama. What is certain is that they are putting a check to Iranian imperialism, and the first to be doing so. NATO support for them is as justified as it is for Libyan rebels. The outcome reached in Syria will decide whether the Arab order really has imploded or, on the contrary, will go on much as before.

NR

Tocqueville And the Tube

*TV makes us dull and fat, and bad
citizens too*

BY BEN BERGER

TELEVISION makes us fat, lazy, inattentive, unsocial, mistrustful, materialistic—and unhappy about all of that. It cheapens political discourse, weakens family ties, prevents face-to-face socializing, and exposes kids to sex and inures them to violence. Yet Americans can't get enough. In 1950, just 9 percent of U.S. households owned a television; by 1960 it was 90 percent, and by the year 2000 TVs were just about everywhere. Now the average U.S. household has more TVs than people.

High-quality programs may enrich us, and moderate viewing is not so bad. We do not view moderately, though. According to the Nielsen Company, in 2009 the average American watched more TV per day (over five hours) than ever before. If you're reading this article, you're probably in better shape than most, since those who read seriously tend to watch less TV. But don't get smug. As TV continues its inexorable merger with computers, the Internet, and mobile technology—when I write of TV, I mean not only the traditional boob tube but any way of transmitting video content from afar—even dedicated readers will contend with its siren song.

The hunger for stimuli may result in our favoring visual media over print, and spectacle over depth. Print makes us translate words into mental imagery and sounds, which exercises our minds. Television is less taxing; it does all of the work for us. The late media theorist Neil Postman found in TV an inherent bias toward the shallow, and not just for sit-coms and the like. Eventually, programmers feel pressure to make even the news and other serious programming more entertaining, if only to compete with alternatives. When we are constantly bombarded with spectacular images, we find it harder than ever to face the weighty and comparatively dull issues of public life. Postman worried that our combined tendencies to take the path of least resistance and the path of greatest pleasure would mean a stampede from any kind of meaningful reading: "Television does not ban books, it simply displaces them."


Recent events reveal Postman's prescience. Witness AOL's initiative to transform CliffsNotes book summaries into short, humorous online videos for students who can't be bothered even to try hard at cheating. Traditional CliffsNotes offer text-based shortcuts to imitate knowledge's external indicators without the hard work or educational benefits of reading the material. The newly proposed AOL videos offer shortcuts for shortcuts.

Mr. Berger is an associate professor of political science at Swarthmore College. His book Attention Deficit Democracy: The Paradox of Civic Engagement is forthcoming this summer from Princeton University Press.



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Having stripped classic literature of all essential nutrients, the videos would add a comedic candy coating: a spoonful of sugar to help the sugar go down.

The same goes for public affairs. Because TV deals in images, “you cannot do political philosophy on television,” Postman argued. “Its form works against the content.” Postman and his fellow media guru Marshall McLuhan both insisted that “the medium is the message,” that it matters less *what* we watch than *that* we watch—watch rather than listen, read, or think in silence. Content is not irrelevant, of course: Watching violent programs in high doses correlates with reduced sociability and increased volatility, especially in youngsters. Watching crime shows and even news in high doses correlates with the excessive cynicism that the late media scholar George Gerbner called “mean-world syndrome,” which impedes social trust and public-spiritedness. And a number of economists have found that TV’s commercialism makes viewers more materialistic and less satisfied. All of those effects flow from television’s content. But to glimpse the small screen’s big picture we must see how the medium itself affects us.

Writing in 1985, Postman worried about TV content’s ever-increasing speed and flux: more fleeting images and stimuli every year. That trend has continued. The average shot length of American movies stood at 27.9 seconds in 1953, just after TV

patterns, a problem most intense among the high percentages of children with TVs in their bedrooms. (A multi-year report by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that the 71 percent of children 8–18 with TVs in their bedroom watch 56 percent more TV than those without them.) Adults who view heavily also experience problems with attention span, sleep patterns, and obesity. Researchers blame the obesity less on viewers’ physical inactivity than on the number of calories they consume with the tube on: Television induces a semi-hypnotic state in which we may eat without noticing quality or quantity.

EXCESSIVE television watching would be a problem for any society, but it’s an especially critical problem for a free one that wants to stay free. Democracy requires that people pay attention and participate in public affairs. Television encourages the opposite, exacerbating a preexisting condition in American culture first diagnosed by Alexis de Tocqueville, who long before *American Idol* saw what might make Americans idle.

Tocqueville sought to understand democracy itself as a new technology. Democracy extends citizens’ movement beyond their previous boundaries in feudal and aristocratic hierarchies, enabling them to do pretty much what they like. In that sense it

Heavy TV viewing produces heavy TV viewers, not to mention ones who tend to be inattentive, lazy, gluttonous, and unpopular.

began its ascent, fell to 7.3 seconds in 1986 as MTV gradually took hold, and was 2.5 seconds in 2007. TV programs have followed a similar path. Why? Visual and aural stimuli trigger what Pavlov called our “orienting response,” a reaction to novel events that can be seen even in infants and that probably carried evolutionary advantages. Fast TV cuts get our attention. But we quickly acquire stimulant tolerance. In order to hold our attention, programs and advertisements use ever faster cuts and brighter colors. Who among us, having once seen *The Electric Company* as a child, could go back to watching *Mister Rogers*?

Unfortunately, the pace race carries costs. Communications scholar Annie Lang argues that when visual edits and cuts come too quickly, we still pay attention but cease retaining information effectively. And by making real life seem dull by comparison, they may impair our ability to pay attention to it.

Heavy TV viewing produces heavy TV viewers, not to mention ones who tend to be inattentive, lazy, gluttonous, and—no surprise after all of the preceding—unpopular. A 2010 study in *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* finds that among toddlers, even when controlling for socio-economic status, “every additional hour of television exposure” corresponds to significant decreases in later “classroom engagement . . . math achievement . . . time spent doing weekend physical activity . . . and activities involving physical effort,” and significant increases in “victimization by classmates . . . consumption scores for soft drinks and snacks . . . and body mass index.” Among older children, heavy TV viewing correlates with inconsistent sleep

constitutes a technology of freedom. But Tocqueville worried that citizens might use the new technology in ways that undermined their prospects for maintaining freedom. He observed Jacksonian-era Americans with relatively modest aspirations:

adding a few acres to one’s fields, planting an orchard, enlarging a house, making life ever easier and more comfortable, keeping irritations away, and satisfying one’s slightest needs without trouble and almost without expense.

So far, so good. The problem lies not with these “petty aims” but with attachment:

The soul cleaves to them; it dwells on them every day and in great detail; in the end they shut out the rest of the world and sometimes come between the soul and God.

If we move beyond the historical specificity of the examples—I struggle just to keep my grass mown, let alone plant an orchard—we see that Tocqueville captures our present dilemma. TV, like democracy, is a technology of freedom. It provides a window onto many worlds and offers vast amounts of information. It also caters ever more perfectly to the very proclivities—materialism and privatism—that in Tocqueville’s view produce dissatisfaction and disengagement, tending “to isolate men from each other.”

Sound familiar? It should. Robert Putnam’s 2000 book *Bowling Alone* chronicled a 40-year decline in community



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engagement and social connectedness, or “social capital,” a trend that closely resembles what Tocqueville called “individualism.” Putnam subtly divided the blame among a host of social, economic, and political factors, but TV viewing came in for the lion’s share. The more TV you watch, the more likely you are to be disengaged from your community, disengaged from political affairs, and disengaged from all kinds of face-to-face socializing. As Putnam put it, “people now watch *Friends* rather than having friends.” Critics have contested Putnam’s findings, arguing that news programming does not have the same negative correlations as entertainment TV, and that the worst effects are of heavy rather than moderate TV viewing. But the overall data tell a clear story: TV-watching correlates negatively with social and community life. The Italian economists Luigino Bruni and Luca Stanca concur, arguing that while “relational goods” (Putnam’s “social capital”) vitally affect our sense of personal happiness, TV crowds them out with its cheap short-term pleasures.

Marshall McLuhan proposed that all technologies, including television, extend human abilities and senses. A shovel extends the hand. A microscope extends the eye. Television and other forms of electronic media extend our entire central nervous system, providing a radically enlarged selection of stimuli. (A scientist in Don DeLillo’s novel *White Noise* feels “proud to be an American” because “we still lead the world in stimuli.”) Given the human weakness for instant gratification, it should come as no surprise that TV-viewing supersedes pursuits with less certain or immediate payoffs, whether informal socializing and community involvement (as Putnam observes) or book-reading (as Postman feared).

THIS would not have surprised Tocqueville, who would have appreciated the political dimension of our attention-deficit democracy: For those who immerse themselves too completely in their private worlds, self-government can seem an annoying intrusion. Such citizens may be tempted to delegate increasing authority to a centralized administration. Inattentive and inwardly focused, having lost the habit and art of associating, they would be unlikely to notice the erosion of their freedom and unable to stop it in any case. In the end, democracy as a technology of freedom may actually make citizens more dependent: dependent on an overweening administration and on the petty pleasures for which they sacrificed self-government.

Does Tocqueville give any reason for hope in our struggle with TV’s negative influences? For all of his anxieties, he admired many features of American society that counterbalanced democracy’s pull toward privatism. In particular he appreciated the decentralized government that attracted self-interested citizens to participate locally and taught them public-spiritedness. He lauded Americans’ religiousness because it drew people out of their homes and out of themselves while setting salutary yet voluntary moral limits. He especially appreci-

ated the non-political “art of associating” by which Americans learned to cooperate for common purposes without relying on distant and impersonal powers.

In the present day, organized religion may serve some of the same functions that Tocqueville observed. Sociologist Christian Smith finds that extremely religious American teenagers watch much less TV than their unreligious peers. But for the moderately observant and unobservant, TV watching continues to rise. Like Gerbner, media scholar Larry Gross proposes that for many Americans television plays the role of socializing influence that religion once did. Nothing could be worse from a Tocquevillian perspective. Organized religion might combat social isolation

and egoism, but television as religion puts the isolating force in the pulpit.

Engaging with community affairs would get us out of the house and develop beneficial social capital to boot. But since heavy TV watching seems to undermine community engagement, prescribing the latter as a remedy for the former would be like prescribing robust health as a tonic for illness. In the end, each of us bears the burden for himself, and parents bear a multiplied load. TV offers a pacify-

ing anchor for turbulent family life, but over time that anchor becomes a ball and chain. Here are two simple pieces of advice for parents: First, keep TV out of children’s bedrooms, since in that private setting viewing time rises and negatively affects children’s sleep, focus, and schoolwork. Second, make a concerted effort to limit TV exposure generally. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends withholding TV entirely from children under two and limiting its viewing by older children to less than two hours a day.

While our 19th-century Frenchman offers wise counsel, his 21st-century countrymen offer a poor example: In 2008 France’s High Audiovisual Council, desiring to “protect children,” banned from French TV all programming aimed at kids under three. That heavy-handed approach not only set a bad precedent, using the state to parent parents, but likely undermined its own aims. French parents wealthy enough to afford international programming can circumvent the ban altogether; poorer citizens who treat TV as an electronic babysitter for their toddlers turn to shows whose content is even less appropriate.

