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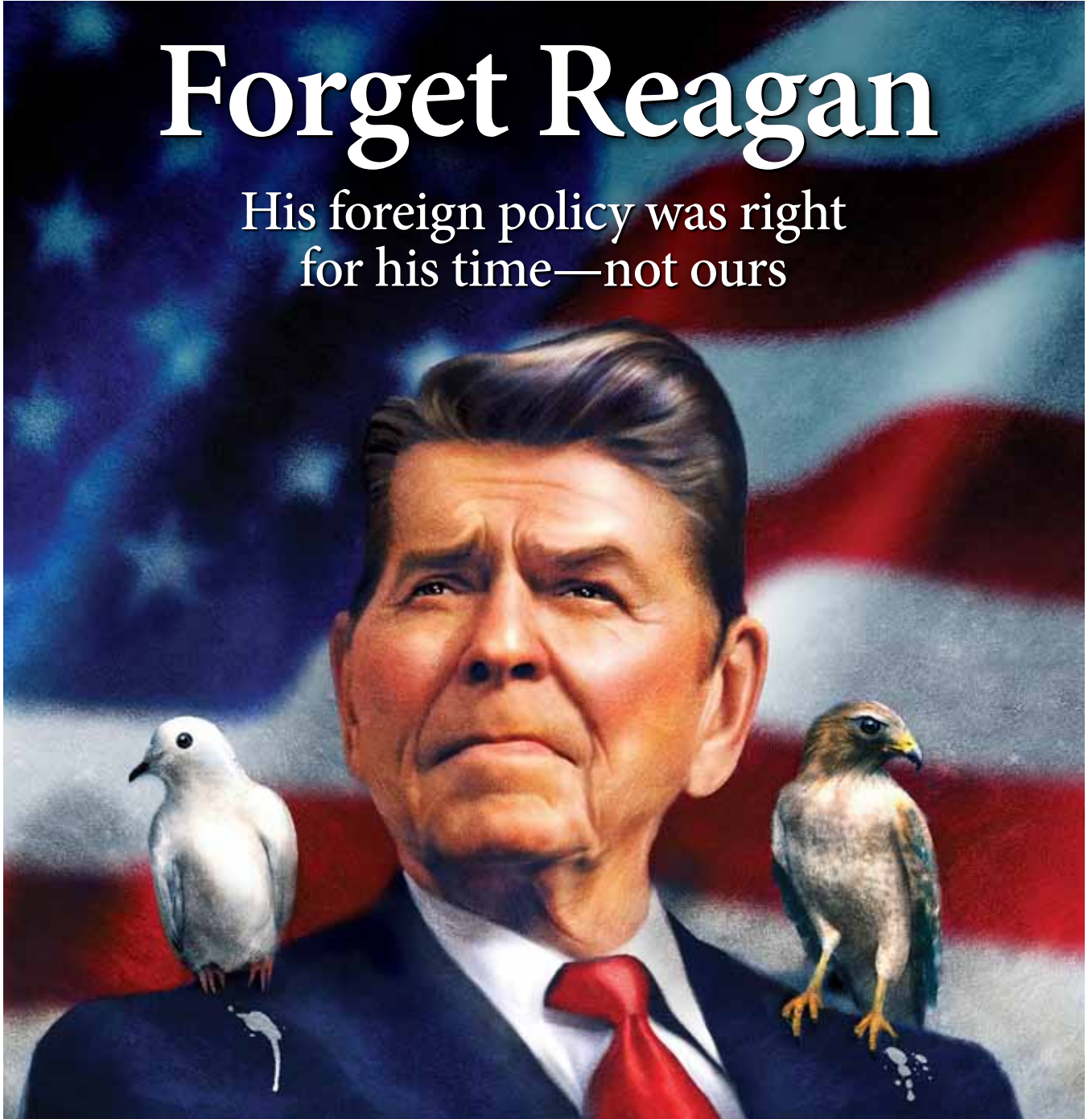
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Reactions

“THE WAR’S MOST LASTING LEGACY”

True, there’s no necessary connection between the Bush administration’s Iraq floundering and, say, the right’s setbacks in the gay-marriage debate. But cultural change is a complicated thing, built on narratives and symbols and intuitive leaps.

As *The American Conservative*’s Dan McCarthy noted in a shrewd essay (“The GOP’s Vietnam,” March/April), the Vietnam War helped entrench a narrative in which liberal social movements were associated with defeat in Indochina—and this association didn’t have to be perfectly fair to be politically and culturally potent.

In a similar way, even though Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney weren’t culture warriors or evangelical Christians, in the popular imagination their legacy of incompetence has become a reason to reject social conservatism as well. Just as the post-Vietnam Democrats came to be regarded as incompetent, wimpy and dangerously radical all at once, since 2004 the Bush administration’s blunders—the missing W.M.D., the botched occupation—have been woven into a larger story about Youth and Science and Reason and Diversity triumphing over Old White Male Faith-Based Cluelessness.

Of all the Iraq war’s consequences for our politics, it’s this narrative that may be the war’s most lasting legacy, and the most difficult for conservatives to overcome.

ROSS DOUTHAT
New York Times

I’m unconvinced that Vietnam is the key reason why the Democrats lost their status as the majority party. Rather, I believe it was overwhelmingly domestic policy considerations—and particularly the nexus of race and crime—that overwhelmingly drove the “Silent Majority” into the arms of Richard Nixon, and, subsequently, motivated the Democrats of Macomb County, Michigan, to pull the lever for Ronald Reagan.

That doesn’t mean Vietnam was irrelevant, but in the absence of the currents of domestic social change, I suspect the Vietnam debacle would have looked more like, say, the Korean War, the memory of which did contribute to the Democrats’ losses in 1952 and 1956, but did not lead to a long-term realignment. There is a tendency to attribute those social changes to the disillusion caused by the Vietnam War, but I suspect this is also a mistake—the Generation of ’68 was a global phenomenon.

NOAH MILLMAN
Excerpt from a blog post at The American Conservative

The war was instrumental in driving younger voters away from the GOP and into the Democratic coalition in 2006 and 2008, and most of them have remained there since then. Of course, Iraq was not the only thing about the Republican Party and mainstream conservatism that alienated Millennials, but it is correct to say that the Iraq war increased and hastened Millennial alienation from both. The important point is that the GOP was already going to be struggling to appeal to a more diverse, more liberal younger generation, and a foreign policy defined by the Iraq debacle has made that task even more difficult. So the sobering thing for Republicans to consider is that the Iraq war is a liability for them with Americans of all ages, and it has already proven to be a disaster for them with younger voters.

DANIEL LARISON
Excerpt from a blog post at The American Conservative

THE CASE FOR MARRIAGE

Former presidential candidate Jon Huntsman’s op-ed expressing support for gay marriage literally made news, generating enough media attention to be mentioned in a White House press briefing. His endorsement garnered 120,000 pageviews and 35,000 Facebook shares on TheAmericanConservative.com.

Gov. Huntsman’s argument in “Why Marriage Equality Is Right” (March/April) is unsubstantial. How can the governor implore the value of America’s political traditions while, in the same breath, dismiss the very moral principles that lay the foundation for America itself?

Not unexpected, Mr. Huntsman neglects to provide any compelling evidence to his position, instead obscuring the issue with references to an emerging Hispanic population, fiscal responsibility, and the personal testimony of his own marriage. It is more of the same hollow rhetoric that quickly rendered Mr. Huntsman irrelevant among his Republican peers this past election year.

Whatever misperceived political opportunity Mr. Huntsman found in taking this position has undeniably shown to be the governor himself “feeling for stones” in the river dividing regional and national politics.

JONATHAN ARMESTO
Ave Maria, FL

Huntsman’s argument that support for marriage equality is a *conservative* cause is significant for reasons that don’t necessarily have anything to do with politics. As a cultural matter, there are mountains of social science studies that show that relationships involving committed couples, regardless of the gender pairings involved, are far more stable than “casual” relationships. Additionally, it’s fairly clear that established families are far better for children than single parent families, and the evolving practice of homosexuals either bearing children via artificial insemination or adoption has shown that such relationships are just as beneficial for children as heterosexual relationships. What all of this suggests is that allowing gays and lesbians to enter into a legal marriage tends to lead to exactly the kind of social stability that conservatives claim that they support.

DOUG MATACONIS
Excerpt from a blog post at Outside The Beltway

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CORPORATE RELATIONS

In his discussion of sex and culture, Rod Dreher (“Sex and Christianity,” March/April) gives scant attention to the supra-nationalist corporate order that has been imposed upon all of us—the very generator of modernist morals and mores. For the extraction of ever-increasing profit margins, this amoral system requires a mass psychology of narcissistic individualism and the relentless creation and stimulation of artificial wants and desires—all of which demand instant gratification and none of which can ever be completely satisfied or sated. Until this corporate commodification of all human relationships is recognized and confronted, any thought of a renewal or revival of moral values, traditional or otherwise, remains mere idle and utopian speculation.

MARTIN COMACK, PhD
Somerville, MA

REIMAGINING VATICAN II

Does Pat Buchanan really blame the Second Vatican Council for the decline of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe and America? (“Pope Benedict’s Farewell,” March/April) Even if we assume that the impulses reflected by Vatican II (decentralization and collegiality in church polity, engagement of the laity in the Mass, engagement of the church in the modern world) were misguided, the potential for these initiatives to fundamentally affect the way the church operates was severely limited by a Vatican hierarchy that, working through the increasingly conservative Pope Paul VI and then led for 23 years by John Paul II, systematically blunted or reversed each of the reforms launched by the Council.

There is no question that the Roman Church faced significant challenges to its authority and relevance in the second half of the last century. If nothing else, the rise of relativism as an accepted ethical framework made it harder to recruit priests or to keep the faithful in

the pews. But, as David Brooks pointed out in a recent *New York Times* column (“How Movements Recover,” March 15, 2013), an institution that responds to crisis by following the impulse to “purge and purify” risks sacrificing its authority in its effort to avoid being tainted by the world it seeks to influence. A case could be made that it is actually the refusal of the Roman hierarchy to follow the course set by Vatican II that has led to the marginalization of the Catholic Church in the western world.

Mr. Buchanan’s evaluation of Benedict’s papacy, that he restored “majesty” to the liturgy and poached a few Anglican congregations that objected to the ordination of women and homosexuals, rings as faint praise indeed. John Paul’s charisma may have hastened the demise of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, but his opposition to the impulses of Vatican II may have simultaneously weakened the ability of his church to inspire spiritual renewal in the cradle of Christianity.

ROB ABBOT
Arlington, VA

WHITHER THE EUROPEAN UNION?

Taki’s article (“Escape From the EU”) in your March/April issue evoked a long held observation of mine. One of the powerful and lasting impressions of living in London during the stock market “Big Bang” conversion of 1986 was that the concept of the EU was doomed to eventual failure. It was obvious that this effort consisted of troweling over chasms of differences, many irreconcilable, which defined the European nations, with a veneer of similarity. This was in complete contrast to the U.S. where we have a thin veneer of differences covering a bedrock of commonality among our states, Civil War and all. My bet is that the artificial EU cannot prevail over the genuine independence of the European countries. If the USSR could not do it, I doubt the EU can.

WES WALLACE
via email

Springtime for Keynes

The Great Recession started off well for conservative economic theories. They seemed vindicated, particularly the ideas of the Austrian school of economics. The real estate bubble's burst looked like a textbook turn of the Austrian business cycle, with lax monetary policy encouraging overinvestment in a series of inflated assets—first dot-coms, then real estate—and finally leading to a titanic collapse. Austrians prescribed buying gold and waiting for the inflation that would inevitably follow the Federal Reserve's "quantitative easing."

More conventional small-government conservatives also had a ready remedy for the crisis. Plummeting federal revenues and new stimulus spending led to trillion-dollar deficits, which made the case for cutting government more compelling than ever. Harvard economists Carmen Reinhart and Kenneth Rogoff stepped in to show that debt-to-GDP ratios in excess of 90 percent correspond to significantly diminished growth. Spending our way out of the doldrums was impossible—only revving up growth by reducing spending held any possibility of escape. The rise of the Tea Party in 2010 and the nomination of Rep. Paul Ryan as the GOP's candidate for vice president in 2012 testified to the popularity of this view among Republican voters.

Maybe these theories are correct. But the short-term evidence has not borne them out. Inflation has been modest, while in April Rogoff and Reinhart's seminal paper, "Growth in a Time of Debt," came in for withering criticism from three University of Massachusetts scholars—one of them, Thomas Herndon, a graduate student—who found the study employed questionable assumptions and selective data sets and even included a glaring spreadsheet error. Revising its conclusions would show, the critics maintained, that there was no remarkable choke off of growth once debt-to-GDP hit 90 percent, and what slow-

down could be seen was a correlation that did not obviously imply a direction of causation.

The weight of circumstances no longer favors arguments for austerity. Neither does the political climate, to judge from the results of the 2012 election, which saw the relatively budget-conscious Republican ticket of Romney and Ryan go down in flames to the president who has spent more than any other. In the battle of perceptions, Keynesians have the upper hand—with the more dedicated of the breed, such as Paul Krugman, criticizing President Obama for not spending nearly enough.

Conservatism is not a mere economic dogma, however, but a political philosophy. And there are reasons beyond those of the "austerians" for looking askance at the burgeoning of the welfare state in this time of prolonged misery. The greater immediate danger is not dependency—millions of Americans are genuinely in need amid a hollowed-out working-class economy—but the socially atomizing effects that even helpful government programs can have. The last thing the country needs, in the face of a faltering employment base, is further erosion of civil society and the family. But there are few, if any, policies in place to counteract the crowding out of the private realm by public assistance.

Conservatives must give at least as much attention to these problems as to overarching economic theories—which, even when correct, may be far from any practical implementation. But there are grounds for solace even in this age of Keynes. The man whose name is a synonym for statism to many on the right in fact "believed that budgets should be balanced over the business cycle, with surpluses in good years to offset deficits in bad years," as Bruce Bartlett has observed. On that much, at least, conservatives may find themselves not altogether opposed to Lord Keynes. ■

Front Lines

Rand Paul's Realignment

The senator points his party toward a stronger defense policy.

by WILLIAM S. LIND

A concept central to our medieval forebears' understanding of how life works was the wheel of fortune. Whoever was on top would soon be on his way down, and whoever was humble and lowly would find himself on the way up.

If there is any place where the wheel of fortune still turns, it is Washington. There, over the past couple months, the Republican Party's wheel has begun to revolve. The permanent war faction, with its allies the Pentagon budget-stokers, has tumbled, while the long-despised foreign-policy realists and "cheap hawks," those who want an effective military at an affordable price, have begun to rise.

Two events impelled the wheel's movement. In the House of Representatives, the Republican majority, faced by sequestration with a choice between cutting the deficit and protecting the defense budget, chose the former. President Obama did his best to terrify House Republicans with the boogeyman of "undermining our military," even channeling George W. Bush by speaking at the Norfolk shipyard where our aircraft carriers are built. The Republicans shrugged.

In the Senate, Rand Paul's filibuster against the use of drones at home marked another turn of the wheel. It was not so much what he said, important as that was—Americans will not enjoy living under constant surveillance and possible obliteration by drones any more than do Pakistanis, Gazans, or Yemenis—rather, it was the reaction to him from establishment Republicans.

Led by Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, they supported him. The mouthpiece of the permanent war party, Sen. John McCain, was left spluttering.

The *Financial Times*, the world's best English-language newspaper, caught the moment and its import. *FT* reported on March 11,

The ties that bind Mr Paul and fellow Kentucky senator Mitch McConnell reveal just how influential the conservative Tea Party movement, of which Mr Paul is a favorite, remains within the Republican party and how it is shifting the party's position on foreign policy. And it marks a challenge to traditional defence hawks such as Senator John McCain, who used to dominate the party.

That "used to" is significant. More so is the fact that Mitch McConnell, up for re-election in 2014, now needs Rand Paul and the rising grassroots forces he represents.

These actions, taken once, become easier to repeat. The fulsome embrace of blowzy, poxy Madame Pentagon, once forgone, looks ever less beguiling.

So far, Republicans' abandonment of defense spending as their highest budget priority is driven by financial considerations. A majority of House Republicans now recognize that the greatest threat to America's security is the enormous federal deficit and the ballooning national debt. Debt crises have destroyed more than one great power. Both America's strength and

the Republican Party's base lie in the middle class, and the usual outcome of a debt crisis, inflation, threatens the middle class with ruin. Inflation wiped out the German middle class twice in the 20th century. Not only can it happen here, on our current course it will. The Tea Party grasps this fact, which means Republican officeholders must also grasp it or be replaced.

What Republican members of Congress thus far have not understood is that clear thinking about national defense also leads to a dramatically smaller defense budget. Almost all our defense spending goes to equip and support forces designed for wars with other states. As we have seen in Iraq and Afghanistan, such forces are not effective against non-state, Fourth Generation opponents. Yet our most vital interest—our interest in maintaining a world of states and not of spreading stateless disorder—dictates that we should avoid war with other states. The question of what the bulk of our armed forces are for, then, is no longer answerable.

As this column warned repeatedly since before our invasion of Iraq, the most likely outcome when we go to war with another state will be the creation of a new stateless region. That will then be another petri dish for the incubation of more Fourth Generation war. This prediction was supported by the outcomes in Iraq and Libya, and it appears on track in Afghanistan as well. The test of any theory is its predictive value, and there seems to be something of a trend here.

As a growing number of Republicans agree, if the party is to win elections, its policy agenda needs updating. The present agenda, as faithfully represented by presidential candidate Mitt Romney, is as stale as *H.M.S. Surprise's* hardtack. By

refusing to be panicked into dropping sequestration because it means cuts to the Pentagon, House Republicans began that updating. With their support for Sen. Rand Paul's filibuster, Senate Republicans laid aside their fear of identifying with foreign-policy realism—a realism our deficits and debts compel. If Republicans can next find the courage to update their defense policy to reflect

the challenge posed by Fourth Generation war, the party will, at least in those areas, be addressing the future and not the past. Only then may it hope to ride fortune's electoral wheel upward. ■

William S. Lind is author of the Maneuver Warfare Handbook and director of the American Conservative Center for Public Transportation.

The Left vs. the Liberal Media

Media Lens debunks the BBC's humanitarian interventionists

by NEIL CLARK

It all started in July 2001 when two men, concerned about bias in the corporate news media in the UK, began to send out “media alerts” to a small number of family and friends. Twelve years on and Media Lens—the brainchild of writer David Edwards, a former manager in sales and marketing, and David Cromwell, a physicist by background—has established itself as the UK's media watchdog. There's no doubting the impact they have made. “Without their meticulous and humane analysis, the full gravity of the debacles of Iraq and Afghanistan might have been consigned to bad journalism's first draft of bad history,” is the verdict of veteran reporter and filmmaker John Pilger.

It's been an eventful twelve years. In addition to the “debacles” of Iraq and Afghanistan, we've had the (ongoing) menacing of Iran on account of an unproven nuclear-weapons program and Israeli military assaults on Lebanon in 2006 and on Gaza in 2008 and again in 2012. Add in the global financial crash of 2008, and there's been plenty to keep the two Davids occupied.

David Cromwell's new book, *Why Are We The Good Guys?*, discusses these events and the work that he and Edwards have done to counter the “elite-friendly value assumptions and judgements” that characterize their

coverage in Britain. Although he is clearly a man of the left—his working-class childhood was an “interesting mix of Catholic and Communist” influences—Cromwell's not one to be deceived by labels, an important skill to possess in an age when wars are sold as “humanitarian interventions” to gain support from liberals.

Media Lens has been outspoken, when the need arises, in its critique of so-called liberal-left media. Many on the British center-left give the BBC a free pass because they have swallowed the line that the organization is somehow “left-wing.” Yet Cromwell and Edwards have shown that when it comes to propagandizing for illegal wars and peddling establishment views, the BBC has at least as bad a record as commercial news networks.

When I caught up with David to talk to him about his new book, the BBC was in the middle of what has been described by some as the biggest crisis in its 90-year history: the resignation of its Director-General and other bigwigs after the fallout from a “Newsnight” program on child abuse. But while heads rolled over the state-owned broadcaster getting allegations wrong on just one program, Cromwell points out that the BBC was never held accountable for the role it played in the lead up to the Iraq War.

“There was no such pressure for senior BBC staff to go over the broadcaster's systemic failure to challenge US-UK propaganda over Iraq's non-existent WMD. This media failure paved the way towards war in Iraq and the subsequent brutal and bloody occupation. Instead of responsible public-service journalism, BBC News provides a reliable conduit for government propaganda, most notably the state's supposedly benign intentions in foreign wars and international relations. That is the daily news diet we are all spoon-fed.”

No such presumption of good faith applies when journalists discuss the actions of countries that don't toe the Washington line. “It is, of course, fine for journalists in the West to point to the crimes of official enemies and to mock them for their transparent propaganda efforts. Thus, the BBC's Emily Maitlis was able to introduce the flagship television program ‘Newsnight’ with a touch of sardonic wit: ‘Hello, good evening. The Russians are calling it a ‘peace enforcement operation.’ It's the kind of Newspeak that would make George Orwell proud.’”

“Maitlis was referring to the invasion of Russian forces into the Georgian province of South Ossetia in August 2008. By contrast, imagine a BBC presenter referring skeptically to the government's claim of a ‘peace enforcement operation’ for the West's invasion of Afghanistan, Iraq, or Libya and describing such language as ‘the kind of newspeak that would make George Orwell proud.’ It just would not happen.”

I ask Cromwell how he would respond to those who say that Media Lens should devote all its energies on attacking neocon *über*-hawks rather than criticizing the liberal media, which might agree with the group's standpoints, say, 70 percent of the time. “Media Lens has indeed spent more time analyzing the liberal media than right-wing outlets. Why? Because the liberal media is often regarded as

the outlets where the most progressive and the most challenging views can be seen and heard. If you like, it's one end of the acceptable spectrum of news and views. But if even here there are severe limits on permissible challenges to state-corporate power, what does that say about society generally? It's like a litmus test for dissent."

Cromwell believes that the role of the media in promoting the doctrine of 'liberal interventionism' has been absolutely crucial. "If the public was better informed, and not so often misled by those in power, there would likely be a stronger rein on the governing elite. But it's not happening. A major reason for this is that the corporate media acts as an echo chamber and amplifier of government propaganda. Even when challenged, senior journalists say that their role is to report what those in power say and do—even what they 'think.'

"For example, when the BBC's Nick Robinson was the ITN political editor, he wrote of the war in Iraq:

In the run-up to the conflict, I and many of my colleagues, were bombarded with complaints that we were acting as mouthpieces for Mr Blair. Why, the complainants demanded to know, did we report without question his warning that Saddam was a threat? Hadn't we read what Scott Ritter had said or Hans Blix? I always replied in the same way. It was my job to report what those in power were doing or thinking... That is all someone in my sort of job can do.

"Robinson performs the same compliant role today as political editor for the BBC," Cromwell says.

In the '90s we saw an informal alliance formed between neoconservatives and progressives united behind their support for "liberal intervention." I ask Cromwell if he thinks that a similar alliance can be formed be-

tween the antiwar left and the antiwar right. "I'd be wary of an overt alliance with anyone, right-wing or otherwise, who espouses other views that I might find distasteful. But certainly traditional conservatives should be—and often are—vehemently opposed to what goes by the benign-sounding term 'neo-liberalism,' which I unpack in the book."

One of the most riveting chapters in Cromwell's book is called "Beyond Indifference," in which he talks about his philosophical influences. He concludes—rather like Aldous Huxley—that if we do want to "free ourselves" and live better lives, it all starts with undertaking "small acts of kindness for others." And in contrast, he writes,

Violence feeds on violence, as wise people have known for thousands of years. For example, if brutal state repression is met by violence from some elements of society, it provides an excuse for state forces to ramp up fire-power and crush dissent with even more brutal and widespread violence. The current state of Permanent War can only be ended by people

coming together peacefully to overcome state power.

Cromwell certainly thinks that in challenging elite state propaganda we're in a better position now than we were when Media Lens began in 2001. "One positive thing I've noticed is that more people are challenging the media, at least judging by the messages posted on our board and Facebook page, the emails we get and the tweets we receive. Often, even before we've worked up a media alert, we've been beaten to it by our readers—although, to be fair to ourselves, we do typically wait a few days or longer to see how an event is being played out in the media. Ideally, I would hope that in five years' time there would be less need for Media Lens to be on the internet 'harranguing' and 'vilifying' journalists, as skeptics and opponents sometimes say! And surely by ten years from now I can be happily retired and pottering about in a garden shed. Preferably my own and not some random neighbor's." ■

Neil Clark is a UK-based journalist, blogger, and writer.

Thatcher Goes to China

Why Hong Kong recalls the Iron Lady fondly

by TODD CROWELL

As the swinging '70s gave way to the more anxious '80s, people in Hong Kong became increasingly apprehensive about a fast-approaching, though once comfortably distant, date—1997, the expiry date for the vast (by Hong Kong definition) hinterland acquired in 1898 on a 99-year lease and still known as the "New Territories."

