

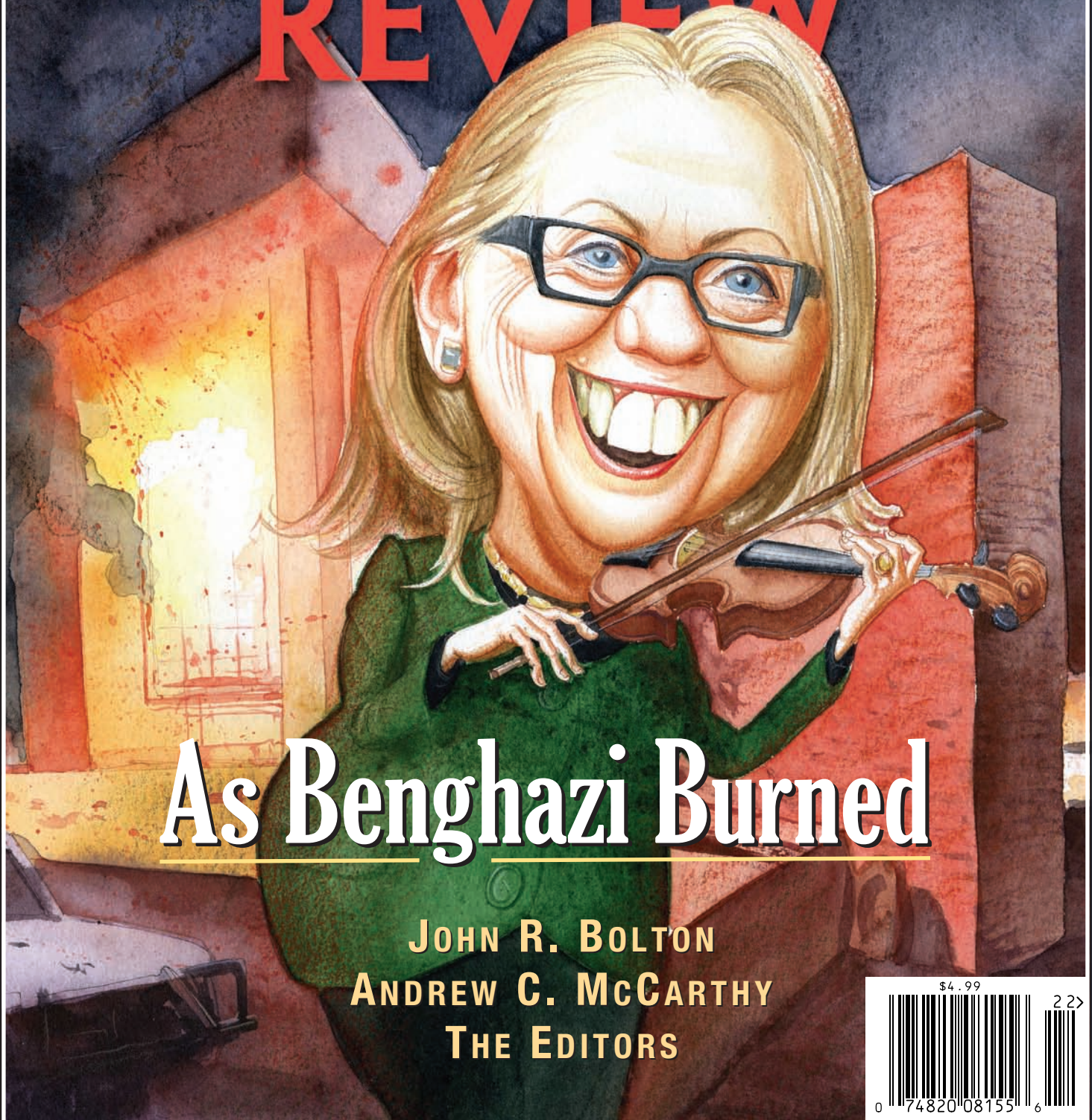
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MICHAEL R. STRAIN: A New Jobs Agenda

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The Campaign Must Go On!

What many of us openly hypothesized immediately following the September 11 Benghazi terrorist attack is finally, after eight months of tooth-pulling, established fact: The Obama administration's oft-repeated story that Islamophobia provoked a spontaneous "protest" that resulted in the murder of four Americans was a calculated fraud. *Andrew C. McCarthy*



COVER: ROMAN GENN

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The Borg Below



I was intrigued by Kevin D. Williamson's "Borg Queen" (May 6). It reminded me of the contrast between the junior devil's "Enemy" and his "Father Below" in Chapter Eight of C. S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters*. God, the "Enemy," wants to make sons out of his believing followers. The "Father Below" (guess who) wants to "absorb" in body, mind, and will those who end up in his clutches. The progressive "queen" in charge of government, as Williamson describes it, appears to have a similar aim.

Gilbert B. Weaver
Siloam Springs, Ark.

Spying for Fun and Pleasure

It might seem late in the game to call for fairness toward Richard Nixon, but to write of a "Nixonian taste for secret tapes" in connection with *Mother Jones* and Senator McConnell (The Week, May 6) ignores the fact that no one has ever presented a shred of evidence that Nixon ever intended to do anything with his tapes but use them to write his memoirs. That was quite a bit different from LBJ, who reportedly found the FBI surveillance tapes of Martin Luther King Jr. highly entertaining. Who had the taste for secret tapes?

Albert Alioto
San Francisco, Calif.

The Texas Work Week

I always place great stock in your reviews of recent publications, and in particular I enjoyed your review of Erica Grieder's *Big, Hot, Cheap, and Right* (May 6). One factor wasn't emphasized to a sufficient extent, however: the Texas work ethic. It can be summarized best by an old Texas adage, "Work until it's too dark to see."

According to a San Antonio preacher I once heard, in the Bible you work sunup to sundown six days a week. If you work a 40-hour week you are semi-retired. Do you suppose that could be one reason an assemblage of goat-ropers was able to create an economic powerhouse?

Keep up the good work.



David J. Leidler
Arlington, Texas

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The Week

■ Note to IRS auditors: Please skip page 14. And page 8. Actually, maybe just skip the whole issue . . .

■ A Philadelphia jury convicted Kermit Gosnell of the first-degree murder of three infants, and the third-degree murder of a patient, at his abortion clinic. The grand jury that indicted him noted that we will never know how many hundreds of other infants were killed during his decades of crime. It was able to conclude that pro-choice state governments of both parties had enabled that practice by deliberately choosing not to monitor abortion clinics. The abortion lobby insists that Gosnell is an outlier. The Republicans on two congressional committees are not so sure: They have sent letters to state officials to determine whether states are fulfilling their Fourteenth Amendment obligations to offer legal protection to all infants. As Jillian Kay Melchior reports in this issue, three clinics in Florida alone used practices similar to those at Gosnell's clinic. Even more alarmingly, she found that law enforcement refused to pursue a case in which an infant was delivered and then put in a trash can to die—and refused because of confusion over whether the infant had any legal right not to be killed. Congressmen should do what they can to clear up that confusion; the pro-lifers among them should point out that such moral and legal confusion can be traced directly to *Roe v. Wade*.

■ The Heritage Foundation recently undertook to determine the cost to American taxpayers of legalizing the 11 million illegal immigrants currently in the U.S. under the process now being considered by the Senate. The federal government spends about \$50 billion more on illegal immigrants than it receives from them in taxes each year; after amnesty and an interim period in which access to benefits is restricted, that gap will open to about \$100 billion. This adds up to \$6.3 trillion in benefits that the rest of the taxpayers will have to fund for legalized immigrants over their lifetimes; some of those benefits would have to be provided in the absence of amnesty, but a large fraction would result from the legislation. Supporters of legalization are pointing out, quite correctly, that Heritage has not performed a complete analysis of the effects of comprehensive immigration reform, and that it did not dynamically score amnesty's economic effects (but it did count substantially increased revenues from newly legal taxpayers). Heritage has gone farther than anyone else so far in putting numbers on the bill's costs and benefits. If supporters of the legislation have any better analysis to offer, they ought to share it presently.

■ In the wake of that Heritage Foundation study indicating a high price tag for amnesty, a liberal *Washington Post* blogger dug up the 2009 Harvard dissertation of Jason Richwine, one of the study's authors. The paper was both highly technical and highly flammable: Richwine rigorously calculated IQ scores for several generations of Hispanic immigrants, suggested using IQ testing



in immigration policy, and offered an argument that racial gaps in IQ scores are partly genetic in origin. Within days Heritage accepted Richwine's resignation. There is no denying that almost every aspect of the dissertation is debatable, but Heritage should not have caved to political pressure. Richwine's careful work bore the signatures of three prominent Harvard professors, and its subject matter, while taboo, should be considered a legitimate area of scholarly inquiry. Heritage is an openly ideological think tank and has no outright obligation to retain staff who become a threat to its public relations—but in this case it made the wrong call.