What to do? The legendary newsman Edward R. Murrow insisted that when TV is used responsibly, “this instrument can teach.” Neil Postman disagreed, maintaining that whatever TV teaches is not worth learning. Perhaps there is a middle ground: TV may instruct us—but not, contra Murrow, primarily on the subject of current events. It can provide an object lesson in our shared public philosophy: Though citizens from across the political spectrum find TV-viewing problematic, most of them would agree that the problem can’t or shouldn’t be solved through state action. As Tocqueville argued, we citizens err about our long-term interests, but the only worse judge would be anyone else. Even when faced with TV’s barrage of stimuli, it is up to us to focus on what matters most.

NR



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Judge, Jury, And Economist

The Keynesians vs. the entrepreneurs

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

A WICKED joke attributed to George Stigler goes: “All great economists are tall—the only exceptions are Milton Friedman and John Kenneth Galbraith.” The diminutive Friedman grows ever larger. The NBA-sized Galbraith is a fading figure: He is survived by his trademark phrase, “the conventional wisdom,” and some remember that there was a book called *The Affluent Society*, others that he served as ambassador to India and as the butt of many jokes made by the founder of this magazine. William F. Buckley Jr. was mistaken to have described him as “the most influential U.S. intellectual of the 20th century,” but then he was generous to his friends, among whom Galbraith was a cherished one. Galbraith did not end his career as a public intellectual impressively, descending into self-caricature when he sniffed to WFB that “there is not one member of the faculty of Harvard University who is pro-Bush” and presented that demonstrably untrue datum as though it were a devastating argument, apparently having forgotten his friend’s endlessly quoted declaration that he would rather be governed by the first 2,000 names in the Boston telephone directory than by the 2,000 members of the Harvard faculty.

Galbraith has suffered ignominies, among them being dismissed as a “media personality” and “celebrity economist” by Paul Krugman, a media personality and celebrity economist. I suspect that there is an element of sibling rivalry in Krugman’s viciousness. Galbraith was treated by the best people as the intellectual heir to John Maynard Keynes, and Krugman—Nobel laureate, recipient of the John Bates Clark medal—does hack work for the *New York Times* while Robert Reich plays an economist on television. The memory of Keynes’s authority must be a wistful thing for 21st-century economists, inasmuch as none of them has as much command over public affairs as do a half dozen leering buffoons on television.

Both Keynes and Galbraith are thought by their admirers to have offered correctives to capitalism. But it is difficult to separate their ideas about *capitalism*, which were economic ideas, from their ideas about *capitalists*, which were largely moral and aesthetic. Each was marked in his way by an aristocratic revulsion from the trading classes and the grubby, advantage-seeking business of business. Keynes dreamed of a world in which we transcended scarcity, and Galbraith believed we had arrived there. Each contributed in his own way to the current progressive misreading of our economic

troubles, inasmuch as their intellectual heirs see our current straits as being the product not of *malinvestment* but of *sin*.

But for progressives, sin is a matter of taste. Keynes’s tastes were complicated, and not just in the usual Bloomsbury way. Though he disliked hereditary wealth, his work contains an echo of the old gentry’s disdain for trade. A remarkable feature of it is its lightly concealed contempt for businessmen, a contempt that Galbraith shared and made even less effort to conceal in his own pronouncements. Keynes, in *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, describes businessmen as a pitiable class, terrified by the rise of socialism, irresolute, and largely incapable of controlling their own destinies. Far from being profiteers, as the socialists charged, entrepreneurs could not help becoming wealthy during economic booms

whether they wish it or desire it or not. If prices are continually rising, every trader who has purchased stock or owns property and plant inevitably makes profits. By directing hatred against this class, therefore, the European Governments are carrying a step further the fatal process which the subtle mind of Lenin had consciously conceived. The profiteers are a consequence and not a cause of rising prices. . . . We are thus faced in Europe with the spectacle of an extraordinary weakness on the part of the great capitalist class, which has emerged from the industrial triumphs of the nineteenth century, and seemed a very few years ago our all-powerful master. The terror and personal timidity of the individuals of this class is now so great, their confidence in their place in society and their necessity to the social organism so diminished, that they are the easy victims of intimidation.

Crises, especially crises of confidence, have their uses. It was not many years later that Keynes was writing to Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt to offer advice on yoking that same diminished class of businessmen:

Businessmen have a different set of delusions from politicians, and need, therefore, different handling. They are, however, much milder than politicians, at the same time allured and terrified by the glare of publicity, easily persuaded to be “patriots,” perplexed, bemused, indeed terrified, yet only too anxious to take a cheerful view, vain perhaps but very unsure of themselves, pathetically responsive to a kind word. You could do anything you liked with them, if you would treat them (even the big ones), not as wolves and tigers, but as domestic animals by nature, even though they have been badly brought up and not trained as you would wish. It is a mistake to think that they are more *immoral* than politicians. If you work them into the surly, obstinate, terrified mood, of which domestic animals, wrongly handled, are so capable, the nation’s burdens will not get carried to market.

His other advice included nationalizing the utilities and the railroads, as well as pouring massive government subsidies into the housing market. (Thanks a million for that, Lord Keynes.) His prose communicates a deep conviction that entrepreneurs and their enterprises are pieces to be moved around on the national chessboard. The instrumental view of the businessman as a kind of specialized capital engineer exercising mostly local responsibility would come to be a recurrent theme in Keynes’s thought.

Mr. Williamson is author of The Politically Incorrect Guide to Socialism (Regnery).

THAT thought was rife with contradiction. In their invaluable paper “Keynes and Capitalism,” Roger Backhouse and Bradley Bateman report that Keynes in 1926 planned to write a book titled “An Examination of Capitalism” and proposed to deliver a series of lectures on the subject. For whatever reason, he changed his mind, and his full view of capitalism remains a matter of some dispute. Surely this is in part because Keynes was an overly agreeable man, one who could write to F. A. Hayek to communicate his “deeply moved agreement” with *The Road to Serfdom*, and to FDR to express his agreement with the view that “investment must come increasingly under state direction,” and to socialist Kingsley Martin to note his agreement with his observation that “capitalism is an out-of-date institution incapable of meeting the requirements of the twentieth century.”

That’s a lot of contradictory stuff to agree with. But economics isn’t about economics—not when political power is involved. Regardless of whether low regard for the businessman as a kind of mindless pack animal has any warrant in Keynesian economics, it certainly is part of the Keynesian tradition, and was from the beginning. Or even before the beginning: Long before he published the *General Theory*, he already was making the case for managing the economy along moral-political lines rather than economic ones: “The business man is only tolerable so long as his gains can be held to bear some relation to what, roughly and in some sense, his activities have contributed to society.” Profit beyond propriety Keynes denounces in Biblical language—“the love of money,” which he described as a “disgusting morbidity, one of those semi-criminal, semi-pathological propensities which one hands over with a shudder to the specialists in mental disease.” So much for utility-maximizing economic actors.

The obvious question is which businessmen are to be held intolerable, and by what standard. The implicit answer is: those condemned by John Maynard Keynes—judge, jury, and economist. Keynes’s proposal to judge what businessmen “contribute to society” on non-economic grounds is a constant of our politics now, a tedious staple of progressive rhetoric, e.g. Hillary Rodham Clinton’s misquoting of Oscar Wilde on the market’s knowing “the price of everything and the value of nothing.”

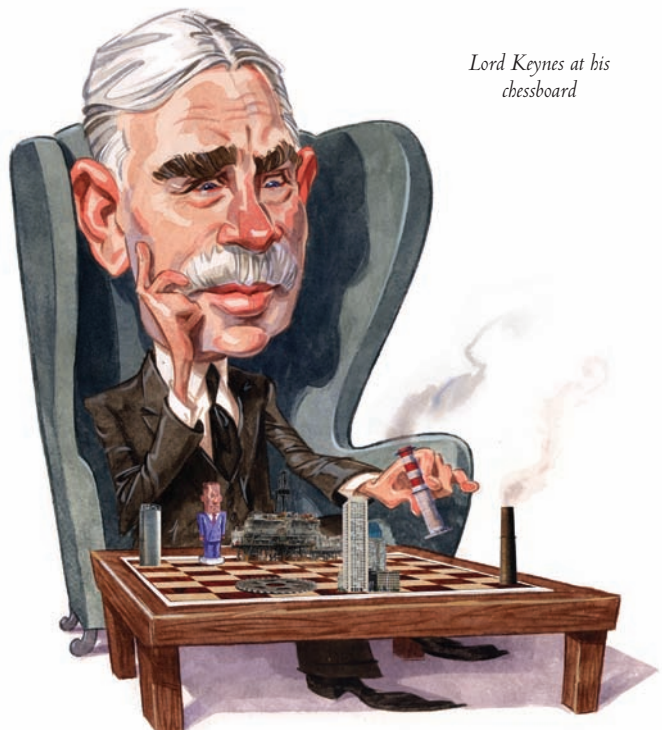
A particular object of Keynes’s scorn was the “third-generation man,” the fellow whose grandfather began some enterprise and whose father developed it, then handed it off to him. The hereditary system behind the third-generation man was, Keynes wrote, “the reason why the leadership of the capitalist cause is weak and stupid.” Keynes himself was a kind of third-generation man: His grandfather was a successful entrepreneur, a self-made man whose fortune eased the way for Keynes’s father’s career as an academic economist and Keynes’s own. Keynes *père* was a famous man in his day, and Keynes *fils* very much went into the family business. The Keyneses were aristocrats long before Lord Keynes was titled—his mother was the mayor of Cambridge (the first woman to hold that position), and his knighted brother married the granddaughter of Charles Darwin. But Keynes was no mere privileged scion. Beyond his *General Theory*, he published on everything from probability mathematics to the management of the Indian rupee.

He was an enormously talented businessman on top of it all. He started off wobbly, badly bruising his personal finances with

highly leveraged currency speculation. And though he required a bailout from a wealthy friend, that early failure did not much damage his confidence in his intelligence, the lesson learned being: “The market can stay irrational longer than you can stay solvent.” But the lesson was learned nonetheless, and he improved his strategy, becoming a gifted steward of his own money and that of others: Under his management, the King’s College trust fund returned an average of 12 percent from 1927 to 1946, years during which the overall British stock market declined 15 percent, and he hit those numbers with no reinvestment of dividends. This was in his spare time. Conservatives are wrong to scoff at Keynes the economist or Keynes the man of practical finance.

But we rarely encounter that Keynes, really. Instead we meet a great deal of Keynes the cultural and political dabbler, the man who was mystified that FDR did not wish to endure his mathematical lectures. Between the theory and the policy lies the shadow: History suggests strongly that Keynesian management of aggregate demand is not translated effectively into public policy—if it worked, we would never have a recession—and its loudest contemporary champions, men such as the aforementioned Mr. Reich, have a transparently different set of interests than can be justified by mere economics, chief among them moral concerns about income inequality. Keynes was the butterfly of which Paul Krugman is the larval form: an academic who leverages his academic reputation into political influence only lightly connected to his expertise.