Many businessmen were worried about the uncertain impact this change would have on business basics: would land leases be extended beyond that

date? (Virtually all land in Hong Kong, then as now, is "crown" land and parceled out on long-term leases.) Would contracts be honored? More to the point: what did China intend to do with Hong Kong?

It was against this background that British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher made her famous first visit to Beijing in Sept. 1982, to begin negotiating the future of the British colony with the Chinese Communist government of Deng Xiaoping. The meeting did not go well.

Thatcher went to Beijing hoping to persuade China's leaders that continuing British administration of the territory was necessary for the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong. The chaos of the Cultural Revolution, which essentially ended only with Mao Zedong's death in 1976, was still a vivid memory, China's reforms only just beginning.

She knew relatively little about China or Hong Kong, although she was undoubtedly briefed that China did not recognize as valid the 19th-century treaties that had ceded Hong Kong island and the tip of Kowloon

As the British would say, continued colonial administration of Hong Kong was just not on.

peninsula to Britain "in perpetuity" after the Opium Wars. She must also have known that Hong Kong could not continue as a viable entity without the New Territories.

The prime minister, however, seemed to think she had a duty at least to try to uphold the treaties, which she claimed were still valid under any consideration of international law. The issue came down to sovereignty. Would the British keep it beyond 1997, or would they have to surrender the entire territory?

For his part, Deng Xiaoping was unmovable: China would resume full sovereignty. Anything less would make him complicit in the treasonous territorial giveaways of the late Qing Dynasty. Yet otherwise, he was willing to grant generous concessions guaranteeing Hong Kong's way of life and liberties post-1997, under his famous but never-before-tried one-nation, two-systems formulation.

Much has been made in retrospectives following Mrs. Thatcher's recent death of how the "Iron Lady" had met her match in Deng. This is unfortunate. To be sure Deng, a former revolutionary war commander, was a tough hombre. But in truth Thatcher had a weak hand, which she was smart enough to understand. As the British would say, continued colonial administration of Hong Kong was just not on.

It took two more years for the British finally to come around to this position. They were trying times. In Oct. 1983, when it appeared that negotiations might collapse, the Hong Kong dollar began to plunge in value. That led to the pegging of the currency at HK \$7.8 to the U.S. dollar, a peg that continues to this day.

In 1984 London formally agreed to surrender sovereignty over the entire territory, as Thatcher confirmed in a letter to Chinese premier Zhao Ziyang. Later she made her second trip to Beijing to sign the Joint Declaration at a ceremony in the Great Hall of the People.

Thatcher had been out of office for seven years when the actual transition took place at midnight on June 30, 1997, so she didn't have to sit on the dais and watch the Union flag lowered for the last time. That role fell to newly minted Prime Minister Tony Blair. She was probably happy to be out of it.

In a 2007 interview Thatcher expressed "regret" that she could not persuade China to accept continued British rule. But there is no shame in playing a leading part in what was one of the most enlightened yet practical acts of diplomacy in modern times. It gave Hong Kong far more autonomy than any of the so-called "autonomous regions" in China proper.

Most commentary on Thatcher's death in Hong Kong and China was

laudatory. "We have no reason not to show our respect to this woman who signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration," wrote the *Global Times*, an affiliate of the official government organ *China Daily*.

The British political figure that Beijing truly hated was the last governor, Christopher Patten (appointed by Thatcher's successor, John Major). He took a confrontational tone with Beijing, which hit back with such endearing terms as "sinner of a thousand years." It will be interesting to see how the Chinese press handles his death.

As Hong Kong and China look back on the nearly 16 years since Hong Kong reverted to Chinese sovereignty, both find their worst fears unrealized but so too their best hopes. Many Hong Kongers, though recognizing that their basic liberties are intact, are still disappointed that the territory is only partially democratic, with only vague promises of more to come later.

Beijing is happy that the territory has not become, as it had feared, a base for subverting Communist rule on the mainland. But it is a source of disappointment that their punctilious observation of the terms of the Joint Declaration has not earned China's leadership much love. Hong Kong people still think of themselves as Hong Kongers first and Chinese—as in citizens of the People's Republic of China—second.

Indeed, tensions between Hong Kong people and mainland Chinese visitors have been rising in recent years, as newly rich Chinese jack up property prices and hog space in maternity wards to give birth to "anchor babies." Of late, protestors have taken to displaying the old British colonial flag. It is meant mostly to irritate Beijing, not as nostalgia for colonial days. But one imagines that Thatcher would take a quiet satisfaction from the sight. ■

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The West Loses Faith

“The Faith is Europe and Europe is the Faith,” wrote Hilaire Belloc after that bloodbath we call World War I. “Europe must return to the Faith, or she will perish.”

By 1938, Belloc concluded Christian Europe was done:

“The bad work begun at the Reformation is bearing its final fruit in the dissolution of our ancient doctrines—the very structure of society is dissolving.” He was right. Europe is the dying continent.

And looking back at the history of the Old Continent, we see the truth of G.K. Chesterton’s insight: when men cease to believe in God, they do not then believe in nothing, they will believe in anything.

Consider the idols to which European Man has burnt incense since losing his faith: Darwinism, Marxism, Bolshevism, fascism, Nazism, now globalism—the idea of a secular paradise where mankind’s needs are met by the state and people spend their lives consuming cultural and material goods until the time comes for the painless exit.

Wednesday, even as Europe has said goodbye to Rome, Rome began to say goodbye to Europe.

The College of Cardinals, for the first time ever, chose a pope from the New World: Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio of Argentina.

To be exact, Pope Francis is not of the indigenous peoples of the New World. Yet, though by blood an Italian, Pope Francis, heart and soul, does not belong to Europe.

The reaction of our secular media to the election of this first Jesuit pope, who lives his “preferential option for the poor,” was easily predictable.

On redistribution—“Is he a conservative, or a Great Society liberal who will push the ‘social gospel?’”—the new pope passes with honors. He has a simple apartment, rides the bus and lives among the Buenos Aires poor.

But on the “social issues”—“Is Pope Francis a progressive who will move the Church to a more ‘tolerant’ view of abortion and same-sex marriage?”—the disappointment of the media elite was evident.

Pope Francis adheres to orthodox Catholic teaching that abortion is the killing of an unborn child entailing automatic excommunication for all involved. He has denounced same-sex marriage and regards homosexual adoptions as a crime against children.

That the media showed visible disappointment at learning this makes one wonder if they know anything at all about the Catholic Church.

To be Catholic is to be orthodox.

Indeed, let us presume the impossible—that the Church should suddenly allow the ordination of woman, and decree that abortions in the first month of pregnancy are now licit, and that homosexual unions, if for life, will henceforth be recognized and blessed.

This would require the Church to admit that for 2,000 years it had been in error on matters of faith and morals, and hence is not infallible. But if the Church could have been so wrong for so long, while the world was right, and many had suffered for centuries because the Church erred, what argument would be left for remaining Catholic?

If the Church were to admit it had been wrong since the time of Christ about how men must live their lives to attain eternal life, why should Catholics obey the commandments of such

a fallible and erring Church? Why not follow our separated brethren of the Protestant faiths, and choose what doctrines we wish to believe and what commandments we wish to obey?

And how have those churches fared that have accommodated themselves to the world?

Of the Christian denominations, the closest to Catholicism has been the Anglican or Episcopal Church. For a time, Anglicans were not regarded as heretics. For though they had rejected the primacy of Rome, they had not rejected the truths fundamental to Catholicism. They had been seen in the time of Henry VIII as schismatics.

But lately the Episcopal Church has been in the vanguard of all Christian churches in ordaining women priests and consecrating women and homosexuals as bishops.

Result? No church has suffered greater losses, as Catholicism has benefited from a steady stream of defecting Anglican clergy.

What the secular media reaction to Pope Francis reveals is that traditional Catholicism is today almost as deeply alien to our present-day West as it was in Roman times, only the West chooses to ignore Catholicism, where Rome feared and persecuted it.

President Obama sent to the official installation of the Holy Father to represent America our ranking Catholic officeholders, Vice President Joe Biden, along with former Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

One wonders what His Holiness was thinking when he greeted these ornaments of American Catholicism, both of whom regard *Roe v. Wade* as a milestone of progress for women’s rights and homosexual marriage as the civil rights cause of the 21st century. ■

Reagan, Hawk or Dove?

His foreign policy wasn't what you think—and may not matter today.

by DANIEL LARISON

The uses and abuses of Ronald Reagan's record have greatly influenced arguments on foreign policy over the last 25 years. Reagan's example has been cited to support everything from engagement with Iran and withdrawal from Iraq to George W. Bush's "freedom agenda" and the arming of rebels in Libya and Syria. His name has also been abused to justify an aggressive, militarized post-Cold War role for the U.S. that has little to do with the foreign policy that Reagan conducted while in office. Perhaps the most useful thing conservatives can learn from Reagan today is that his example is of limited relevance in a world where the Soviet Union no longer exists, Communism has collapsed almost everywhere, and the U.S. is more secure than it has been in decades.

The farther removed from Reagan's time in office that conservatives are, the more intent vying factions on the right have become to identify their preferred foreign policy with him. Reagan is the one national Republican figure of the last 40 years whose reputation with most conservatives has improved over time. That is partly the result of Reagan's departure from the political scene after leaving office, and it is also partly because of the tendency of later conservatives to reimagine his administration as what they wished it had been. As the last politically successful, self-identified conservative president, Reagan is one of the few modern leaders most on the right will agree to imitate. Anyone wanting to make his policy arguments appealing to conservatives feels the need

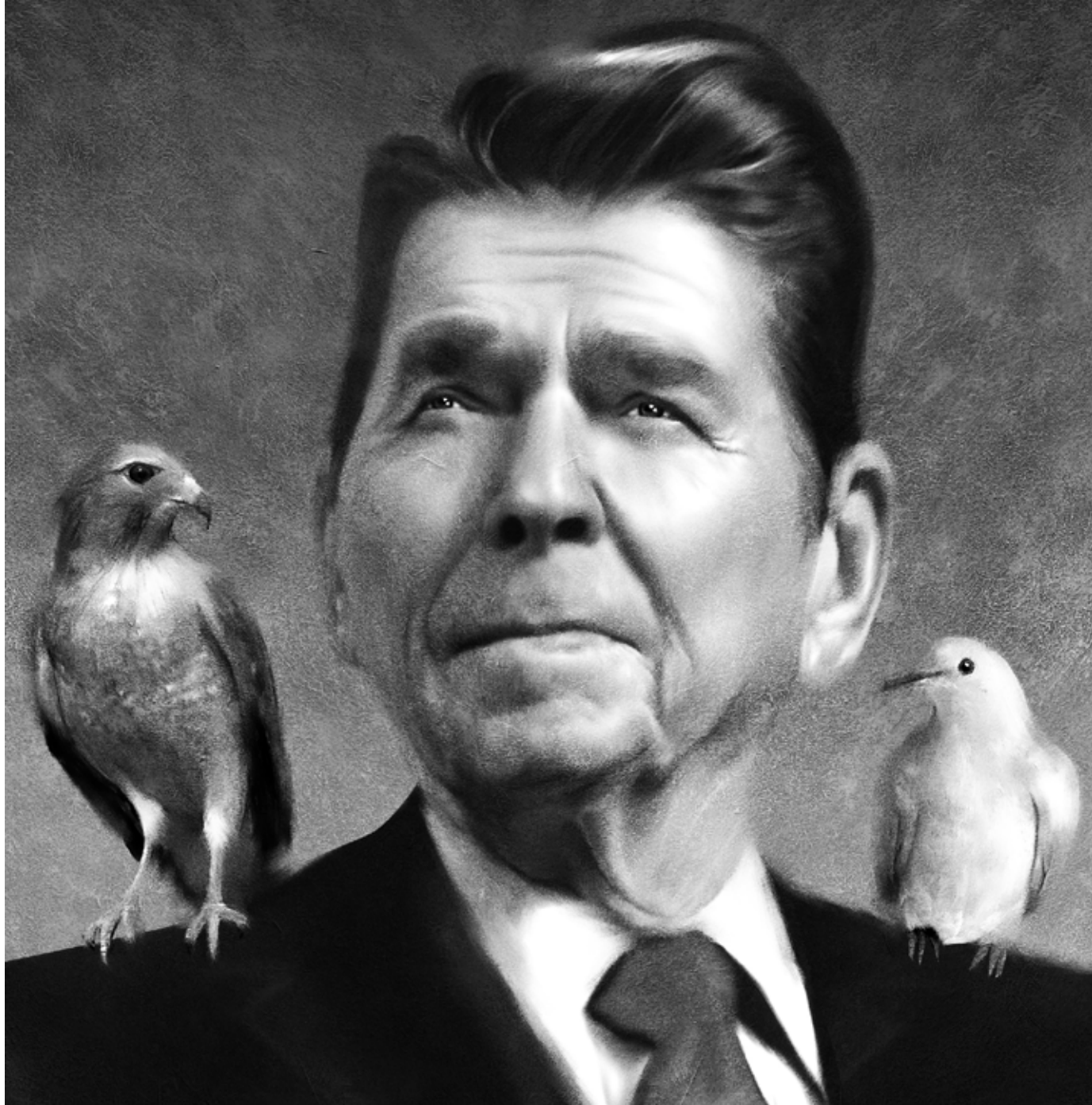
to identify them with the Reagan record.

Self-described realists often emphasize Reagan's willingness to engage the USSR in arms-reduction negotiations. Noninterventionists tend to focus on his aversion to sending U.S. forces abroad and his relatively rare and limited uses of force. Hawks in general remember Reagan for his increased military spending and support for anticommunist insurgencies—the Reagan Doctrine—while neoconservatives in particular celebrate the combative rhetoric Reagan directed against Communism and his eventual support for democratic movements in the Philippines and South Korea. The Reagan administration's foreign policy included all of these things, but they weren't all desirable or successful.

How these factions interpret the same events during the Reagan years represents another way that the 40th president's legacy is co-opted and reinvented in contemporary debates. The decision to send U.S. forces into Lebanon in the wake of the 1982 Israeli invasion and then the decision to remove them after the 1983 Marine barracks bombing in Beirut remain some of the most contested episodes from the Reagan years. The way that different factions on the right perceive Reagan's Lebanon policy exposes the fault lines that divide them sharply from each other.

Noninterventionists and other conservative supporters of foreign-policy retrenchment view the

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Michael Hogue

withdrawal from Lebanon as an example of how Republicans can and should be willing to acknowledge a major policy error and correct it by avoiding additional American losses in unnecessary missions abroad. In 2011, Grover Norquist used the example of withdrawal from Lebanon as a model for how conservatives could agree to cut U.S. losses in Afghanistan and end that war sooner. During the 2008 and 2012 primaries, Rep. Ron Paul cited Reagan's decision to pull troops out of Lebanon as proof that calls for terminating foolish interventions quickly had a good conservative and Republican pedigree.

The original decision to intervene in Lebanon stands as a warning for conservative noninterven-

tionists that there is nothing to be gained for the U.S. by becoming involved in conflicts in countries whose history and internal divisions Americans don't even begin to understand. Indeed, withdrawing U.S. forces from Lebanon had no significant harmful consequences for U.S. security. It was only much later, following the 9/11 attacks, that hawks put a new, implausible spin on the decision to leave Lebanon as an invitation to future strikes against us.

At its best, Reagan's foreign policy was a response to contemporary realities and problems, and most of these no longer exist. Conservatives who fail to take these changes into account are substituting nostalgia for sound analysis. Instead of worrying about what

Reagan would do today, conservatives should devise a foreign policy that advances U.S. security and interests in the world as it is. Rather than trying to relive the Reagan years, conservatives would do well to scrutinize which of Reagan's decisions still make sense with the advantage of more than two decades of hindsight.

His most hawkish decisions as president make sense only in the context of the Cold War and have little or no application to contemporary issues. The U.S. has no superpower rival to contain any longer, and it faces no coherent ideological challenge on par with that of Soviet Communism. A military build-up comparable to Reagan's today would serve no purpose except to bloat the Pentagon's budget—and

There is little in common between Reagan's actual foreign policy and the so-called "neo-Reaganite" foreign policy promoted by neoconservatives.

defense contractors' wallets—to the detriment of America's fiscal health. To the extent that Reagan-era increases in military spending contributed to Soviet collapse, they had some value, but it makes no sense to maintain military spending that exceeds even that of the Reagan era when no comparable foreign threat exists.

There is no longer anything to be gained by supporting insurgents against weak dictatorships, and no reason for the U.S. to embroil itself in the internal conflicts of other nations. Whatever value the Reagan Doctrine may have had in the 1980s, it now stands mostly as a cautionary tale about the damage that arming foreign insurgencies can do to the countries affected and the abuses that may come from waging such proxy wars. When there is nothing for the U.S. to "roll back," there is no need for anything like a policy of rollback.

The most common abuse of Reagan's legacy is the rote recitation of the slogan "peace through strength." Originally, the phrase implied support for creating a strong defense as a deterrent to aggression. As the threat of aggression by other states has receded, it has come to mean something very different. Many Republican hawks rely on this phrase to describe their foreign-policy views, but they long

ago dismissed the importance of deterrence when dealing with states much weaker than the Soviet Union. It is common now for advocates of regime-change and preventive war to profess their commitment to "peace through strength," but the substance of the policies they prefer shows that they reject the concept as Reagan understood it both in principle and in practice. Instead of deterring aggression to protect international peace, the new "peace through strength" often serves as rhetorical cover for the violation of that peace through acts of aggression.

There is likewise little in common between Reagan's actual foreign policy and the so-called "neo-Reaganite" foreign policy promoted by neoconservatives over the last 20 years. This is the approach Bill

Kristol and Robert Kagan introduced in a 1996 *Foreign Affairs* article, which presented the case for U.S. "benevolent global hegemony." The creators of "neo-Reaganite" foreign policy were determined to combat what they saw as insufficient conservative and Republican support for larger military budgets and an activist American role in the world. "Neo-Reaganites" wanted to "remoralize" American foreign policy, to make "moral clarity"

its focus, and to "restore a sense of the heroic" to its conduct. In practice, this meant pushing for regime-change in some countries and meddling in the internal affairs of the rest. The Cold War had ended, but as far as "neo-Reaganites" were concerned, the only difference this made was that it freed the U.S. to be even more assertive in exercising global leadership.

The neoconservative use of "neo-Reaganite" as the brand name of their foreign policy was intended to signal to conservatives disaffected with George H.W. Bush's domestic policy record that they should also reject the elder Bush's more realist approach to world affairs in favor of a more militarized and moralistic one. If Bush had proved to be a poor heir to Reagan at home, the "neo-Reaganites" were saying, he must have "discarded" Reagan's foreign-policy views as well by not being missionary enough. This deliberately obscured the extent to which Reagan had moved in the direction of the realists during his presidency, and it ignored how in response to this "neo-Reaganites" and their forerunners had constantly faulted Reagan for being too accommodating with the Soviets and too ready to negotiate and agree to arms reduction.

Sen. Rand Paul's speech at the Heritage Foundation in February was an attempt to claim Reagan for

the Republican realist tradition, but with the added twist of connecting Reagan's record to George Kennan's understanding of containment. Paul identified the link in the claim by Jack Matlock, a former Reagan national security official, that Reagan's Soviet policy was closer to Kennan's thinking than any president's approach that had come before it. Matlock's 2007 account of the views that Kennan and Reagan shared covered many different issues, but perhaps the most important point of convergence was on containment itself. Matlock wrote:

Both men rejected what Kennan called 'liberationist slogans,' those that had been used, particularly in 1952, to attack his containment policy. Reagan also refused to play the 'nationality card,' attempts to stir up the non-Russian population of the Soviet Union. While he thought that the independence of the Baltic countries should be restored, he did not set out to bring down the Soviet Union. He tried to change Soviet behavior, not to destroy the Soviet Union.

If there were important points of agreement between Reagan's policy and Kennan's thinking, Kennan himself was appalled by Republican triumphalism that sought to credit the Reagan administration and the GOP with winning the Cold War. In an October 1992 op-ed for the *New York Times*, Kennan dismissed the claim that the Reagan administration "won" the Cold War as "intrinsically silly." He rejected the idea that an event as momentous as the dissolution of the USSR could be attributed to the actions of any American administration. Kennan wrote:

The suggestion that any Administration had the power to influence decisively the course of a tremendous domestic political upheaval in another great country on another side of the globe is simply childish. No great country has that sort of influence on the internal developments of any other one.

The idea that Reagan "won" the Cold War is one of the more pernicious and enduring distortions of Reagan's real success, which involved both opposing and engaging with the Soviet Union as its system collapsed from within largely on its own. The claim of winning the Cold War greatly exaggerated the ability of the U.S. to shape events in other countries. That in turn has inspired later generations of conservatives and Republicans to imagine that they can successfully promote dramatic political change overseas in

order to topple foreign regimes. As Kennan said in the same op-ed: "Nobody—no country, no party, no person—'won' the cold war. It was a long and costly political rivalry, fueled on both sides by unreal and exaggerated estimates of the intentions and strength of the other party."

Congratulating Reagan for winning the Cold War is one more form of widespread abuse of Reagan's legacy that has adversely affected how conservatives think about foreign policy and the proper U.S. role in the world. This has warped how the right understands American power and U.S. relations with authoritarian and pariah states for the last two decades. It also blinds many conservatives to the fact that other nations resent and reject American interference in their political affairs. In spite of the failures of nation-building in Iraq and Afghanistan and the collapse of the so-called Freedom Agenda, this myth continues to make many on the right overly confident in our government's ability to influence overseas political developments to suit American wishes.

The conservatism of the Cold War era was in large part defined by anticommunism, as this provided the common cause that united disparate groups on the right and informed their prevailing foreign-policy views. Ever since the end of the Cold War, conservatives have sought in vain to find something that might replace anticommunism, and they have tried to conjure up a new ideological foe that could fill the same role that Communism did for four decades. Many conservatives have sought to use the existence of jihadism as a justification for a new global ideological struggle, and even Senator Paul suggested something along these lines in his speech at Heritage with his comparison of "radical Islam" and the Soviet Union. Yet what is necessary for conservatives now is to stop conceiving of the U.S. as the leader of one side in a global ideological struggle, and that isn't likely to happen so long as conservatives keep falling back on arguments about what Reagan did and what he would do today.

Conservatives certainly can and should still learn from Reagan's successes and mistakes—as they should from those of Nixon, Eisenhower, and other past leaders. However, if there is to be a conservative foreign policy that is well-suited to advancing present-day U.S. security interests, conservatives cannot continue relying on the crutch of imitating and invoking Reagan. If conservatives are supposed to understand and cope with the world as it is, rather than how it once was or how we would like it to be, nothing would be worse than to mimic a foreign policy that was created for another era. ■

Immigration Made Right

The GOP is being stampeded into enacting the wrong reforms.

by WILLIAM W. CHIP

On Nov. 6, President Obama won re-election with 39 percent of the white vote and 72 percent of the Hispanic vote. Republican challenger Mitt Romney's share of the Hispanic vote (28 percent) was not much lower than John McCain's share four years earlier (31 percent) and was higher than that of some other recent GOP nominees, such as George H.W. Bush (25 percent) and Bob Dole (21 percent). Yet on this slender evidence, the mainstream media has for months pulsated with the theme that Romney's weak showing among Hispanics cost him the election and that his problem with these voters was the GOP's "harsh rhetoric" on immigration.

The importance of the Hispanic vote to the outcome of the 2012 election is easily overestimated since many Hispanics live in states like California and Texas where a GOP loss or win was a foregone conclusion. Allison Kopicki, polling editor at the *New York Times*, explained in the Nov. 20 edition how Obama could have won re-election even if Romney had taken a majority of the Hispanic vote in key swing states. Moreover, the reasons for President Obama's popularity among Hispanic voters are complex. Hispanics are on average less educated and wealthy than non-Hispanic whites and are drawn to generic Democratic policies such as raising the minimum wage. Even on the so-called "social issues," Kopicki points out that Hispanics were far more likely than white voters to support Democratic priorities such as same-sex marriage (59 percent versus 47 percent) and abortion on demand ("two thirds" compared to "slightly more than half").

No doubt some Hispanic voters were also moved by the President's promise of a "path to citizenship" for the millions of illegal aliens residing in the country. Hispanic citizens are more likely than the rest of us to be related to, or personally acquainted with, an illegal immigrant who might benefit from the president's

amnesty. In addition, they could hardly have missed the relentless message of the liberal and Spanish-language media that all opposition to the president's immigration policies grew from fear and hatred of Hispanics. Even so, opinion polls consistently showed that immigration policy was a low priority for most Hispanic voters. Indeed, in a May 2012 Gallup poll, immigration policy ranked fifth—behind healthcare, unemployment, economic growth, and the gap between rich and poor.