■ Oregon, a few years ago, held a lottery to determine whom it would add to Medicaid, a policy that created ideal circumstances for social-science research. In 2011, the results of the first year of coverage were announced, and liberal health-policy writers touted these findings as proof that government efforts to expand health insurance improve people's health. An update including the second year was mysteriously delayed, but the results are now out. Receipt of Medicaid was not associated with any improvement in physical-health outcomes. Recipients did, however, feel better about their financial security and reported lower levels of depression (although they did not report higher levels of antidepressant use). The liberal writers went into a frenzy of spin: The sample size was suddenly too small, positive results that aren't statistically significant should count, and so on. Paul Krugman pointed out that fire insurance has value even if it does not reduce the risk of fire: It guards against the risk of financial



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catastrophe. He seems to be unaware that he is making conservatives' case for us: We can bring about near-universal access to catastrophic health insurance at a cost much lower than Obama-care's. This is just one study, albeit a good one, so the case for the liberal approach to health care is not yet a smoldering ruin. Liberals had better take out an ideological insurance policy.

■ At a recent press conference, the president said that “for the 85 and 90 percent of Americans who already have health insurance,” the only impact of Obamacare “is that their insurance is stronger, better, and more secure than it was before. Full stop. That’s it. They don’t have to worry about anything else.” These comments don’t jibe with the Congressional Budget Office’s estimate that some 10 million Americans will lose their current coverage under the law by 2018—an estimate that may be optimistic—as employers are incentivized to drop coverage and fully half of the plans currently on the individual market are outlawed. Premiums are already increasing, and are expected to increase further. Pile on a grab-bag of new taxes and Medicare price controls likely to drive providers out of the market altogether, and there is plenty to worry about. Period.

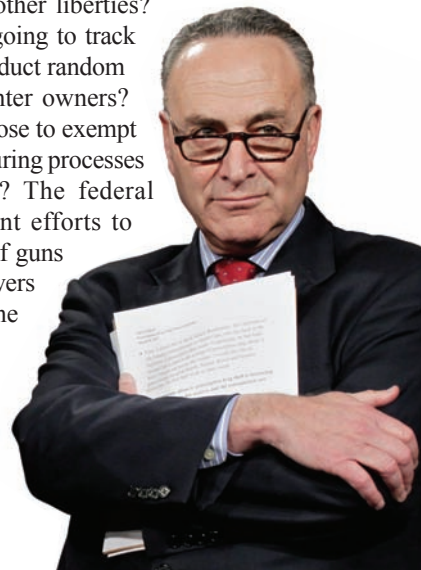
■ The Congressional Budget Office announced something that passes for good news: The projected deficit for 2013 will be reduced to a mere \$642 billion, mostly as a result of sequestration and higher tax revenues. While a deficit of well under \$1 trillion is welcome, it is hardly an occasion for breaking out the Moët & Chandon: CBO projects another \$6.3 trillion in debt will be added to the books by 2023, and some of that revenue may prove to be transitory: Federal income got a bump from larger-than-expected payments from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, and from investors’ realizing capital gains before the deadline of the 2013 tax increase. Douglas Elmendorf, a former Clinton adviser who now leads the CBO, struck an appropriately sober note: “We have large projected deficits, a debt that will remain at a historically high share of GDP and will be rising at the end of the coming decade. I think what that implies is that small changes in budget policy will not be sufficient to put the budget on a sustainable path.” He pointed out that the number of Americans receiving Social Security and Medicare benefits is expected to increase by 40 percent in the coming decade. The salient fact is that the credit of the United States is excellent but not infinite; the government may either impose meaningful fiscal reform or wait to have reform imposed upon it by the credit market. The sooner we move, the less painful that reform will be.

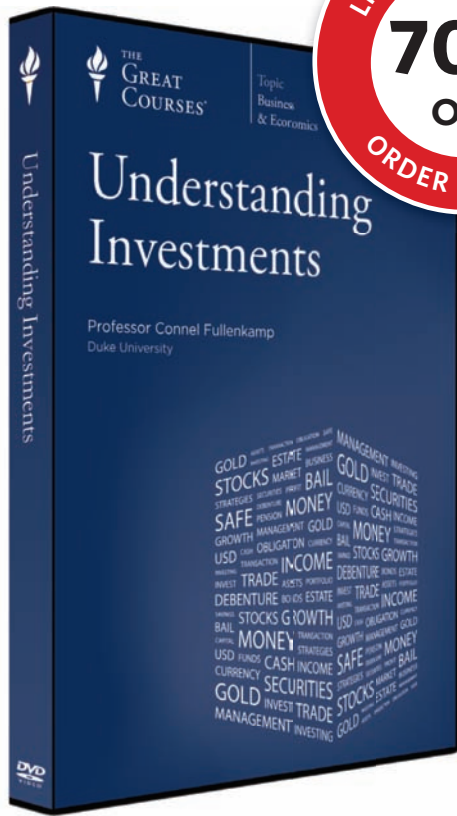
■ President Obama has been no friend of America’s shale-oil-and-gas boom, but his ability to restrain the growth of shale-oil extraction has been limited by the fact that the most bountiful reserves are on privately held land. The federal government holds a much tighter grip on what is done with natural gas after it comes out of the ground; it is typically liquefied before being shipped abroad, and the U.S. has significantly restricted the number of permits for such activity and, therefore, the amount that can be exported. This restriction has depressed domestic prices of natural gas, subsidizing home-heating bills and industrial activity, but driven up prices abroad, and introduced a significant market distortion. The Obama administration has now signaled that it would like to slowly open the valve on such activity—no doubt in part because it will push other countries to consume

more natural gas and less coal, reducing their carbon emissions. This move is an important victory for free trade, and it will also strengthen America’s position in negotiating to liberalize the movement of goods and commodities with which we are less blessed.

■ A large bipartisan majority of the Senate voted to let states collect sales taxes from vendors located outside their jurisdictions. Most of the arguments that the majority made were terrible. Senators claimed that granting the states this power would advance federalism, for example. The Founders’ federalism was actually intensely concerned with restraining states’ extraterritorial economic aggression. That’s why it would take an act of Congress to give the states this power. The unutterable argument the senators made is that it is unfair for states to collect taxes from consumers at physical stores when Internet buyers do not have to pay tax. Some unfairness is, however, built into our state-by-state sales-tax system, and this bill would create its own. A Massachusetts resident would now have to pay his state’s taxes when buying online but could evade them by shopping in New Hampshire. One way to lessen unfairness would be to have all states tax sales based on the origination point of the transaction: The state where the Internet seller was located, for example, would levy taxes on its sales. That rule would restrain the states’ abuse of the taxing power, since sellers would be able to relocate in more welcoming states. Presumably that is why the state governments, and their too-ardent friends in the Senate, are not interested in that kind of federalism.

■ Chuck Schumer, like so many before him, is destined to learn by experience what King Canute knew by instinct: However loudly you command them, some tides just will not be stemmed. Reacting to the news that a Texas outfit had successfully used a 3D printer to build a plastic gun—and uploaded the blueprints for all to access—Schumer immediately called for this application of the technology to be outlawed. The senator has not yet recognized that we live in a brave new world. Important questions are raised: How does the state intend to regulate the Internet without shredding other liberties? Is the government going to track all blueprints or conduct random searches of 3D-printer owners? Does Schumer propose to exempt particular manufacturing processes from existing law? The federal bureaucracy’s recent efforts to quash the printing of guns suggest that the answers are irrelevant: By the time it got involved, the blueprints had been downloaded 100,000 times and made their way onto popular file-sharing websites.





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■ Fresh from helping to defeat the Toomey-Manchin bill in the U.S. Senate, in early May the National Rifle Association met for its annual convention in Houston, Texas. It was a boisterous, muscular occasion, featuring the usual resolve and hyperbole and boasting a host of 2016 hopefuls set on marking out their territory. The NRA promised that 70,000 people would come; the final number was 86,000—fitting for an organization that has increased its membership from 4.5 million to 5 million people since the beginning of this year. Across the street, 30 protesters stood and made their case, prompting the media to report that “both sides were in attendance.” Let all of our debates be thus.

■ The FDA’s restrictions on Plan B and similar emergency-contraceptive drugs have had a tangled history. An advisory board recommended that they be available without a prescription to women and girls of all ages. HHS secretary Kathleen Sebelius overruled it. The drugs are now available in pharmacies, and only to women 17 and older. A New York district judge mandated that all the restrictions be lifted, and the Obama administration is now appealing. While the litigation continues, the FDA has staked out a compromise position of sorts by approving an application to allow Plan B to be sold without a prescription to girls as young as 15. While the balance of evidence suggests that Plan B does not work as an abortifacient, the risk that it might do so in some cases

The Heart of Obamaism

LESS than a week before the IRS scandal broke, the president of the United States told the graduating class at Ohio State University:

Unfortunately, you’ve grown up hearing voices that incessantly warn of government as nothing more than some separate, sinister entity that’s at the root of all our problems; some of these same voices also doing their best to gum up the works. They’ll warn that tyranny is always lurking just around the corner. You should reject these voices. Because what they suggest is that our brave and creative and unique experiment in self-rule is somehow just a sham with which we can’t be trusted.

It’s almost as if the gods themselves decided to beclown Obama for his hubris.