FORMATIVE influence on Keynes, one who helped to expand his attention well beyond economics, was the art critic Roger Fry. As Backhouse and Bateman explain, Fry took a dualistic view of human life, dividing it between the animal necessities and the higher “imaginative life” of art and culture. Keynes’s idea of progress was to get free of the muck



Lord Keynes at his chessboard

of the third-generation men and their competitive conspicuous consumption and to rise to the level of high culture and aesthetic contemplation. But we'd need some guidance after arriving in that Promised Land. Guidance from whom? From men like Keynes, of course. He addressed his concerns in "Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren":

The strenuous purposeful money-makers may carry all of us along with them into the lap of economic abundance. But it will be those peoples, who can keep alive, and cultivate into a fuller perfection, the art of life itself and do not sell themselves for the means of life, who will be able to enjoy the abundance when it comes.

Yet there is no country and no people, I think, who can look forward to the age of leisure and of abundance without a dread. For we have been trained too long to strive and not to enjoy. It is a fearful problem for the ordinary person, with no special talents, to occupy himself, especially if he no longer has roots in the soil or in custom or in the beloved conventions of a traditional society. To judge from the behaviour and the achievements of the wealthy classes to-day in any quarter of the world, the outlook is very depressing! For these are, so to speak, our advance guard—those who are spying out the promised land for the rest of us and pitching their camp there. For they have most of them failed disastrously, so it seems to me—those who have an independent income but no associations or duties or ties—to solve the problem which has been set them.

Beware the wrong sort of rich people, in other words, and dread the day when all the wrong sort of people become rich.

To dream of a world without scarcity is to dream of a world without economics. John Kenneth Galbraith believed we had arrived there, to the extent that working to increase private-sector productivity was, in his view, *irrational*. He took an unremarkable fact of economic life (the declining marginal utility of consumption, e.g. you only want so much chocolate ice cream) and built a baroquely complex social critique on top of it: Since each new unit of consumption is marginally less valuable (assuming basic material needs have been met), then new investments in production must be of declining value as well. (Never mind that we do not produce to enable others' consumption, but our own.) Like Keynes, Galbraith takes refuge in pseudopsychology and assumes his moral case rather than arguing it: "Our preoccupation with production is, in fact, the culminating consequence of powerful historical and psychological forces—forces which only by an act of will we can hope to escape. Productivity, as we have seen, has enabled us to avoid or finesse the tensions anciently associated with inequality and its inconvenient remedies." This communicates very little other than Galbraith's disappointment in the proletariat for taking more satisfaction in having more bread for its own table than in seeing that the rich have less for theirs. It is difficult to impose an authoritarian reorganization on a well-fed society. Villains are needed for that, and so Keynes's third-generation man is reborn as Galbraith's coddled corporate executive: "The riskiness of modern corporate life is, in fact, the harmless conceit of the modern corporate executive, and that is why it is vigorously proclaimed. Precisely because he lives a careful life, the executive is moved to identify himself with the dashing entrepreneur of economic literature." Never mind that corporations

tend to be the children of dashing entrepreneurs—and not just in "economic literature," either.

Strange as it sounds, in Galbraith's view, the corporate executives and ad men who were conspiring to increase the production of goods and services were making the world poorer. That is because he believed private-sector productivity and a wealth of privately produced goods did not merely *correlate* with public-sector privation and the consequent lack of relatively high-value public goods but was in fact the *cause* of it: "Our wealth in privately produced goods is, to a marked degree, the cause of crisis in the supply of public services." His alternative was the usual welfare for the upper middle class: more subsidies for education and "the arts," etc., funded by appropriating the goods of those rascally executives and their shareholders. He complained that GDP was a poor measure of the nation's economic performance on the grounds that \$1 in Harvard lectures was valued the same as \$1 in television sets. He imagined advertising to have extraordinary powers, bordering on the occult, a belief that far exceeded the available empirical evidence of its efficacy, then or now. For Galbraith, that was as much a political problem as an economic one, inasmuch as "advertising operates exclusively . . . on behalf of privately produced goods and services." The word "propaganda" exists to describe advertising government does on behalf of itself, but Galbraith ignores that.

Buyers and sellers in the free market had preferences at odds with his own, and it never occurred to Galbraith that this did *not* reveal a massive shortcoming of the free-enterprise system.

Galbraith could have used a little wisdom from Keynes, who shared in *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* a great insight: that the economic conditions that led to Europe's unprecedented prosperity before the Great War were in no small part abnormal, and were not, as comfortable Europeans had concluded, "natural, permanent, and to be depended on." The position of the United States following World War II produced what looked to Galbraith like "the affluent society," but much of that affluence—particularly the country's commanding position in the manufacturing sector—was the temporary result of the war. His intellectual heirs complain that wicked businessmen are "sending our jobs overseas" without understanding how those jobs came to be here in the first place. There are not that many third-generation men in the United States, outside of truly dysfunctional industries such as newspapers, but the totem remains potent.

Like Keynes, Galbraith enjoyed commanding positions in public life, beginning as one of FDR's price fixers and ending with enough clout that WFB mistook him for the alpha intellectual of his century. But the legacy of Keynesian thinking isn't $C + I + G + X - M = Y$, it's, "Dear God, we cannot let *those* people run the economy. Is there a Harvard man in the house?" Most of what they touched, other than book contracts, produced failure: Galbraith's price controls proved a fiasco, and his affluent society soon enough found itself in want, scourged by stagflation, gasoline rationing, and other signs of non-affluence. Custodial liberalism fell into intellectual discredit, and Keynesian macroeconomic management does not seem to much soften recessions. But we still use Keynes's assumptions and Galbraith's catchphrases, and a certain chief executive has picked up the latter's habit of calling for programs to "invest in" this or that pet enthusiasm. All of which suggests that the man who taught us to question "the conventional wisdom" has become that, as has his mentor.

NR

Pioneering audiologist invents "reading glasses" for your ears.

NEW

Neutronic Ear is the easy, virtually invisible and affordable way to turn up the sound on the world around you.

**You don't have to pay through the nose to get
Personal Sound Amplification Technology.**

It's amazing how technology has changed the way we live. Since the end of the Second World War, more products have been invented than in all of recorded history. After WWII came the invention of the microwave oven, the pocket calculator, and the first wearable hearing aid. While the first two have gotten smaller and more affordable, hearing aids haven't changed much. Now there's an alternative... Neutronic Ear.

First of all, Neutronic Ear is not a hearing aid; it is a PSAP, or Personal Sound Amplification Product. Until PSAPs, everyone was required to see the doctor, have hearing tests, have fitting appointments (numerous visits) and then pay for the instruments without any insurance coverage. These devices can cost up to \$5000 each! The high cost and inconvenience drove an innovative scientist to develop the Neutronic Ear PSAP.

Neutronic Ear has been designed with the finest micro-digital electronic components available to offer superb performance and years of use. Many years of engineering and development have created a product that's ready to use right out of the box. The patented case design and unique clear tube make it practical and easy to use. The entire unit weighs only 1/10th of an ounce, and it hides comfortably behind either ear. The tube is designed to deliver clear crisp sound while leaving the ear canal open. The electronic components are safe from moisture and wax buildup, and

The Evolution of Hearing Products

Invention	Date	Easy to Use?	Invisible?	Affordable?
The Ear Horn	17th Century	No	Hardly	Maybe
Wearable Hearing Aid	1935	Weighed 2.5 pounds	No	No
Digital Hearing Aid	1984	No	No	Not for most people
Neutronic Ear	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes

you won't feel like you have a circus peanut jammed in your ear. Thanks to a state-of-the-art manufacturing process and superior design, we can make Neutronic Ear affordable and pass the savings on to you.

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- Restaurants
- Church • Lectures
- Book Groups • Movies
- Bird-watching and almost any daily activity



The Long View

BY ROB LONG

NSA DOCUMENT EXTRACT

POTUS Secured Communications

03.24.11 09:33EDT

Begin Extract

Static. Ringing.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: Hello?

POTUS: Mr. President? It's Barack Obama.

UMV: Well hey. Hey! Barack Obama. Lemme just—Barb, can you turn that down? It's Barack Obama.

Unintelligible conversation.

UMV: Barbara, I've got no earthly idea, which is why I want you to turn that down. *Noises. Thumps. Silence.*

UMV: Okay, Mr. President, all clear. What's up?

POTUS: The reason I'm calling, Mr. President—

UMV: Call me George.

POTUS: Okay. George. And please call me Barack.

GEORGE H. W. BUSH: Not happening.

POTUS: The reason I'm calling is to ask some advice—

GEORGE H. W. BUSH: —about Libya, right? Here's what I'd do. Get the Arab League to get some more planes in the air. Qatar's got at least 20 jets they took delivery of last spring, but so far they've only got two in the air. Same with the Emirati force. Base the whole thing in Doha—tell Sarkozy it's for optics—then get some guys in dishdashas to stand over some theater maps. Good for the locals to see. Unfreeze the assets starting next week and watch where the money goes. My guess, it'll start getting drained by nervous relatives. Let it go. When it all collapses, get the League to commit the scratch for a U.N. nation-building force, get the Saudis to maintain oil production, and wipe your hands of it. Meantime, make connections with League friendlies to insert other friendlies into the Syrian orgs, promise them whatever, get that started in earnest. Hands clean, no traces, pull a Syrian coup out of your hat, Libya neutralized, region stable but nervous, oil flows secure. Anything else?

POTUS: Um. Okay. Could you repeat some of that?

GEORGE H. W. BUSH: NSA's got it recorded. Ask for the transcript.

End Extract.

03.24.11 09:44

Begin Extract.

Static. Ringing.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: Hello?

POTUS: George? It's Barack.

GEORGE W. BUSH: Hey. Expected your call. Just got off the blower with Dad.

POTUS: I'm calling about the Libyan situation.

GEORGE W. BUSH: What's the big deal? A couple of gals want to get it on, doesn't seem like—

POTUS: No, George. Libyan situation. Not lesbian situation.

GEORGE W. BUSH: Sorry. I'm on the tractor. Hard to hear.

POTUS: What I'm trying to do is make the humanitarian case for our actions in Libya, and I'd like some advice about how to make it.

GEORGE W. BUSH: Seriously? My advice? Well, you could say that Qaddafi's an evildoer—

POTUS: I'd prefer to avoid that language.

GEORGE W. BUSH: Oh yeah. Right. But he is an evildoer. Right?

POTUS: I don't like to judge.

GEORGE W. BUSH: Piece of advice: When you bomb the bejeezus out of a cat, you're making a judgment.

POTUS: We're doing this on purely humanitarian grounds. He's a vicious—

GEORGE W. BUSH: —dictator, yeah, I know this speech.

POTUS: He's attacked his—

GEORGE W. BUSH: —own people, yeah, Barack, I know this speech, okay? I gave it. I know it's crawling up your butt, but the best thing for you to do is go back to some of my stuff and do a little cut and paste.

POTUS: We're doing that. Except a lot of it is about WMDs.

GEORGE W. BUSH: Yeah. Well. At least we know that Qaddafi doesn't have them. He gave 'em up after we invaded Iraq.

POTUS: Well, it's a little more complicated than that.

GEORGE W. BUSH: Actually, it's less complicated than that. Good luck with the

no-fly zone. Don't let Sarko run away with it.

End Extract.

03.24.11 10:01

Begin Extract.

Static. Ringing.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: Hello?