Even if some Hispanic voters are turned off by Republican restrictionism, Republicans face a dilemma. Their opposition to unions, minimum wages, and taxes on the rich gives them little to show white working men and women why conservative Republicans, and not liberal Democrats, are on their side; limiting wage competition by restricting immigration is one of the GOP's few truly blue-collar policies. In a study reported in the December 2012 issue of *Social Science Quarterly*, University of Houston political scientist George Hawley concluded that supporting amnesty would lose more white votes for the GOP than it would gain them in Hispanic votes.

That a number of Republican politicians have nonetheless leapt for the media's bait should not be surprising. There have always been factions within the GOP that favored loose enforcement of immigration law, mostly those in thrall to businesses in search of cheaper labor but also libertarians who in principle detest market regulation of any kind. (Shortly after the election, the editors of the *Wall Street Journal* intoned: "The GOP needs to leave its anti-immigration absolutists behind.") Yet along with these establishment conservatives, who have never hidden their affection for more liberal immigration policies, a

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significant number of formerly reliable conservatives in the media and Congress, such as Sean Hannity of Fox News and Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, have decided to go with the flow and pronounced that Republicans must do “something” to prove that they are not anti-Hispanic—or at least to get immigration out of the spotlight.

The apparent crumbling of Republican opposition to a general amnesty for the 11 million illegal aliens estimated to be residing in the United States has triggered a euphoric reaction and sense of empowerment among a host of liberal and business interest groups. They demand not only an amnesty for the huddled masses “living in the shadows” but also expanded “guestworker” programs to satisfy the demand for unskilled labor that fostered illegal immigration in the first place, tens of thousands of additional visas for skilled STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) workers, and millions of additional visas for the foreign relatives of naturalized immigrants now stalled in decades-long waiting lists. This accumulating “immigration wish list” is grudgingly accompanied by promises to increase security at the border and to make mandatory the now-voluntary “E-Verify” system, by which employers may instantaneously confirm the validity of newly hired employees’ social security numbers. The resulting package of amnesty, guestworker programs, more legal immigration, and improved enforcement bears the label “Comprehensive Immigration Reform” (CIR), so christened when a somewhat less grand version was proposed by President George Bush in 2004.

Where this will end is hard to predict. Hearings have taken place in both the House and the Senate. A group of four Democratic and four Republican Senators—the “Gang of Eight”—has introduced legislation that would legalize the undocumented population immediately but defer citizenship until certain enforcement targets had been met. The president is putting together a similar plan, to be proposed only if the Gang of Eight’s plan does not move promptly in the Senate. The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Virginia Rep. Bob Goodlatte, and the chairman of the Immigration Subcommittee, South Carolina Rep. Trey Gowdy, are expected to follow the example of outgoing committee chairman Lamar Smith, who opposed amnesty and favored upgrading the skills requirements for legal immigrants without increasing their numbers.

While it is early in the game, it is hard to imagine

that the House Judiciary Committee will report out a bill that would meet the most basic demands of CIR advocates, let alone their more exotic proposals, such as unlimited numbers of visas for the foreign partners of gay citizens and immigrants. Even those Republicans who jumped on the amnesty bandwagon are having second thoughts about creating millions of new Democratic voters and are imaging versions of legalization that do not lead to citizenship—a non-starter with most Democrats. The wild card is Speaker John Boehner, who is widely believed to be among the small but potent class of Republicans who would let the Chamber of Commerce write the rules for legal

The importance of the Hispanic vote to the outcome of the 2012 election is easily overestimated.

immigration and give Democrats the amnesty for which they lust in the vain hope that the media would then stop casting Republicans as nativists.

No outcome to this byzantine process is predictable, but every aspect of immigration policy will be up for grabs, which means that the pending legislative process may yield the most fundamental revision of U.S. immigration law since the 1960s, shaping the country’s economic and cultural future for the remainder of the 21st century.

Given the multifaceted nature of immigration, is there a version of “Comprehensive Immigration Reform” that ought to appeal to true conservatives, who are not beholden to the bottom line of a global business or to the ideological dictates of Ayn Rand? I think there is. Indeed, the outlines of Immigration Reform that would be both comprehensive and conservative are not even that hard to discern, if the effort is made to understand what immigration is all about.

Since before the American Revolution, there has been a division of interest between American business, looking to minimize labor costs, and American workers, for whom minimal labor costs mean minimal incomes. In this respect, the current debate over illegal immigration is simply the present incarnation of the 18th century debate over indentured servitude, the 19th century debate over slavery, and the 20th century debate over unionism.

Myself, I don’t like unions. They create artificial

monopolies in the supply of labor so that privileged castes of workers may extract high wages for mediocre service. Still, I know of no conservative who does not believe that a healthy society must be based on functioning families. With illegitimacy rates of over 70 percent among blacks, over 50 percent among Hispanics, and nearly 30 percent among whites, conservatives should be rallying to policies, including even a higher minimum wage, that make it more certain that young men and women may expect to raise families on their wages alone. After all, the original “American Dream,” as envisioned by the Founding Fathers,

The affluent must expect, in the president’s words, to pay “a little bit more” in taxes if they are unwilling to pay a little bit more for lettuce, landscaping, and cleaning their pools.

was of a nation of yeomen, not beholden by penury either to privileged interests or to the state. But since the days of the New Deal, we have not had the option of having parents compete in a free labor market for their family’s daily bread and then make do with the outcome. If competition with immigrant workers prevents native workers from earning enough to support a family, they will not form families at all, or they will elect Democrat politicians who will balance market outcomes with food stamps, Obamacare, and a host of other public subsidies that conservatives rightly regard as insidious when they become normal.

In other words, the affluent must expect, in the president’s words, to pay “a little bit more” in taxes if they are unwilling to pay a little bit more for lettuce, landscaping, and cleaning their pools. Maybe those libertarians who want to demolish the welfare state will someday have their way. But in the meantime, is it not better to ensure that a family-supporting wage is available from full-time employment so as to minimize the attraction of direct dependency on government? And is it not better to sustain a living wage by controlling immigration than by mandating wage rates or by empowering labor unions?

As a conservative who worries about a nation where many and eventually most men will depend on the government to care for their families, I hold to a very high standard of proof the claims of the business community that foreign workers are needed to perform unskilled work that “Americans won’t do.”

If American public schools excel at anything, it is the production of unskilled workers, young men and women who in decades past would have counted on working as bricklayers, janitors, waiters, or even farmworkers to make a living. When slavery was abolished in the 1860s, cotton farmers wailed that the cotton would “rot in the fields.” When the Bracero Program for Mexican farmworkers was ended in the 1950s, tomato farmers made the same “rotten” argument. In both cases, technology quickly came to the rescue, and farmers learned to plant and harvest in a manner compatible with living wages for their workers.

The need for immigrant workers was comprehensively addressed by the U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, which was authorized by the Immigration Act of 1990. The head of the commission for most of its seven-year existence was Barbara Jordan, a former Democratic congresswoman and African-American civil rights leader appointed to her post by President Clinton. The recommendations of the Jordan

Commission, given their provenance, should be beyond reproach to liberals. Based on extensive studies conducted by the National Academy of Sciences, the commission concluded that the United States, with nearly 300,000,000 people and the world’s premier university system, suffered no overall shortage of workers and that amnesties and guestworker programs would do more harm than good.

The Jordan Commission also challenged the centerpiece of American immigration policy, the right of every citizen to sponsor the admission of members of both the family he created (his spouse and children) and the family that created him (his parents and siblings). Granting this priority to relatives of prior immigrants was a legacy of the 1965 immigration reforms, which replaced national quotas that favored European immigration with equal per-country quotas that opened the door to Asian immigration. By granting preference to relatives of prior immigrants, the sponsors of the reforms thought they would preserve an overwhelmingly European migration flow.

But in post-1960s Europe, most families had only one or two children, and most did well enough economically to stay put, whereas in Asia, Africa, and Latin America families of three or more children remained commonplace, and economic conditions made immigration to the United States immensely attractive. Within a few decades, family-sponsored

immigrants were overwhelmingly originating from the Caribbean, Latin America, and Asia. Moreover, allowing sponsorship of the family that created the sponsor, as well as the family the sponsor created, led to chain-migration, whereby a naturalized immigrant sponsored his siblings and a spouse, the spouse sponsored her own siblings, the siblings sponsored their own spouses, *ad infinitum*. The result was exponential growth in the demand for immigrant visas and decades-long waiting lists in numerically limited categories, only temporarily relieved by a huge increase in visas for relatives in 1988.

The Jordan Commission recommended limiting sponsorship rights to an immigrant's immediate family—spouse, minor children, and parents—with a ceiling of 400,000 per annum, allotting an additional 150,000 visas to refugees and exceptionally talented aliens. While one might not agree with all the findings and recommendations of the Jordan Commission, they were the outcome of a bipartisan process involving years of work under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences. They ought to be the starting point for any reasoned national discussion about immigration policy.

The Jordan Commission also recommended that the E-Verify system, already mandatory for federal contractors, be made mandatory for all employers. The business community has one reason for opposing E-Verify with which I sympathize. Employers are already obligated to submit a Form W-4 to the IRS that gives the name and social security number of every new employee. The IRS shares that information with the Social Security Administration (SSA), which knows which numbers are invalid—or are suspicious because there are being used in multiple locations or belong to children or the very elderly—and generally does nothing about it. The SSA refuses to share evidence of fraudulent use of Social Security numbers with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). When Bush administration officials approached the chairmen of the Social Security committees in Congress about a fix, they were rebuffed.

In other words, but for a handful of senators and congressmen jealous of their bureaucratic prerogatives, the federal government would not need to mandate E-Verify. If employers knew that ICE would be notified of false or suspicious Social Security numbers—“G-Verify”—unscrupulous employers would be deterred from hiring workers they knew to

be illegal, and most honest employers would voluntarily enroll in E-Verify to avoid the hassle.

There is no good policy reason for giving amnesty to the 11 million illegal aliens believed to be living in the United States, or to any significant portion of them. The only reason amnesty is considered at all is that the Democratic Party stands rock-solid against enactment of the Jordan Commission recommendations—or any other reform of the immigration laws—unless accompanied by a blanket amnesty for whomever happens to be here illegally when the reform is enacted. Arguments in favor of amnesty break down into two categories: “sympathy” and “inevitability.” Most Americans, myself included, can sympathize with aliens who have taken risks to leave their country in search of a better life for themselves and their families. Nevertheless, there are millions of aliens who have legally entered the United States for the same reasons. Some of them will live and work here for six years or more before their visas expire. How does one explain to one of those legal alien workers why he must now return home while

There is no good policy reason for giving amnesty to the 11 million illegal aliens believed to be living in the United States.

the fellow working beside him, who sneaked across the border two years ago, is invited to stay for the rest of his life?

If making illegal aliens accept the same conditions on their stay as we routinely impose on legal aliens does not break our hearts, then what about their families? Some of their children may be U.S. citizens; even those who are not may have been raised in this country. I invite those whose hearts are broken to speak with some of the hundreds of thousands of legal aliens living or studying here on temporary visas, many of whom also have children born or raised in the United States but who will nevertheless repatriate with their families when their visas expire. When finished speaking with them, I suggest a call to a few of the millions of American men and women who serve in our armed forces and are expected every three years, with a few months notice, to move their households across the country, if not across the globe.

Illegal-alien advocacy groups take for granted that

aliens with U.S.-born children represent a special case, since the U.S. government treats those children as U.S. citizens. But there is nothing special about their case, since many alien women who come temporarily to the United States, whether to work at an embassy or to visit Disney World, give birth during their stay and do not think of asserting that they have thereby acquired rights to live here forever. Instead, they feel blessed that their children now have the option of someday living here, as well as in the parents' native land.

Treating the American-born children of illegal aliens as U.S. citizens is in any event bad policy. While

Treating the American-born children of illegal aliens as U.S. citizens is in any event bad policy.

illegal-alien advocates focus on the privileges of which the child would be deprived if the United States did not grant citizenship, they ignore the responsibilities with which such children are burdened, including the obligation to fight in our wars if the military draft is re-instituted and the obligation to pay U.S. income tax on their worldwide income for the rest of their lives. The so-called "birthright citizenship" that supposedly is bestowed on children of illegal aliens (if one focuses on the privileges) or imposed upon them (if one focuses on the responsibilities) is based upon the Fourteenth Amendment's prescription that all persons "born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof" are U.S. citizens.

This prescription was intended to remove any doubt that Americans born as slaves would be U.S. citizens. Yale Law Professor Peter Schuck, in his 1986 treatise *Citizenship Without Consent: Illegal Aliens in the American Polity*, laid out a convincing case that the term "jurisdiction" here refers to the mutual duties owed between an individual and the state. The courts have reasoned that Fourteenth Amendment "jurisdiction" does not apply to the children of Indian tribes and foreign diplomats, and this same reasoning would exclude from birthright citizenship the children of tourists, illegal immigrants, and other aliens whose presence here cannot reasonably be construed as an implicit pact with the child that whatever tribal or foreign citizenship he or she would otherwise inherit from the parents has been superseded by a greater

bond of loyalty to the United States.

Three years ago, the *Washington Post* reported on the phenomenon of "birth tourism," exposing doctors from China and other countries who had made a lucrative practice of arranging accommodations in the U.S. for well-to-do pregnant women from overseas who were entering the country for the sole purpose of attaining U.S. citizenship for their children, usually so that they would later be eligible for free or reduced tuition at U.S. schools and universities. Impoverished Mexican mothers have been crossing the border for this purpose for decades, giving birth to what are called "anchor babies" because they provide the child's parents an "anchor" in the United States that may protect them from deportation and entitle them to certain government benefits. Although illegal-alien advocates have treated the term "anchor baby" (and even "illegal alien") as derogatory, perhaps the *Post's* revelations of how the well-off abuse an overbroad interpretation of birthright citizenship will permit the subject to be discussed in polite company.

The "sympathy" argument at least has the merit of starting with a fact—that many illegal aliens merit our sympathy, albeit not the grand prize of permanent residence and citizenship. The "inevitability" argument, that "we cannot deport 11 million people," is wholly meretricious. No one in the immigration debate has proposed that. True immigration reformers have proposed only that aliens who find themselves in our country under any auspices should obey all of our laws. Aliens who have been admitted to study here are not allowed to work, and aliens who were not invited at all should not be allowed to work either.

Every day, between 400,000 and 500,000 aliens enter the United States by air, land, or sea. Depending on their visas, they may visit for a day or stay for years. We do not rely on deportation to ensure the return of the 11 million aliens who will enter the United States in the next three weeks, and we will not rely on deportation to ensure the return of the 11 million who happen to be living here illegally at present. Most alien visitors choose to obey our laws, including our labor laws. When they run out of money, they do not "self-deport," they "go home." If Congress enacts G-Verify, then even those alien visitors who are willing to break our laws will find that almost all jobs are closed to them and, like countless other visitors, they will go home when they run out of money.

Illegal aliens change jobs frequently. If the govern-

ment were to institute G-Verify or mandate E-Verify, the great majority would soon be out of work. Presumably there are some innocent employers who would be inconvenienced and many innocent family members whose lives would be disrupted. Even a proponent of strict law enforcement might countenance a transitional program that granted temporary work permits to those illegal aliens who came forward, so that their employers might find replacements, their children might finish the school year, etc. Twelve months would be more than sufficient—and would give more notice than we give our sailors, soldiers, and Marines before shipping them and their families to Timbuktu.

In short, packaging together the recommendations of the Jordan Commission, enabling G-Verify, clarifying birthright citizenship, and issuing transitional visas to illegal aliens should qualify as immigration reform that is conservative as well as comprehensive. Sadly, comprehensive conservative immigration reform has little chance in the real world. The Democrats' leadership will sign on to nothing that does not include an amnesty, and the Republican leadership will approve nothing that does not provide for guestworkers to pick our crops and build our homes. We may perhaps hope that serious conservatives serving in Congress will at least see that America gets as much as possible of the good, with as little as possible of the bad. ■

DEEPBACKGROUND *by* PHILIP GIRALDI

Media reports of CIA preparations to use drones to target al-Qaeda-linked rebels in Syria, should the post-Assad situation warrant such an intervention, are only partly correct. The plan to use drones under certain circumstances is in reality part of the much larger CIA program in Iraq that parallels the program being set up in Afghanistan. CIA initiatives in both countries are related to what is being mandated by the National Security Council as a policy of "regime survival" to help keep in place governments that are at least nominally friendly to Washington and that will be dependent on American technology and intelligence resources for the foreseeable future to maintain their own security. The CIA will bear the brunt of the two operations, as it can do so without a highly visible military footprint. In Iraq it includes, among other elements, the continued training of something akin to an elite counter-terrorism Praetorian Guard to protect senior officials while also advancing efforts against a growing Salafist presence in the country, linked to resurgent Sunni terrorism that is attempting to weaken the government of Nouri al-Maliki. The Obama administration is hoping to develop a level of cooperation with the Iraqi government that will enable the identification of extremist elements, some of which are taking the opportunity to transit into Syria. They are a threat to what are perceived to be the long-term interests of America and Iraq's Shia government. Those who are identified as al-Qaeda-linked militants could become drone targets in Syria, if the situation in that country deteriorates.

The program would be similar to one adopted in

Afghanistan that has reportedly led to a majority of the adult male population being recorded using biometric identifiers, enabling the U.S. military and CIA to track and identify suspected militants through technologies that are still top secret. The U.S. concern is that western Iraq and Syria, which are now both part of a linked insurgency, could easily become a center of jihadi activity, so an intensive effort is underway first to identify and then separate the hard-core elements from the less radicalized spear-carriers before the situation metastasizes after the expected fall of Assad. As is often the case in volatile situations, the CIA does not have a good handle on who the players are and what their motivations might be, in spite of having had a large presence in Iraq since 2003. It is having trouble identifying the "friendlies." The Agency particularly lacks good connections in the Sunni region and is largely reliant on technical collection of information rather than spies who could provide context for the intelligence coming in. The numbers being suggested in Washington regarding the size of the cross-border insurgency alleged to be affiliated with either al-Qaeda or its Iraqi affiliate al-Nusra are unreliable, as they tend to come from liaison with Iraqi intelligence and can include anyone who is adult, male, and Sunni and is regarded as resisting the Shia government of al-Awlaki. This is not unlike the questionable estimates made of Taliban strength in Afghanistan. ■

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Our American Pravda

The major media overlooked Communist spies and Madoff's fraud. What are they missing today?

by RON UNZ

In mid-March, the *Wall Street Journal* carried a long discussion of the origins of the Bretton Woods system, the international financial framework that governed the Western world for decades after World War II. A photo showed the two individuals who negotiated that agreement. Britain was represented by John Maynard Keynes, a towering economic figure of that era. America's representative was Harry Dexter White, assistant secretary of the Treasury and long a central architect of American economic policy, given that his nominal superior, Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr., was a gentleman farmer with no background in finance. White was also a Communist agent.

Such a situation was hardly unique in American government during the 1930s and 1940s. For example, when a dying Franklin Roosevelt negotiated the outlines of postwar Europe with Joseph Stalin at the 1945 Yalta summit, one of his important advisors was Alger Hiss, a State Department official whose primary loyalty was to the Soviet side. Over the last 20 years, John Earl Haynes, Harvey Klehr, and other scholars have conclusively established that many dozens or even hundreds of Soviet agents once honeycombed the key policy staffs and nuclear research facilities of our federal government, constituting a total presence perhaps approaching the scale suggested by Sen. Joseph McCarthy, whose often unsubstantiated charges tended to damage the credibility of his position.

The Cold War ended over two decades ago and Communism has been relegated to merely an un-

pleasant chapter in the history books, so today these facts are hardly much disputed. For example, liberal *Washington Post* blogger Ezra Klein matter-of-factly referred to White as a "Soviet spy" in the title of his column on our postwar financial system. But during the actual period when America's government was heavily influenced by Communist agents, such accusations were widely denounced as "Red-baiting" or ridiculed as right-wing conspiracy paranoia by many of our most influential journalists and publications. In 1982 liberal icon Susan Sontag ruefully acknowledged that for decades the subscribers to the lowbrow *Readers Digest* had received a more realistic view of the world than those who drew their knowledge from the elite liberal publications favored by her fellow intellectuals. I myself came of age near the end of the Cold War and always vaguely assumed that such lurid tales of espionage were wildly exaggerated. I was wrong.

The notion of the American government being infiltrated and substantially controlled by agents of a foreign power has been the stuff of endless Hollywood movies and television shows, but for various reasons such popular channels have never been employed to bring the true-life historical example to wide attention. I doubt if even one American in a hundred today is familiar with the name "Harry Dexter White" or dozens of similar agents.

The realization that the world is often quite different from what is presented in our leading newspapers

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and magazines is not an easy conclusion for most educated Americans to accept, or at least that was true in my own case. For decades, I have closely read the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and one or two other major newspapers every morning, supplemented by a wide variety of weekly or monthly opinion magazines. Their biases in certain areas had always been apparent to me. But I felt confident that by comparing and contrasting the claims of these different publications and applying some common sense, I could obtain a reasonably accurate version of reality. I was mistaken.

Aside from the evidence of our own senses, almost everything we know about the past or the news of today comes from bits of ink on paper or colored pixels on a screen, and fortunately over the last decade or two the growth of the Internet has vastly widened the range of information available to us in that latter category. Even if the overwhelming majority of the unorthodox claims provided by such non-traditional web-based sources is incorrect, at least there now exists the possibility of extracting vital nuggets of truth from vast mountains of falsehood. Certainly the events of the past dozen years have forced me to completely recalibrate my own reality-detection apparatus.

Thoughtful individuals of all backgrounds have undergone a similar crisis of confidence during this same period. Just a few months after 9/11 *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman argued that the sudden financial collapse of the Enron Corporation represented a greater shock to the American system than the terrorist attacks themselves, and although he was widely denounced for making such an “unpatriotic” claim, I believe his case was strong. Although the name “Enron” has largely vanished from our memory, for years it had ranked as one of America’s most successful and admired companies, glowingly profiled on the covers of our leading business magazines, and drawing luminaries such as Krugman himself to its advisory board; Enron Chairman Kenneth Lay had been a top contender for Treasury secretary in President George W. Bush’s administration. Then in the blink of an eye, the entire company was revealed to be an accounting fraud from top to bottom, collapsing into a \$63 billion bankruptcy, the largest in American history. Other companies of comparable or even greater size such as WorldCom, Tyco, Adelphia, and Global Crossing soon vanished for similar reasons.

Part of Krugman’s argument was that while the terrorist attacks had been of an entirely unprecedented nature and scale, our entire system of financial regulation, accounting, and business journalism was

designed to prevent exactly the sort of frauds that brought down those huge companies. When a system fails so dramatically at its core mission, we must wonder which of our other assumptions are incorrect.

Just a few years later, we saw an even more sweeping near-collapse of our entire financial system, with giant institutions such as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers, Wachovia, and AIG falling into bankruptcy, and all our remaining major banks surviving only due to the trillions of dollars in government bailouts and loan guarantees they received. Once again, all our media and regulatory organs had failed to anticipate this disaster.

Or take the remarkable case of Bernie Madoff. His colossal investment swindle had been growing unchecked for over three decades under the very noses of our leading financial journalists and regulators in New York City, ultimately reaching the sum of \$65

The events of the past dozen years have forced me to completely recalibrate my own reality-detection apparatus.

billion in mostly fictional assets. His claimed returns had been implausibly steady and consistent year after year, market crashes or not. None of his supposed trading actually occurred. His only auditing was by a tiny storefront firm. Angry competitors had spent years warning the SEC and journalists that his alleged investment strategy was mathematically impossible and that he was obviously running a Ponzi scheme. Yet despite all these indicators, officials did nothing and refused to close down such a transparent swindle, while the media almost entirely failed to report these suspicions.

In many respects, the non-detection of these business frauds is far more alarming than failure to uncover governmental malfeasance. Politics is a partisan team sport, and it is easy to imagine Democrats or Republicans closing ranks and protecting their own, despite damage to society. Furthermore, success or failure in public policies is often ambiguous and subject to propagandistic spin. But investors in a fraudulent company lose their money and therefore have an enormous incentive to detect those risks, with the same being true for business journalists. If the media cannot be trusted to catch and report simple financial misconduct, its reliability on more politically charged matters will surely be lower.

The circumstances surrounding our Iraq War demonstrate this, certainly ranking it among the strangest military conflicts of modern times. The 2001 attacks in America were quickly ascribed to the radical Islamists of al-Qaeda, whose bitterest enemy in the Middle East had always been Saddam Hussein's secular Baathist regime in Iraq. Yet through misleading public statements, false press leaks, and even forged evidence such as the "yellowcake" documents, the Bush administration and its neoconservative allies utilized the compliant American media to persuade our citizens that Iraq's nonexistent WMDs posed a deadly national threat and required elimination by war and invasion. Indeed, for several years national polls showed that a large majority of conservatives and Republicans actually believed that Saddam was the mastermind behind 9/11 and the Iraq War was being fought as retribution. Consider how bizarre the history of the 1940s would seem if America had attacked China in retaliation for Pearl Harbor.