Since the IRS scandal is metastasizing as I write, I will not dwell on it. But even the broad outlines illustrate the problem with Obama’s vision of America. Over and over again, President Obama has said, amidst other pronouncements ripped from a student-council campaign speech, that the “government is us,” or as Barney Frank reportedly liked to say, “‘government’ is just the word we use for those things we do together.” The upshot of all of this is that it’s somehow weird or cynical, dangerous or creepy, that anyone would see the government as a “separate, sinister entity.”

Well, tell that to those whom the IRS demanded to reveal their donors, their organizations’ members, the names of attendees at their meetings, and their family’s potential political aspirations. The wrong answers might mean the effective end of your group. And the only reason the government was putting you through this legal and emotional wringer in the first place? Because your group had the words “patriot” or “tea party” in its name—or maybe the mission statement said something about the “Bill of Rights” or making this a “better country.”

According to Obama, what those people need to understand is that government is just another word for those things we do together, such as persecuting groups with the

word “patriot” in their name.

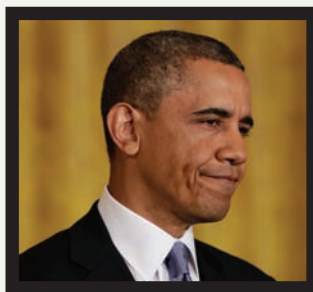
President Obama’s vision is totalitarian. No, it’s not totalitarian in the sense of wanting to put people in camps or unleash firing squads on dissenters. It’s totalitarian in the original meaning of the word. Mussolini defined *totalitario* as a vision of the state according to which all of the interests of the people are reflected in the aims and ambitions of the government. “The government is us” was the heart of Mussolini’s philosophy. Hence the idea that the state might work against the will and needs of the people was ridiculous, like saying your arm is an enemy of your body. The state is us, we are the state. Or, everything within the state, nothing outside the state.

The problem, as the Founders recognized, is that people have different and more authoritative conceptions of what their own interests are. For one man, being made a stonemason would be a great reward, but for another it would be a tyrannical imposition. That is why the Founders recognized the individual’s right to pursue happiness.

Any political philosophy that assumes the current government is the only authentic representation of *us* will automatically turn perfectly decent dissenting citizens into *them*. Think taxes are too high? You are against us. Believe government is too big? You are one of them. One needn’t reject all conception of *us* to understand that this can go too far. Jihadi terrorists, even American ones, strike me as *them*. People who want to drink Big Gulps? Not so much.

In his other gig, as a *New York Times* columnist, NATIONAL REVIEW film critic Ross Douhat speculates that “the bureaucrats in question probably thought they were just doing their patriotic duty, and giving dangerous extremists the treatment they deserved.” I’m sure that’s the case. I’m also willing to believe—for now—that President Obama didn’t order the IRS to target tea-party groups. But that doesn’t mean they weren’t following Barack Obama’s lead.

—JONAH GOLDBERG



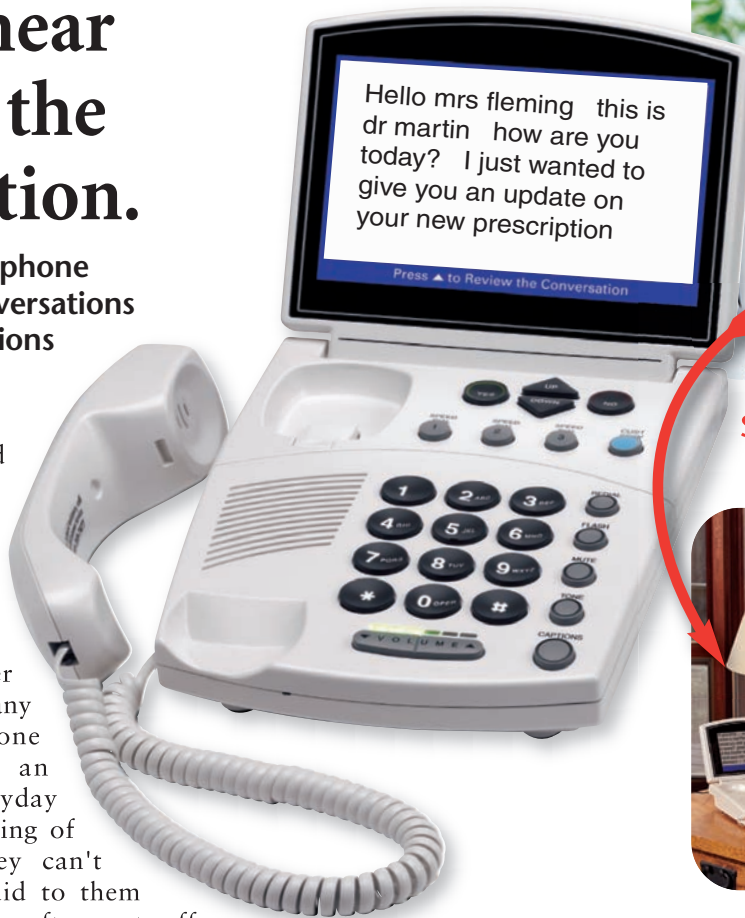
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is not one that can be dismissed out of hand. At any rate, the question of whether we ought to promote easier access to any form of contraception to minors without parental involvement is not one that can be settled by science. Nor should it be settled by a federal judge.

■ Representative Mel Watt (D., N.C.) embodies the toxic politics that produced the housing bubble. He is a practitioner of a nasty form of racial politics (just before the election of Obama, he proclaimed that white Americans are so besotted with racism that they could not vote for a black candidate) and at the same time is cozy with Wall Street (his largest benefactor is Bank of America, closely followed by Goldman Sachs and bubble beneficiaries such as the National Association of Realtors). He says that his experience living with brown skin supersedes the need for “empirical evidence” so far as matters racial are concerned. But empirical evidence is precisely what is needed at the Federal Housing Finance Agency, which Watt has been asked to lead by President Obama. FHFA is the main regulator of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the prime malefactors in the millennial housing bubble, which still hold or guarantee trillions of dollars in mortgage debt. Housing activists and the mortgage industry put a target on the back of FHFA administrator Edward Demarco, who has been in their view insufficiently eager to turn on the Washington money pump and reinflate the housing bubble by imposing write-down losses on Fannie and Freddie, and Watt is their choice to replace him. But the country has no pressing need of another subprime-mortgage explosion, or another practitioner of corrosive racial politics, making Watt precisely the wrong man for the job.

■ The House passed the Working Families Flexibility Act (with 220 Republican and three Democratic votes), which would allow hourly employees to accept compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay for time worked beyond the standard 40-hour week. Like overtime wages, that comp time would be accrued at a time-and-a-half rate. The bill is likely to founder in the Senate, and President Obama has promised to veto it. It is a welcome nod to 21st-century reality: In the modern information-and-services economy, the rigidity of the old regularly scheduled factory shift has been supplanted by a lumpier labor model, in which factors such as project deadlines and seasonal changes mean that some weeks or months will be busier than others. Under the bill, employers would have the choice to offer comp time, and employees would have the choice to accept it—or not, and the bill contains specific provisions forbidding employers to require its acceptance. Though many workers in these straitened times cherish overtime pay, others, especially those with family responsibilities or those working more than one job, would prefer the comp time. The Democrats who thwart this preference in the name of a 1938 law (the Fair Labor Standards Act) are the very picture of reactionary liberalism.

■ If there’s an antonym for “panacea,” it is “global warming,” which has been blamed for every ill imaginable, including (this is a very partial list) earthquakes, asteroid impacts, murder, locusts, asthma, cold weather, deafness in fish, walrus stampedes, and the Arab Spring. Now we can add prostitution to the list. A group of Democratic House members (including Representative Hank Johnson of Georgia, who once demonstrated his knowl-

edge of geophysics by suggesting that Guam might tip over if the army put too much stuff on it) has introduced a resolution predicting that global warming will mess everything up so badly that the economy will collapse, civilization will descend into anarchy, and women will have no other choice than to put on the red light and sell their bodies to the night. So never mind the medical degree, ladies, and don’t throw out that Halloween costume you wore sophomore year, because you’re going to need it. That’s the one consolation in all this: Prostitutes are a natural for global warming—they’re already dressed for it.

■ Dick Harpootlian maintained the standards that informed his tenure as chairman of the South Carolina Democratic party to the very end. In 2012 he said Republican governor Nikki Haley was “in the bunker à la Eva Braun.” Harpootlian explained that



he was only accusing her of avoiding the press. “So she has some hurt feelings? I didn’t know she had feelings.” Before stepping down this month he urged Democrats to send Haley “back to wherever the hell she came from” in next year’s gubernatorial race. Haley is a Sikh, and a daughter of immigrant parents, but no, Harpootlian didn’t mean that either. He

wanted her “to go back to being an accountant in a dress store” (Haley’s family started a multimillion-dollar clothing business). Did Harpootlian mean that women should stay out of politics? Here is a statement that will not require qualification: Dick Harpootlian’s mouth is like the bottom end of a garbage disposal. South Carolina will be a more pleasant place now that he is in private life.