POTUS: Bill? It's Barack.

BILL CLINTON: You called me last?

POTUS: Excuse me?

BILL CLINTON: You call both Bushes before me? What's up with that?

POTUS: It's not—it's just that they both have experience in the region—

BILL CLINTON: I don't have experience in the region? Any idea how many Sidewinders I let fly into Sudan? Into Somalia? Into Yemen? I've got experience in the region coming out of my—

POTUS: Okay. Okay. Fine. What's your advice?

BILL CLINTON: All right. Okay, I forgive you. Here's what I'd do. I'd sell the whole thing as a limited humanitarian military action, like we did in Yugoslavia.

POTUS: But that came awfully late. The war was practically over.

BILL CLINTON: Did you call me for advice or did you call me to nitpick?

POTUS: Anything else?

BILL CLINTON: Get one of the kids to Google some of W.'s speeches. Just go through them and cut and paste.

POTUS: That's exactly what Bush told me to do.

BILL CLINTON: I know!

UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: I told you it was great advice!

Laughter.

POTUS: George?

GEORGE W. BUSH: Hey!

BILL CLINTON: I've got this "merge calls" button on my iPhone.

Laughter.

GEORGE W. BUSH: Tell you what, I'll send you a whole box of some of my speeches. They've all got some humanitarian-mission stuff in 'em.

Laughter.

GEORGE W. BUSH: Not so easy, is it?

POTUS: Thank you both for your help.

GEORGE W. BUSH: Aw, c'mon. Don't be mad.

BILL CLINTON: Next time, call me first.

End Extract.

A Time to Every Purpose Under Heaven

THIS year's "Earth Hour" came and went without much hoorah. A few cities turned off their lights downtown for 60 minutes to show how glorious the world could be if we were all kickin' it Pyongyang-style, and people swooned. The objections are obvious: It's symbolic. It accomplishes nothing. It flatters those who believe they are better people because they fret about carbon, compost their fair-trade coffee grounds, and lecture people who use superglue when they could use Himalayan yak spittle. (Seriously, you can find it at any cop.) If Freud were around these days, he'd reduce their psyche to the Id and the Super-eco.

Here's the problem with Earth Hour: How do you know when it's over without consulting some carbon-powered instrument? *I know, I'll check the sundial, like the wise old carbon-neutral Greeks! Someone light a candle so I can see what time it is.* But candles give off the CO₂, the Devil's Breath. One candle, it is estimated, gives off 0.00000001 PBs of carbon, with 1 PB being the amount it takes to melt a glacier and strand a photogenic polar bear on a floe. So no wicks, no tapers. Better to curse a candle than to light the darkness.

Perhaps one could use a wind-up timer to know when the Hour's done. That would have a symbolic message possibly lost on the celebrants: Civilization, like an egg-timer, winds down unless maintained and resupplied with energy. The problem with our current energy situation, though, is that we won't hear the *Ding!* when time's up. Things will just grind down until the economy is on blocks in the front yard because gas is six bucks a gallon, inflation is galloping like a stagecoach horse, and the entitlement state has become so enormous the only thing Congress can do is meet twice a year to turn it over so it doesn't get bedsores. We're supposed to be panicked about unsustainable fuels and switch to putt-putt plastic cars that run on hemp, but we could sustain ourselves for some time with the oil we have and the nuclear plants we could have. Might give us some breathing room, so skylines need not be darkened to divert the last precious watts to a hospital's ICU.

Anyway. In the high holy holidays of the ecology movement, Earth Hour is the precursor to Earth Day, the annual reminder that despite four decades of laws and regulations, the planet is still precariously imperiled. Grade-school students will spend the day writing letters to Congress so the Koch Brothers don't inject plutonium into the earth's core as part of their "Mwah hah hah! Die! Everyone die!" initiative. But just as Earth Hour has lost steam, Earth Day has

challenges. The latest Gallup poll indicates that Americans are caring less about global warming than before. They care the most about "contamination of soil and water by toxic waste," which will surely spur the moribund EPA to fight all those laws that permit American Cadmium and Lead to pour their industrial waste into ponds by the elementary school. Most people also worry "a great deal" about "air pollution"—28 percent don't give it much thought at all, but they're sitting in boardrooms lighting cigars with \$100 bills to kick off National Belching Smokestack Week. A majority of people—57 percent—are worried about "urban sprawl and loss of open spaces." That is also the percentage of people who have never flown across the Midwest and looked out the window.

Bottom of the list: global warming. Fifty-one percent "worry" about it "a great deal or a fair amount." The poll didn't dig into specifics, alas; one would love to know how the people who worry a great deal go about their day. Sitting in a room, chin on fist, brow furrowed, worrying for a solid uninterrupted hour? Scattered flurries of worry throughout the day, spurred by a weather report that says tomorrow's temps will be above average, or the sight of a Hummer? Perhaps they say that because decent people say they're concerned. Not being Very Worried is like razoring the Free Tibet bumper-sticker off your car bumper. Admitting you

don't care about global warming, in some circles, is like admitting you're worried about Iran getting the bomb. That's really all some people need to know. Back away. He may quote Glenn Beck without irony *at any moment*.

The beauty of Earth Hour: It's predictable, it's voluntary, it happens at night, and it doesn't interrupt anyone's dentist appointment. Countries that have their own unscheduled "Earth Hours" several times a day must look at the West like a starving person regards a trencherman who announces he will abjure oysters once a year between 3 and 4 P.M. We can give it up because we don't have to. Yet. If the grid goes down for good, and the human infestation on aching Gaia is reduced to hominids huddled in huts, children may ask toothless Gramps to tell them what it was like when the great dark towers shone at night, when the night was banished by the proud gleam of our hasty and tireless servant, Electricity. But if Gramps was a green, he might well scoff: "'Twas a vain boast that man could outmatch the stars, and what did we get out of it? Besides a century of unparalleled prosperity? A half-degree rise in global temperatures. Or so some say. The instruments that compute such things had to be plugged in to work. Anyhow, stop your fussin' and go to bed."

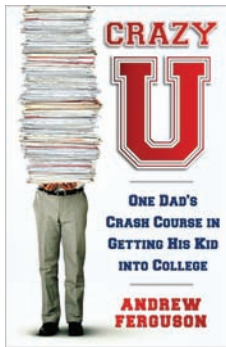
Sun's down. Day's done.

NR



The Parent Trap

CHRISTINA HOFF SOMMERS



Crazy U: One Dad's Crash Course in Getting His Kid into College, by Andrew Ferguson (Simon & Schuster, 240 pp., \$25)

WHEN Andrew Ferguson attended Occidental College in the 1970s, colleges were already moving away from fussy old requirements like American history, English composition, and foreign languages, and towards the anything-goes curriculum of today. If he was not playing in his rock band, visiting a Zen center, or engaging in “a dozen other forms of fun that had nothing to do with traditional education,” Ferguson pursued classes like “Women in Film” and “Our Bodies Our Selves for Men.” But it was still the pre-self-esteem era, so when he went to his college counselor for career advice, she spoke bluntly: “You have no marketable skills whatsoever.” So, says Ferguson, “I became a journalist.”

Ferguson became not only a journalist, but a widely admired writer whose fans include Christopher Hitchens, Tom Wolfe, P. J. O'Rourke, and this humble reviewer. Florence King has hailed him

Christina Hoff Sommers is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. She is the author of Who Stole Feminism and The War Against Boys, the co-author of One Nation Under Therapy, and the editor of The Science on Women and Science.

as “the Buster Keaton of the cultural essay.”

What happens when Buster Keaton stumbles into the mad world of early-21st-century college admissions? In *Crazy U*, Ferguson is at his dazzling best, using humor and narrative as portals to very serious subjects. The book is both a hilarious chronicle of his 18-month ordeal helping his not-always-cooperative son apply to college and a devastating exposé of the buying and selling of higher education in America.

There have been dozens of worthy books in recent years about how our institutions of higher learning have “lost their mission.” These furrowed-brow tomes are much admired, but rarely read. Ferguson's story, by contrast, is irresistible. His perspicacious discussions of SAT politics, *U.S. News* rankings, runaway tuition costs, and knowledge-free curricula are woven into an endearing family sitcom. Ferguson says, “If the book seems to veer recklessly between the two poles, between matters of the heart and the big booming issues of culture and politics—well, that's one reason it seemed worth writing.” And equally worth reading.

Ferguson's story begins when he finagles his way into a seminar with Katherine Cohen, one of a new breed of expensive “independent college admission counselors.” For \$40,000, she and her associates shepherd high schoolers through the entire application gauntlet: helping them choose just the right mix of schools, prepping them for the SAT, tutoring them on the application essay, and coaching them for the interviews. Why would anyone pay forty grand for such a service? Because, as a growing number of students are competing for a

fixed number of places in elite schools, the application process has evolved into a treacherous lottery. Experts like Cohen claim to offer tips that help applicants avoid the rejection pile.

Ferguson the journalist is appalled by the excess and frenzy; Ferguson the parent is panicked. He listens with dismay as Cohen speaks of the need for high-school freshmen to begin assembling a “portfolio” and to devote their summers to worthy projects. Working at a job is okay; starting a business is much better. One job to avoid is lifeguarding, which conveys “slacker.” Ferguson's son (he never gives his first name) had worked as a lifeguard for two summers and was planning to do it once again.

Ferguson falls into “the bottom quintile of the lower upper middle class,” a demographic of parents with huge ambitions for their kids but without the means to pay for elite private colleges, let alone fancy admissions counselors. So he resolves to be his son's own do-it-yourself admissions counselor. Ferguson devours insider's guides, visits Internet chat sites, swaps tips with other parents at parties, and slowly becomes an expert.

His son had a monumental struggle with the college essay. Typical college-essay questions are: “What do you think people who know you would be surprised to learn about you?” or “Tell us about a moment in your life when you refused to be embarrassed.” According to a Haverford dean, the essay should be cathartic—“You must share some part of yourself.” Cohen had warned Ferguson that students often are relegated to the waiting list because they did not “dig deep enough” in their essays: “Tell your son . . . to talk about his innermost thoughts.” But as Ferguson says, “Seventeen-year-old boys do not have innermost thoughts, and if they did, neither you nor I would want to know what they are.”

This psychological focus in admissions essays is part of a broader change in the process. In the late Seventies, when many colleges feared extinction because Baby Boomers were having far fewer children than their parents did, a battle for survival ensued, led by high-



“Maybe you just can't have hope and change at the same time.”

powered marketers. Suddenly prospective students were a “customer base”—and, as Ferguson says, “a large, lucrative, and parasitic industry puckered up and suctioned itself onto the tumescent host of college admissions.” Demographers, psychologists, color-palette experts, and graphic designers went to work branding and rebranding colleges and universities to suit the presumed desires and aspirations of high-school juniors. Vast fortunes were invested in landscaping, food courts, sports facilities, and “atmospherics.” Here Ferguson quotes economics professor Richard Vedder’s sardonic take on the winning strategy for today’s successful college president:

You buy off the alums by having a good football team. . . . You buy off the faculty by giving them good salaries. You let them teach whatever they want, keep their course loads low. You buy off the students by not making them work too hard. . . . You make sure the food is good and the facilities are nice. And you buy off the legislators and trustees in various ways: tickets to the big football games, admit their kids if they apply, get a good ranking from *U.S. News*.