True facts were easily available to anyone paying attention in the years after 2001, but most Americans

The speed with which important events are forgotten once the media loses interest might surprise George Orwell.

do not bother and simply draw their understanding of the world from what they are told by the major media, which overwhelmingly—almost uniformly—backed the case for war with Iraq; the talking heads on TV created our reality. Prominent journalists across the liberal and conservative spectrum eagerly published the most ridiculous lies and distortions passed on to them by anonymous sources, and stampeded Congress down the path to war.

The result was what my late friend Lt. Gen. Bill Odom rightly called the "greatest strategic disaster in United States history." American forces suffered tens of thousands of needless deaths and injuries, while our country took a huge step toward national bankruptcy. Economics Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz and others have estimated that with interest the total long-term cost of our two recent wars may reach as high as \$5 or \$6 trillion, or as much as \$50,000 per American household, mostly still unpaid. Meanwhile, economist Edward Wolff has calculated that the Great Re-

cession and its aftermath cut the personal net worth of the median American household to \$57,000 in 2010 from a figure nearly twice as high three years earlier. Comparing these assets and liabilities, we see that the American middle class now hovers on the brink of insolvency, with the cost of our foreign wars being a leading cause.

But no one involved in the debacle ultimately suffered any serious consequences, and most of the same prominent politicians and highly paid media figures who were responsible remain just as prominent and highly paid today. For most Americans, reality is whatever our media organs tell us, and since these have largely ignored the facts and adverse consequences of our wars in recent years, the American people have similarly forgotten. Recent polls show that only half the public today believes that the Iraq War was a mistake.

Author James Bovard has described our society as an "attention deficit democracy," and the speed with which important events are forgotten once the media loses interest might surprise George Orwell.

Consider the story of Vioxx, a highly lucrative anti-pain medication marketed by Merck to the elderly as a substitute for simple aspirin. After years of very profitable Vioxx sales, an FDA researcher published a study demonstrating that the drug greatly increased the risk of fatal strokes and heart attacks and had probably already caused tens of thousands of premature American deaths. Vioxx was immediately pulled from the market, but Merck eventually settled the resulting lawsuits for relatively small penalties, despite direct evidence the company had long been aware of the drug's deadly nature. Our national media, which had earned hundreds of millions of dollars in advertising revenue from Vioxx marketing, provided no sustained coverage and the scandal was soon forgotten. Furthermore, the press never investigated the dramatic upward and downward shifts in the mortality rates of elderly Americans that so closely tracked the introduction and recall of Vioxx; as I pointed out in a 2012 article, these indicated that the likely death toll had actually been several times greater than the FDA estimate. Vast numbers Americans died, no one was punished, and almost everyone has now forgotten.

Or take the strange case of Bernard Kerik, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's police commissioner during 9/11, later nominated by President Bush to be America's first director of national intelligence, a newly

established position intended to oversee all of our various national-security and intelligence agencies. His appointment seemed likely to sail through the Republican-controlled Senate until derailed by accusations he had employed an undocumented nanny. With his political rise having been blocked, the national media suddenly revealed his long history of association with organized-crime figures, an indictment quickly followed, and he is currently still serving his federal prison sentence for conspiracy and fraud. So America came within a hairbreadth of placing its entire national-security apparatus under the authority of a high-school dropout connected with organized crime, and today almost no Americans seem aware of that fact.

Through most of the 20th century, America led something of a charmed life, at least when compared with the disasters endured by almost every other major country. We became the richest and most powerful nation on earth, partly due to our own achievements and partly due to the mistakes of others. The public interpreted these decades of American power and prosperity as validation of our system of government and national leadership, and the technological effectiveness of our domestic propaganda machinery—our own American *Pravda*—has heightened this effect. Furthermore, most ordinary Americans are reasonably honest and law-abiding and project that same behavior onto others, including our media and political elites. This differs from the total cynicism found in most other countries around the world.

Credibility is a capital asset, which may take years to accumulate but can be squandered in an instant; and the events of the last dozen years should have bankrupted any faith we have in our government or media. Once we acknowledge this, we should begin to accept the possible reality of important, well-documented events even if they are not announced on the front pages of our major newspapers. When several huge scandals have erupted into the headlines after years or decades of total media silence, we must wonder what other massive stories may currently be ignored by our media elites. I think I can provide a few possibilities.

Consider the almost forgotten anthrax mailing attacks in the weeks after 9/11, which terrified our dominant East Coast elites and spurred passage of the unprecedented Patriot Act, thereby eliminating many traditional civil-libertarian protections. Every morning during that period the *New York Times* and other leading newspapers carried articles describing the mysterious nature of the deadly attacks and the complete bafflement of the FBI investigators. But evenings on the Internet I would read stories by perfectly respectable journalists such as *Salon's* Laura Rozen or

the staff of the *Hartford Courant* providing a wealth of additional detail and pointing to a likely suspect and motive.

Although the letters carrying the anthrax were purportedly written by an Arab terrorist, the FBI quickly determined that the language and style indicated a non-Arab author, while tests pointed to the bioweapons research facility at Ft. Detrick, Md., as the probable source of the material. But just prior to the arrival of those deadly mailings, military police at Quantico, Va., had also received an anonymous letter warning that a former Ft. Detrick employee, Egyptian-born Dr. Ayaad Assaad, might be planning to launch a national campaign of bioterrorism. Investigators quickly cleared Dr. Assaad, but the very detailed nature of the accusations revealed inside knowledge of his employment history and the Ft. Detrick facilities. Given the near-simultaneous posting of anthrax envelopes and false bioterrorism accusations, the mailings almost certainly came from the same source, and solving the latter case would be the easiest means of catching the anthrax killer.

Who would have attempted to frame Dr. Assaad for bioterrorism? A few years earlier he had been involved in a bitter personal feud with a couple of his Ft. Detrick coworkers, including charges of racism, official reprimands, and angry recriminations all around. When an FBI official shared a copy of the accusatory letter with a noted language-forensics expert and allowed him to compare the text with the writings of 40 biowarfare lab employees, he found a perfect match with one of those individuals. For years I told my friends that anyone who spent 30 minutes with Google could probably determine the name and motive of the likely anthrax killer, and most of them successfully met my challenge.

This powerful evidence received almost no attention in the major national media, nor is there any indication that the FBI ever followed up on any of these clues or interrogated the named suspects. Instead, investigators attempted to pin the attacks on a Dr. Steven Hatfill based on negligible evidence, after which he was completely exonerated and won a \$5.6 million settlement from the government for its years of severe harassment. Later, similar hounding of researcher Bruce Ivins and his family led to his suicide, after which the FBI declared the case closed, even though former colleagues of Dr. Ivins demonstrated that he had had no motive, means, or opportunity. In 2008, I commissioned a major 3,000-word cover story in my magazine summarizing all of this crucial evidence, and once again almost no one in the mainstream media paid the slightest attention.

Media

An even more egregious case followed a couple of years later, with regard to the stunning revelations of Pulitzer Prize winner Sydney Schanberg, one of America's foremost Vietnam War reporters and a former top editor at the *New York Times*. After years of research, Schanberg published massive evidence demonstrating that the endlessly ridiculed claims of America's Vietnam MIA movement of the 1970s and 1980s were correct: the Nixon administration had indeed deliberately abandoned many hundreds of American POWs in Vietnam at the close of the war, and our government afterward spent decades covering up this shameful crime. Schanberg's charges were publicly confirmed by two former Republican House members, one of whom had independently co-authored a 500 page book on the subject, exhaustively documenting the POW evidence.

Although a major focus of Schanberg's account was the central role that Sen. John McCain had played in leading the later cover-up, the national media ignored these detailed charges during McCain's bitter 2008 presidential campaign against Barack Obama. One of America's most distinguished living journalists published what was surely "the story of the century" and none of America's newspapers took notice.

In 2010 Schanberg republished this material in a collection of his other writings, and his work received glowing praise from Joseph Galloway, one of America's top military correspondents, as well as other leading journalists; his charges are now backed by the weight of four *New York Times* Pulitzer Prizes. Around that same time, I produced a 15,000-word cover-symposium on the scandal, organized around Schanberg's path-breaking findings and including contributions from other prominent writers. All of this appeared in the middle of Senator McCain's difficult reelection campaign in Arizona, and once again the material was totally ignored by the state and national media.

An argument might be made that little harm has been done to the national interest by the media's continued silence in the two examples described above. The anthrax killings have largely been forgotten and the evidence suggests that the motive was probably one of personal revenge. All the government officials involved in the abandonment of the Vietnam POWs are either dead or quite elderly, and even those involved in the later cover-up, such as John McCain, are in the twilight of their political careers. But an additional example remains completely relevant today, and some of the guilty parties hold high office.

During the mid-2000s I began noticing references on one or two small websites to a woman claiming to be a former FBI employee who was making the most

outlandish and ridiculous charges, accusing high government officials of selling our nuclear-weapons secrets to foreign spies. I paid no attention to such unlikely claims and never bothered reading any of the articles.

A couple of years went by, and various website references to that same woman—Sibel Edmonds—kept appearing, although I continued to ignore them, secure that the silence of all my newspapers proved her to be delusional. Then in early 2008, the London *Sunday Times*, one of the world's leading newspapers, ran a long, three-part front-page series presenting her charges, which were soon republished in numerous other countries. Daniel Ellsberg described Edmonds's revelations as "far more explosive than the Pentagon Papers" and castigated the American media for completely ignoring a story that had reached the front pages of newspapers throughout the rest of the world. Such silence struck me as rather odd.

Philip Giraldi, a former CIA official who regularly writes for this magazine, suggested he investigate her charges. He found her highly credible, and his 3,000-word article in *TAC* presented some astonishing but very detailed claims.

Edmonds had been hired by the FBI to translate **E**wiretapped conversations of a suspected foreign spy ring under surveillance, and she had been disturbed to discover that many of these hundreds of phone calls explicitly discussed the sale of nuclear-weapons secrets to foreign intelligence organizations, including those linked to international terrorism, as well as the placement of agents at key American military research facilities. Most remarkably, some of the individuals involved in these operations were high-ranking government officials; the staffs of several influential members of Congress were also implicated. On one occasion, a senior State Department figure was reportedly recorded making arrangements to pick up a bag containing a large cash bribe from one of his contacts. Very specific details of names, dates, dollar amounts, purchasers, and military secrets were provided.

The investigation had been going on for years with no apparent action, and Edmonds was alarmed to discover that a fellow translator quietly maintained a close relationship with one of the key FBI targets. When she raised these issues, she was personally threatened, and after appealing to her supervisors, eventually fired.

Since that time, she has passed a polygraph test on her claims, testified under oath in a libel lawsuit, expanded her detailed charges in a 2009 *TAC* cover

story also by Giraldi, and most recently published a book recounting her case. Judiciary Committee Senators Chuck Grassley and Patrick Leahy have publicly backed some of her charges, a Department of Justice inspector general's report has found her allegations "credible" and "serious," while various FBI officials have vouched for her reliability and privately confirmed many of her claims. But none of her detailed charges has ever appeared in any of America's newspapers. According to Edmonds, one of the conspirators routinely made payments to various members of the media, and bragged to his fellow plotters that "We just fax to our people at the *New York Times*. They print it under their names."

At times, Congressional Democratic staff members became interested in the scandal, and promised an investigation. But once they learned that senior members of their own party were also implicated, their interest faded.

These three stories—the anthrax evidence, the McCain/POW revelations, and the Sibel Edmonds charges—are the sort of major exposés that would surely be dominating the headlines of any country with a properly-functioning media. But almost no American has ever heard of them. Before the Internet broke the chokehold of our centralized flow of information, I would have remained just as ignorant myself, despite all the major newspapers and magazines I regularly read.

Am I absolutely sure that any or all of these stories are true? Certainly not, though I think they probably are, given their overwhelming weight of supporting evidence. But absent any willingness of our government or major media to properly investigate them, I cannot say more.

However, this material does conclusively establish something else, which has even greater significance. These dramatic, well-documented accounts have been ignored by our national media, rather than widely publicized. Whether this silence has been deliberate or is merely due to incompetence remains unclear, but the silence itself is proven fact.

A likely reason for this wall of uninterest on so many important issues is that the disasters involved are often bipartisan in nature, with both Democrats and Republicans being culpable and therefore equally eager to hide their mistakes. Perhaps in the famous words of Benjamin Franklin, they realize that they must all hang together or they will surely all hang separately.

We always ridicule the 98 percent voter support

that dictatorships frequently achieve in their elections and plebiscites, yet perhaps those secret-ballot results may sometimes be approximately correct, produced by the sort of overwhelming media control that leads voters to assume there is no possible alternative to the existing regime. Is such an undemocratic situation really so different from that found in our own country, in which our two major parties agree on such a broad range of controversial issues and, being backed by total media dominance, routinely split 98 percent of the vote? A democracy may provide voters with a choice, but that choice is largely determined by the information citizens receive from their media.

A democracy may provide voters with a choice, but that choice is largely determined by the information citizens receive from their media.

Most of the Americans who elected Barack Obama in 2008 intended their vote as a total repudiation of the policies and personnel of the preceding George W. Bush administration. Yet once in office, Obama's crucial selections—Robert Gates at Defense, Timothy Geithner at Treasury, and Ben Bernanke at the Federal Reserve—were all top Bush officials, and they seamlessly continued the unpopular financial bailouts and foreign wars begun by his predecessor, producing what amounted to a third Bush term.

Consider the fascinating perspective of the recently deceased Boris Berezovsky, once the most powerful of the Russian oligarchs and the puppet master behind President Boris Yeltsin during the late 1990s. After looting billions in national wealth and elevating Vladimir Putin to the presidency, he overreached himself and eventually went into exile. According to the *New York Times*, he had planned to transform Russia into a fake two-party state—one social-democratic and one neoconservative—in which heated public battles would be fought on divisive, symbolic issues, while behind the scenes both parties would actually be controlled by the same ruling elites. With the citizenry thus permanently divided and popular dissatisfaction safely channeled into meaningless dead-ends, Russia's rulers could maintain unlimited wealth and power for themselves, with little threat to their reign. Given America's history over the last couple of decades, perhaps we can guess where Berezovsky got his idea for such a clever political scheme. ■

Sex, Spies, and the 1960s

The John Profumo scandal made Britain modern

by CHRISTOPHER SANDFORD

Shortly before 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 24, 1962, a 36-year-old Soviet naval captain, gourmand, and priapic man-about-town named Yevgeni Ivanov entered a low-lit restaurant in London's fashionable South Kensington. Although dressed in the standard boxy dark suit and gabardine raincoat, Ivanov cut a striking figure even in that free-swinging era. There was a certain bustle about him, and he moved through the restaurant with a simian lope, all flashing gray eyes, crinkly dark hair, tufted mustache, and abounding predatory energy. He looked like a Russian spy out of central casting, as interpreted by Groucho Marx.

Ivanov was there to talk about the Cuban missile crisis, which had entered an ominous new phase that morning when 19 destroyers of the U.S. Second Fleet took up stations in an arc around the island, with orders to turn back ships found to be carrying offensive weapons. The world held its breath: "we all sat with our hearts in our mouths to see whether any of the Russian ships did turn around," recalled David Ormsby-Gore, the British ambassador to Washington. About the time Capt Ivanov walked into the restaurant, President Kennedy picked up the hotline to call Prime Minister Harold Macmillan in London. The two leaders discussed possible Soviet reactions to that day's embargo. Then, "rather unexpectedly," recorded Macmillan in his diary, "President asked me straight out the 64 thousand dollar question—'Should we take out Cuba?'"

Ivanov's guest that day was a 49-year-old osteopathic physician and portraitist named Stephen Ward. Permanently sun-tanned, a fastidious dresser, and with a harsh, high-spirited laugh, in one account Ward looked "like the sort of professional Englishman you might see on a Club Med holiday." A "man of pillow fights and romping," as another friend described him, Ward shared Ivanov's flair for collecting nubile

young women. The two had met some years earlier when they had happened to find themselves sleeping (if not concurrently) with the same partner. Her name was Christine Keeler, a would-be actress, and in 1962 she informally shared Ward's home with another free-spirited friend, Mandy Rice-Davies, a dancer and showgirl. Both women were, as the jargon of the time had it, of doubtful reputation.

In due course, Ivanov had become an associate member of their convivial ménage. These arrangements took on a new layer of complexity one night in July 1961, when Ward held a garden party at Cliveden, the English country estate owned by the Astors, where he rented a summer cottage. One of the other guests was 46-year-old John Profumo, the British Secretary of State for War, whose wife—Valerie Hobson, an exotic society beauty with a skirt made from python skin—actually was an actress, starring in the original stage production of "The King and I." Profumo was then a rising politician, half-Italian, slightly balding, with a "boyishly happy leer" customarily plastered on his face. He met Keeler for the first time when she emerged nude from the Cliveden swimming pool to demurely shake his hand. Perhaps not surprisingly, they, too, had entered into a relationship, which thus brought a national-security dimension to the proceedings.

Stephen Ward, the ringmaster of these various affairs, was a clergyman's son who had emerged from the army medical corps with a growing osteopathy practice and an unfulfilled yearning to be a very important person. "I know a lot of major people, and am often received in some of the most famous homes in the country. Sir Winston Churchill and many leading politicians have been among my patients," he

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later informed a court. This was the man who now sat down to lunch with the libidinous Soviet diplomat whom, he thought, might be preparing to defect to the West. For once, Ward recalled, Ivanov appeared to want to talk not about girls, but about great “issues.”

And talk he did. Brilliantly. At length. He had all the details. He knew the facts and figures. According to the American diplomatic correspondent Elie Abel, author of a bestselling book on the Cuban crisis,

Ivanov told Ward that the US had created a dangerous situation, they were on a collision course

with the Russians, and neither side could afford to lose face by seeking a compromise. The British alone could save world peace by calling an immediate summit conference in London. There would be great credit for Britain, Ivanov added, in demonstrating that she was not merely a pawn of Washington but a power capable of independent action for peace. He said that he could guarantee Khrushchev’s acceptance of a British invitation to immediate talks, adding that Khrushchev had personally told him he was prepared to turn back all ships carrying

arms to Cuba and to discuss the removal of the missiles already installed.

Whether Ivanov really was in the confidence of the Kremlin, or just another of those plausible fantasists who tend to accumulate on the fringes of an international crisis, remains uncertain. But Ward was flattered by his friend's words, which seemed to take their relationship from "one based primarily around a mutual appreciation of sex, to one touching on the future survival of mankind," as he put it with characteristic modesty. Following their lunch, Ward lost little time in communicating Ivanov's remarks to his contacts in the British government. We know this from a statement Macmillan himself made to the House of Commons nine months later. "During that week" of the Cuban missile crisis "the strain was certainly very great," he allowed,

Naturally the same was true of the Soviet government, who were doing all they could to further their policy and weaken the resolution of the West. Part of this Soviet activity was public, some of it private ... Ivanov, with the assistance of Mr Ward, was perhaps rather more persistent than most. On 24th October, Ward telephoned the Resident Clerk at the Foreign Office and gave him an account of a conversation he had just had with Ivanov, this to be passed on to me ...

Ivanov had told him, Ward said, that the Americans had created a situation in which there was no opportunity for either Americans or Russians to compromise, and that the Soviet government looked to the United Kingdom as their one hope of conciliation.

At the time he made this statement, Macmillan had no way of knowing that the names Ivanov, Ward, Kee-ler, and especially Profumo would within weeks bring about his own downfall.

Reinforcing the political insecurity of Britain in 1963—a country still in thrall to a class system essentially unchanged since Edwardian times, led by an apparently decrepit 69-year-old man known for his shuffling gait and grouse-moor plus-fours, yet where the likes of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones were now coming up—was a series of security scandals that set the table for what became known as the Profumo affair.

In January 1961, Scotland Yard rather belatedly rounded up the "Portland Spy Ring," a cabal of two Englishmen, two Poles, and a Russian that for five

years had used an impeccably respectable address in the London suburbs to supply Soviet intelligence with material from Britain's highly secret Underwater Weapons Establishment. Some of the information was passed on in the form of microdots pasted into antique books that were mailed to Moscow. Even before the criminal trial and parliamentary investigating committee into that affair came about, there was the case of George Blake, who held the seemingly contradictory roles of being a senior officer of MI6 and an openly practicing Communist. Blake, too, was tried and found guilty of selling secrets to the USSR. He was given a 42-year sentence, said by the press to represent one year for each of the agents killed when he betrayed them. Five years later, Blake escaped from prison with the help of some anti-nuclear campaigners who admired him. He later resurfaced, to some fanfare, in Moscow, and as of early 2013 he is still living there, aged 90, on a KGB pension.

Next up was the tragicomic case of John Vassall—another vicar's son and a cipher clerk at the British Embassy in Moscow—who had been lured into a homosexual trap and blackmailed into becoming a Soviet mole, "though without the least ideological conviction in the matter," as he later put it. After his posting to Moscow, he had transferred to Naval Intelligence in London. Over the next five years, Vassall was able to abstract secret military documents and to photograph others until, in September 1962, he was arrested following a tip-off from the CIA and put on trial. As Macmillan remarked with notable self-composure to Roger Hollis, the head of MI5, who asked if he was "pleased" at Vassall's capture:

No, I'm not. There will be a great public outcry. Then the security services will not be praised for how efficient they are but blamed for how hopeless they are. There will then be an enquiry... There will be a terrible row in the press, there will be a debate in the House of Commons, the Government will probably fall. No, I'm not pleased.

On October 22, the day the Cuban missile crisis erupted, Vassall was sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment. He served ten of them and later lived under an assumed name as a lawyer's clerk in London, where he died in 1996, aged 72.

The case had repercussions for Macmillan's government because Vassall had for a time been employed by the socially well-connected Tam Galbraith, a Conservative MP and Civil Lord of the Admiralty. Had their relationship perhaps "had a whiff of impropriety?" the

PM wondered in his diary. The press was not slow to seize on a story that had all the ingredients of a classic British political scandal—sex, espionage, and a possible connection to the highest rungs of the ruling establishment. “Fleet Street,” Macmillan wearily told the House of Commons during the Vassall debate, “has generated an atmosphere around this case worthy of Titus Oates or Senator McCarthy ... a dark cloud of suspicion and innuendo.” Another official enquiry was launched, and two journalists called to testify, Brendan Mulholland of the *Daily Mail* and Reg Foster of the *Daily Sketch*, refused to disclose to the judges the sources on which they had based their stories. Since, in fact, there were no sources—they had simply made the stories up—they could hardly have done otherwise.

In March 1963, Mulholland and Foster were each sentenced to six months’ imprisonment for contempt of court. As Macmillan rightly remarked, “the Press will not forget or forgive the incident ... they will be represented as martyrs for years to come.” In Britain that spring tawdry revelation was matched by vile animus; almost every morning, one awoke to headlines suggesting, if not shouting, that the government was in the hands of a bunch of doddering old fools deep in a mire of frivolity and corruption, with dubious sexual habits to boot; the *Mirror*’s PRINCE PHILIP AND THE PROFUMO SCANDAL—RUMOUR UTTERLY UNFOUNDED surely set a benchmark for mendacious innuendo. One need only think of the consensus media attitude to Richard Nixon in the final days of Watergate, with added prurience, to get the flavor.

“In all our later difficulties,” Macmillan noted in his diary,

the Press was still actuated by rancour at the mere suggestion that they could be held responsible for the statements they printed. I have never understood this position, which is, however, sincerely held by many editors and journalists. The Press, in demanding full protection for their ‘sources,’ have even claimed the privilege of the priesthood.... The whole [series of scandals] led to a spate of questions, involving every crude variety of wink and insinuation.

One way or another, it was all “sordidly distasteful” wrote the prime minister—born in 1894—and he professed little sympathy for its principal cast. “Every-one’s ‘darling,’” he complained in his diary.

Now all that remained after the hors d’oeuvres was the main dish of Profumo.

On March 21, 1963, the House of Commons debate on the two jailed journalists took an unexpected turn when a Labour MP, Colonel George Wigg—one of those both sinister and faintly comic figures who lurk on the edges of the “intelligence community,” with the hooded eyes and sagging jowls of a particularly dilapidated bloodhound—took the opportunity to refer publicly to Profumo’s widely known but still unreported involvement with Christine Keeler. “There is not an Honourable Member in the House,” he announced, “nor a journalist in the Press Gallery, nor

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do I believe that there is a person in the Public Gallery who, in the last few days, has not heard rumour upon rumour involving a member of the Government Front Bench.” Wigg then used the protection of parliamentary privilege against libel prosecution to refer to “the parties at the heart of the scandal ... this deplorable breakdown of public morals” by name.

The next day, a heavily tranquillized Profumo got up in the House to assure the Honourable Members, “There was no impropriety whatsoever in my acquaintanceship with Miss Keeler.” He promised to sue for libel should any newspaper or individual publicly repeat the allegation. It was left only for the prime minister and the senior members of the cabinet to put on record their “unstinting” and “wholehearted” support for their colleague. In time, the “No impropriety” line would become as iconic in its way as Nixon’s “I’m not a crook.” Profumo’s lie was the one truly imperishable moment of the scandal, and with it the stage was set for the saga that eventually led the Secretary of State for War to admit he had been sharing a mistress with a possible Russian spy. “A laughingstock” was the way Macmillan accurately described himself as a result.