■ But it’s not just Democrats who embarrass themselves in the Palmetto State. Former governor Mark Sanford won a special election to Congress in the first district, beating Elizabeth (sister-of-Stephen) Colbert Busch. Sanford was presidential material until 2009, when his affair with an Argentine mistress wrecked his marriage and (temporarily) his career. The national GOP stopped funding Sanford, fearing repercussions from his divorce. But Colbert Busch ran a slippery campaign, refusing to say whether she would vote for Nancy Pelosi for speaker. Sanford hammered her out-of-district support, and the solidly Republican electorate gave him a comfortable victory (54 to 45 percent). Once he won the primary, Sanford was the better choice. We hope he redeems himself, and does not think that winning an election counts as such.

■ If its council elects to pass a proposal introduced in early May, New York City will become the first major American city to permit legally present non-citizens to vote in local elections. Under a suggested change in the rules, any immigrant who has been resident in New York for at least six months would be allowed to cast votes for mayor and other municipal offices. New York City follows California in mooting the idea of non-citizen voting. The plan is misguided. Currently, immigrants are not

required to speak English or to take a civics test until they become citizens, both reasonable prerequisites to voting. Worse, there are 535,000 illegal immigrants in New York City, and the city appears wholly unwilling to distinguish between legal and illegal residents. What could go wrong?

■ At a commemoration of the 1970 Kent State shootings, Bill Ayers disclaimed any similarity between the Boston Marathon bombings and those carried out in the 1960s by his Weather Underground. First Ayers trotted out his familiar defense—that Weathermen bombs never killed anyone. This is debatable, but to the extent that it's true, the only reason is that their bomb builders were less competent than a couple of Chechen losers: A 1970 bomb, meant to be packed with nails and set off at an Army dance at Fort Dix, went off by accident and killed three Weathermen. Ayers topped it off by pulling out the tu quoque on Senator John McCain, who, Ayers said, “murdered civilians” regularly as a Navy pilot. McCain was taken prisoner and tortured constantly for five years; he still suffers every day for serving his country. Ayers, meanwhile, has been rewarded for his cowardice with board chairmanships, speaking gigs, a tenured professorship until his recent retirement, and an adoring audience whenever he feels like stroking his ego some more. Narcissists know no embarrassment, and the guilty can never stop proclaiming their innocence.

■ Britain's membership in the European Union has long haunted the country's Conservative party, creating internal divisions that have at times proved near fatal. But the hope that, if the party waited it out, the “European question” would magically go away seems more unlikely than ever to be fulfilled. Its rival on the right, the anti-EU UK Independence party, which has spent most of its political life on the fringe, is now starting to win elections. UKIP, as it is popularly known, currently scores around 23 percent in national opinion polls and, in early May, the party won 25 percent of the vote in the local elections it contested in England. The party's charismatic leader, Nigel Farage, took this as a sign that UKIP is “fundamentally changing British politics.” The country is split over Europe, and now one side of that split has a party.

■ While pleading for more bailout funds in Berlin, Italy's new prime minister, Enrico Letta, said: “Traditionally, Europe has always seen great results when Italy and Germany have worked together.” And he's right. The Visigoths attacked Rome and got 800 years of Dark Ages; the Nazis and Fascists teamed up and got the Marshall Plan.

■ Max Brenner is a handmade-chocolate business that two entrepreneurs hope to build up. “Chocolate by the bald man” is their unusual slogan. The company has multiple outlets in the U.S., and one is due to open on the Sydney campus of the University of New South Wales. Not so fast. The bald chocolatiers are Israelis, and the business belongs to the Strauss Group, an Israeli company. That will never do for the leading anti-Israel movement of BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions): Its activists have mounted protests opposing the shop's opening. The Strauss Group provides food, maybe even chocolate, to the Israeli armed forces, which in the eyes of BDS makes it “complicit in war crimes.” Anti-Israel and anti-Jewish sentiment is so indistin-

guishable that politicians from democracies have prepared, in defense, a document known as the London Declaration on Combating Anti-Semitism. Julia Gillard, the Australian prime minister, has just signed on to it, the first Australian politician to do so. Denouncing the BDS, she said: “In the face of anti-Semitism, there can be no bystanders.”

■ A garment factory in Bangladesh collapsed, killing at least 1,127 people, with the last survivor rescued after 16 days buried in rubble. The catastrophe was horrifying enough on its own—it is the deadliest accidental structural collapse in modern history—but it was made worse by the fact that it was preventable: While the structural defects of the crumbling building were obvious, its owner was merrily adding new floors at the top, without a building permit. That regulations and warnings were ignored is likely explained by the fact that the building (which also contained apartments, a bank, and shops) was owned by an official of the Awami League, the socialist party that dominates the country's politics. Many of the firms that did business with the factory, including Swedish giant H&M, have signed on to a labor-backed agreement that calls for independent inspections of factories in Bangladesh, the largest garment producer behind China. The step is welcome, but the reality is that Bangladesh already has a library full of building regulations and labor standards; it also has a corrupt and ineffective government that will not enforce them. International manufacturers have real power in Bangladesh, and they have real responsibilities there, too.

■ Pope Francis recently canonized the 813 martyrs of Otranto, who were executed for refusing to convert to Islam during the Ottoman invasion of southern Italy in 1480. Their cause for sainthood was begun centuries ago; they were beatified in 1771. Because the Church keeps time by a slower clock than the one that dictates the news cycle, the message that some observers are liable to read into the timing of the canonization ceremony last

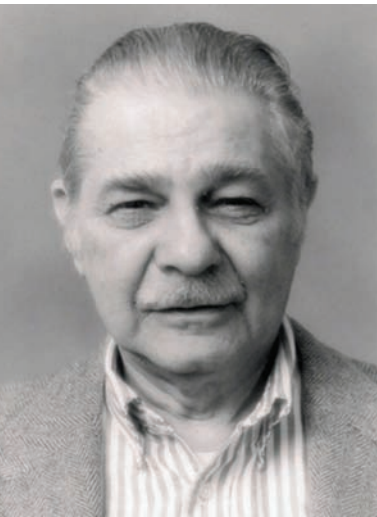


month was probably unintended by the Vatican, although the Holy Spirit may have intended it. Faith aside, it is a matter of fact that Christians in parts of the world today are persecuted by some who take their inspiration from the likes of those Ottoman invaders half a millennium ago. Those who take their inspiration from the martyrs instead should not be blamed if they consider the massacre to have contemporary relevance.

■ Bloomberg News has been accused of spying on Goldman Sachs and other clients, as well as Fed chairman Ben Bernanke and former treasury secretary Timothy Geithner. By monitoring

the use of its terminals on Wall Street and in the City of London, where they are ubiquitous, the news service gathered clues as to what leaders had on their minds, who was talking to whom, and who was on the outs, proprietary information that the technical side of the company made available to its journalists. The Treasury Department has opened an investigation, and the Fed is looking into it. Bloomberg clients know that the company tracks some elements of their usage of the terminals, but Goldman Sachs and others have complained that they did not know just how much information the firm had access to, much less that it would be made available to reporters. Bloomberg's editor-in-chief has tendered an abject apology. While it is amusing to hear Goldman executives complaining of an asymmetrical-information problem, there are substantive concerns at issue here. Whatever is going through the mind of Ben Bernanke, the proper avenue for its disclosure is not a back channel via the Bloomberg news desk.

■ Friends of Good Counsel Homes, a Catholic charity that serves homeless pregnant women and their unborn children, gathered in midtown Manhattan one evening the week before Mother's Day to attend the 28th Annual Ball for Life, where Kathryn Jean Lopez received the Reflection Award in honor of her long-standing advocacy for the pro-life cause. Readers of this magazine and of NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE know her dedication to the project of affirming the bond between expectant mothers and the children they bear. The proceedings at the ball were interrupted when Joan Andrews Bell, one of the great heroines of the pro-life movement in America, stood up to remind all the women present of the maternal bond between themselves and the unborn children they carry in their hearts. To be there was to witness the truth and feel the warmth of Kathryn's persistent argument that the only feminism deserving of the name is feminine.



■ Like many former Communists, Herbert Romerstein never fled Communism. He walked away from it for the purpose of throwing himself against it, dedicating the rest of his life to the effort to take it down. Beginning in the 1950s, the Brooklyn boy who only a few years earlier had advanced from the Communist Youth League to the Communist Party USA began cheerfully showing up at meetings just to expose the mendacity of the party line. He later served as an investigator for the House Committee on Internal Security, drawing on his experience of how Communists operated in the United States. In the 1980s

he headed up the effort at the U.S. Information Agency to counter Soviet disinformation. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Romerstein was vindicated by the release of the Venona documents, which he analyzed in a book co-authored with Eric Breindel. The work must have been often dispiriting, but someone had to do it. Dead at 81. R.I.P.

■ Peter Worthington, one of Canada's finest conservative columnists and co-founder of the *Toronto Sun*, passed away. The 86-

year-old Worthington (who is the political writer David Frum's father-in-law) charmed readers with award-winning stories about politics, international affairs, family, and his beloved dogs. A Korean War vet, he covered military battles from Israel to Algeria in scintillating detail. He blasted away at Pierre Trudeau's leftist agenda with sheer delight. As WFB wrote about Worthington's autobiography, *Looking for Trouble* (1984): "He writes the way journalists were meant to write, with immediacy, clarity, and courage." His intellectual and witty writing style earned him many accolades over 50 years—and remained razor sharp to the end. There aren't many Peter Worthingtons left in journalism. Canada was fortunate enough to have the real thing to admire and cherish. R.I.P.