College officials disparage the *U.S. News* guide as “superficial” and “destructive,” but “the same administrators read it, feed it, and fidget all summer until the new edition arrives, and then wave it around like a bride’s garter belt if their school gets a favorable review.” But here is the paradox, and one of Ferguson’s most important points: A school’s high ranking has nothing to do with how well it educates its students. Lots of factors determine where a school falls on the list, such as a school’s wealth or student SAT scores. But here, says Ferguson, is one piece of information that is left out of the equation: “Is any learning going on around here?”

Many private colleges now cost more than \$50,000 per year for tuition, fees, and room and board. Higher education, like health care, grows more and more expensive. But at least we can say that there have been momentous improvements in health care. Can we say the same about college education?

Ferguson describes college tours where undergraduate guides who manifest the “cheerful gene” lead prospective

students and their parents around the campus and drive home the message that at this university, students can do whatever they want. Schools offer countless majors, but visiting high schoolers are assured that “you’re always free to make your own, as long as it’s approved.” Spoiler alert: The Ferguson boy—to his father’s joy, astonishment, and relief—eventually rallied and succeeded in getting into a top-notch school. But Ferguson then discovered that the same craziness and excess that characterizes the application process carries over into the daily business of the academy.

At BSU—Big State University, Ferguson’s way of referring to his son’s school—“you could get a degree in the humanities without studying literature,” he writes. History majors seeking to fulfill a European requirement do not need to take a survey course in history of modern Europe; instead they can take

“Witchcraft” or “any number of seminars thrusting them into a scholarly silo built by a history professor: ‘Mercantilist Identities in Industrial Britain, 1895 to 1902’ or ‘Incantations and Charms from Chaucer to Spenser.’” BSU makes one concession to the old regime: It requires a course in composition. But when Ferguson’s son registered too late for his first choices, he had to choose among “The 1960s,” “AMC’s *Mad Men* and *American Life*,” and “Intro to Queer Theory.”

The universities do have their defenders. “Our schools are the envy of the world,” they say. It is a myth, they insist, that today’s students study less than those in the past. College students have always found ways to avoid learning. They could point to Ferguson himself as Exhibit A: He goofed off, took weird courses, and still flourished.

Let me depart from Ferguson’s text to offer a few points in support of his find-

WINDOW SHOPPER’S IVORY

The grand and opulent curve—
the tusk from a beast long gone;
now observed held firm,
upon its dark, exotic wooden base.

At first glance, the surface appears merely uneven;
but a better view reveals the intricate drama—

Convolution of tiny figures,
a great crowd of them,
in all postures of threat and submission,
of dance, ritual, and celebration—

Myth and legend of the Orient:
faces from the carver’s village and family;
of his schooldays . . . and of his dreams;
transposed into their own world,
where the torn and broken . . .
are healed and beautiful.

The making of a jewel endless as Art itself;
which in its painstaking creation,
thousands of hours of work,
becomes more the life of the artist,
than of the elephant from which it came.

At least as seen on pillars of smooth mahogany,
upholding the great, private spectacle:
long as a man reclining . . . in the curve of ivory.

—WILLIAM W. RUNYEON

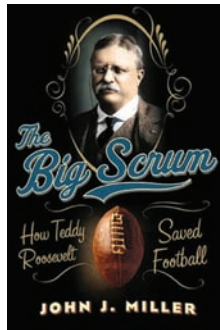
ings. Two labor economists, Philip Babcock and Mindy Marks, recently published an analysis of “student time use” from the 1920s to the present. The percentage of full-time students who reported studying more than 20 hours per week in 1961 was 67 percent; in 1981, 44 percent; and today, 20 percent. In *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*, education sociologists Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa marshal a massive amount of data to show steady decline in the quality of the academic experience: “Fifty percent of students in our sample reported that they had not taken a single course during the prior semester that required more than twenty pages of writing, and one-third had not taken one that required even forty pages of reading per week.” Our international reputation, they say, is “largely derived from graduate programs at a handful of elite public and private universities.” Meanwhile, the indispensable American Council of Trustees and Alumni has documented rampant grade inflation along with other sobering facts—e.g., that only 15 of 70 top colleges and universities require English majors to take a course in Shakespeare; and that a large percentage of seniors from elite colleges cannot identify Valley Forge, words from the Gettysburg Address, or basic principles of the U.S. Constitution.

For this attenuated education, today’s students and their families are taking on crippling debts. When Ferguson graduated in 1978, the annual tuition bill at Occidental was \$5,100. Today, adjusted for inflation, that would be \$16,500; instead tuition is \$40,000. Add to this the prospect that the class of 2012 will be entering a highly competitive global economy populated by children of Tiger Mothers. They have to know something to make a living; they can’t all be journalists.

Driving home after dropping his son at BSU, an overwrought Ferguson lost his composure and started rambling and waxing poetic. His wife and daughter urged him to get a grip. He tried, but when he stopped for gas, he forgot to take the nozzle out of the tank. As he pulled away, “I felt a sickening tug and heard the sound of sheet metal being ripped from welded bolts.” That is a pretty good summary of what this charming and scary book does to College, Inc. **NR**

TR’s Goal-Line Stand

PAT SAJAK



The Big Scrum: How Teddy Roosevelt Saved Football, by John J. Miller (Harper, 272 pp., \$25.99)

BASEBALL may still try to market itself as our national pastime, but there’s little doubt that football is our national passion.

By any measurement, the popularity of college and professional football is staggering. Teams in the NCAA and NFL reap billions of dollars in TV revenue; billions more are wagered legally and illegally; and NCAA schools drew more than 48 million spectators in 2009, while the NFL attracted another 17 million.

Given those numbers, it’s hard to believe that, little more than a hundred years ago, at the dawn of the Progressive movement, there was a concerted effort to ban the sport. The violence and brutality that made serious injury common (resulting, sometimes, even in death) sparked a crusade that very nearly killed football in its infancy.

In longtime NR writer John J. Miller’s new book, *The Big Scrum*, the battle between Progressive reformers and the defenders of the game is played out on a series of separate tracks that finally merge at a “football summit” in October 1905, in Pres. Theodore Roosevelt’s White House. Although even Miller admits that his subtitle—“How Teddy Roosevelt Saved Football”—might overstate the case a bit,

Mr. Sajak, the host of Wheel of Fortune, spent several years as host of a baseball show on MLB Radio.

he leaves little room for doubt that TR’s advocacy of the sport, and his recognition that the rules had to change in order to save it, helped preserve the game and set the stage for its explosive growth. It’s not difficult to imagine that without his intercession, football today—if it existed at all—might find itself in the sporting public’s consciousness somewhere between indoor soccer and cockfighting.

Miller writes about college football enthusiastically and eloquently—not as mere games, but as “cultural rituals of deep significance.” Though he knows the sport only as a spectator, it’s obvious he bleeds the maize and blue of the University of Michigan. As a young boy, he’s taught by his father to sing the Wolverine fight song, “Hail to the Victors,” and he meets his wife on his way to Michigan Stadium. For his fellow football lovers, *The Big Scrum* provides a fascinating, detailed look at a nearly forgotten chapter that could easily have robbed them of a tradition that provides so many touchstones in their lives. But, even for those who prefer pigskin to remain on pigs, the book’s vivid character portraits entertainingly recreate a time in America when the forces of Progressivism were attempting to reshape the nation. Miller cites a 1903 editorial from the reliably shrill *New York Times*, of which the headline, “Two Curable Evils,” best sums up the decibel level. One evil was the lynching of blacks. The other was football.

Football began in earnest not long after the Civil War, as a variation of rugby played primarily by young college men. The game—marked by “scrums” (masses of athletes pushing and shoving)—was brutal, and the rules were, to say the least, unsettled, usually decided by the two teams just before each contest. It was touted as a physical activity that would improve a student’s mind and character, but players were not above gouging an eye or snapping a bone while writhing within a tangle of bodies on a muddy field (while wearing no helmets or other protective equipment). The violence and resultant injuries attracted the attention of reformers who saw the risks as unacceptable. For many progressives, abolishing football became as important as instituting an income tax.

At first glance, Theodore Roosevelt seems an unlikely champion of football, as Miller introduces us to a young, frail, sickly boy nicknamed “Teedie” who bat-

tles everything from asthma to seasickness. However, after his father confronts him in a fateful—and possibly apocryphal—meeting, at which the elder Roosevelt reportedly announces, “You must make your body. It is hard drudgery to make one’s body, but I know you will do it,” he begins a grueling regimen and develops a growing appreciation for what he comes to call “the doctrine of the strenuous life.” Indeed, once the assassination of William McKinley thrusts Roosevelt into the White House, he takes pains to conceal the extent of his physical activity, fearing Americans might not approve of such a “sporting president.”

We also come to know Walter Chauncey Camp, a player, coach, and sportswriter known as the “father of American football,” who participates in the summit; E. L. Godkin, influential editor of *The Nation*, who campaigns passionately for the abolition of the game; and Charles W. Eliot, who serves as Harvard’s president for 40 years and is an outspoken opponent

with major college coaches, he opens one meeting with a stark assessment: “Football is on trial.” Out of that summit came recommendations for an increased focus on sportsmanship, as well as equipment and rules changes (the most important of which was the forward pass, which opened up the game and reduced the number of injury-producing scrums). While the summit didn’t end the controversy over football, it did dampen the cries for its abolition, thereby buying some time. As the changes in the rules and improvements in equipment had their intended effect, the sport’s popularity continued to grow. There were further efforts to ban football when well-publicized deaths or injuries occurred in subsequent years, but Roosevelt never again insinuated himself into the debate as he had in 1905.

Miller brings life to an era we normally see only through grainy black-and-white film. And, while there’s enough football action and information to please the most fanatical gridiron fan,

John J. Miller brings life to an era we normally see only through grainy black-and-white film.

of college football. When Eliot, pushing for outright prohibition, claims that no sport can be honorable if it embraces “the barbarous ethics of warfare,” Roosevelt (a Harvard alumnus) shoots back, “I think Harvard will be doing the baby act if she takes any such foolish course as President Eliot advises.”

Infantilism vs. manhood aside, some opponents of football worried the game was damaging to young men’s morals in that it encouraged, and even glorified, cheating and bad sportsmanship. On that point, even TR was forced to agree. Miller writes of a 1905 Harvard-alumni-dinner speech at which President Roosevelt, addressing the growing outrage over football violence, warned, “When the injuries are inflicted by others, either wantonly or of set design, we are confronted by the question not of damage to one man’s body, but of damage to the other man’s character.” The outcry had reached a critical mass, and Roosevelt, champion of Progressives but defender of football, knew he had to act.

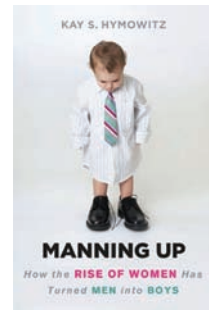
Later that year, at his “football summit”

he avoids getting bogged down in football jargon. Instead, he uses the sport as a window into a tumultuous time in U.S. history. The fact is that much of the debate in the Progressive era remains relevant to today’s Washington, as political leaders have their own scrums over basic philosophical issues. Miller also manages to infuse *The Big Scrum* with drama and tension, even though the eventual outcome is known to all. After all, football has thrived on the college and professional level to a degree neither Teddy Roosevelt nor any of his contemporaries could have imagined.