On April 4, Scotland Yard, apparently at the urging of Colonel Wigg, opened an investigation into Stephen Ward for living off immoral earnings—

oddly enough, an offense in Britain only since 1956. Christine Keeler was also interviewed and eventually signed a statement confirming that she had been Profumo's lover and that certain "considerations" for this arrangement had been passed to Ward. The Labour opposition seized its opportunity. On May 24, Wigg and his colleague Harold Wilson wrote to Macmillan, enclosing a long letter from Ward—now rightly concerned that he was about to stand trial for pimping—in which he, too, alleged that Profumo had not told the truth in his statement to the Commons. The PM's response was to set off to the moors of Scotland on a shooting holiday. When he returned to London in June, he found events had moved at "a rather alarming" rate. Under continuing parliamentary pressure, Profumo admitted that perhaps he had slept with Christine Keeler after all. For his "inexcusable folly" in lying to the House, he was immediately resigning his cabinet appointment, his Privy Councillorship, and his seat in Parliament.

Meanwhile, a West Indian lover of Keeler's had in a jealous rage shot at Stephen Ward's house; another West Indian, this one named "Lucky" Gordon—brother of "Psycho" Gordon, a London jazz entrepreneur with alleged Mob connections—was on trial at the Old Bailey for wounding Keeler in the street. Ward himself had been arrested and charged with a variety of sexual offences, including keeping a brothel. The *Sunday News of the World* began the serialization of Keeler's life story, and there was talk of her recording a pop song. And Captain Ivanov appeared in print as a "hairy chested Russian" who had shared pillow talk with this versatile woman. No wonder the British press, in one of its cyclical fits of morality, saw the whole thing as a gift with which to attack a tired and corrupt government.

"Eleven years of Conservative rule have brought the nation psychologically and spiritually to a low ebb," *The Times* editorialized. There was even a transatlantic dimension to the affair. As a senator, President Kennedy had slept with one Suzy Chang, a New York prostitute who had moved to London and was part of the Ward vice—or "V-girl"—ring. In June 1963, Chang was said to be anxious to sell her story of nights with a "high-elected US official" to the *New York Journal-American*. According to the journalist Seymour Hersch, Robert Kennedy used his considerable influence with the Hearst family, who owned the *Journal-American*, to spike the story.

The scandal accelerated rapidly. With Profumo now disgraced and an object of public mirth, Macmillan was obliged to make an emergency statement in the House on June 17. He made it clear that he saw

himself as a victim of events. "On me," Macmillan said, "as Head of the Administration, what has happened has inflicted a deep, bitter and lasting wound ... I find it difficult to tell the House what a blow this has been to me, for it seems to have undermined one of the very foundations on which political life must be conducted." When the final vote of confidence came to be taken, there were 27 abstentions among the Conservative back-benches.

Macmillan had won, but with his reputation for unflappable dignity in ruins. On his irregular "meet the people" tours, hecklers—hitherto unknown on formal occasions—shouted ribald remarks at him about call-girls and spies. Rumors were rife about Macmillan's own home life. A Gallup Poll in July 1963 showed him at the nadir of his popularity, with a 35 percent approval rating, the lowest for a Prime Minister since Neville Chamberlain at the time of Munich.

It was left for Macmillan to announce that a Judicial Enquiry under Lord Denning would report on the security aspects of the affair, which the press had built into a *cause célèbre* that linked not only the Tory government but the ruling establishment as a whole to an underworld of prostitutes, pimps, spies, topless go-go dancers, and exotic household practices. One widely circulated story was said to involve an eminent politician who had waited at table at a fashionable London dinner party naked and masked, wearing a placard that read, "If my services don't please you, whip me." If true, a sorry lapse from the late-Victorian public etiquette Macmillan himself seemed to embody.

On July 22, Stephen Ward appeared on trial at the Old Bailey on a variety of morals charges. Over the next nine days, the proceedings saw a series of colorful witnesses give evidence against the accused—whom *The Times* thought a "wretched" and "visibly shrunken" figure—including an 'intimate model' named Vickie Barrett and a "masseuse and interpretative dancer" sworn in as Ronna Ricardo. (None of Ward's society friends, by contrast, came forward to testify to his good character.) Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice-Davies also appeared, the latter providing the scandal's second immortal aphorism. When the prosecuting counsel Mervyn Griffith-Jones pointed out that Lord Astor, owner of the Cliveden estate, denied having met her, Rice-Davies replied, "Well he would, wouldn't he?" The line quickly entered the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

Following a harsh attack on his character in Griffith-Jones's closing speech, Ward went home to his flat and took an overdose of sleeping pills. The

next morning, while the defendant lay comatose in a hospital bed, the jury at the Old Bailey found him guilty of living on the immoral earnings of Keeler and Rice-Davies. The judge deferred sentencing “until such time as the criminal may be fit to return to court,” which in the event meant never. Three days later, Ward died without having regained consciousness. He was 50. His suicide note read, “I am sorry to disappoint the vultures.”

On September 26, Macmillan’s cabinet received the Denning Report, which like Kenneth Starr’s 35 years later would go on to become one of those rare government publications to be a public bestseller. People lined up the streets for it. 125,000 copies were sold—6,000 in the first hour. With chapter titles like “The Slashing and the Shooting,” “Christine tells Her Story,” “He’s a Liar,” “The Man Without a Head,” and “The Man in the Mask,” the 70,000-word narrative perhaps promised more than it delivered. Much as with Kenneth Starr, some felt that Denning’s innate Puritanism—at one point he referred to Ward’s preference for the sexual ménage à trois as “this practice of a revolting nature”—rendered him unfit for an investigation that even touched upon, as it were, the dimension of a Cabinet minister’s genitals and the “outstanding upholstery of Miss Keeler.”

The report laid blame squarely on Profumo for lying to his colleagues about the nature of his association with Keeler, though Macmillan and his cabinet were criticized for failing to respond adequately to “glaring proof” of the war minister’s adultery. There was no evidence “for believing [the] national security has been or will be endangered,” Denning concluded.

That was, in effect, the end of the Profumo scandal, though its longer-term consequences included a disinclination among the British public ever to take politicians quite so seriously again. As a result, newspapers were free to abandon any vestiges of deference to the patrician establishment and quickly substituted the cocktail of sexual gossip and topless photographs that readers of British tabloids enjoy today. For this reason, it’s been called the ignition-point of Britain’s “modernization crisis.” Macmillan himself resigned on grounds of ill health less than a month after publication of Denning’s report, the victim of a misdiagnosed prostate problem that the doctors had told him might be fatal. He lived until December 1986, a few weeks short of his 93rd birthday.

Christine Keeler served nine months in jail for perjury relating to the “Lucky” Gordon case and later achieved a sort of immortality when she was photographed straddling a chair with nothing on—voted one of the Sixties’ “iconic images” in a BBC poll. Now 70, she continues to publish a series of articles and books insisting that she wishes to be left alone. Mandy Rice-Davies converted to Judaism and opened a chain of successful nightclubs and restaurants in Tel Aviv and elsewhere. She has described

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her life as “one slow descent into respectability.” Captain Ivanov was recalled to Moscow, where in short order he found himself abandoned by his wife and out of favor with the Kremlin. An alcoholic, he died insane in January 1994, aged 68.

But perhaps the most poignant post-scandal afterlife was that of John Profumo himself. Following his resignation, he simply disappeared from public life. One morning in December 1963, Profumo knocked on the door of Toynbee Hall, a welfare center for down-and-outs in the east end of London, and asked if he could help in any way. He would remain there as a full-time volunteer, doing everything from cleaning the toilets to raising large sums of money for the disadvantaged, over the next 40 years. His wife Valerie, the once glamorous actress, also devoted herself to the charity until her death in 1998. Profumo never publicly spoke about the scandal, preferring to take the flagrantly unfashionable view that it was all a private matter between him and his family. Most commentators came to agree with the verdict of the *Daily Mail* that he should be remembered “as much for his contribution to society after his fall from political grace as for the folly which caused that fall.” His award of the CBE in 1975, for services to Toynbee Hall, signaled a partial return to respectability. John Profumo died in March 2006, at the age of 91. ■

Clive James at Last

A genius sunburned by his faith in humanity

by R.J. STOVE

Here is Orwell, writing in 1941 on H.G. Wells, then 75 years old: “is it not a sort of parricide for a person of my age (thirty-eight) to find fault with H.G. Wells? Thinking people who were born about the beginning of this century are in some sense Wells’s own creation.”

For “H. G. Wells” substitute “Clive James,” and for “thirty eight” substitute “fifty.” This done, the above passage’s first sentence becomes relevant to what the Sydney-born Clive James meant for most of us Australian scribes who emerged during the 20th century’s last two decades. Not merely did we long in vain for James’s mastery of English. We also could not imagine imitating any other Australian author.

What recent local models—outside the monstrously overcrowded Australian annex of the John Berryman bughouse—did we have then? Well, we had Patrick White, whose tortured poeticisms usually resembled the first prize in a Saul Bellow parody contest. We had Roman convert James McAuley, almost forgotten save by his friends, with most of his verse and polemics out of print following his premature 1976 demise. We had a half-dozen female novelists, ranging from gentility to grunge, who reversed the late Nora Ephron’s motto: they achieved more kudos for describing hangnails than their masculine colleagues could for describing cancer. At least all the above were recognizably literate, as was the Americanized and often virtuosic Robert Hughes, who died last year. A far more prevalent danger lay in aping ex-historian Manning Clark, whose fake-scriptural bombast and superhuman carelessness James himself epitomized in seven cruel words: “Let alone rewrite, he doesn’t even reread.”

Then along came James, aged 22 when early in 1962 he reached England. Surmounting initial setbacks, he did what few literary émigrés since T.S. Eliot have

done: succeed in Oxbridge and London on his own terms. When you had recovered from his finest journalism’s impact, there was his finest rhymes’ impact to contend with. (Petrarchan sonnets, if you please, or the quatrains of his new translation of *The Divine Comedy*.) He was polyglot. He was routinely televised. He was prodigiously well-read. He was—and this factor’s charm should never be minimized—bald. Afforded every incentive to adopt Margaret Thatcher’s speech patterns, he still talked like a New South Wales coalminer. So he was, to his compatriots, fundamentally ours. And his wit was like nothing attained in his homeland before or since.

The *locus classicus* of James’s wit, and the James production which all should read if they read no other, is his *Unreliable Memoirs*: the best autobiography by an Australian (which will suggest thin praise) and among the best modern autobiographies by anyone (which should not). Its account of James’s conscription—his was Australia’s last pre-Vietnam draft—is so dazzling as to leave the much-lauded Good Soldier Schweik asleep in the sentry-box. Any editor will writhe in sympathy with the book’s account of James’s early days as a broadsheet proofreader:

writing is essentially a matter of saying things in the right order. It certainly has little to do with the creative urge per se. Invariably the most prolific contributors were the ones who could not write a sentence without saying the opposite of what they meant. One man, resident in Woy Woy [50 miles north of Sydney], sent us a new novel every month. Each novel took the form of 20 thick exercise books held together in a bundle. Each exercise book was full to the brim with neat handwriting. The man must have written more

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compulsively than Enid Blyton, who at least stopped for the occasional meal. Unlike Enid Blyton, however, he could not write even a single phrase that made any sense ... It was my first, cruel exposure to the awkward fact that the arts attract the insane. They arrived in relays from daylight to dusk. For all the contact they had with reality they might as well have been wearing flippers, rotating bow-ties, and sombreros with model-trains running around the brim.

Alas, the law of diminishing returns mars *Unreliable Memoirs*' four sequels. Nor is James inherently

at home in fiction, except with *Brrm! Brrm!*, as sardonically perfect a novella as Saki could have furnished. Still, to dip into many of James's non-fiction releases is to be enriched beyond the proverbial dreams of avarice.

On stoicism: "We would like to think we are stoic ... but would prefer a version that didn't hurt."

On the clueless antipodean abroad: "An Australian expatriate in London or New York has only to mention Proust or Rilke and he is greeted as an avatar, as if Paracelsus had come to town."

On Schwarzenegger: "A condom stuffed with walnuts."

On a photo of Bill Clinton shaking Nelson Mandela's hand: "Both these men have highly outspoken wives, but only one knows where her husband has been every night for the last 26 years. Which one?"

On the notorious blank-faced, rifle-toting image of Dallas's best-known killer: "Lee Harvey Oswald in an early attempt to avoid suspicion."

On Josephine Baker: "She joined the Resistance during World War II, as distinct from other entertainers who joined it after the war was over."

On Brezhnev: "Lenin had been injected with formaldehyde after his death. Brezhnev had appar-

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ently received the same treatment while still alive."

(Improbably, Brezhnev made a lasting appeal to James's critical imagination. His 1978 attack on Moscow's official Brezhnev biography is among mankind's greatest book reviews. It starts: "Here is a book so dull that a whirling dervish could read himself to sleep with it. If you were to recite even a single page in the open air, birds would fall out of the sky and dogs drop dead.")

To James, early in the 21st century, something peculiarly bad happened which straightforward *memento mori* cannot explain. Perhaps the Internet must take the rap. The Internet's knack for driving into near-extinction "the man of letters"—or, in the comparable 1934 phrase of composer-conductor-critic Constant Lambert, "the disappearing middle-brow"—appears infinite. Bernard Levin, Kingsley Amis: how authoritative their historiographical pontificating sounded in the 1980s, and how easy it is now to demolish most of their allegations after 20 minutes' Wikipedia perusal.

James can no more be impugned for not predicting cyberspace's intellectual impact than Passchendaele Tommies could be impugned for not predicting atomic weapons. Where he can more reasonably be queried is in post-Berlin-Wall geopolitics. Upon James, 9/11—rather than being the nightmarish but ultimately foreseeable shock that it was for anyone familiar with Washington's Middle East policy, or

lack thereof—seems to have left that particular spiritual concussion which Molotov-Ribbentrop once left upon Marxists. If 9/11 was James's Nazi-Soviet disillusion, worse came with the October 2002 Bali bombings. They appear to have formed, for him, the non-Marxist equivalent of Khrushchev's secret speech and Hungarian invasion combined.

Someday a profound sociological tome will analyze *Homo Australianus's* public meltdowns in response to the Bali atrocity. They had no local precedent. Sure, we hated—rightly enough—Hirohito's Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere for its disgusting crimes. (The emperor's Australian prisoners included James's own father, killed in 1945.) But our general cognition did not cease thereby. We had not then acquired what our education system's subsequent progressive gurus imposed on us: the adamant conviction that, for Aussies, death is optional. This conviction—as can be confirmed by the oafish mummery which characterizes Australia's average post-Christian funeral rite—has become, above all since Bali, our cultural default mode.

Indonesia's 1975–1999 extermination of 180,000 East Timorese inspired in the Australian masses total indifference—and in Australian Prime Ministers from Gough Whitlam to Paul Keating a discreet but active pleasure at having 180,000 fewer Catholics in the neighborhood to disturb the Western Enlightenment Project. Not so the Bali carnage. Over the slaying by terrorists of 88 roistering Australian nightclubbers—the other 114 victims were Lesser Breeds, and thus could be safely ignored—our rent-a-mobs set up the same institutionalized howling with which London's schmaltzy sans-culottes and their junk-media enablers had greeted Princess Diana's apotheosis. James had prided himself on channeling *Homo Australianus*, just as Walt Whitman had channeled *Homo Americanus*. Now Bali hurled the credo of "the Anti-Death League" (Amis's terminology) back in *Homo Australianus's* face.

Can you imagine James's resultant anguish? His pre-2001 worldview had exceedingly little room for Kant's "crooked timber of humanity" or in non-German language, Original Sin. That it had any transient room whatever is to James's lasting credit. Pascal would not have been ashamed to write what James once wrote about Satan: "the beast drives a car and knows what time our daughter leaves school." But from this insight into evil, what did James conclude? It is not altogether evident.

A lifetime's reading is distilled in James's 876-page *Cultural Amnesia* (2007). While many habitual essayists have turned to a big book, none can have invested more ardor in the marathon than James did. Had James simply announced, "I hope I earn lots of money for these brief smooth profiles of 106 notables whom I enjoyed writing brief smooth profiles of," nobody could have had the smallest objection. But when you have grown less interested in art or commerce than in saving the world, a profiler's dexterity no longer suffices. James wanted *Cultural Amnesia* to be not just his big book but his *Summa Theologica*, and indeed his university. Hannah Arendt had her *Human Condition* and *Origins of Totalitarianism*, so why should not James join the epic writers' club? (It is true that James, unlike Arendt, had never got up close and personal with Heidegger, but it is equally true that Arendt, unlike James, had never dared appear on Japan's trash-television.)

The sad reality is that *Cultural Amnesia*, notwithstanding its commendable things, suffers overwhelmingly from the *Economist* Syndrome. As James Bowman said in these pages seven years back: "*The Economist* is an excellent magazine for keeping informed about subjects you don't know anything about, but its deficiencies begin to appear as soon as it addresses one you do." Let us concede that James must have examined Poland's Witold Gombrowicz and the Franco-Austrian psychologist Manès Sperber more deeply than has any other individual, living or deceased. Meanwhile James continues to display difficulty in getting right the simplest facts about far more distinctive figures. Relying, as he does, on the posthumous Shostakovich "memoirs" is like relying for Holodomor scholarship on Walter Duranty. The research level of James's references to Richard Strauss, Wilhelm Furtwängler, and Herbert von Karajan would disgrace a sophomore. But then, any overarching theme in *Cultural Amnesia* amounts to no more than: "liberal secular democrat four-legs good, elitist or even quietist two-legs bad." "Darkest Zeitgeistheim"—C.S. Lewis's phrase—is still a prison, even if James is as ebullient within it as were the Blues Brothers in Joliet Penitentiary.

Arendt, in her big books and elsewhere, triumphed on three vital counts where *Cultural Amnesia* cannot. First, she was from head to toe a scholar, not a publicist, even a prodigiously gifted publicist. Second, she gave her readers the benefits of a stratospheric Mittel-European IQ. Third, being conversant with abstract thought imbued her with what a malign fusion of temperament and Anglo privilege de-

nied to James: an actual operative moral philosophy with which to undermine the commissar.

James has delightfully mocked the commissar, a species now largely confined to Pyongyang, Ottawa, Canberra, and Harvard. But what creed can he set against the mullah, the Beltway chickenhawk, the cyberpornographer, and the therapeutic statist? Mere liberal secular democracy: a phenomenon largely meaningless outside European-derived mores and, at best, intermittently functional within them. It might continue to play in Peoria. Its allure in Tehran, Cairo, Beijing, Harare, Jakarta, or Riyadh (Eretz Netanyahu we shall silently overlook) remains probationary.

Forbear to blame him. The fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our Australian stars, including our Australian TV stars, but in our Australian selves. Take away the short-lived influence of B.A. Santamaria's Catholic-dominated political machine—doomed by its failure to prevent Whitlam's 1972 election—and Australia's Cold Warriors consisted disproportionately of tenured Sydney and Melbourne academics whose response to Enver Hoxha's atheism Mmuseums was to build their own atheism museums, from which they debarred Hoxha on an aesthetic technicality.

About the recent developments in James's hitherto private life—that is, the eight-year extramarital debauch—compassion demands a diplomatic reticence. Apropos James's leukemia-induced torments, gossip would be unseemly. He himself has confessed that today he needs so much extra oxygen as to render future Australian visits impossible. How desolate this realization must make him can be gauged from *Unreliable Memoirs'* glorious final prose-poem:

As I begin this last paragraph, outside my window a misty afternoon drizzle gently but inexorably soaks the City of London. Down there in the street I can see umbrellas commiserating with each other. In Sydney Harbor, 12,000 miles away and 10 hours from now, the yachts will be racing on the crushed diamond water under a sky the texture of powdered sapphires. It would be churlish not to concede that the same abundance of natural blessings which gave us the energy to leave has every right to call us back. ... Pulsing like a beacon through the days and nights, the birthplace of the fortunate sends out its invisible waves of recollection. It always has and it always will, until even the last of us come home. ■



Home Plate

BILL KAUFFMAN

For President Buchanan

One disadvantage of having exiled our television for several years is that I'm counting on Rona Barrett and Mary Hart to relay this news, but if for some reason they are stuck in analog TV traffic, I must tell you that Ron ("Gettysburg," "Gods and Generals") Maxwell's new movie, "Copperhead," which opens June 28, is from a screenplay I adapted from the novella by Upstate New York's greatest novelist. No, not James Fenimore Cooper (of whose *Deerslayer* Mark Twain said, "its humor is pathetic; its pathos is funny; its conversations are—oh! indescribable; its love-scenes odious; its English a crime against the language") but Harold Frederic, the pride of Utica (along with Annette Funicello and Roscoe Conkling).

Ron and cast and crew did a marvelous job of making vivid the world and story of *Copperhead*, which concerns an Upstate farmer who in the sanguinary years of 1862–3 says *No* to the war for the Union. Abner Beech (Billy Campbell, in a subtly powerful performance) is neither a doughface—i.e., a Northern man with Southern principles, a la Lincoln's predecessor, James Buchanan—nor a congenital contrarian: he is, rather, a Jefferson-Jackson agrarian in the Upstate New York Democratic tradition. His side will lose, his tradition almost disappear, but Abner will not be moved.

No spoiler alerts here; see the movie. I will say that "Copperhead" approaches the Civil War from an angle of vision unusual in American popular culture, and even there it might surprise you. Place and verism, after all, must always trump ideology. I despise

"message" movies, or didacticism, or deck-stacking. Lord knows American movies are in need of alternative perspectives, but the world can do without a libertarian Stanley Kramer or a localist Gene Roddenberry.

I mentioned the unlovable James Buchanan, who has been on my mind since I recently reread *Buchanan Dying*, John Updike's imaginatively empathetic play about the despised 15th president, who on his deathbed revisits the people and the climactic moments of his life in Lancaster and Washington.

James Buchanan was something of a cold fish, an inveterate office-seeker, and—typical of the decayed Democracy of that era—an expansionist/imperialist who coveted Mexico, Cuba, and any other southerly territory that wasn't nailed down. He temporized—or played for time—as the Union ruptured during the interregnum between Lincoln's election and assumption of office, and Updike makes the best case he can for the wisdom of this course.

The play is an act of Pennsylvania patriotism. As Updike explained, "In my Pennsylvania childhood, I knew him to be the only President our great and ancient state had produced, but where were the monuments, the Buchanan Avenues, the extollatory juvenile volumes with titles like *Jimmie Buchanan*, *Keystone Son in the White House* or *'Old Buck,' the Hair-Splitter Who Preceded the Rail-Splitter?*"

In the tradition of such Middle Atlantic men of letters as Harold Frederic, Edmund Wilson, and Gore Vidal, Updike was something of a war skeptic, even a Copperhead, who referred to "the dubious cause of putting down

secession with force." Writing in 1974 of "our hero," Updike noted hopefully that "it may be, in these years of high indignation over unbridled and corrupting Presidential power, that we can give more sympathy to Buchanan's cautious and literal constitutionalism than has been shown him in history books written by Lincolnophiles and neo-abolitionists."

Airball, John.

Vidal did not care much for Updike, whose books, he said, were surrounded by a "force field" that rendered them impenetrable. Vidal tamped his enthusiasm for *Buchanan Dying* because he thought Updike skirted the matter of Buchanan's ambiguous sexuality. Updike gives Buck an Ann Rutledge of his own, Anne Coleman, who takes her life in despair over her suitor's lack of ardency. He ignores the possibility—the possibility—that Buchanan had eyes instead for his erstwhile roommate, Senator (and Vice President) William Rufus King of Alabama, a silk-scarved dandy who made Oscar Wilde look like Ernest Borgnine. (The roomies were known around Washington as "Mr. and Mrs. Buchanan.")

As if playing his own devil's advocate, Updike quotes in his afterword Henry James: "The 'historic' novel is, for me, condemned ... to a fatal cheapness You may multiply the little facts that can be got from pictures & documents, relics & prints as much as you like—the real thing is almost impossible to do ..."

Buchanan Dying, like the historical novels of Gore Vidal and Thomas Mallon, among others, refutes James. On screen, I think "Copperhead" does too. But you be the judge of that. ■



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Arts&Letters

'Good Guys' Make Bad Generals

by ANDREW J. BACEVICH

The Generals: American Military Command From World War II to Today, Thomas E. Ricks, Penguin Press, 565 pages

By all accounts, the present-day United States military is the best—that is, the most capable—in all the world. In the estimation of their countrymen, today's American warrior (the homelier term G.I. having now gone the way of doughboy) may well be the best of all time. Yet America's Army doesn't win. Except for small-scale skirmishes, it hasn't since World War II.