SCANDAL I

The Difference It Made

AFTER nine rounds of Benghazi hearings convened by Representative Darrell Issa's (R., Calif.) House Oversight Committee—a number of iterations made necessary by the administration's manifold efforts to stall, stymie, and deflect the investigation—we are finally beginning to get a picture of the terrorist attacks that took four American lives on September 11, 2012. The breakthrough came with the testimony of Mark Thompson, acting deputy assistant secretary of state for operations, counterterrorism bureau; of Eric Nordstrom, former State Department regional security officer for Libya; and especially of Gregory Hicks, a Foreign Service officer and former deputy chief of mission in Libya, who, after Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens's death that night, became America's senior diplomat in the country. Rightly identified as "whistleblowers," the three men came forward at considerable professional risk because, as a choked-up Nordstrom testified in his opening remarks, "it matters" that we find out what happened before, during, and after the attacks that left four Americans dead.

Mr. Hicks began the hearing with a harrowing account, from his vantage point at the embassy in Tripoli, of the attacks as they unfolded. He spoke with emotion of learning of the death of Ambassador Stevens, and of the heroism of the few, outnumbered and outgunned, left to fend off wave upon wave of jihadi firebombs, RPGs, and mortar rounds.

Hicks also testified that these men were left to die because his attempt to send a Special Forces detachment from Tripoli to Benghazi was overruled by military brass. The soldiers on the ground, Hicks reported, were "furious."

Calling off the reinforcements was just one of many questionable tactical and strategic decisions made both before and during the attack. Nordstrom testified, for instance, that although the government recognized Benghazi as an acutely dangerous post, the consulate's security apparatus did not meet the minimum standards for such installations, and that by statute the only person who may waive security protocols in such situations is the secretary of state. As we already knew, not only did the security situation fail to improve in the months leading up to the attack, it actually deteriorated, and security personnel were reassigned even as the number of violent incidents against the Western presence increased.

But perhaps more disturbing were the cynical and negligent calls made after the attack, none more notorious than the administration's preposterous decision to blame the American deaths

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on a “spontaneous” demonstration against a fourth-rate YouTube video seen by few and regarded by fewer. Hicks testified, starkly and matter-of-factly, that “the YouTube video was a non-event in Libya.” So, naturally, he was “stunned” by Ambassador Susan Rice’s Sunday-show appearances blaming the attack on it.

When confronted by committeemen with Secretary Clinton’s now infamous ejaculation of “What difference does it make,” Hicks responded that the administration’s continued insistence that the attack was related to the video caused an “immeasurable” amount of damage, most critically by delaying for 18 days the arrival in Benghazi of an FBI investigatory team, during which time the site of the attack was completely unsecure and precious evidence may have been lost forever.

Not only was the video not the proximate cause of the attack, but we have every indication that the administration *knew* that it was not and yet perpetuated the falsehood. The media, roused from slumber by the hearing, discovered in the days after it that the White House’s Benghazi talking points had been scrubbed of references to al-Qaeda and terrorism, and that they were not the unvarnished product of the intelligence community but a face-saving document revised a dozen times in a process guided by political operatives in the White House and Foggy Bottom. The most plausible explanation for this is that the administration had judged that, in an election season, the video-as-cause narrative was less problematic than the truth, even if it involved throwing the video’s amateurish auteur, Nakoula Basseley, in jail.

In his 22 years of diplomatic service, Hicks testified, every congressional delegation he has ever received has been afforded one-on-one meetings with *chargés d’affaires*. But in the aftermath of Benghazi, State Department lawyers explicitly instructed Hicks not to speak to Representative Jason Chaffetz (R., Utah), nor to allow Chaffetz to speak with security personnel, without their presence as babysitters—a massive breach of protocol.

Merely to read these facts is to understand their import. They show an administration characterized *ex ante* by incompetence and *ex post facto* by panic and cold calculation, willing to subvert national security for campaign politics. The May 8 hearing and the subsequent coverage have provided new leads and suggested new witnesses, and we encourage Representative Issa to redouble his investigatory efforts. We’re closer than ever, but we still haven’t gotten to the bottom of Benghazi.

SCANDAL II

The Indefensible IRS

ON March 22, 2012, IRS commissioner Douglas Shulman testified under oath before the House Oversight Committee, which was inquiring about whether the agency was targeting tea-party groups and other conservative organizations filing for tax-exempt status. He firmly and repeatedly denied that any such thing was happening. “There’s absolutely no targeting,” he said. A little over a year later, the IRS confirmed that it was in fact improperly targeting not only tea-party groups but also Jewish religious nonprofits, organizations inspired by Glenn Beck’s 9/12 Project, and those “educating the public about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights,” in the IRS’s own words. That is a remarkable enemies list.

The Associated Press soon confirmed that, well before Shulman offered his substantially untrue testimony to Congress, the



IRS had convened a meeting with its chief lawyer to discuss the very thing the commissioner said was not happening. Acting commissioner Steven Miller was briefed on the matter a year ago, and never found a moment to inform Congress that it had been misled by his predecessor. When Senator Orrin Hatch (R., Utah) inquired about the matter, Miller assured him that no targeting was taking place. Far from being confined to a backwater office in Cincinnati, as the IRS claimed when the issue became public, the practice was known to and blessed by officials in Washington, at both the IRS and the Treasury Department.

Further, the targeted groups were subjected to invasive investigation far in excess of what IRS procedure calls for: The agency demanded lists of donors to tea-party groups, while Jewish groups were quizzed about their theology and their opinions on the state of Israel. Members of conservative-leaning groups were asked, under penalty of perjury, such open-ended questions as whether any of their friends or family might be thinking about running for office—any office—at some point in the future. The IRS demanded details about the groups’ political associations, copies of literature they distributed at public functions or online, and a great deal more that has little or nothing to do with their tax-exempt status. Let us note that 501(c)(4) organizations, the groups in question, are legally entitled to engage in lobbying and political activity, so long as that is not their main purpose.

We should also note that, contrary to many erroneous media accounts, donations to 501(c)(4) groups are not tax-deductible; but they may be kept anonymous if the organizations so choose—which goes a long way to explain the IRS’s fishing expeditions for donor lists.

Democrats have been eager to point out that Shulman was appointed by President George W. Bush, which is entirely irrelevant. The actions of the IRS were unethical, unconstitutional, and very likely criminal, and that is a matter for congressional action regardless of whether the president or any of his close associates were directly involved. The IRS has fearsome investigatory powers and holds sensitive information on practically every person and institution in this country—information that has a way of leaking during election years, as many conservative groups have come to appreciate. A rogue element within the IRS is a dangerous thing. It is up to Congress to discover how high and wide these misdeeds reach.

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At least the administration knew its priorities

BY ANDREW C. McCARTHY

WHAT many of us openly hypothesized immediately following the September 11 Benghazi terrorist attack is finally, after eight months of tooth-pulling, established fact: The Obama administration's oft-repeated story that Islamophobia—in this instance, an anti-Islamic Internet video—provoked a spontaneous “protest” resulting in the murder of four Americans was a calculated fraud in the service of the president's reelection campaign.

What is only now coming to light, though, is that President Obama's blame-the-video gambit was also disingenuous when it came to the rioting at the U.S. embassy in Cairo, which also occurred on September 11, several hours before the Benghazi attack.

The atrocity in Libya resulted in the murders of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other Americans—Sean Smith of the State Department,

and Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty, a pair of former Navy SEALs working as CIA contractors. Post mortem, the administration's tireless denunciations of the video—in the face of strong evidence of a pre-planned, coordinated terrorist attack—manifested President Obama's willingness to obfuscate. That is why many of us administration critics called on the moribund Romney campaign to pursue Benghazi aggressively—pleas that fell on deaf ears.

Obviously, the State Department should never have had a facility in Benghazi, a jihadist hotbed that is one of the world's most dangerous places for Americans and other Westerners. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the White House had recklessly failed to beef up security at the State Department facility even though there had been several terrorist strikes in the four months prior to September 11: bombing attacks that targeted both the facility

and the nearby International Red Cross offices, as well as rockets fired at the British ambassador's convoy—a near-miss that convinced Britain to close its Benghazi offices.

The impending eleventh anniversary of the 9/11 attacks should thus have prompted a serious ratcheting up of security at the Benghazi facility. Yet the State Department denied requests, including requests from Stevens himself, for better protection.

It is not difficult to figure out why neither the September 11 attack on the Benghazi facility nor the several attacks that preceded it were responded to as jihadist terror. One need only define political cynicism down to outright deception.

To treat jihadist terror as what it is would be an admission that it remains a profound national-security challenge. To concede that there was rampant, al-Qaeda-driven jihadism in Benghazi, the heart of “rebel” (i.e., Islamist) opposition to the ousted Qaddafi regime, would be to raise questions about the wisdom of President Obama's unauthorized war—which naysayers, including *moi*, argued would empower anti-American terrorists. To acknowledge that our officials were killed in a pre-planned, sophisticated terrorist operation involving mortars and other high-powered weapons that fell into jihadist hands after Qaddafi was toppled would have undermined two themes of Obama's reelection campaign: that Obama had eviscerated al-Qaeda, heralding an end to the War on Terror, and that Obama's policy decisions had put Libya on the course toward stable democracy.