Still, the controversy over its violence continues. The NCAA and NFL struggle to address ongoing concerns over injuries as athletes become larger, stronger, and faster. New rules are instituted annually in an attempt to make the game safer for its players, most recently in the area of helmet-to-helmet contact. But no matter how these safety issues work themselves out, football will continue to be played. If the Progressives couldn’t knock it out of bounds, who can? **NR**

Charlie Sheen Writ Large

KATHRYN JEAN LOPEZ



Manning Up: How the Rise of Women Has Turned Men into Boys, by Kay S. Hymowitz
(Basic, 248 pp., \$25.99)

“**A**RE men necessary?” Maureen Dowd famously asked in a book title. Who needs men, when, as Manhattan Institute scholar Kay Hymowitz writes in her new book, “young women are reaching their twenties with more achievements, more education, more property, and, arguably, more ambition than their male counterparts”? What do women want, as they live urban, graduate-degreed lives of independence? Good luck with answering these questions, if you’re a young man in America today—never mind figuring out what a man is supposed to be in the first place.

Even before Charlie Sheen’s recent notoriety as the “Malibu Messiah” with “tiger blood,” the popularity of his sitcom *Two and a Half Men* was broadly attributed to his bad-boy character on the show. Women, it has been argued, weren’t entirely turned off by the crude rudeness of the hard-drinking jingle writer he played. What he lacked in personal responsibility he made up in domination. Any attraction women may have had to the show’s Charlie speaks to the paradoxical reality of modern life. Men have been deconstructed and emasculated and yet are expected to somehow ooze masculinity, even when they’ve been told it’s something akin to a hate crime; as Hymowitz writes, “provider husbands and fathers are now optional, and the character qualities

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as we visit Grand Turk, San Juan, St. Thomas, Half Moon Cay, and Ft. Lauderdale

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Murdock, Fox News commentator S. E. Cupp, terrorism and legal experts Andrew McCarthy and John Yoo, political guru Ralph Reed, social critic and humorist James Lileks, domestic-policy expert Sally Pipes, best-selling conservative authors Andrew Klavan and Michael Walsh, ace economist Kevin Hassett, State Policy Network executive Tracie Sharp, Americans United for Life president Charmaine Yoest, and, from *NR*, editor Rich Lowry, *Liberal Fascism* author Jonah Goldberg, *NRO* editor-at-large Kathryn Lopez, senior editors Jay Nordlinger and Ramesh Ponnuru, *NRO* "Campaign Spot" blogger Jim Geraghty, "Exchequer" blogger Kevin D. Williamson, contributor John Derbyshire, National Correspondent John J. Miller, former *NR* editor John O'Sullivan, and political reporter Bob Costa.

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SUN/Nov. 13	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars
MON/Nov. 14	Grand Turk	7:00AM	3:00PM	afternoon seminar "Night Owl" session
TUE/Nov. 15	San Juan	1:00PM	11:00PM	morning seminar late-night smoker
WED/Nov. 16	St. Thomas	8:00AM	5:00PM	morning seminar evening cocktail reception "Night Owl" session
THU/Nov. 17	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars
FRI/Nov. 18	Half Moon Cay	8:00AM	4:00PM	afternoon seminar evening cocktail reception
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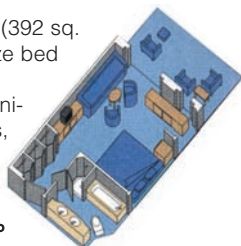


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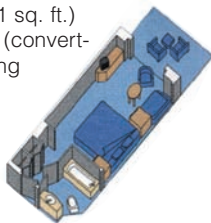


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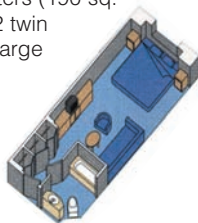


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men had needed to play their role—fortitude, stoicism, courage, fidelity—are obsolete and even a little embarrassing.”

What remains of masculinity is not infrequently the Charlie Sheen caricature of it, the loser-slackers played by Seth Rogen, or, at best, the overgrown-child characters of many a successful Adam Sandler movie. The insistence that irresponsibility, childishness, and the attention of “goddesses” is what defines “winning” is perversely related to the feminist notion that “a woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle”: Societal insistence on ignoring and forcibly rewiring the natural complementarity of the sexes has condemned men and women to a prolonged “preadulthood.” Consider the magazine cover headlining Jennifer Aniston’s latest insistence that, at 42, divorced, and childless, she is absolutely happy. Her audience doesn’t seem to buy it—perhaps because they know their own lives.

“Not so long ago,” writes Hymowitz, “average mid-twentysomethings, both male and female, had achieved most of the milestones of adulthood: high-school diploma, financial independence, marriage, and children.” Nowadays, though, “they hang out in a novel sort of limbo, a hybrid state of semi-hormonal adolescence and responsible self-reliance.” This preadulthood isn’t all bad, “but it seems about time to state what has become obvious to legions of frustrated young women: It doesn’t tend to bring out the best in men.”

This preadulthood is “a momentous sociological development,” which comes as no surprise to anyone who has been born and raised in its midst. The Girl Project of the last decades—complete with Take Your Daughter to Work Day—has not only neglected boys, but raised a We Girls Can Do Anything cadre of females with every conceivable goal except being a wife and mother. And so the daughters of the Project now “graduate from college in greater numbers than men, with higher grade point averages; more extracurricular experiences, including study abroad; and, as most professors tell it, more confidence, drive, and plans for the future. They are aggressively independent; they don’t need to rely on any man, that’s for sure.”

Their brothers and boyfriends are often child-men, “the fun house mirror image of the alpha girl”: “If she is ambitious, he

is a slacker. If she is hyper-organized and self-directed, he tends toward passivity and vagueness. If she is preternaturally mature, he is happily not.” The contrast between underachieving Bart and overachieving Lisa Simpson in pop culture pretty well captures it. *The Simpsons* are in suspended animation and so would Bart and Lisa be in real life. Bart and his friends wouldn’t grow up and Lisa wouldn’t admit she’d actually like them to, because she both wants and needs men as an integral part of her life. Generally, she doesn’t articulate any of this, and neither does the culture. Neither do the traditional community-support systems—because often, in the midst of *Sex and the City*-like urban life, they’re not there in the first place.

Books like *Are Men Necessary?*, *The Decline of Males*, and *Is There Anything Good About Men?* are responses to the reality that, in Hymowitz’s words, “men are not thriving in today’s cultural and economic environment.” They’re not thriving because they’ve been cheated and been mistreated. The feminists who played no small role in getting us here have left us with a great irony: “On the one hand, the well-raised, middle-class young man learns that marriage should be a partnership of equals. He will share the cooking, cleaning, feeding, and driving so that his wife can make partner or meet her book deadline too. But he learns something else as well, something that doesn’t square with that first message. He learns he is dispensable and possibly even a drag on family life.”

They are stuck in preadulthood in part because preadults “don’t know what is supposed to come next. They’re not sure what the gender scripts are, if there are any.” They’re still “pre” because they

don’t even know what “adult” means.

Preadulthood simply doesn’t work. It’s a limbo that has “confounded the primordial search for a mate. It has delayed a stable sense of identity, dramatically expanded the pool of possible spouses, mystified courtship routines, and helped to throw into doubt the very meaning of marriage.” Young people are getting married later, having children later. And it’s “an uneasy standoff with human biology, culminating in an unintended set of medical, economic, and social consequences, including more child-men, single mothers, and fatherless homes.”

This isn’t, of course, entirely the doing of the feminists, but they’ve certainly played a key role. The birth-control pill made the faux independence the sisterhood sold seem plausible. But so did economic and technological shifts, especially the development of a “knowledge economy” that “multiplies opportunities in such fields as law, media, public relations, fashion, graphic and product design, book publishing, communications, and retail, where the few women who had pursued careers in the past had generally gravitated.”

This “profound demographic shift” is here to stay, Hymowitz warns, because “the economic and cultural changes are too embedded” to reverse. “And so while women will continue to pursue careers and independence, they also have to wake up to and be at peace with nature. The female body imposes certain limits.”

A main lesson the book draws from the ongoing chaos of the sexes is that there are limits to individualism. That won’t be news to any discerning person of faith, member of the military, or team player. But it’s a reality and we need to wake up to

PHILIP HOLZER

1919–2011

Printer, gentleman, good and true friend of
NATIONAL REVIEW

R.I.P.

it. Hymowitz writes that what's around us shapes our "understanding of the possibilities of how to live. . . . People don't order or create a meaningful life out of whole cloth. They use the cultural materials available to them. The materials available to young men are meager, and what is available often contradicts itself. At bottom, they are too free." Kay Hymowitz's *Manning Up* is a five-alarm siren for a society in denial as it looks to be falling off a demographic cliff.

Can America rediscover adulthood? There are some signs of hope—chiefly in the fact that many college-educated men and women do grow out of this unprecedented stage that is preadulthood. But that's an unreliable trend, given current bad habits and attitudes. As Hymowitz writes:

Between his lack of familial responsibilities, his relative affluence, and an entertainment media devoted to his every pleasure, the single young man can live in pig heaven—and he often does. He has plenty of time—at least he thinks so from his sad little apartment—to become a mensch. Women put up with him for a while, but then in fear and disgust they either decide to change their plans and give up on the husband and kids or they go to the sperm bank and get the DNA without the troublesome child-man attached. They're probably not thinking about it this way, but their choice only legitimizes the guy's attachment to the sandbox. Why should he grow up? No one needs him anyway. He has nothing he's got to do.

Might as well grab the remote and have another beer.

Perhaps some of those married survivors of preadulthood—who have charted their own course out of the dating and mating scene—can truly be adults, helping those behind them along the way. Perhaps, through demonstration, encouragement, and even admonishment, they can work toward reissuing those tried and tested age-old civilizational scripts, adapted for new educational and economic opportunities. But until then, good luck, guys, figuring out whether to hold the door or not, pay the bill or not—be a man or not. And good luck, gals, with your "navel-gazing, wisecracking child-men" when what you're really needing is an "unhyphenated, unironic" one. It's a social jungle out there. Charlie Sheen, on screen and off, isn't the only casualty of it. **NR**

Film

Paths from Glory

MICHAEL KNOX BERAN

TS. ELIOT, in his essay on Kipling, said that the outsider, if he happens to be "alarmingly intelligent," has a "peculiar detachment and remoteness" that enables him to see the places through which he passes more clearly than the natives do. The subject of Richard Brookhiser and Michael Pack's documentary film *Rediscovering Alexander Hamilton* was such an outsider. Born on the tropical fringes of the Anglo society of the West Indies, Hamilton was a teenager when he sailed to North America to realize his vocation as a man of destiny. He made his way into the highest councils of his adopted country, yet he remained an exotic figure, one who excited in ample measure the gossip and uneasiness that so often wait upon the mysterious alien.