In terms of providing its army with bountiful resources, no nation comes even close to the United States. In terms of willingness to commit that army into action, no nation (except perhaps Israel and the United Kingdom) compares. Yet the roster of victories achieved by the United States Army since 1945 is an abbreviated one: the Dominican Republic (1965), Grenada (1983), and Panama (1989). Twenty years ago, observers might have added the Persian Gulf War

(1991) to that list. Unfortunately, the brief and seemingly glorious encounter that was Operation Desert Storm turned out to be a mere preliminary bout.

Forays ending in something other than victory—i.e., conclusive operational success yielding desired political outcomes—have been both more numerous and of greater moment. The Cold War provided the occasion for one costly draw (Korea) and one humiliating defeat (Vietnam). The post-Cold War era has included one outright failure, the embarrassing if quickly mythologized Somalia intervention, along with two wars of middling size, long duration, and ambiguous outcome. Whatever verdict historians ultimately render regarding Iraq and Afghanistan, they are unlikely to classify them as roaring successes. Indeed, mounting evidence suggests that these two badly managed wars may have rung down the curtain on the so-called American Century, with the self-described “world's only superpower” now facing irreversible decline.

The United States Army is like one of those chronically underperforming professional sports franchises: the team looks good on paper but somehow doesn't quite get the job done. Despite a huge payroll, a roster loaded with talent, and an enthusiastic fan base, perfor-

mance on the pitch falls short of what's needed to win championships.

What explains this gap between apparent potential and actual achievement? When Americans send their army to fight, why doesn't it return home in triumph? In *The Generals*, Thomas R. Ricks ventures an answer to that question, with his book's title fingering the chief culprits.

Writing in 1932, the soldier-historian J.F.C. Fuller identified the essential attributes of successful generalship as “courage, creative intelligence and physical fitness.” A prize-winning journalist best known for his cogent analysis of the Iraq War, Ricks does not question whether senior American military officers can do the requisite number of push-ups and sit-ups to demonstrate their physical vigor. Yet since World War II, he argues, the quality of creative intelligence found in the upper echelons of the United States Army has declined precipitously. So too has the quality of civil-military interaction—the dialogue between senior officers and senior civilian officials that is essential to effective war management. Here the problem stems at least in part from pronounced lapses in moral courage. Together, these failings at the top explain why an army that seemingly ought to win doesn't.



Ricks also offers an explanation for why this decline occurred: the Army officer corps no longer polices itself, at least not its upper echelons. Back in World War II, generals fired generals who performed poorly. Today that is no longer the case—indeed, it hasn't been for several decades. The demise of this ethic of professional accountability has created an environment in which people getting to the top are patently unqualified for the responsibilities that await them. Worse, even when they screw up they get a pass—and sometimes even get promoted.

To become a general officer is to join an exclusive club. As with many clubs, ranking members decide whom to admit, restricting entry to those who satisfy the criteria for being the right sort. In American military vernacular, Ricks

writes, the key is to be deemed a “good guy.” The good guy projects the right attitude, strikes the right pose, and recites all the right clichés. Good guys are team players. They don't rock the boat. They get ahead by going along. In practical terms, demonstrated adherence to orthodoxy becomes the premier qualification for admission. Heretics need not apply.

And according to Ricks, once you're in, you're golden: with membership come privileges and protection. So when events expose the limitations of a William Westmoreland in Vietnam or a Tommy Franks in Iraq, other senior officers cognizant of those shortcomings keep mum. Sergeants or captains falling short in the performance of duty might feel the axe; not so with the generals said to be responsible for what the

sergeants and captains do or don't do. General officer responsibility turns out to be more nominal than real. Reflecting on the Iraq War, one disenchanted American officer put it this way: “As matters stand now, a private who loses a rifle suffers far greater consequences than a general who loses a war.” Needless to say, that officer's invitation to join the club never arrived.

It didn't use to be that way. At the outset of World War II, Ricks writes, George C. Marshall, the Army chief of staff, established strict standards of general officer accountability. In the field, commanders like Dwight D. Eisenhower enforced those standards, ruthlessly sacking division and corps commanders found wanting. Meanwhile, those generals who

demonstrated a capacity for combat leadership—among them J. Lawton Collins, James Gavin, and Matthew Ridgway—reaped rewards: swift promotion and assignment to positions of greater responsibility. For Marshall, war was the ultimate Darwinian environment, separating fit from unfit (or perhaps lucky from unlucky). The clash of arms rendered judgments; Marshall's system accepted those judgments as authoritative.

Did this Marshall system actually exist? The case that Ricks advances for answering that question in the affirmative falls short of being conclusive. His approach is nakedly didactic: *The Generals* consists of a series of chapter-length profiles, each focusing on a particular senior officer whose personal qualities, performance of duty, or ultimate fate reveals something about the evolution of American generalship. The individuals to whom the author directs attention form a motley, even whimsical, group. Some are colorful, others bland. Some—George S. Patton for example—meet anyone's standards for historical importance. Others—

The leadership system that had produced victory during World War II almost immediately began to decay.

raise your hand if you've heard of Terry de la Mesa Allen—qualify as marginal. But the key point is this: tinker with the cast of characters and you're likely to reach different conclusions.

Even some of the figures Ricks uses to build his argument cast doubts about the Marshall system's efficacy. Mark Clark offers a case in point. Ricks correctly identifies Clark, the erstwhile liberator of Rome, as a petty, if exceedingly ambitious, officer of negligible ability, "disliked and distrusted by subordinates and superiors alike." In a

crisis, Clark's practice was "to blame everyone but himself." If the Marshall system worked as Ricks claims, he ought to have been sacked. Yet as a personal friend of Eisenhower, Clark flourished, achieving four-star rank and remaining a blight on the Army for years to come.

More problematic still is the case of Douglas MacArthur, who presided over the Southwest Pacific theatre of operations with an imperial disdain for whatever George Marshall (not to mention Franklin Roosevelt) might want. In a 2010 blog post, Ricks fingered MacArthur as "the worst general in American history." Here he concedes that MacArthur "stood outside of" the Marshall system. Yet a system of accountability that allows the worst (not to mention most narcissistic) general in U.S. history to run roughshod over his superiors while cultivating an undeserved reputation as a Great American Hero may not actually qualify as a system at all. Some exceptions confirm the rule; others expose the rule as fiction.

Still, even without enshrining World War II as some sort of golden age of American generalship, Marshall, Eisenhower, Patton, and the rest of them (even including he likes of Clark and MacArthur) did get the job done. The war ended with the United States on the winning side. We may wonder how much credit for that outcome is due to superior U.S. military leadership as opposed to German strategic folly, Japanese economic weakness, and the extraordinary resilience of the Red Army. But that is not the question that Ricks wishes to entertain here.

Instead, according to the story he chooses to tell, the leadership system that had produced victory almost immediately began to decay. By the onset of the Korean War, it had all but ceased to exist. In choosing subordinates, MacArthur, the dominant figure during the war's early stages, pre-

ferred cronies and courtiers. The only creative intelligence he valued was his own. Rather than competence or independent judgment, therefore, sucking up to the boss determined who flourished under his command. After President Harry Truman had finally had his fill of MacArthur's insubordination and dismissed him, Ridgway sought to reinstate Marshall's standards, but with a twist: rather than being fired outright, failed commanders were quietly transferred. Shielding generals, and the Army, from embarrassment was becoming a priority.

Worse was to come. In the wake of Korea, a new "corporate model of generalship" emerged, embodied by Maxwell Taylor and by Taylor's protégé William Westmoreland, officers who were smooth, bureaucratically savvy, intellectually shallow, and less than honest. Taylor "made a habit of saying not what he knew to be true but instead what he thought should be said." Westmoreland displayed a similar tendency to shade the truth, especially on matters affecting his own image and reputation. Among senior officers, plain speaking was becoming a lost art. The Army, writes Ricks, "was fast becoming a collection of 'organization men' ... who were far less inclined to judge the performance of their peers." Generals "were acting less like stewards of their profession, answerable to the public, and more like keepers of a closed guild."

Here for Ricks lies the key explanation for why Vietnam became such a debacle: Army generals screwed it up. They misconstrued that war's actual nature. They employed methods ("search and destroy") that were wrong-headed, unnecessarily brutal, and massively counterproductive. Attempting to deceive and manipulate their civilian masters, they helped create a poisonous civil-military relationship. And with Marshall's standards of accountability now fully abandoned, they prospered. Senior officers who ran the army into the ground as they led it to defeat reaped

rewards, winning medals and promotions. Westmoreland's fate was emblematic: Ricks suggests that Marshall would have canned him; yet after four years of mismanaging the Vietnam War, Westy ascended to Marshall's old job as Army chief of staff.

From their experience battling insurgents in Southeast Asia, army generals took one lesson: never again. That apart, they learned next to nothing. Indeed they wasted no time in concluding that the war had nothing to teach.

In recounting how the Army recovered from Vietnam, Ricks rightly emphasizes the contributions of Gen. William DePuy. Today a forgotten figure, DePuy may well rank as the most consequential U.S. military officer in the last quarter of the 20th century, both as chief architect of the Army's post-Vietnam reforms and as the senior officer most insistent on declaring the entire Vietnam experience irrelevant.

DePuy's interest in burying that war was understandable: as Westmoreland's operations chief he had devised the concept of "search and destroy," confident that superior U.S. firepower would bludgeon the Communist insurgents into submission. In effect, DePuy in the 1960s applied to a Vietnamese civil war methods that Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman had employed during the American Civil War in the 1860s: grind the enemy down until he gives up. Yet the two wars were utterly dissimilar. DePuy's approach badly underestimated the capacity of the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army to absorb punishment and still carry on. And in a contest where the prospects of success turned on winning the support of a contested population, it employed means that victimized and alienated that population.

Yet the abject failure of that concept in Vietnam—a failure above all of creative intelligence—prompted little soul-searching on DePuy's part. Nothing that had occurred there altered his pre-existing conception of warfare. Stripped to its essentials, that

conception reduced combat to a series of discrete, measurable tasks. In DePuy's eyes, to master tasks was to master war itself. Paying lip service to war's human dimension, disdaining its political aspect altogether, DePuy's approach—which became the Army's approach—pretended to a sort of pseudo-empiricism, as if war were akin to a large-scale industrial enterprise.

Demanding compliance with prescribed formulas, checklists, and decision matrices, DePuy's Army had little use for critical thinking or independent judgment. This was the Army that in 1991 fought Saddam Hussein and then in 2003 came back for a second go—an Army led by "good guys" who had mastered minor tactics but were intellectually complacent, strategically illiterate, and wore their antipathy for politics like a badge of honor.

Against Saddam's undistinguished legions, this proved good enough to win battles but nowhere near good enough to win wars. Against the more resolute opponent that American soldiers confronted in occupying Iraq (and Afghanistan), it wasn't good enough to win anything. Iraq after 2003 became the war that DePuy's Army had been so intent on avoiding: it was Vietnam *redux*. Yet generals imbued with DePuy's mechanistic approach to warfare proved no more adept at grasping the problem actually at hand than had the prior generation of senior leaders who all but destroyed the army they professed to love in their vain pursuit of an ever bigger body count.

Generals who had come of age in DePuy's army took for granted the superiority of American military technique. They did not question its relevance to the battlefield that they confronted in Iraq. For this generation of senior leaders, creative intelligence amounted to bearing down harder in the face of resistance, an impulse that found its ultimate expression in the madcap effort to lock up every military age Iraqi male in

places like Abu Ghraib prison. To remove from circulation every potential "terrorist" was to assure ultimate victory: here was the modified version of body count.

In painful detail, Ricks recounts the failings of successive U.S. commanders in Baghdad and of the equally lackluster four-stars back in Washington who had little to offer to civilian leaders badly in need of competent military advice—even if they were slow to acknowledge that need. The roll call of generals that Ricks singles out for spanking—the "dull and arrogant" Tommy Franks, the clueless Ricardo Sanchez, and the slow-on-the-uptake George Casey ("up to his ears in quicksand and he doesn't even know it")—certainly sustains his overall thesis. Not since Irvin MacDowell, George McClellan, John Pope, Ambrose Burnside, and Joe Hooker subjected the Army of the Potomac to serial abuse had American soldiers suffered under such mediocre leadership.

Extending that comparison would find David Petraeus serving as the Iraq War's equivalent of Ulysses S. Grant, the general who turns looming failure into victory. Yet Ricks won't go that far. Rather than winning the Iraq War, he writes, Petraeus succeeded in merely "putting a new face on it." He applied the tourniquet that slowed the loss of blood. The tourniquet held just long enough for Washington to declare the patient stable and hastily leave the scene of mayhem that the United States itself had unleashed.

Furthermore, the Petraeus Moment by no means inaugurated a full-fledged renaissance of American generalship. According to Ricks, Petraeus's ill-concealed ambition and operating style, more than slightly reminiscent of Taylor or Westmoreland, had always marked him as an "outlier." Petraeus assiduously courted journalists. Devoting considerable energy to winning favor among politicians, he achieved rock-star status on

Capitol Hill. In recruiting staff, he surrounded himself with fellow Ph.D.'s, seemingly valuing academic credentials over experience gained while leading troops in the field. None of these qualify as standard "good guy" attributes.

As a consequence, Ricks depicts Petraeus as a one-off. When he departed from active duty to become CIA director, the Petraeus Moment ended. Were there doubts on that score, the sex scandal that booted "King David" out of Langley quashed them. The result was an Army left in the hands of senior officers no more interested in critically examining their service's (or their own) performance in Iraq and Afghanistan than DePuy had been interested in critically examining his service's (and his own) performance in Vietnam. To judge by the evidence that Ricks assembles, the present generation of senior officers may lack a capacity for introspection, but its members suffer no shortage of self-esteem. "I think we've got great general officers," remarks one Army four-star quoted by Ricks, insisting that anything that had gone amiss in Iraq was clearly the fault of civilian politicians.

For this very reason, the eminently sensible suggestions for improving the quality of senior military leadership that Ricks offers in concluding his account—in essence restoring the professional ethic that produced George C. Marshall and that he himself subsequently sought (however imperfectly) to uphold—have little chance of implementation. The successors to the generals once so keen to forget Vietnam are now hell-bent on forgetting Iraq and can't wait to do the same for Afghanistan. They are "good guys," able to do their push-ups and sit-ups. Just don't look to them for much by way of moral courage or creative intelligence. ■

Andrew J. Bacevich is a professor of history and international relations at Boston University.

Community or Leviathan?

by PATRICK J. DENEEN

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Our Divided Political Heart: The Battle for the American Idea in an Age of Discontent, E.J. Dionne, Bloomsbury USA, 336 pages

In his most recent diagnosis of the state of America's political soul, the journalist and political thinker E.J. Dionne begins with a simple thesis. In the opening pages of *Our Divided Political Heart*, he asserts that "American history is defined by an irrepressible and ongoing tension between two core values: our love of individualism and our reverence for community." The inevitable "creative tension" between these two commitments, he argues, is the source of ongoing American debate as well as American strength. We need to hold firmly to both values, as difficult as that can be in practice.

But while Dionne states that these two commitments do not simply "face off against each other"—that there is no party of "individualism" aligned against a party of "community," but rather commitments to each ideal are to be found "in the consciousness and consciences of nearly all Americans"—in fact, throughout his book Dionne ends up making an argument distinct from his opening thesis. He insists that there is, in fact, one party of individualism today. That party—alternatively "conservatives," "Republicans," and the "Tea Party"; they are all named as purveyors of this view—has developed the notion that American prosperity and power derive almost exclusively from the efforts of individuals, and that government is everywhere and always a baleful influence. According to Dionne, Democrats/liberals/progressives, by contrast, maintain the traditionally salutary view that America is a combination of both individualism and community. He purports to offer

his book as a corrective to the imbalance currently found in the political views of American conservatives, even as he also triumphantly lauds the current balance between individualism and community to be found in the Democratic Party and embodied in the presidency and person of Barack Obama.

Dionne certainly has a point concerning a main current of American conservatism today, and he rightly notes that there is a strong intellectual tradition within conservatism that supplies correctives to the libertarian, Randian leanings found among some on the contemporary right. Among those correctives he identifies the work of such thinkers as Robert Nisbet, Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus, and the early George Will. However, Dionne is so exercised about the rise of the Tea Party in Republican politics that he somehow misses that "individualism" is hardly a pathology to be found exclusively among denizens of the American right; arguably, it pervades the very essence of the contemporary American left. He makes a fundamental category mistake by supposing that the left's "balanced" position, and especially its support for "community," can be discerned in the left's support for the role of the national government.

A serious, rather than glancing, engagement with Nisbet would have been educational for Dionne, and would have helped him move beyond the partisan limits of his analysis. Dionne posits that "the American quest for community has taken national as well as local forms," but throughout the book he equates the left's identification with "community" to its willingness to support an activist federal government. With a seemingly uncontroversial reference to Robert Nisbet's 1953 book *The Quest for Community*, Dionne inadvertently reveals a superficial familiarity with the conservative tradition he purports to recommend—and he unintentionally reinforces the continu-

ing relevance of Nisbet's analysis.

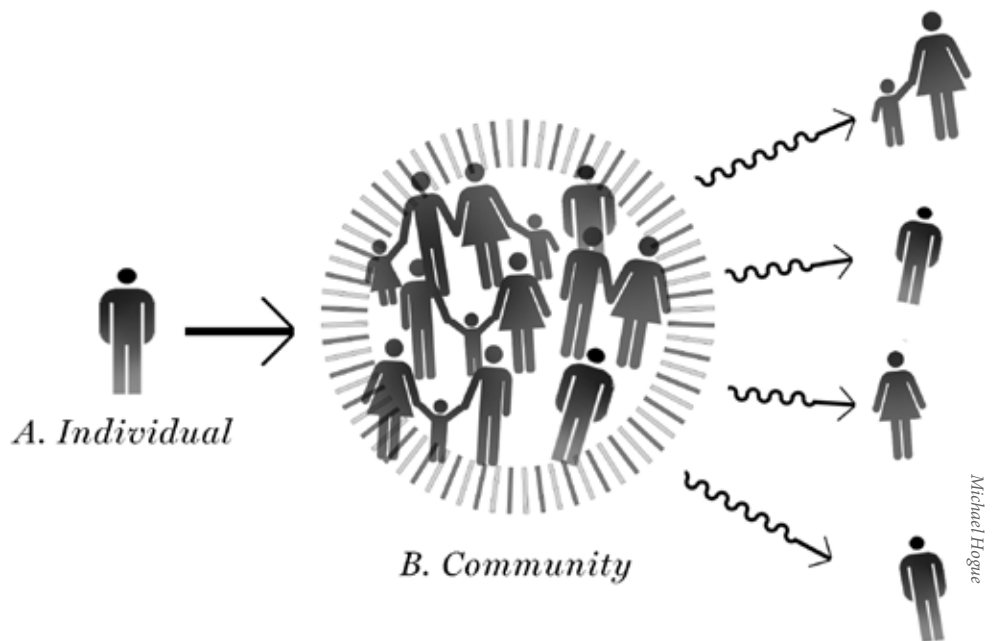
Nisbet spoke of the "quest for community" as an inherent longing of every human person. But modern society increasingly had been organized to thwart, undermine, or re-direct that longing away from local forms of membership. The modern project, as Nisbet described, could trace its origins back at least five centuries to such thinkers as Bodin, Hobbes, and Rousseau and consisted of the organized effort to align the supposed mutual interests of autonomous individuals (demanded by the rise of capitalism) and centralized government power, both working toward undermining a range of constitutive and "limiting" human associations such as church, guild, schools, and even families. As a result, the "quest for community" became pathologically redirected toward identification with the state. Government becomes, as Nisbet anticipated, the "only thing that we all belong to"—a line that was highlighted during the introductory video shown at last year's Democratic National Convention. But this "quest for community" in fact results in the effective strengthening of centralized government power and individualism alike, at the expense of more local forms of constitutive community.

Dionne reveals a lack of familiarity with the basic contours of Nisbet's argument, and in his insistence that the contemporary left embraces both community—in the form of an activist federal government—and individualism, what he misses is that actual forms of constitutive community are the losers in this arrangement. Our "political heart" is far from divided—it is rather in love with a unified and ongoing effort to use the power of the state to liberate the individual. The elites who lead the two parties are of one mind and one heart in this respect.

Dionne is so confused about this point that he misses it even when he endorses it. For instance, in commending the "balanced" view that he finds expressed in the speeches of Franklin Roosevelt, he italicizes the following line in which the ends of government activism are revealed: *not to hamper individualism, but to protect it*. Were Dionne attentive to the pincer movement described by Nisbet—in which the state supports the liberationist ambition of autonomous individualism, and autonomous individuals increasingly appeal to and rely upon the state

liant upon the government because there is no evidence of any support of family, community, church, or friends in her life. In her middle age, she (on her own accord, apparently) "decides" to have a child, and in one scene is shown sending young "Zachary" off to school; he is never to be seen again for the rest of her life. It is the very picture of the Leviathan—in this world, there are only individuals and the state.

There is similarly no mention of an incident early in Obama's first presidential campaign, when he argued (while campaigning during the Michi-



as guarantor of their liberation—he might have noticed that this same basic devotion to individualism lies at the heart of the contemporary left, and particularly the president he claims as the very embodiment of "balance."

There is no mention in Dionne's 300-page book, for instance, of the campaign commercial that launched President Obama's re-election campaign, "The Life of Julia." Julia is portrayed over the course of her life as the beneficiary of a bevy of government programs; notably, with the exception of one slide, she is constantly pictured alone. She appears to be especially re-

gan and Ohio primaries) that there might be a need to revisit terms of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that were undermining and even destroying the economic base of communities throughout the upper Midwest and elsewhere. As was reported in hushed tones afterwards, Obama quietly dispatched his economic advisor, Austan Goolsbee, to Canada to assure our northern neighbors that the president-to-be didn't really mean it. Obama's policies have consistently used the power of the federal government to "liberate" upwardly mobile individuals while leaving communities

to fend for themselves in a globalizing and rapacious economic order. When has the word “NAFTA,” or any debate about “free trade,” been heard during the Obama administration? Would you rather be a trader on Wall Street under someone named Clinton or Obama or someone named Bush?

Dionne is enraptured, however, by any rhetorical flourish in which Presidents Clinton or Obama speak admiringly of community: he cites speeches

Where do we see a resurgent concern for “family, faith and community” in the policies of President Obama?

by each as proof-positive of their care and concern for community, while he consistently dismisses conservative rhetoric—such as Ronald Reagan’s sentimental appeals to small-town America—as so much deception that shrouds policies that advantage Wall Street at the expense of Main Street.

Again, Dionne has a point: many Republican policies have proven harmful to communities, particularly those policies that have supported forms of crony-capitalism that have treated the small producers and blue-collar American workers as an afterthought. But have the Democrats lauded by Dionne done any better for communities in this regard? Have those “moderate traditionalists” who came to mistrust Democrats for their aversion to speaking positively about “family, faith and community” simply been in the throes of false consciousness since the 1980s? Did Obama win them back in 2012 by appealing to those rooted aspirations—or did he succeed in driving them away from supporting any candidate at all, as they finally realized that they were fundamentally unrepresented in the American political system today? Shouldn’t Dionne be concerned that

several million fewer such voters even bothered to turn out in 2012? Where do we see this resurgent concern for “family, faith and community” in the policies of President Obama?

Dionne is correct on two main points: a major element of the Republican Party today is dominated by individualistic tendencies, and government can indeed do good things to assist people, especially against the depredations of global capitalism. But this book is keenly disappointing as anything more than a campaign handbook. Dionne willfully refuses to extend his analysis to consider more comprehensively the pathologies of American political life, particularly the complicity of his partisan friends.

Perhaps most lamentably, Dionne not only overlooks the systematic ways in which the left today advances the power of government to support the liberation of autonomy-loving individuals, but he also misses the opportunity to encourage the growing number of articulate conservatives who have taken up the banner of the likes of Robert Nisbet—one of whom, *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat, recently provided the introduction for a new edition of Nisbet’s *Quest for Community*. Where, on the other hand, does one see evidence of intellectual creativity on the Left today that consistently shows concern for the condition of “faith, family and community?” You will search in vain for the health of our actual communities in the pages of this book—written by one of America’s most celebrated communitarian thinkers—unless you unreflectively accept that “government” and “community” are the same thing. But that view is finally nothing more than the “quest for community” gone awry, something Dionne, more than anyone, should realize. ■

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Don’t Despair of Democracy

by DANIEL J. MAHONEY

After Tocqueville: The Promise and Failure of Democracy, Chilton Williamson Jr., ISI Books, 264 pages

Alexis de Tocqueville is the great analyst and “prophet” of the “democratic revolution” that relentlessly continues to transform the modern world. He remains an indispensable reference point for everyone who wants to think about the human soul under conditions of modernity. In *After Tocqueville*, the conservative man of letters Chilton Williamson Jr. sets out to analyze Tocqueville’s insights and the prospects for democracy in a world marked by centralization, bureaucratization, moral relativism, and the full torrent of what Walter Lippmann called the “acids of modernity.”