So the administration tried very hard not to acknowledge it.

The instrument of the fraud was “Innocence of Muslims,” an amateurish, virtually unknown and unwatched anti-Islamic video about 14 minutes in length. It was written and produced by one Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, a California resident and native-Egyptian Coptic Christian with a record of petty crime. The video is said to be a “movie trailer,” but it is unclear whether there really is a full-length film fleshing out its themes of Muslim human-rights violations, including the persecution of Copts.

Why would the administration blame this obscure video for igniting the

STR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Benghazi massacre? The rationale was straightforward. The video, the story goes, was singularly responsible for provoking the “protest” at the U.S. embassy in Cairo earlier in the day on September 11. So, as the administration scrambled to conceal its various defaults in Benghazi—the failure to beef up security and to take military action in defense of Americans under attack—it realized that the seemingly spontaneous rioting in Egypt could be spun as having naturally spilled into neighboring Libya. Benghazi, then, could be framed as a similar “protest” that “spontaneously” erupted in violence.

This story is utterly untrue as to Benghazi. The State Department’s No. 2 official in Libya, Gregory Hicks, who was closely monitoring events in Benghazi from the U.S. embassy in Tripoli, was directly told by Ambassador Stevens, shortly before the latter was killed, that the facility was under terrorist attack. He directly briefed Secretary of State Clinton and her top staffers to that effect in a phone call at 2 A.M. (8 P.M. Washington time)—a time when Hicks’s most pressing concern was that Stevens might have fallen into the hands of Ansar al-Sharia, the local al-Qaeda affiliate, some of whose members orchestrated the attack. Only an hour later, in a call from the Libyan prime minister, did Hicks learn Stevens had been murdered. As Hicks testified in early May before Chairman Darrell Issa’s House Oversight Committee, the video was a “non-event” in Libya.

Clinton did not speak with Hicks again that evening, even after the news of Stevens’s death. She did, however, speak with President Obama by telephone at 10 P.M. Washington time—one of the very few details that have been disclosed about Obama’s activities that night. Shortly afterward, despite what Clinton had learned from Hicks, the media began reporting that Clinton had put out a press statement on the Benghazi attack, which included the following:

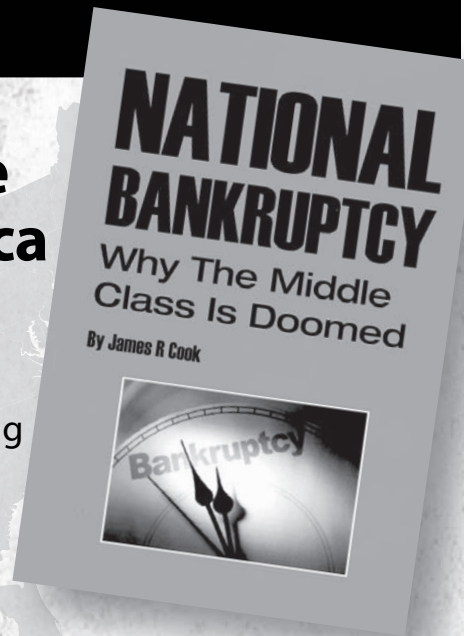
Some have sought to justify this vicious behavior as a response to inflammatory material posted on the Internet. The United States deplors any intentional effort to denigrate the religious beliefs of others. Our com-

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Beyond its lack of real-world connection to the siege in Benghazi, this explanation failed to convey that the “some” who were “justify[ing]” the commission of “vicious behavior as a response to inflammatory material posted on the Internet” prominently included the State Department itself.

Earlier in the day on September 11, hours before the rioting in Egypt, diplomats at the U.S. embassy in Cairo began

release imprisoned jihadists, prominently including the “Blind Sheikh” (Omar Abdel Rahman, whom I successfully prosecuted for terrorism in the Nineties). This dovetailed with a threat by Abdel Rahman’s son a few weeks earlier to conduct a Tehran-style raid on the embassy and take Americans hostage to coerce his father’s release.

Ibrahim’s reporting matches what *The Weekly Standard*’s Stephen Hayes uncovered about the CIA’s pre-riot admonition to the State Department:

Obama was campaigning for reelection on the demonstrably false claims that his leadership had decimated al-Qaeda and that his policy of empowering Islamic supremacists in the Middle East had promoted stability and real democracy.

tweeting repeated condemnations—in Arabic—of “religious incitement,” proclaiming that they “vehemently reject[ed] the actions of those who abuse the worldwide right to freedom of expression in order to injure the religious beliefs of others.” They coupled this with the release of an insipid statement, in English, deriding “the continuing efforts by misguided individuals to hurt the religious feelings of Muslims.”

State did not make this up out of whole cloth. Reports about the video had begun making the rounds in Egypt. Moreover, on September 9, just two days before the rioting, the grand mufti of Egypt publicly inveighed against the video. Egypt is a predominantly Islamist country, and in light of sharia’s savage treatment of those who speak ill of Islam or its prophet, there was good reason to believe the video would factor into any anti-American protest.

The video, however, was very far from the exclusive cause of rioting at the embassy. In fact, as reported by Raymond Ibrahim, an analyst who closely follows the Arabic media, the Egyptian press reported on September 10 that jihadist groups—some of which now have political arms that participate in Egypt’s Islamist government—were “threatening to burn the U.S. Embassy in Cairo to the ground” over the failure of the United States to

“On 10 September we warned of social media reports calling for a demonstration in front of the [Cairo] Embassy and that jihadists were threatening to break into the Embassy.”

This information was eventually purged from the infamous “talking points” with which the Obama administration armed Susan Rice, a close Obama confidante who serves as his ambassador to the U.N., as she prepared to discuss the Benghazi attacks on the Sunday talk shows. Notably, neither the Egyptian press report cited by Ibrahim nor the CIA warning cited by Hayes mentions the video.

Then, of course, there was the Cairo rioting itself. To be sure, there was plenty of caterwauling about the video. Yet it was only one item on the familiar menu of grievances Islamic supremacists lodge against the United States. Significantly, many of the rioters expressed their support for al-Qaeda, gleefully chanting, “Obama, Obama, there are still a billion Osamas!” They demanded the Blind Sheikh’s return to Egypt, called for the release of other jihadists, and tore the Stars and Stripes down from our flagpole, replacing it with al-Qaeda’s black banner of jihad.

The Obama administration chose to hear only peevish about the video. In the days that followed, Obama, Clinton, Rice, White House spokesman Jay Carney, and other administration offi-

cially studiously denounced it—the best publicity it could have received. They spoke as if it were a legitimate rationale for anti-American violence while desperately pleading with Muslims to understand that the *U.S. government*—as opposed to irresponsible Americans exercising their lamentable First Amendment rights—had nothing to do with it. Obama and Clinton actually filmed a public-service announcement condemning the video for Pakistani consumption.

More shamefully, when the coffins of our fallen officials from Benghazi were

brought home, Clinton used the occasion of this solemn ceremony to tell the grieving families that the government would get the producer who was responsible for the video. And the government did just that—arresting Nakoula in the dead of night and locking him up on a trivial violation of supervised release from incarceration for a prior conviction. Nakoula continues to sit in a jail cell even as the evidence that the video had no relevance to the Benghazi carnage, and that Obama and Clinton well knew it, accumulates into proof.

Obama was campaigning for reelection on the demonstrably false claims that his leadership had decimated al-Qaeda and that his policy of empowering Islamic supremacists in the Middle East had promoted stability and real democracy. The video canard was as much an administration creation as an administration reaction to real events. In truth, the video had no bearing on the Benghazi massacre, and its pertinence to the prior rioting in Egypt was vastly overblown. It did, however, enable the Obama campaign to stay on offense: With a compliant media and an opponent unwilling to engage him on the issue, the president was free to beat his Islamophobia straw man rather than address his catastrophic Middle East record.

His story is unraveling now. But in the campaign stretch run, it did the trick.

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The Difference It Will Make

Lessons from Benghazi

BY JOHN R. BOLTON

THE May 8 congressional testimony of three courageous State Department whistleblowers foreshadows a substantially longer, more detailed public investigation into the September 11, 2012, Benghazi attacks. It is clear even now, however, that the Obama administration's willful blindness to the continuing threat of international terrorism is a major reason for its mistakes before, during, and after the murders of Ambassador Christopher Stevens and his colleagues. It is appropriate already to draw lessons, although others will undoubtedly surface. Consider the following.

Lesson One: The CIA should not write "talking points" for members of Congress, the White House, or other executive agencies. It may take time to understand fully the drafting of the "talking points" and other narratives deployed by Obama-administration officials in the weeks after the Benghazi attacks. Unquestionably, however, one of the most stunning recent revelations is the CIA's role in formulating U.N. ambassador Susan Rice's script for her five September 16 talk-show appearances.