The same foreignness that made Hamilton suspect in the eyes of his detractors gave him a keen insight into America's needs. Talleyrand said that Hamilton "divined" Europe—grasped its essence intuitively. In studying America, Hamilton had the advantage not only of this intuitive genius but also of direct observation, an observation unhindered by personal attachment or regional bias. More perhaps than any other founder, Hamilton saw America steadily and saw it whole.

It is true that the outsider will sometimes abuse his gift of insight, as the Austrian Hitler did in Germany and as the Georgian Stalin did in Russia. But *Rediscovering Alexander Hamilton* makes it clear that in Hamilton intelligence was tempered by virtuous scruples. Henry Adams scented in him a Napoleonic adventurer—but Hamilton resisted, as Bonaparte never did, the temptation to sacrifice the general welfare to individual glory. Of the two kinds of heroic temperament most commonly met

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with—the self-sacrificing valor of which the Catos are the exemplar, and the self-aggrandizing heroism of which the Caesarian or Alexandrine conqueror, is the type and symbol—Hamilton was closer to the first than the second. But he had undoubtedly some affinity for the romance of a personal ascendancy; Forrest McDonald has aptly described him as a "romantic personality" whose "true kin were the likes of Byron and Beethoven." A gulf divides him from the nation he helped to form.

The originality of *Rediscovering Alexander Hamilton* is nowhere more evident than in its suggestion that the America Hamilton did so much to create was not an America in which he personally could be at home. Nothing could be more mistaken than the notion that Hamilton was the prototype of that characteristically American figure, the man on the make, the hustler, the tycoon: a prefigurer of Jay Gould and Jay Gatsby. Hamilton was on the contrary consumed by longings for immortal glory; and his glory consisted in helping to build a country in which such inglorious but useful and constructive personalities as Morgan and Rockefeller could flourish.

Devoted himself to fame and high statesmanship, Hamilton labored to create a republic in which there is, Tocqueville observed, remarkably little "lofty ambition." Hamilton saluted Bonaparte as an "unequalled conqueror, from whom it is painful to detract," yet he promoted a politics inimical to Bonapartism. Jefferson claimed to have heard him say that "the greatest man that ever lived, was Julius Caesar," yet in his statecraft he worked with materials no would-be Caesar could have cared to touch—with models of commercial prosperity derived from the unheroic philosophies of Hume and Smith, with a theory of judicial review that subjected the acts of statesmen to the scrutiny of lawyers, with a financial program that made Wall Street rather than West Point the Mecca for much of the brightest talent of the nation. It is not a Bonapartist or Caesarian legacy that Brookhiser finds when he visits the floor of the Stock Exchange or watches lawyers cite the *Federalist Papers* in oral arguments in *Boumediene v. Bush*, in which the Supreme Court ruled that the Bush administration's suspension of the writ of habeas corpus at Guantanamo Bay violated the Constitution.



Richard Brookhiser (center, right) oversees descendants of Burr and Hamilton re-creating their ancestors' famous duel.

Near the beginning of the documentary, Brookhiser informs the viewer that his object is to “walk the paths of Hamilton’s life” and look at “the modern versions of the institutions Hamilton created.” The result is a series of contrasts, at times amusing, at times alarming, between the life the hero lived and the world the hero made. With gentle irony Brookhiser takes the viewer from scenes of revolutionary tumult to scenes in which the placid, good-humored, and above all *casual* life of the country today goes on. He talks to Columbia students who are oblivious of the identity of their college’s greatest son—a cluelessness that is possible (among educated people) only where history itself is unreal, is a thing that happens somewhere else, to someone else. Hamilton and his fellow founders have to a great extent insulated Americans from history; as a result we are innocents not only abroad but also at home.

Justice Scalia, alone among the documentary’s cameos, questions the peculiar kind of imbecility that is found wherever people have for a long time lived comfortably remote from the terror of history. Most Americans, Scalia observes, when they are asked what makes the Constitution great, point to one or another of the provisions of the Bill of Rights. “And that is not what’s great about it,” Scalia tells Brookhiser. “And it’s not what’s distinctive about the American system. Almost all the nations of the world today have a bill of rights and you would not want to live in 80 percent of them, because the constitutions of those countries do not prevent as ours does the centralization of power.” If the American Constitution is something more than a set

of paper promises, it is because men like Hamilton created, out of the tragic materials of history (blood and violence), institutions that have grown into a system that really does limit authority. It takes a lot of history to create even a little constitutional order—it takes, that is, a lot of suffering, and a lot of heroism.

“But unheroic as bourgeois society is,” Marx said, “yet it had need of heroism, of sacrifice, of terror, of civil war and of national battles to bring it into being.” It is true that the freedom Marx stigmatized as “bourgeois” is not even now wholly without Catos. If history has happened only intermittently in America, the credit is due not merely to dead heroes like Hamilton but also to living ones—to the uniforms that guard us while we sleep. But it is no less true that the heroic temper jars with the contemporary American mood—with the complacent ironies of Jon Stewart and the precious idealism exemplified by the Columbia students who recently mocked a wounded Iraq War veteran. Such naïveté is possible only to those who are very, very remote from history.

Rediscovering Alexander Hamilton is not, to be sure, a brief for a reversion to the archaic, to the harder history our forebears knew: The documentary finds much to like in our dressed-down, undemanding republic. But the film is conscious always of the paradox that our modern democratic world, in which it grows ever more difficult to take anything seriously, was in great measure molded by pre-modern intellects that took many things seriously. Glory was real for Hamilton, piety was real for John Winthrop, and sin was real for both of them, in ways that they are only very rarely real for the educated person today. (The sentiment of

honor, so important to the founders, is cultivated today, Brookhiser observes, mainly in urban gangs, some of whose members he talks to.) The different cast of mind of men like Hamilton and Washington seems to have been in part the product of their deeper experience of history. However much we study the past, we are (most of us) personally unacquainted with history.

As illuminating as *Rediscovering Alexander Hamilton* is—and it is not only the most thoughtful, but also the most ingeniously crafted documentary on the life of an American founder I have seen—there is, finally, a mystery it cannot penetrate, that of a statesman who worked deliberately to make a world that would have little use for his own qualities of soul, a man lastly over-strong against himself. Hamilton remains for us the stranger he was for many of his contemporaries: a garlanded hero whose heroism has made it possible for us to recline (in unheroic levity) before the plasma icons of Oprah and Jon.

Few of us would go back to Hamilton’s world. A world in which there is much heroism is likely to be a world in which there is much misery, for not only does intense suffering call forth heroism, but heroism gone rancid becomes Caesarism and is in turn a cause of suffering. (The founders broke the Cromwellian-Napoleonic cycle in which courage is corrupted into despotism, but a glance at the map reveals that the odds are against such breakthroughs.) I would not go back, but I came away from this deeply intelligent exposition of a great man’s life and fate with a shudder of humility—a sensation that there has passed away a glory from the earth.

NR

Film

Light of The World

ROSS DOUTHAT

IF the Vatican Observatory were to begin broadcasting Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence-style signals into space, and the Catholic Church went looking for a single story capable of introducing to an entirely alien consciousness the essence of the Christian life, I can think of no better candidate than Xavier Beauvois's luminous *Of Gods and Men*.

The film, which debuted in France last year and only recently arrived stateside, takes place almost entirely within the walls of a small Cistercian monastery, in the nearby village, and on surrounding mountainsides. The mountains are the Atlas range in Algeria, and the village in question is populated exclusively by Muslims, with whom the Cistercians have an easy rapport. They supply medical care and other forms of assistance, attend festivals and birthday parties, and sell honey in the local marketplace. They do not proselytize directly, but their lives are a witness to Christian charity, and a fulfillment of the dictum attributed to Saint Francis: "Preach the Gospel always. If necessary, use words."

But good works are not all they do. They also worship and pray, morning and night, in the chapel and in their cells and around their dinner table. This is a film about charity and liturgy, and how the Eucharist and the parable of the Good Samaritan can be intimately intertwined.

Except that being the Algerian equivalent of a Samaritan—outsiders in a Muslim country, that is—turns out to be enough to get the monks killed.

Of Gods and Men is based on a true story from Algeria's bloody 1990s civil war, when seven Cistercians were kidnapped from their monastery and found beheaded two months later. The circumstances of their death were mysterious: An Islamist group claimed credit for the slaying, but there were suggestions that the brothers had been killed by government forces in a botched rescue attempt. In different hands, this mystery would be a spur to speculation and embellishment. But Beauvois does not propose a theory of what really happened to his characters; indeed, he implies their fate, rather than depicting it. His film is interested in a different question: not how they died, but why they stayed.

The answer is for God, and for one another. Their prior, Brother Christian (Lambert Wilson), is sure of his course from the beginning. After Algeria's Islamists begin their campaign of terror, he brusquely dismisses a local official's offer to station troops at the monastery, and when a group of militants shows up to menace the monks on Christmas

Eve, he dismisses them with a barrage of Koranic quotations. (The real-life Brother Christian was an officer in the French Army before he took his vows, and Wilson plays him with the bearing of a soldier and the sensibilities of a religious intellectual.)

His fellow monks are more uncertain. Their vocation is contemplation and charity, not martyrdom, and the democracy of the monastery lets them argue with Christian, and with one another, about what to do and where to go. Brother Luc (Michael Lonsdale), the doctor of the group, is old and mischievous, subtle and unafraid of the test to come. ("I'm not scared of death," he tells the prior, his eyes twinkling above their ample bags. "I'm a free man.") Brother Christophe (Olivier Rabourdin), the youngest monk, is the most vocal advocate for leaving, and the most obviously terrified of death. The others are divided, pulled one way by their fears, the other by their love for the life they've chosen and the place where they have made it.

The beauty of that place and life are crucial to the film's theological theme. By insisting on the goodness of creation even as it admires its characters for being willing to depart it, *Of Gods and Men* wonderfully illustrates the difference between Christianity and gnosticism, between an asceticism that cares intensely for this world and an asceticism that merely renounces it. This is a film about men in love with God, but both the monks and the movie are in love with life as well. Seen through Beauvois's skillful lens, the bare simplicity of Cistercian life yields a rich and extraordinary beauty—visible not only in the skies and mountainsides, but in a cord of firewood, an upturned garden bed, the worn flesh of an aged face.

This theme is distilled in the monks' last meal together, when Brother Luc unexpectedly uncorks a rare vintage of red wine and puts a tape of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* into the cassette player. It's the only time secular music breaks into the movie's sacred world, but really in that moment it's the sacred that envelops the secular and claims it for its own. The world is redeemed and its glories revealed, *Of Gods and Men* suggests, whenever Christians take up the cross of Christ: The monks are dying as he died, and like him they are making all things new.



Brother Christian (Lambert Wilson)

NR

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

Decline And Fall



JOHN DERBYSHIRE

THESE is a school of psychology called Situationism that poohpoohs the notion of individual character. This line of thought began with some experiments by Stanley Milgram of Yale in the early 1960s. By manipulating his test subjects' conformism and respect for authority, Milgram was able to get ordinary pleasant people to give near-lethal 450-volt electric shocks to slow learners. (The "learners" were hired professional actors, the shocks imaginary, but Milgram's subjects did not know these things.) The most extreme Situationists argue that personal character is a fiction, and that given an appropriate situation, anyone will do anything. This has been on my mind recently.