Williamson admires Tocqueville even if he thinks that we live in a post-Tocquevillian age. He is a capable analyst of Tocqueville’s thought even if he does not always capture its exact nuances or remain faithful to its sober but demanding warning against both utopianism and despair. Williamson rightly describes Tocqueville’s “sympathy and controlled admiration for the young American democracy,” a sympathy and admiration that were “never blind to its flaws.” As Williamson notes, Tocqueville loved “liberty, legality, and respect for rights, but not democracy,” as the great Frenchman himself put it in a revealing private note in 1841. Democracy was a “political phenomenon” for Tocqueville and never a “faith” or an object of passionate and disfiguring love.

For his part, Williamson argues that modern democracy, transformed by “advanced liberalism,” has become a “false religion, a form of government based on faith,” or rather an

anti-faith. “Modern democracies are morally relativist and inherently atheistic societies devoid of absolute principles...‘One Nation Under God’ may be a pretty phrase, but it is a lie nonetheless.” But surely a self-respecting Tocquevillian ought to challenge the moral relativism of late modern democracy in the name of those goods and principles—including religious faith—that are necessary to sustain a liberal order. “One Nation Under God” is not merely a slogan, however antiquated, but a description of the great desideratum of a free society that aims to do justice to the moral contents of life. One must contest the anti-traditional subversion of democracy both for the good of democracy and for the health of the human soul. It is a mistake to succumb to a fatalism that declares democracy to be an enemy of civilization and therefore of a life worthy of man.

If the task of free men and women remains to educate, moderate, and where possible to elevate democracy, it cannot be said that we live in a post-Tocquevillian age. Williamson insists that “the various elements hitherto thought necessary to civilization” do not include democracy. But if democracy remains our “fated circle,” as Tocqueville so suggestively put it in the final paragraphs of *Democracy in America*, then surely we are obliged to sustain civilization amidst the democratizing—the equalizing—pressures of the age. This is a demanding task, perhaps even a Sisyphean one, but one that need not culminate in inaction or despair. Williamson needs more confidence in the promise of democracy, even if he is right to eschew democracy as an object of religious faith.

If Williamson respects Tocqueville, he is positively scornful of contemporary commentators such as Francis Fukuyama and Bernard-Henri Lévy who in different ways have succumbed to democratic triumphalism. He cannot accept Fukuyama’s claim that “liberal capitalist democracy is

the highest, most humanly fulfilling, and historically favored form of government, one likely to endure in fact and in ideal so far as the prophetic eye can see.” For Williamson, advanced liberalism, emphasizing autonomy and liberation from restraints, is transforming democracy—and human life—beyond recognition. (Witness the subversion of marriage in the name of a pure abstraction, “marriage equality.”) The modern democratic state wars with the intermediary institutions of society that Tocqueville famously praised as “barriers to tyranny.” A “New Class” of intellectuals, bureaucrats, experts, and technocrats displaces the patriotic elites of old. For a century or more, the left has challenged the great goods of our civilization that have a “connection to, affinity for, or compatibility with Christianity.” In a particularly memorable passage Williamson writes that “the Left today places Western culture, rationality, the rule of constitutional law, free markets, the white race, the human male, sexual morality, the family, patriarchy, intermediate social institutions, moral restraint, and religious authority at the top of its list of idols for destruction.”

Democracy is more revolutionary, more acidic, more destructive of the goods of life than even Tocqueville had anticipated. And contra Fukuyama, the free, rational, and neutral political and social order at which it aims is destined to be “fundamentally unfree, irrational, and biased.” The partisans of the “end of history” are blind to the erosion of civilization and falsely believe that the human condition, marked as it always is by tragedy and the persistence of evil, can somehow be “solved.” (Williamson makes particularly good use of Bertrand de Jouvenel’s notion of “the myth of the solution.”)

If Fukuyama provided the theo-

retical support for the religion of democracy in the post-Cold War era, in Bernard-Henri Lévy’s book *American Vertigo*—a facile effort at replicating *Democracy in America*—the French “new philosopher” unintentionally highlighted “the displacement, by secularism and moral relativism, of traditional morality rooted in Christian doctrine.” In his effort to update Tocqueville’s travelogue, he did not see or appreciate the “indispensable connection between religious belief and democratic government on which Tocqueville insists throughout *Democracy in America*.” Instead, he expressed his chagrin at the persistence of poverty and capital punishment and the considerable strength of evangelical Christianity in the United States. Lévy won’t be content until the conservative features of American de-

Tocqueville remains an indispensable reference point for everyone who wants to think about the human soul under conditions of modernity.

mocracy are replaced in the name of a humanitarian, secular, and egalitarian version of democracy. Tocqueville lamented the tendency of democracy to continually “democratize;” Lévy in contrast applauds, or at least takes for granted, its self-radicalizing and “emancipatory” tendencies.

Williamson rightly observes, “it was in his fears, perhaps more than his hopes, that the author of *Democracy in America* proved himself to have been a man of deep intuition and a true prophet of history.” But his articulation of these themes did not aim to enervate or to undermine commitment to democratic liberty. Instead, his work was in

the service of democratic self-correction. Unlike the aristocratic enemies of democracy, Tocqueville believed that the goods of human life could only be saved within the democratic dispensation. He rejected every kind of fatalism and upheld an “art of liberty” whose aim was precisely to moderate the tendency of democracy to free itself from its moral and cultural prerequisites.

Williamson is no doubt right that Tocqueville would be “shocked and scandalized by the United States today.” But since the alternatives available to the acting man still involve some variety of democratic liberty or democratic despotism, Tocqueville

Democracy is more revolutionary, more acidic, more destructive of the goods of life than even Tocqueville had anticipated.

would surely caution against despair. Williamson, in contrast, takes aim at American exceptionalism, which he sees at best as a “pleasant fiction” that encourages a dangerously evangelical attitude toward the spread of democracy. But it is arguably the case that Tocqueville would still be impressed by the attachment of so many Americans to religious faith and to a proud and principled affirmation of the nation. Americans have not succumbed to the “pure democracy” lamented by the French political philosopher Pierre Manent, a European-style “democracy” that downplays national sovereignty, ignores the will of the people, and wishes to be “untainted by national, ethnic, and cultural peculiarities and prejudices.”

Williamson laments the absence of patriotism in post-national Europe but can see in American patriotism only an

excuse for aggressive nationalism. Yet American resistance to the tyranny of international law—a resistance in crucial respects undermined by the present administration—is a victory for the nation and thus for the political form that is the natural home for democracy in the modern world. If the sovereign state and the democratic nation go hand in hand, America still offers an admirable alternative to the “non-national democracy” (the phrase is Manent’s) that is the dominant political form in Europe today.

As we have suggested, Williamson’s considerable learning and insight is undermined by a fatalism that borders on despair. He goes so far as to suggest that Russia, China, and the United States are in the process of “converging” into a new form of corporate nationalism. This version of “convergence” makes no more sense than the version put forward in the 1960s that foresaw the eventual convergence of Soviet Communism and American capitalism. Woefully underestimating the persistence of real forms of self-government in the United States, Williamson effectively declares dead a constitutional order that is still worthy of our loyalty and affection.

Of course, the rise of a bureaucratic New Class in the United States ought to be of grave concern to friends of liberty. But the profound differences between American liberty and a Leninist party-state in China and “managed democracy” in Russia are enough to make the prediction of a new convergence not only mistaken but bereft of even the slightest confidence in the capacity of American democracy for self-renewal. It is the quasi-fatalism of Williamson’s analysis—and his accompanying tendency to pronounce rather than to argue—that separates his approach from the sturdy sobriety

of Tocquevillian political science.

Many of Williamson’s pronouncements do not stand up to critical scrutiny. For example, he declares the Cold War to have been a form of “nationalist rivalry,” even though we know that Lenin and Stalin despised Russian national consciousness. And as the Soviet archives have confirmed, all Soviet leaders spoke their ideological, wooden language behind closed doors as well as in public. They thought and acted as the ideologists that they were. In contrast, post-Communist Russia pursues a national-minded foreign policy rather than the ideological one that was characteristic of the Soviet Union for 70 years. That is a source of potential conflict between Russia and the West but also a guarantee that there will be no return to the absolute animosity of old.

My reservations aside, Williamson has written a thoughtful and provocative book. His prose is often sparkling and his insights jarring. He allows us to think along with Tocqueville, Henry Maine, Walter Bagehot, Orestes Brownson, Bertrand de Jouvenel, Pierre Manent, Reinhold Niebuhr, and a host of other outstanding guides to our democratic discontents. He is right to warn us against “pushing forward, thoughtlessly and relentlessly” toward the “premature completion of history,” even if he underestimates the resources for civilizational renewal—resources that are discounted at our peril. For the foreseeable future, we are destined to live with the “acids of modernity,” and each generation is obliged to come to terms with the threats to democratic self-government and to the integrity of the human soul that accompany it. Williamson’s book is a welcome addition to the literature on this unnerving theme. ■

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Why Kennan Matters

by JORDAN MICHAEL SMITH

American Diplomacy: Sixtieth-Anniversary Expanded Edition, George F. Kennan, University of Chicago, 192 pages

In his classic 1951 book *American Diplomacy*, Cold War strategist George F. Kennan rethought not only his own views but also those of American policymakers from the 1898 war with Spain to the outset of the Cold War. The book was comprised of six lectures delivered in 1951 at the University of Chicago under the auspices of the Charles R. Walgreen Foundation. A newly expanded edition, published by the University of Chicago, adds an 11,000-word introduction by University of Chicago (there is a trend here) political scientist John Mearsheimer, as well as two of Kennan's *Foreign Affairs* essays (from 1947 and 1951) and his 1984 reflections on the Chicago lectures, along with a foreword he wrote for an edition of the book that year.

Kennan's Walgreen Lectures have been called "the most famous series of lectures ever delivered on American diplomacy" by Cold War historian Melvyn Leffler, who believed that nothing Kennan subsequently wrote matched their impact. Indeed, *Foreign Affairs* called them "for many years the most widely read account of American diplomacy in the first half of the twentieth century." Yet their influence has waned over the years, not because the Kennan's thinking has aged poorly but because the appetite among the public and policymakers for Kennanesque views has declined.

Kennan had been at the summit of policymaking before he delivered these lectures. He had served several diplomatic tours in the Soviet Union, including a stint as deputy chief of mission under Ambassador Averell Harriman from 1944 to 1946. While sick in

bed that year—the man was frequently ill, in part due to anxiety problems—he dictated to his secretary an analysis of Soviet behavior that the State Department had requested. Kennan's exposition came to 8,000 words, far more than State had had in mind. He admitted years later that it was an "outrageous encumberment of the telegraphic process," but he believed it was necessary to convey his views accurately.

The "Long Telegram" became famous. Suffice to say it offered a persuasive, eloquent, historically grounded explanation for the sources of Soviet conduct and American strategy to counter the threat. "My reputation was made," Kennan recalled in his *Memoirs*. "My voice now carried." Indeed, he became instrumental in forging America's postwar foreign policy, helping to devise the Marshall Plan along with aid to Greece and Turkey and providing the framework for the containment strategy that, in mutated form, served as the basis for U.S. policy throughout the Cold War.

His influence was at its zenith under Secretary of State George Marshall—and declined swiftly under Marshall's successor, Dean Acheson. Kennan took a leave of absence in 1950 and soon thereafter delivered the lectures. Under Acheson, he recalled, he had been "relegated to the sidelines" and "outside the chain of command, one step removed from the real decisions." Acheson had merely tolerated him: "he was, I suspect, sometimes amused, sometimes appalled, usually interested; but there were times when I felt like a court jester, expected to enliven discussion, privileged to say the shocking things, valued as an intellectual gadfly on hides of slower colleagues, but not to be taken fully seriously when it came to the final, responsible decisions of policy." Acheson, for his part, recalled that he once told Kennan he ought to quit the Foreign Service and go "preach

his Quaker gospel but not push within the Department."

So much for the context of the lectures. Kennan's purposes in delivering them, he wrote in the first ("The War With Spain"), was to explain why America in 1900 was "so secure ... [and] had relatively little to fear," yet by 1950 was "insecure" and faced conditions "dangerous and problematical in the extreme ... hemmed in as we are by a thousand troubles and dangers, surrounded by a world part of which seems to be actually committed to our destruction and another part to have

George Kennan's analysis of Soviet behavior served as the basis for U.S. policy throughout the Cold War.

lost confidence either in ourselves or in itself, or in both."

What is striking about these sentences is that they contradict Kennan's sentiments not only in some of his other writings but also in other passages of *American Diplomacy*. Even in the same lecture, he argued, "in 1900 we exaggerated the security of our position and had an overweening confidence in our strength and our ability to solve problems, whereas today we exaggerate our dangers and have a tendency to rate our abilities less than they actually are." Kennan oscillated between optimism and despair. His ambivalence was perhaps best revealed in a note he sent to Acheson before he left government, at a moment when the Korean War had begun to go south—or more accurately, north, above the 38th parallel dividing the two Koreas and that the U.S. military had now crossed, only to find the Chinese entering the war. Kennan wrote:

In international, as in private, life what counts most is not really

what happens to someone but how he bears what happens to him. For this reason almost everything depends from here on out on the manner in which we Americans bear what is unquestionably a major failure and disaster to our national fortunes. If we accept it with candor, with dignity, with a resolve to absorb its lessons and to make it good be redoubled and determined effort ... we need lose neither our self-confidence nor our allies nor our power for bargaining. But if we try to conceal from our own people or from our allies the full measure of our misfortune, or permit ourselves to seek relief in any actions of bluster or petulance or hysteria, we can easily find this crisis resolving into an irreparable deterioration of our world position—and of our confidence in ourselves.

Such self-doubt mixed with confidence in America's capabilities pervades *American Diplomacy*.

Another matter on which Kennan was of two minds was American democracy. Exasperation at its failings flows continually through his work, as

Kennan's criticisms of democracy intermittently progressed into hatred.

he ascribes the failures of U.S. foreign policy to lawmakers' deference to popular opinion. In *American Diplomacy*, he calls this "diplomacy by dilettantism." He would have preferred a corps of professional officers to have unrestrained power to make foreign policy. He famously compared democracy to "one of those prehistoric monsters with a body as long as this room and a brain the size of a pin." Such lines were not aberrations but part of his lifelong

thought. "There is, let me assure you, nothing in nature more egocentric than the embattled democracy," he wrote in his 1960 book *Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin*. "It soon becomes the victim of its own war propaganda." Even historian John Lukacs, in his admiring 2007 biography called simply *George Kennan*, conceded that Kennan's criticisms of democracy intermittently progressed into hatred, "something that even his friends and admirers ought not to ignore."

Yet Kennan also writes in *American Diplomacy*, "The system under which we are going to have to continue to conduct foreign policy is, I hope and pray, the system of democracy." And while he believed public opinion in the short term is "easily led astray into areas of emotionalism and subjectivity which make it a poor and inadequate guide for national action," he also wrote, "I do not consider public reaction to foreign-policy questions to be erratic and undependable over the long term."

The best one can say is that Kennan was not dogmatic about democracy. Indeed, he was dogmatic about very little. One is struck by how little theory or ideology occupied his mind. He was generally identified as a "realist" in the mold of Hans Morgenthau, and he maintained a fruitful correspondence with the godfather of American realism. The two shared the view that a state's primary task is to preserve its national interest—Kennan wrote in *American Diplomacy*, "our own national interest is all that we are really capable of knowing and understanding." Both also eschewed romanticism in policymaking. Perhaps the most famous lines in Kennan's lectures are that he "see[s] the most serious fault of our policy formulation to lie in something that I might call the legalistic-moralistic approach to international problems." He opposed attempts to apply domestic concepts of justice to the international arena. Not because he was amoral; just the oppo-

site: "it is a curious thing, but it is true, that the legalistic approach to world affairs, rooted as it unquestionably is in a desire to do away with war and violence, makes violence more enduring, more terrible, and more destructive to political stability than did the older motives of national interest."

But even as a realist, Kennan was *sui generis*. In his first Walgreen talk, Kennan faults one thinker for falling prey to the "overestimation of economics, of trade, as factors in human events and ... the corresponding underestimation of psychological and political reactions—of such things as fear, ambition, insecurity, jealousy, and perhaps even boredom—as prime movers of events." Most other realists "underestimate" those explanations too: they see international affairs as the raw product of competition for power in an anarchic world; domestic factors affect the international struggle only in exceptional circumstances. And while Kennan had a lifelong hatred of nuclear weapons, most realists today believe they prevented the Cold War from becoming a hot one.

Kennan may have the better approach—at the very least, it is better that policymakers have specialized knowledge than adhere to any theory, even the best of which will have imperfections and gaps. Whereas the only thing that men like John Foster Dulles knew about the Soviets was that they wore red and fought bears, Kennan could connect their behavior to Peter the Great's. He was, as a result, brilliantly able to discern what secretive governments like Stalin's were after. He understood that the Soviets' motives were a mixture of Marxist ideology and typical great-power ambitions. Mearsheimer believes Kennan was incorrect in seeing ideology, not the will to power, as the source of Soviet behavior, but the two could not be separated in Kennan's view. The Soviets needed Marxism to provide ideological rationalizations for their immoral, tyrannical actions. "That is why So-

viet purposes must always be solemnly clothed in trappings of Marxism, and why no one should underrate the importance of dogma in Soviet affairs,” he wrote in the Long Telegram.

He extracted larger lessons from his own experiences abroad. He warned in *American Diplomacy* against “the acceptance of any sort of a paternalistic responsibility to anyone, be it even in the form of military occupation, if we can possibly avoid it, or for any period longer than is absolutely necessary.” In his *Memoirs* he echoed his hero Gibbon’s remark that “there is nothing more contrary to nature than the attempt to hold in obedience distant provinces.” He learned this, he wrote, from his scrutiny of Nazi Germany’s problems as an occupying force.

Kennan did not fully acknowledge the power of nationalism, however. (Mearsheimer astutely points out that the word barely appears in *American Diplomacy*.) Among the great tragedies of World War I, he wrote, was that it dissolved the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and thereby allowed Germany to dominate Europe. But it was simply an illusion to believe that the Hapsburg Empire could survive; the wonder is that it existed as long as it did, as Gibbon said of the Roman Empire. Twelve main nationalities and some 15 language groups comprised the empire, a deeply unstable polity in a post-1848 world. Similarly, Kennan writes that both World Wars “were fought, really, with a view to changing Germany; to correcting her behavior, to making the Germans something different from what they were.” He wrote that “If you tried to compute the various degrees of guilt,” for World War I, “you got a rather fuzzy pattern: the Austrians and the Russians no doubt in first place, the Germans with less but certainly with a goodly share Above all, you could not say that anyone had deliberately started the war or schemed it.”

His was the popular view well into the 1960s, epitomized by the success of Bar-

bara Tuchman’s Pulitzer Prize-winning 1962 book, *The Guns of August*. We now know it to be false. In 1959, Fritz Fischer was the first historian to publish findings from the archives of Imperial Germany. He discovered that in fact Germany did want a war, and it simply exploited the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand to realize its ambitions to dominate Europe. As Philip Bobbitt wrote in *The Shield of Achilles*, after Fischer’s work, it is “impossible to maintain” that the war was a “ghastly mistake” and not of Germany’s design. Kennan was unable to see that Germany, once reunified by Bismarck, could not be contained without war.

American Diplomacy’s most enduring, brilliant insight was perhaps its definition of the U.S. interest in world affairs: that “no single Continental land power should come to dominate the entire Eurasian land mass.” Should one do so, it would enter “on an overseas expansion hostile to ourselves and supported by the immense resources of the interior of Europe and Asia.” Preventing that is all the U.S. needed. And so it remains. The only difference is that now China, not Russia, Germany, or Japan, poses the greatest challenge.

Everything Kennan ever wrote is worth reading. As Lee Congdon argued in his fine 2008 book, *George Kennan: A Writer’s Life*, part of what makes the Milwaukee-born diplomat so compelling is the sheer beauty of his prose—few other historians come close to matching its gorgeousness, which seems to come from his deep reading of great works of fiction. (He would have liked to have been a novelist.) But of course, what makes us go back to Kennan’s works decades after the Cold War are his enduring insights into American foreign policy. That few Americans read him today says more about the public than it does about Kennan. To profit from his genius, *American Diplomacy* is the best place to start. ■

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Bipartisan Predators

by JAMES BOVARD

Devouring Freedom: Can Big Government Ever Be Stopped?, W. James Antle III, Regnery, 256 pages

The friends of freedom are accustomed to being beaten like a rented mule in Washington. Is it time to give up hope for any rollback of Leviathan? Not according to James Antle, a contributing editor for *The American Conservative* and a very talented writer who has done fine work for the *American Spectator*, *Wall Street Journal*, and other publications.

Antle’s new book, *Devouring Freedom*, seeks to provide a roadmap for how politicians and activists can curb federal spending and power grabs. Antle is bluntly realistic:

Cutting government is extremely difficult and rarely accomplished. In a perversion of Say’s Law (‘supply creates its own demand’), the supply of government creates its own demand. The breakneck growth of a deficit-financed welfare state makes it inevitable that more voters will develop similar attachments to proliferating government programs, though the broad-based tax increases that they entail will dampen the enthusiasm of some.

He reveals some of the ways the game is rigged: “Even the conventional economic statistics are stacked against the opponents of big government: they measure a dollar spent by Washington without taking into account whence that dollar came.”

Unlike your typical political scientist or *Washington Post* columnist, Antle recognizes the charade of cosmetic reforms: “Government programs are like weeds. If they are merely trimmed, they will grow back. They



Michael Hogue

must be uprooted when possible.” Unfortunately, there is a distinct shortage of weed pullers inside the Beltway.

Unlike many right-leaning pundits, Antle does not fudge on the disastrous record of George W. Bush: “Enrollment in 25 major federal programs increased three times as fast as the population between 2000 and 2006.” Bush did much to propel the explosion of food-stamp enrollment even before the 2007 recession.

The No Child Left Behind Act deserves the brickbats it receives in *Devouring Freedom*.

That law was falsely sold as giving freedom to local school officials. In reality, it empowered the feds to judge and punish local schools for not fulfilling arbitrary guidelines. Many states “dumbed down” academic standards, using bureaucratic racketeering to avoid harsh federal sanctions. Though the No Child Left Behind Act promised to permit children to escape “persistently dangerous” schools, most states defined that term so as to claim that all their schools were safe.

Regnery may have targeted *Devouring Freedom* at readers who have not closely followed political battles in recent decades. The book declares, “The nexus of big-government and big business remains a well-kept secret.” This is a secret only to people who get all their information from their “Obama phone.” David Stockman, former director of Reagan’s Office of Management and Budget, flogged business subsidies 30 years ago, and even the mainstream liberal media sometimes jibes corporate handouts.

The book is kind to a fault to Newt Gingrich’s glory years. It declares that the 1996 “Freedom to Farm act set agricultural subsidies on a glide path to elimination.” In reality, that farm bill tripled cash handouts to farmers and sufficed with an unenforceable pledge to phase down subsidies in the next century. The budget deficits of the mid-1990s vanished primarily because federal revenue rose almost

three times as fast as the inflation rate between 1994 and 1998. In a series of budget deals with Bill Clinton, Gingrich did more than any other Republican to unleash the federal spending he later deplored while seeking the Republican presidential nomination. (The fact that so many Republicans still consider Gingrich a “deep thinker” does not inspire hope for the movement.)

Antle justly lauds the Republican-controlled Congress of 1947–48, which struck down some of the New Deal’s worst excesses. “Led by Sen. Robert Taft ... the Eightieth Congress rolled back the militarization of the U.S. economy and prevented the creation of a full-blown European-style welfare state.” Federal spending fell from a wartime high of 43.6 percent of GDP to 11.3 percent in 1948. “Wartime price controls on food and other consumer products were repealed. Taxes were cut. The peacetime draft was, at least temporarily, suspended.” And changes to federal labor law curtailed the power of the nation’s largest unions. President Truman pilloried Republicans as a “do-nothing Congress.” But after a long period of mushrooming government, repealing bad laws and slashing spending is the height of public service.

Devouring Freedom reminds one of a passionate football coach chalking out savvy defensive plays in front of a roomful of listless players who have no desire to tackle their opponents. Many Americans, remembering the rhetoric of Barry Goldwater and Ronald Reagan, have counted on conservative organizations to resolutely block the expansion of government power. But the sellouts keep on coming. The *New York Times* reported on April 9 that the American Conservative Union has solicited contributions from business lobbyists to help thwart the push for budget cuts. A draft proposal circulating in Washington even offered to use the Conservative Political Ac-

tion Conference to blunt attacks on federal infrastructure and military spending. Campaign for Liberty president John Tate observed that the proposed lobbying effort “smacks to a lot of people as taking big money to do the bidding of big business.”

When Georgia governor Lester Maddox was criticized in the late 1960s for the abysmal conditions in his state’s prisons, he blamed the problem on the poor caliber of the convicts. Similarly, government has been growing by leaps in bounds thanks in large part to the mental turpitude and character defects of the typical member of Congress. Antle observes late in the book: “Opponents of big government ... overestimated the degree to which the average American understands the details of the federal budget and what’s at stake.” But most members of Congress also have little or no understanding of the vast majority of federal programs. For every Tom Coburn—the Oklahoma Republican senator who plunges avidly into the details and issues reports on backburner boondoggles—there are a score of congressmen who vote like a know-nothing herd following leadership’s command.