It is not proper for the CIA to undertake such a task, even at the request of Congress or the White House. Remember when the Bush administration was accused of breaching the "wall of separation" between intelligence and policy, thereby "politicizing" the intelligence community? Can you imagine the outcry if senior Bush officials had asked the CIA to draft talking points about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq? Today, Obama's advisers have seemingly solved the "wall of separation" problem

by eliminating the wall, making the CIA merely one more drafter of administration spin. Yet no one in Congress or the media seems exercised. They should be.

An administration is entitled to tell a story tailored to its political needs. And the opposition is entitled to rip that story to pieces according to its political needs. The CIA has no place in such battles. Instead, it should be confined to "clearing" talking points, speeches, and proposed answers to press inquiries that others draft, primarily to make sure that classified information is revealed only if authorized executive officials have decided to declassify it. (In the Bush years, intelligence officials used the clearance process to undermine administration policy, a different kind of breach, but no less egregious.) The CIA should also protect sensitive intelligence-gathering sources and methods from being revealed or compromised in public statements, and it should ensure that such statements are consistent with the available intelligence. It should have no role in either advancing or undermining administration policy.

Drafting talking points for senators or representatives is even worse, because so doing violates the separation of powers enshrined in the Constitution. The CIA doesn't work for Congress. It advises the president and executive-branch agencies. If members of Congress want talking points, they have staffs to write them, with the CIA giving its clearance as described above. That's how then-director of the CIA David Petraeus should have responded when he was asked to provide the intelligence committees with talking points during a congressional briefing just days after the attack.

This is not simply a bureaucratic nicety. Drafting (and redrafting, and

redrafting) talking points, speeches, and answers to press questions, especially in the middle of a crisis, is inherently political. That doesn't make it wrong, because high-level governance is inherently political; as Justice Byron White once opined, "You can't take the politics out of politics." But the spin room is not the place for the intelligence community. If Obama's White House and State Department had done their jobs properly in drafting the Benghazi talking points, and the CIA had been confined to its proper role, the real internal administration dynamic here would be far more readily apparent. So too would be the assignment of responsibility.

Even some of the talking points that were indisputably drafted by the CIA show political correctness creeping in, reflecting the administration's blindness toward international terrorism. That the CIA says what its political masters want to hear is the entirely predictable effect of politicization and self-censorship. Get that wall of separation out of storage.

Lesson Two: If American diplomatic or intelligence personnel are to be deployed in dangerous places for political reasons, think through what is necessary to protect them. It is true that neither our foreign- nor our clandestine-service members can take shelter within embassy fortresses and still do their jobs. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton repeatedly used the near-cliché "expeditionary diplomacy" to describe her favored approach, but we now see that she did not fully realize what it implied. More broadly, however, mistakes regarding Benghazi were not just State Department errors; they reflect broader failings in President Obama's national-security decision-making.



"No, they're not intended ironically!"

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

We now know that there was substantial advance warning about the dangers in Benghazi and in Libya more generally. Following nearly two years of turmoil caused by the Arab Spring, with violence throughout the Middle East, there was simply no excuse for not providing enhanced security to U.S. citizens both official and private, and not just in Libya but region-wide. After having to evacuate American citizens from Tripoli in February 2011 by rented Greek ferryboat because adequate U.S. air and naval assets were unavailable, did no one foresee that similar contingencies were likely to arise in the near future? Was no consideration given to pre-positioning additional military and other assets closer to sites of potential danger in North Africa and the Middle East? These kinds of questions should be routinely asked and answered, but apparently they were not.

Lesson Three: The White House must assign responsibility clearly among

agencies operating overseas. In theory, U.S. ambassadors are “chiefs of mission,” responsible for all official U.S. activity in the countries to which they are accredited. In reality, military and intelligence, for very good reasons, often operate completely independently by express presidential authorization or direction. In other cases, the Pentagon and the CIA operate on their own regardless of formal lines of authority, and thereby provoke endless turf fights abroad and in Washington.

There is no uniform “right” answer for all countries. Instead, the president must shoulder his unique responsibility to make sure that lines of authority and communication, especially in trouble spots such as Libya, are clear and understood by all. Operating through his National Security Council, he is the ultimate allocator of responsibility and authority among the various departments and agencies that labor overseas. This may seem like mere “management” to the disengaged Presi-

dent Obama and a task unworthy of him, but these decisions often involve highly sensitive matters of grand strategy. The president who shirks his responsibility in this area will pay a price, as will his subordinates, sometimes fatally.

We still do not have a satisfactory answer as to why there was a diplomatic mission in Benghazi at all, and why, by State’s own standards, the physical facility was so inadequately secured. The bulk of U.S. personnel in Benghazi were from the intelligence community and posted to the “annex,” not the consulate compound. If the State facility was there to provide cover for the CIA, why were the two operations physically separate? Not much cover there. And as an August 16 cable sent from the mission to Washington reveals, both State and CIA personnel understood that, in light of the threat environment in Benghazi, the two locations should have been consolidated. Finally, as we now know only too tragically, there were inadequate military resources avail-



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able to come to the defense or rescue of the isolated Americans in Benghazi.

Our government's performance before and during Benghazi resulted in four murders. Whether responsibility for this failure lies with Obama himself or elsewhere, lines of authority clearly broke down. Repairing this failure should be a matter of urgency.

Lesson Four: The State Department's Accountability Review Board (ARB) process is broken and should be discarded. The Benghazi ARB should be the last of its kind. There is no justification for having a review panel appointed, as here, by an official (the under secretary for management) whose own conduct should come under review. Unsurprisingly, the Benghazi ARB fixed blame at the assistant-secretary level, one rung down the ladder.

Optimally, State's inspector general (IG) should appoint independent reviewers, thus protecting against interference from above and minimizing fears of retaliation against State employees below. Equally important, the IG should be free to work with his Defense, CIA, and other counterparts to perform comprehensive assessments. Even accepting the Benghazi ARB *tout court*, we should remember that it examined only part of the story. Especially given the CIA's important role in Benghazi, it is impossible to assess accurately what corrections are needed without including that agency in the review. Some CIA-related issues might have been addressed in the ARB's classified report, but no one pretends its review was truly government-wide, as it ought to have been. And where, as here, the White House is involved, only congressional investigations can possibly be comprehensive enough.

Undoubtedly, these practical lessons from Benghazi constitute just a beginning. Their common theme is the need for nonpartisan, commonsense principles of presidential leadership and supervision over the executive branch. As more details emerge about Benghazi (and about the April 15 Boston Marathon bombing), broader conclusions will be drawn. By themselves, of course, no set of lessons can prevent an administration's willful blindness to international terrorism, but these are a start. And, to answer Hillary Clinton's infamous rhetorical question, that is what difference it makes, even now.

NR

Empire Strikes Back

The Middle East needs its Treaty of Westphalia

BY DAVID PRYCE-JONES

SYRIA is descending deeper and deeper into a hell of torture and murder, ethnic cleansing, and the destruction of historic monuments. The future is a choice of evils: Bashar Assad may be left a pawn of Iran's, president of a ravaged country and a nonexistent state; Syria might fragment; and neighboring countries could be dragged into a wider regional war. Greeted as the awakening of freedom from cruel regimes, the so-called Arab Spring comes down to crimes against humanity and the threatened disintegration of the Arab state system.

Diplomatic initiatives from parties supposedly interested in peacemaking—the Arab League, NATO, the European Union, the United Nations—have faded into posturing and impotence. The United States is conspicuous by its absence. President Obama seems to have taken to heart the advice of Talleyrand, admittedly one of the grand masters of foreign policy, above all to show no zeal. Pained silence would have been more honest than pretty but unfounded abstractions about red lines and game-changing moves.

Left to themselves, the warring parties of the Shiite-related Alawite minority under President Bashar Assad and the rebels from the Sunni majority are returning Syria to the old imperialist order of the past when the sword alone determined who ruled and lived, and who was ruled and died. Imperialism was the common organizing principle of the great powers of the Muslim past, the Sunni Ottomans and Shiite Persians, and it is their legacy to the Middle East. Imperialism imposes identity on conquered people, dictating their nationality and religion. Questioned about identity by a European in Ottoman times, almost any Arab all the way from the Mediterranean to Persia would have replied that he was a Muslim, either Sunni or Shiite.

Time was, of course, when the conti-

ment of Europe suffered centuries of Hobbesian all-against-all. Imperialists every one of them, monarchs were waging ceaseless wars of conquest against those of different religions and nationalities. In the 17th century much of Catholic and Protestant Europe was wrecked like Syria today. The turning point was the Treaty of Westphalia, signed in 1648 and specifying that every state has a right to its religious faith and its nationality. The treaty ought to be better known and celebrated for at last providing the juridical framework for the power-sharing between nations that stabilized Europe. Though far from perfect (think of Napoleon or Hitler), state sovereignty has been the antidote to imperialism.

Defeat in the First World War put an end to the Ottoman Empire (which Osama bin Laden perceived as the major injury to Islam that he had to correct). Victorious Britain and France tried to protect themselves from the accusation of imperialism by encouraging the creation of sovereign states on their own model out of what had been the provinces inhabited by Arabs. The individual who previously had declared that his identity was Muslim was now invited to consider himself Syrian, Iraqi, or whatever. Territorial boundaries and a passport confirmed the novel identity. Proving that their policy had succeeded, Britain and France were soon ousted from the Middle East by the very nationalism that they were responsible for introducing in the first place. No longer imperial powers, Turkey under Ataturk and Iran under the Pahlavi shahs transformed into modern secular nation-states. When military officers in Arab countries found that they were unable to co-opt those for whom Islam remained the primary identity, they imprisoned or executed them.