Sometime in the spring of 1967, while Milgram's results were still being keenly discussed, I walked over to the office of the bursar at Liverpool University and received a check, signed by some functionary of Her Majesty's government, to cover fees and expenses for my last college semester.

There followed an interval of 43 years during which, to the best of my recollection, I received no money from any department of any government, other than as payment for work done. I of course consumed government services, but cash-wise and check-wise my post-college life was an entitlement-free zone. Even my occasional spells of unemployment were benefitless. There was always some reason I was ineligible for the dole. I had been too long abroad; I had been self-employed; I was single and childless; I was not a citizen.

I read with wonder of new-landed immigrants signing up for welfare, of

able-bodied citizens spending years unemployed; of the stupendous sums shelled out by my state and nation on Medicaid, SSI, TANF, food stamps, Section Eight. I once *watched* with wonder as the fit-looking young adult man ahead of me in the supermarket checkout line, told that the food stamps he'd offered the cashier did not cover some part of his purchases, produced from his pocket a roll of twenties the size of a soup can and peeled one off, talking all the while to a companion in Spanish.

Now, I'm not going to be boastful about this—quietly smug, perhaps, but no worse. I've been lucky, health-wise and work-wise. Attitudes inherited from doggedly respectable working-class forebears helped: *We never took relief*. The old Anglo-Saxon spirit of independence, too, I like to think. "Do you know what is the pride of the English?" asks Mr. Deasy of Stephen Dedalus in *Ulysses*.

—That on his empire, Stephen said, the sun never sets.

—Ba! Mr Deasy cried. That's not English. A French Celt said that. He tapped his savingsbox against his thumbnail.

—I will tell you, he said solemnly, what is his proudest boast. *I paid my way*.

Such attitudes are in any case so quaint and fogleyish now, they are as far beyond praise or blame as the wearing of a tricorne hat would be. They are relics of the time before Anglo-Saxon civilization collapsed into hedonism, dependency, ethnic masochism, consumer credit, and trillion-dollar national deficits. In Liverpool today, one household in three is "economically inactive"—that is, contains no working adults. In Britain overall, the statistic is one household in eight. No doubt parts of the U.S. are as bad.

Still I never took relief. Now I am taking it, and wondering whether perhaps the Situationists are right: that my proud disdain for government cash was mere fancy, and that the rot has reached into my soul too.

This started last May when, quite unexpectedly, a letter arrived from something called The Pension Service in Newcastle upon Tyne, England NE98 1BA. My 65th birthday was imminent, the letter reminded me. I should fill out the enclosed form to claim my pension. Would I like it

deposited in pounds sterling in a U.K. bank, or converted to dollars and sent to my U.S. bank?

Good grief! Having worked some years in the old country, I had a vague idea that I was entitled to the U.K. equivalent of Social Security, but had never expected Her Majesty's servants to be so proactive. I consulted a fellow expat somewhat older than myself. His advice was to open a U.K. bank account, have them deposit my pension there, and take a vacation in Britain every year or so to spend it. "Otherwise the IRS will jump on it."

Those quaint, fogleyish attitudes kicked in again. I love the IRS no more than does any other citizen; but Uncle Sam having taken me in, given me a home and a living and friends, it seemed a low thing to deprive him of what was lawfully his. I checked the box for conversion, and gave my U.S. bank-account details. And Lo! in the month of my birthday, and every month thereafter, several hundred dollars have crossed the ocean from Newcastle upon Tyne and slipped painlessly onto my bank statements.

This small miracle—*income without effort!*—turned my thoughts to my U.S. Social Security entitlement. I'd had a vague idea that the longer I held off claiming this, the more I'd get, so it would be best to hold out until I might actually need it, which I currently don't. I checked with my accountant. He: "Take it as soon as you can. Sock it all into a muni fund. Later you can pay it all back and re-set at the higher level. You get that higher level. You get that interest from your fund. If you kick the bucket, your family has something. *Hell-o?*"

Still I dithered; but while dithering I learned another thing: that Social Security would add a handsome supplement for each of my two high-schoolers. That was the decider. I signed on, and now get a monthly check from Uncle Sam to add to the one from Her Majesty's Treasury. I am a welfare king . . . or at any rate—the sums are not *that* large—a welfare baron.

So much for my prideful independence and self-sufficiency. It has vanished like dew in the morn, and I am a contented client of the welfare state. Given our nation's fiscal condition, I may have arrived at the banquet just as they are serving coffee, but never mind. I'll take the coffee, and square matters somehow with the keening shades of my never-took-relief ancestors.

NR

Esprit de l'Escalier

WANDERING round this great republic predicting the apocalypse, I'm often asked by audience members why it is I'm being quite so overwrought if not an hysterical old queen about the whole business. After all, President Obama's now-forgotten "Deficit Commission" produced a report melodramatically emblazoned "The Moment of Truth" and proposing such convulsive course corrections as raising the age of Social Security eligibility to 69.

By the year 2075.

With wake-up calls like that, we can all roll over and sleep in for another half century, right?

But some of us have been here before. We know the smell of decay, and we recognize it in America today. Last year, Niall Ferguson, professor at Oxford, at Harvard, and on high-brow telly documentaries, joined Barbra Streisand, James Brolin, and other eminent thinkers at the Aspen Ideas Festival. "Having grown up in a declining empire, I do not recommend it," he told them. "It's just not a lot of fun actually, decline."

Amen, brother. It's the small things you remember. The public clocks that stop and are never restarted. "Stands the church clock at ten to three? / And is there honey still for tea?" wrote Rupert Brooke, aching from abroad for an eternal England. If the town-hall clock stopped at ten to three, it stands there still, and the one above the splendid Victorian railway station stands at twelve past four, and the one on the Gothic Revival opera house at 7:23: You are literally in a land that time forgot. Likewise, the escalators. In "developing nations," they're a symbol of progress. In decaying nations, they're an emblem of decline. In pre-Thatcher Britain, the escalators seized up, and stayed unrepaired for months on end. Eventually, someone would start them up again, only for them to break down 48 hours later and be out of service for another 18 months. It was always the up escalators. You were in a country that could only go downhill: All chutes, no ladders.

If you live in certain of our more obviously insolvent states, you may already recognize the phenomenon. A waggish reader wrote to me from the nation's capital a few weeks ago hailing what he called Union Station's cutting-edge bidirectional escalator technology. The conventional escalator on the left had been out of order for a month and "requires two full-time maintenance workers to stare at it for hours at a time while discussing football and women." But during the same period the equally non-moving escalator on the right had been used every rush hour to accommodate thousands of both upward and downward commuters simultaneously. All the advanced technology of a staircase—now in an escalator! The bright new future of mass transit: no-speed escalators to high-speed trains.

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

Incremental decline is easy to get used to. I'm sure a few of my correspondent's fellow commuters are equally droll about it and a few more get angry, but untold thousands more just shuffle uncomplainingly up and down, scuffing shoes and bumping backpacks. That's the trick with decline: persuading people to accept it. The Transportation Security Administration, which in a decade of existence has never caught a single terrorist, has managed to persuade freeborn citizens to accept that minor state bureaucrats have the right to fondle your scrotum without probable cause. The TSA is now unionizing, which means that this hideous embodiment of bureaucratized sclerosis will now have its fingers in your gusset until the end of time.

What was it they used to say? If we give up our freedoms, the terrorists will have won! Whether or not the terrorists have won, the bureaucrats have. And they're a more profound existential threat to America than the terrorists will ever be. My accountant was trying to explain to me the new 1099 requirements of Obamacare, but who cares? In the Republic of Paperwork, there'll be a new set of new requirements along any minute. I'm ashamed of myself for even knowing what a 1099 is. But that's the issue: Once you accept the principle that one citizen cannot contract with another without filing paperwork with the state, imposing ever more onerous conditions is merely a difference of degree.

In such a world it becomes more difficult to innovate, and frankly not a priority. When I deposit a New Zealand check at my bank in Montreal, the funds are available to me within two seconds. The last time I deposited a New Zealand check at my bank in the U.S., they sent it for "collection" (an entirely artificial concept in the computer age) to Australia, and by the time it came back it had expired. They couldn't understand why I was annoyed—c'mon, man, we were in the ballpark! To resolve the issue, I had to go to the bank president, who, on being informed of my Canadian comparison, said, "Well, you must understand smaller countries by their nature have to get used to dealing with the rest of the world. It's different for America."

This might have been reasonable enough in 1950, when America was last man standing on a Western world otherwise reduced to rubble. But it seems an odd attitude for a country whose households are entirely filled by products made elsewhere and whose future is mortgaged to foreigners. And it made me wonder if perhaps Ferguson and I are being insufficiently apocalyptic. A gargantuan bureaucratized parochialism leavened by litigiousness and political correctness is a scale of decline no developed nation has yet attempted.

It doesn't have to go like that. Abolish the 1099. Get the feds out of your underwear. Restart the escalator. But the clock is running down, fast.

NR





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The federal deficit problem is raging with the Fed printing \$600 Billion, but there is another financial crisis regarding state and local governments. The media has failed to cover this crisis. In the last two years, since the "great recession" wrecked their economies and shriveled their income, states nationwide have collectively spent half a trillion dollars more than they collected in taxes. There is also a trillion dollar hole in their public pension funds.

States have been getting by on billions in federal stimulus funds, but the day of reckoning is here. This intensifying debt crisis has Wall Street worried it could de-rail any chance of an economic recovery, forcing a depression. This will cost 1,000,000 public employee jobs and require another huge bailout that has Washington shaking in its boots.

Respected Wall Street analyst Meredith Whitney believes no one really knows how deep the debt holes are. She and her staff spent two years and thousands of hours analyzing the financial condition of the 15 largest states. She wanted to know if states could pay back what they borrowed and the risk they pose to the \$3 trillion municipal bond market, where state and local governments finance their schools, highways, and public projects. "How accurate is the financial information that's public on the states and municipalities?" Kroft of 60 Minutes asked. "The lack of transparency with the state disclosure is the worst I have ever seen," Whitney said.



Whitney is afraid some local governments will get squeezed as states are forced to tighten their belts. She's convinced that some cities and counties will be unable to meet their obligations to municipal bond holders who financed their debt.

Earlier this year, the state of Pennsylvania had to rescue the city of Harrisburg, its capital, from defaulting on hundreds of millions of dollars in debt for an incinerator project.

"The most alarming thing about the state issue is the level of complacency," Meredith Whitney, one of the most respected financial analysts on Wall Street and one of the most influential women in American business, told correspondent Steve Kroft. Whitney made her reputation by warning that the big banks were in big trouble long before the 2008 collapse. Now, she's warning about a financial meltdown in state and local governments. "It has tentacles as wide as anything I've seen. I think next to housing this is

the single most important issue in the United States, and certainly the largest threat to the U.S. economy," she told Kroft. Call Now and Order — you can not afford to sit around and get slammed by this crisis that lies ahead. Gold & Silver is safer than CD's, Stocks, or Bonds, Gold and Silver is safer than cash in the bank. **CALL NOW!** You are running out of time! Remember friend, the only thing worse than failure is regret when you've been warned!

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