“Freedom” is a word that Republicans enjoy evoking when Democrats are in charge of the White House and executive branch. But one of the best gauges of character is the number of Republican congressmen who openly resisted the abuses and power grabs of George W. Bush. To say that the list is short is the understatement of the year.

It is pathetic that the biggest civil-liberties issue thus far this year is whether the president should be permitted to assassinate Americans residing within the nation’s boundaries. Even more appalling is that few congressional Republicans stepped up

to support Rand Paul’s Senate filibuster on this issue. And despite a token gesture to Paul from Attorney General Eric Holder, Americans still know almost nothing about the extent of, and legal rationale for, Obama’s prerogative to order killings based solely on his own decrees.

Few Republican congressmen today have the gumption to oppose almost boundless executive power, even when the executive branch is controlled by their arch-enemy. Can you imagine Everett Dirksen taking the floor of the Senate to boisterously champion President Lyndon Johnson’s prerogative to read the private mail of Dirksen and every other Republican member of Congress? With their own

“Freedom” is a word that Republicans enjoy evoking when Democrats are in charge of the White House.

party in the White House, however, GOP members of Congress gave Bush a standing ovation when he bragged about his illegal “Terrorist Surveillance Program” warrantless wiretapping in his 2006 State of the Union address. Perhaps many of today’s Republican members of Congress are so clueless that they do not recognize the peril of permitting Obama to perpetuate the secret surveillance that Bush commenced.

Devouring Freedom warns, “Republicans who are committed to the fight against big government may have to fight their leaders first.” Unfortunately, it is difficult to see any sign of a learning curve from GOP leadership. Antle notes, “Shortly after the November 2012 elections, Congressional

Republicans purged four strong fiscal conservatives—Justin Amash of Michigan, Tim Huelskamp of Kansas, David Schweikert of Arizona, and Walter Jones of North Carolina—from their preferred committee assignments.” Kicking Amash and Huelskamp off the Budget Committee signaled that the Republican leadership would not tolerate any principles when it came to negotiating tax-and-spending deals with Obama. Expelling Walter Jones from the House Financial Services Committee was especially tawdry since Jones was out of the few courageous and sagacious Republicans opposed to the Iraq War (an unforgivable sin).

Antle does not lull readers with assurances of no-sweat victories:

It would be foolish to claim that stopping big government is easy. Many people clearly benefit from government. Others perceive benefits where they may not exist. Most of all, asking politicians to think of something more important than fundraising or reelection cuts against human nature. But big government has been challenged before, with some success. With some courage—and more than a little luck—it can happen again. Learning from the recent past is a great place to start.

But how many Republican congressmen are more interested in freedom than in power? Far fewer than most readers would wish. And what are the chances that an effective core of pro-freedom congressmen will arise who are as eloquent as Reagan, as tough as Phil Gramm, and as well-informed as David Stockman?

Antle points Republicans and conservatives in the right direction, but it is unclear how many will heed his message. ■

James Bovard is the author of Lost Rights, Attention Deficit Democracy, *and a new e-book memoir, Public Policy Hooligan.*

Constitutional Calvinist

by KEVIN R.C. GUTZMAN

Roger Sherman and the Creation of the American Republic, Mark David Hall, Oxford, 224 pages

This is the best life of Connecticut’s foremost Founding Father ever written. More than that, it demonstrates once and for all that Calvinism played a very significant role in shaping the American Revolution and U.S. Constitution. Henceforth, historians will have to take account of Mark David Hall’s book in all studies of “the creation of the American republic.”

Hall sets out to correct a serious flaw in the historiography. While prominent accounts of the American Revolution’s intellectual underpinnings devote considerable attention to the influence of Lockean, classical republican, Scottish Enlightenment traditions, the influence of Reformed Protestantism—that is, Calvinism—tends to be overlooked. Although the focus is on Sherman’s political thinking, Hall tells us, his book shows that the Reformed tradition was central to the thought of Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Oliver Ellsworth, Jonathan Trumbull, William Paterson, John Witherspoon, and several other prominent Calvinist politicians as well.

As Hall puts it, “I am not arguing that Calvinism was the only influence on Sherman and his colleagues, simply that it was a very important influence that needs to be taken more seriously if we are to appreciate the political theory and actions of many of America’s founders.” Hall here continues the project on which he, Daniel L. Dreisbach, and Jeffry H. Morrison have long been jointly and severally embarked: that of fleshing out the story of religion’s influence on the politics of the Revolution and Early Republic.

Hall decries the tendency to write

as if George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Ben Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and John Adams (a group disproportionately composed of deists and marginally committed Christians) were the entirety of the Revolutionary generation, and then to deduce the meaning of America’s original commitment to religious freedom from the ideas of those men. One illustration of this tendency is that, by Hall’s calculation, Supreme Court justices writing opinions about the First Amendment’s religion clauses have referred to Thomas Jefferson 112 times and to Sherman only three, even though Sherman helped write the First Amendment and Jefferson was away on diplomatic business in France at the time.

It is a bit naïve for Hall to think that correcting the record will influence justices’ opinions. After all, Associate Justice William Rehnquist showed how little relationship there is between Jefferson’s private views on church and state and the meaning of the First Amendment in his *Wallace v. Jaffree* (1985) dissent, yet the majority in that case and other justices since have gone right on pointing to Jefferson’s metaphor of “a wall of separation between church and state” as the essence of the original understanding. For those of us who want actually to understand our heritage, however, knowledge of Reformed politicians’ role in the Revolution and early Republic is essential.

Roger Sherman played a unique role in making America. Only he signed the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution, as well as helping to draft the Bill of Rights. Not only did he sign the Declaration, but he was also on the five-man committee charged with writing it. The typical account of the Declaration has Thomas Jefferson producing a Lockean document notably devoid of traditional Christian language. Hall demonstrates that while the Declaration’s reference to “nature’s God,” its claim that govern-

ment's function is to protect citizens' rights, and its assertion of a right to overthrow usurpatious rulers are consistent with Lockean thinking, they also are perfectly in keeping with John Calvin's teaching on those subjects, which antedated Locke's *Second Treatise*—and likely influenced Locke. That Sherman and his fellow Calvinists in the Second Continental Congress should have signed the Declaration is not the mystery that Louis Hartz and other proponents of the idea that American has always been Lockean have wanted to make it.

Of particular note in Sherman's career is his role in the Philadelphia Convention of 1787. Hall demonstrates that the Connecticut Compromise between advocates of apportioning representation in both houses of Congress by population and proponents of equal representation in both houses was not dreamt up in Philadelphia by Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth. Sherman had already called for reform to the Articles of Confederation along the same lines several years before. (Hall also makes the interesting point that once the Constitution had been altered to provide the Nutmeg State five seats in the first 65-member House, Sherman's state had the same weight there as it would have had if representation had been apportioned equally.)

Another notable Philadelphia Convention decision in which Sherman played a prominent part was the omission of a bill of rights. Sherman insisted that since the new government would have only the powers the Constitution gave it, there was no reason to add provisions saying that specific powers not granted to the new government were not to be exercised by it. Sherman won the day easily.

In general, however, Sherman did not get what he wanted from the Convention. His idea was that the central government should be limited to a very few purposes. As Farrand's *Records* recounts one of Sherman's speeches, "The objects of the Union, he thought

were few. 1. defence agst. foreign danger. 2. agst. internal disputes & a resort to force. 3. Treaties with foreign nations 4. regulating foreign commerce, & drawing revenue from it ... All other matters civil & criminal would be much better in the hands of the States."

Positions that Sherman unsuccessfully took included opposition to direct election of representatives, advocacy of House apportionment by free inhabitants, advocacy of an executive council to share executive power with the president, and opposition to giving the president veto power. Still, he did win an enumeration of Congress's powers in lieu of Madison's proposal for a general grant of legislative authority and the reduction of the threshold for congressional override of a presidential veto from a three-fourths to a two-thirds vote. His fingerprints are on several other provisions as well.

One reason that the more famous Revolutionaries draw so much attention is that, with the exception of George Washington, they were all so eloquent. Sherman was not. Yet his wisdom does occasionally come through. Thus, for example, in one of his newspaper essays advocating ratification of the Constitution, Sherman counseled, "Philosophy may mislead you. Ask experience." Here one hears echoes of a more famous statement by Patrick Henry, that prominent Virginia Episcopalian orator. As was typical of Americans, Sherman disliked speculation.

In the ratification process, Sherman answered Antifederalist critics bemoaning the absence of a bill of rights by insisting that a paper guarantee was of no real use. What would protect Connecticut citizens' rights was "the nature of [their] government." Not a rhetorical statement, but republicanism and popular fealty to inherited principles were the best—the only—trustworthy safeguard.

Sherman's "support for limited government, states' rights, and legislative superiority helped create a constitu-

tion that was ratified by the states and that has served America well for more than two hundred years," Hall says. Yes, it does seem that Sherman stood at the center of the effort to persuade Connecticut to ratify the document, and his views on government were popular in his home state. Yet if the Constitution remains in effect over two centuries later, it no longer is applied in a similar way to one that Sherman expected: none of those three general principles remains part of American constitutionalism.

Turning to Sherman's career in the new federal government, perhaps the most startling datum that Hall conveys is that, "At sixty-nine years of age, [Sherman] was the oldest member of the Congress." As I write, 26 U.S. senators and 50 U.S. representatives are 69 or older. What in the late 18th century was a young man's service has long since become an old person's career.

Congressman Sherman argued against allowing presidents to remove appointed officials unilaterally. The president and Senate each had a check on the other when it came to appointing, he said, and he moved that language empowering the president to remove the secretary of state without involving the Senate be deleted from a pending bill. He lost, 34–20. As in Philadelphia, where he had favored denying the president the veto power, others insisted on a more potent executive than Sherman desired. He remained a steadfast opponent of attempts to extend the president's powers, but he often failed to defeat them.

We should not assume that because Sherman resisted construction of a powerful executive he opposed all of the Washington administration's signature initiatives. In fact, he had called for assumption of state debts in 1780 under the Articles of Confederation, and he liked the idea in 1790 as well. To him, that the common effort should be funded out of the common fisc seemed "justice." He also favored Hamilton's Bank Bill the next year.

When James Madison brought the House to consider a suite of proposed constitutional amendments, Sherman dusted off his argument from Philadelphia: that since Congress had only the enumerated powers, and it had not been given enumerated powers to encroach upon individual rights, no amendments denying it such powers were necessary. He also trotted out the point he had made in the Connecticut ratification dispute about the uselessness of “mere paper protections.” Republicanism must be the chief defense of American liberty. In a day in which Congress routinely ignores the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Ninth, and Tenth Amendments, and in which the federal courts almost always uphold federal legislation, can we say that Sherman was wrong?

When a committee of the House reported amendments for the full House’s consideration, Sherman rose to object. Madison’s project—sprinkling amendments throughout the Constitution, each in the relevant section—overlooked the distinction between the original Constitution and amendments. The original Constitution, he said, was of a different nature than any amendments would be, as it had been adopted by the people directly through their ratification conventions, while amendments would be the work of state legislatures. Therefore, the amendments ought to be affixed to the end of the document. Madison resisted, but Sherman won out. Had he not, our tradition of referring to, for example, “the Seventh Amendment” would make no sense.

Customarily, reviewers of good books note that they cannot capture a work’s entire content in a short review. That customary act is especially appropriate here because Sherman remained on center stage for so long and did so much with his opportunities, and because Hall condenses the story into so few pages.

As Hall notes, this book is not a full biography, but a focused account of

Roger Sherman’s statesmanship. Even at that, I completed the task of reading it with regret. Because it was published by an academic publisher, it is pricey in hardback. If it appears in a more reasonably priced paperback edition, I will make a habit of assigning it to undergraduates for years to come. Even if it does not, I recommend it highly. ■

Kevin R.C. Gutzman is the author of James Madison and the Making of America.

The Rise of Nullification

by KIRKPATRICK SALE

Most Likely to Secede: What the Vermont Independence Movement Can Teach Us About Reclaiming Community and Creating a Human-Scale Vision for the 21st Century, Ron Miller and Rob Williams, eds., Chelsea Green. 272 pages

I presume to review this book, even though I am a contributor to it, because it is a fine representation of an increasing tendency across this land of resistance to a federal government grown inept, corrupt, overreaching, overlarge, and overintrusive. That tendency may be labeled, for convenience: nullification.

It doesn’t matter that the word does not appear in this volume, for its spirit does. The volume is called *Most Likely to Secede*, and it grows out of a secession movement in Vermont that has been active, off and on, for a decade now. But I don’t think secession really is in the immediate future. Instead the subtitle comes closest to what this book is all about—state independence. It is a collection of essays from a magazine called *Vermont Commons*, which started publishing in 2005, and they deal with every aspect of what it takes for a state to assume unto itself

all the processes that have been ceded to (or seized by) the federal government over the years: money, business regulation, energy, health, education, democracy, food safety, information, the commons, and social policies such as abortion and marriage.

Obviously, every attempt to increase or establish independence on the state level will eventually run up against laws and regulations on the federal level. Take food, for example. One essay here points out that Vermont will not be able to have food produced “locally and regionally ... until we openly name and then dismantle the tyranny of our corporate-industrial food system—which is supported by our government.” It goes on to look at federal regulations that have grown and grown in the 20th century, which “did achieve a certain level of food safety” but at the cost of “creating a system where small abattoirs and locally available meat are scarce because of the capital investment required to comply with all of the safety standards.” So, too, with milk, which the federal government has long required to be pasteurized and produced and bottled in expensive settings with expensive processes that make it very hard for a small farmer to comply.

So if the food movement in Vermont—which has done a lot in recent years to promote local farming and marketing—is ever to set up a truly independent and truly local agricultural system it will have to find a way to push back federal regulations and practices: that is, nullification.

Or take education. Another essay here lays out all the ways in which Vermont could have schools that develop independent thinking, regardless of grades and testing, and gives examples of this being done in a few places in the state. But it is hard to expand these models when the state government is obligated, by state and national laws, to have standardized education. “One vital goal of Vermont independence,” writes Ron Miller, a founder of the “holistic ed-

ucation” movement, “is an educational culture that respects and encourages learning on a human scale, that supports caring and loving communities of learning.” But it runs up against “authoritarian educational policy” and federal “No Child Left Behind” and “Race to the Top” requirements. “National educational policy is one more reason why we need to challenge the burgeoning power of the American empire,” he writes. “We ought to decline the Federal government’s inducements to participate in any ‘race to the top.’”

But declining that means more than a polite “no thank you.” It needs a deliberate campaign to nullify federal laws. That takes courage, but that’s what a surprising number of state legislatures are now displaying.

Nullification acts have been introduced in state legislatures all across the country, particularly in the last few months: no fewer than 10 states took up proposals in the last week of February. According to one estimate at the Tenth Amendment Center, which tracks such things, there are more than 70 proposed bills to nullify federal laws and practices now in state legislatures, sometimes consciously labeled nullification, sometimes not.

For example, 12 states have introduced proposals for state marijuana laws in defiance of federal regulations under the Controlled Substances Act of 1970, joining the 15 states that have already passed various decriminalization provisions, including most recently Washington and Colorado. (Interestingly, they are not confined to blue or red states but stretch across the land: Alaska, Washington, California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Montana, Michigan, Arkansas, Vermont, Rhode Island, and Maine.)

State laws against National Defense Authorization Act provisions that allow the president to detain indefinitely anyone, citizen or not, whom he suspects of terrorist ties, have been introduced in almost half the states, again from coast to coast, and passed

in Arizona, Utah, Maine, and recently Virginia—the state that first used nullification, in 1798, against the Alien and Sedition Acts.

Additional state nullification acts have been introduced this year over threatened gun control measures (called Second Amendment Preservation bills) in 25 states, over Obamacare in 6 states (and one has passed in North Dakota, while an additional 26 states have refused to set up state “exchanges” under it), and over drone-invaded privacy in 14 states (one has passed in Virginia). That’s in addition to the 15 states that have refused to comply with the Real ID Act of 2005 and the 10 others where resistance has passed both houses of the legislature, a rejection so complete that the law, which was supposed to go into effect in 2008, now remains dormant without any sign of the feds pressing to effect it. And, just to make this complete, numerous states have proposed laws for one or more of these causes: gold and silver as legal tender, Tenth Amendment recognition, sheriff primacy (over federal lawmen), National Guard protection, and freedom from federal regulation of hemp, food, and the environment.

All in all, convincing evidence—generally ignored by the media, mainstream and rivulet—that there is widespread resistance to the federal government, sufficient to get laws introduced and passed by states finally exercising Tenth Amendment rights that have long been dormant.

One essayist in this volume, writer Roland Jacobson, effectively sums up the case for Vermont independence and the reason it has to come through directly confronting the national government.

If we are to cultivate our own traditions—to let thrive those

things that make Vermont unique—we need to detach from the national system. So long as decisions about our schools, forests, and water are being made by senators from South Carolina, presidents from Texas, and judges from Chicago, Vermont’s best interests are not going to be kept in mind... .

There’s no question that the things that make Vermont Vermont are under increasing pressure from a variety of external sources. The question is what to do about it. Does Vermont make

There are more than 70 proposed bills to nullify federal laws and practices now in state legislatures.

more sense, does it become more itself somehow by going its own way? A simple test helps answer this. If Vermont had been an independent republic all along, would you now vote for it to join the United States? Of course not. It would be unthinkable.

So there you have it. Unassailable logic. A state that wants to do things differently from the dictates of the Federal government has to start by nullifying the laws it does not want to live under—and eventually it will have to “become more itself” by “going its own way.” That’s called secession—and who knows? On the basis of the book, Vermont really might be most likely to secede. ■

Kirkpatrick Sale is director of the Middlebury Institute and the author of a dozen books, most recently Emancipation Hell: The Tragedy Wrought by Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation 150 Years Ago.



Taki

Thatcher Was No Neocon

1979 was a particularly good year for me. My column in the London *Spectator* had taken off, then Clay Felker—the legendary American editor who had discovered Tom Wolfe—flew over to London and asked if I would be interested to write for *Esquire* in America. But the best news came in May of that year, while swimming off a beach near Corfu. The captain of my father's boat informed me that a woman—he could not pronounce her name—had been elected British prime minister.

I did not meet her until she had become Lady Thatcher, having been stabbed in the back by nonentities like Michael Heseltine and Geoffrey Howe. But she had written a short note of encouragement earlier when I had a spot of bother with some illegal powder in my pocket, and she came to stay with me in Switzerland in the summer of 2000. Lady T, as her intimates called her, made breakfast for her husband every day before going to work at 7 a.m. She knew how important it was to save money, and when I offered to send a private plane for her visit to Gstaad, she personally rang and said, "As a friend is lending me his airplane to go to Austria, why don't I combine the trip, stop over to see you and then fly eastwards, thus saving you a penny or two?" This was vintage Thatcher, a responsible housewife who respected other people's money as much as her own.

She also showed her mettle when the Argentine junta grabbed the Falklands, with just one sentence: "Armed

aggression should not be allowed to pay and the Falklanders should be allowed to live under the government of their choice." She broke the unions that were holding the nation hostage, refused to cancel the conference she was attending after the Brighton bombing—where her closest friend was murdered—and did not shed a tear in public, "but a hell of a lot in private," as her hubby told me.

All this goes to show one thing: steadfastness and courage under pressure breeds respect from enemies. Ronald Reagan I never met, but he, too, showed the same qualities whilst in power. Van Galbraith, our ambassador to Paris under Reagan, once told me that his favorite moment during his ambassadorship was looking out from the French windows onto his garden and seeing Margaret Thatcher almost lecturing Ronald Reagan and waving her finger at him. "That's when I did something no gentleman is known to do, but I cocked my ear and listened." Margaret was telling Ronnie that the Soviets were bust, wanted to deal, and that we should help them along, or words to that effect. The president listened like a respectful schoolboy, said Van. "I still don't know whether he was humoring her along or taking her advice."

So, those were the good old days, *n'est-ce pas?* Nowadays not so good, don't you agree? What happened?

That's an easy one. Spoiled rich boys like the Bushes and Blair, and lying Southern white trash like Clinton, took over, people whose characters were formed not under an ethos of hard

work and principle, but one of going along in order to get along. Maggie Thatcher would never have allowed the Islamic invasion of Europe that has taken place since her fall 23 years ago. Blair did and continues to brag about it. Maggie Thatcher knew that this invasion is more underhand and more treacherous than the centuries-past expansionism of Islam. Maggie would never have gone along with George W's disastrous Iraq invasion and would have told him outright that the neocons were a fifth column, not the cold warriors they posed as before the Soviet collapse.

Ronald Reagan would never have held hands with the head of a kleptocracy—the Saudi ruling family of close to 30,000—that actually subsidizes terror by financing the thousands of terror schools throughout the Arab world in return for being allowed to keep their palaces and whores at home, their yachts, planes and villas abroad. George W. did. Thatcher and Reagan would have seen the Balkan intervention as a strategic and political disaster, establishing a Muslim zone of influence in the middle of Europe and granting rights to a gangster nation like Albania to export its criminals while giving cover to Islamists zealots.

Finally, both RR and MT would have read the riot act to Tel Aviv long ago because of its brutal policies of ethnic cleansing in the Holy Land. It would have been unpopular within the Beltway and in smart London circles, but that's what RR and MT were not about. ■

Did you know that having the *awareness* of *good and evil* is a distinguishing characteristic of mankind? Yes, it is a form of awareness that separates humanity from other living creatures: animals, birds, and bugs.

The writer learned about this kind of *awareness* from Richard W. Wetherill who had identified a created natural law he called the *law of absolute right*. *It specifies people's behavior to be rational and honest in order to be safe and to succeed.*

Wetherill predicted that living with the law of absolute right "written in our hearts and minds," as is nature's gravitational force, ends choices based on judgements of good and evil. Infants born with no awareness of the choice they face often emit complaining cries as a first deviation from the law of right action.

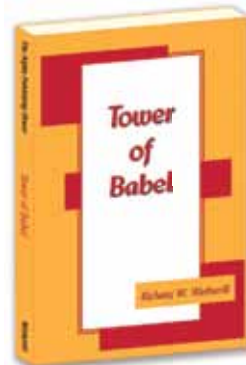
In his lecture, Wetherill referred to a manufactured temperature gauge in which a certain kind of mechanical awareness turned the gadget on and off. The gauge was programmed by its inventor to respond to the predetermined temperature settings, whereas people's awareness enables their decisions to be based on considerations *they think* will be good or evil, right or wrong.

Daily newscasts report the devastating results of "bad" people who harm their victims. So-called "good" people are admired, but such goodness is not based on nature's law of right action. It is based on people's choice to be good and not evil.

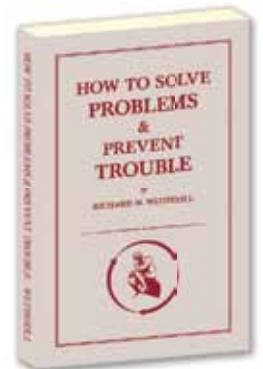
Do people complain or refuse to keep their balance? No, they surrender to a natural law. It is our surrender to the *law of absolute right* that is needed to nullify the creator's warning that reasoning from good and evil results in death.

Reasoning from the creator's law of right action prolongs life.

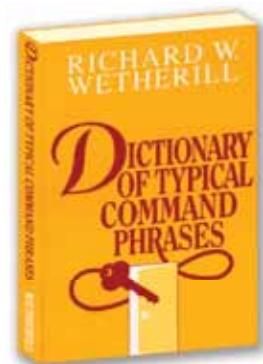
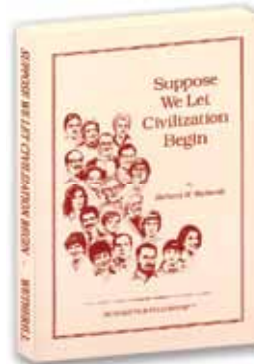
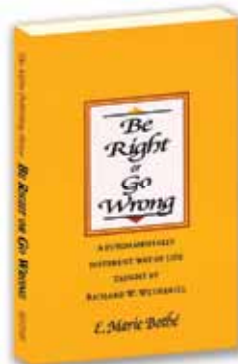
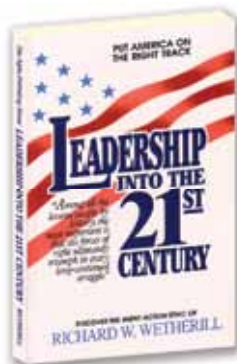
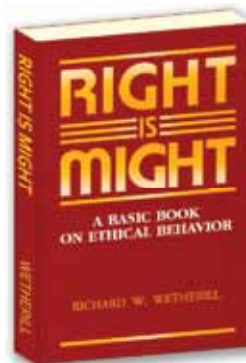
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