The coup that brought Ayatollah Khomeini to power in 1979 abruptly switched Iran from a nation-state back to the organizing principle of imperialism. Whether Shiite or Sunni, Muslims in Khomeini's traditional view constitute the ummah, a worldwide community transcending nationhood with all its differences and particularities. The distinction so dear to Westerners between Islam and Islamism was without meaning for him. He made no bones about it: Islam was the God-given solution to the ills of the world, and Muslims had the divine purpose of restoring a caliph who would reinstate

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Who—and How Many—Are the Palestinian Refugees?

How, under the auspices of the UN Relief and Works Agency, can their numbers have exploded from 650,000 in 1948 to more than five million today?

In 1948, some 650,000 Arabs fled from Israel during Israel's war of independence against six invading Arab armies. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was then formed to provide humanitarian aid to those Arab refugees. Sixty-five years later, UNRWA has grown into a huge, half-a-billion-dollar-a-year bureaucracy that claims a constituency of five million Palestinian-Arab refugees. How has the number of Palestinian refugees grown so dramatically? Is UNRWA helping resettle the refugees, or is it exacerbating the problem? Finally, why would the Palestinian Authority in negotiations for a Palestinian state insist that these refugees be moved to Israel?

What are the facts?

UNRWA's original definition of a refugee was someone "whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict." UNRWA began by providing emergency assistance, temporary shelters and basic relief. Soon after, UNRWA helped resettle the refugees in permanent housing and create educational and health institutions. But, unlike the treatment of refugees in all other wars, UNRWA dramatically and inexplicably expanded the definition of "refugee" to include *descendants* of Palestinian refugees.

Today, UNRWA claims more than five million Palestinian refugees, most of whom are in fact descendants and have never lived in Israel. UNRWA currently employs 30,000 people, mostly Arabs in Gaza and the West Bank. The organization receives more than \$600 million annually to serve these people, almost 40% of which comes from the U. S., and the Palestinian economy has become absolutely dependent on this aid.

By contrast, the UN's High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR)—formed in 1950—serves all the world's refugees *except* the Palestinians, and has successfully resettled 50 million refugees. Yet UNRWA, with its strange definition of refugee, has actually increased the number of Palestinian refugees by more than 700%—several million of whom are citizens of Jordan, and millions more of whom are living in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza. By 2030, the number of Palestinian "refugees" is expected to hit 8.5 million.

UNHCR, which currently serves about 34 million refugees, employs only 7,685 staff—about one for every 4,424 refugees. UNRWA, however, employs one worker for every 172 refugees, and their staff budget per head is *double* that at UNHCR.

After 1993, when an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians gave broad authority for self-governance to the Palestinian Authority (PA), many donor nations argued that UNRWA's purpose should be taken over by the PA and refugee host

The Palestinians insist that millions of "fake" refugees "return" to Israel—though 98% of them have never set foot there.

governments, such as Jordan and Lebanon. UNRWA argued vehemently against this move, however, and won out.

How many true refugees from Israel are left? In May 2012, Senator Mark Kirk introduced and Congress passed a bill known as the Kirk Amendment, requiring the U.S. State Department to specify the real number of refugees who meet the original UNRWA definition. That number is estimated to be no more than 30,000

Palestinians—a far cry from the five million claimed by UNRWA. The actual number is critical because the U.S. is the single largest donor to UNRWA—contributing about \$240 million annually. Surely U.S. citizens have a right to know whether they're supporting legitimate refugees from Israel's 1948

war of independence or whether they're paying to support millions of descendants of refugees and thus creating a new category of Arab welfare dependents.

Why does the Palestinian Authority want millions of "fake" refugees moved to Israel? One of the greatest obstacles to an Israeli-Palestinian peace has been the insistence by Palestinian leadership of the "right of return" of Arab refugees to Israel. Of course there is no inherent right of legitimate refugees, let alone their descendants, to move to Israel. But in every peace negotiation, the Palestinians have stubbornly insisted that millions of "fake" refugees—descendants—"return" to Israel, though 98% of them have never set foot in Israel. This poses an obvious question: Why would Palestinian leaders who are determined to create a Palestinian state want their people now living in the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan to move to Israel instead of to their own new state?

There can be only one explanation: They want a Palestinian state *and* they want to conquer the Jewish state. For surely, if Israel, with a population of eight million—six million Jews and two million Arabs—were to agree to such peace terms, it would be tantamount to suicide. An influx of five million Arabs would swamp Israel demographically, and it would instantly cease to be a Jewish state.

It's clear that UNRWA is an organization that has outlived its usefulness. Rather than working to help stateless Palestinian-Arabs assimilate into other societies, it encourages refugee camps. Rather than promoting Palestinian self-determination and self-reliance, the agency is nurturing a new, rapidly growing welfare class. Rather than working to eliminate the problem of Palestinian refugees, UNRWA has become a bloated bureaucracy whose goal seems to be its own perpetuation and the demise of Israel—a mission that costs American taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

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sharia, the law and culture of Islam, and so be the ruler of unified mankind. Infidels would convert if they knew what was good for them. The French had boasted of their “civilizing mission” and the British of their empire on which the sun never set; Khomeini’s imperial tone was their equal. Writing to Mikhail Gorbachev, then in the Kremlin, in order to persuade him to become a Muslim, Khomeini sounded much like a viceroy encouraging Indian princes to owe allegiance to the British Crown.

It was whispered during his presidency that George W. Bush should have dealt with Iran and Iraq in alphabetical order. In a recent article, Kanan Makiya, a prominent Iraqi intellectual, argues that the downfall of Saddam Hussein after the 2003 invasion of Iraq opened the way for the so-called Arab Spring, whereby all over the Arab world the younger generation tried to take their fate into their own hands. This has come to nothing because the unintended consequence has been to strengthen the old organizing principle of imperialism.

Shiites in Sunni-governed Bahrain, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia are excluded from power, and Iran has skillfully manipulated their genuine grievances in order to extend its own political reach. In a daring unilateral move, Iran colonized Lebanon by setting up Hezbollah, a Shiite militia of several thousand well-armed and well-trained volunteers who take their orders from Tehran. In a classic example of imperialist expansion, the protection of the Iranian position in Lebanon compels the colonization of Syria. Hezbollahis are fighting in Syria, and alongside them are several thousand Iranian Revolutionary Guards. Nouri al-Maliki, the Shiite prime minister of Iraq, turns to Iran for protection in case Syrian Sunni rebels incite Iraqi Sunni rebels.

What would make Iranian imperialism ultimately invulnerable is the nuclear weapon. For a decade and more, Western politicians and diplomats have been attempting to negotiate some way around this danger. Their Iranian counterparts have carefully, even brilliantly, deflected the issue, inflicting a level of humiliation that the West has not had to suffer since the era of Hitler and Stalin.

In *Days of God*, a newly published and well-informed account of revolutionary Iran, James Buchan, a correspondent long familiar with the country and the lan-

guage, makes the point that the regime regularly overplays its hand. Sure enough, Shiite imperialism is motivating and mobilizing an opposing Sunni imperialism. The concept of the ummah is evidently fantasy. Sunnis outnumber Shiites by a ratio of about nine to one, and have always made their sense of superiority felt. Launched in Egypt when Britain had just replaced the Ottomans as overlords, the Muslim Brotherhood has achieved for Sunnis what the regime of the Iranian ayatollahs has achieved for Shiites. Originally a group of just six friends with what seemed like the extravagant purpose of restoring the caliphate then just abolished, the Muslim Brotherhood now numbers millions and has a presence in some 60 countries. Intellectually, organizationally, and militarily, the Brothers are engaged in turning their Islamism into a universal movement. One offshoot is al-Qaeda: Ayman Zawahiri, the successor to bin Laden as leader and by origin Egyptian, professes a greater hate for Shiites than for the West or Jews. For the sake of Sunni solidarity, Saudi Arabia is financing the Syrian rebels, and makes no secret that it sees itself taking the lead in a cold war (sometimes hot) with Iran. Far from conciliating Iran while on a visit there after long years of boycotting it, Mohamed Morsi, the Muslim Brother now Egyptian president, harangued the ayatollahs for their policy in Syria.

The break-up or failure of so many Arab states encourages Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his sinister foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, to put in place what they call the Neo-Ottoman Empire, as if they were hoping to reverse the course of their country’s history. At first seeking alliance with Iran, they went so far as to support its nuclear program until realizing that this would freeze the situation in Syria and establish Shiite supremacy. A rapid reversal leaves Erdogan inveighing against Iran and Assad (“this butcher, this murderer”).

Sweeping through the Arab and Muslim Middle East, Islamist imperialism has already left some failed states in its wake and is putting pressure on other regimes. The question is whether state sovereignty is an anachronism or a safeguard, or to put it another way, what price a Treaty of Westphalia for the Middle East? Apparently there’s no call for anything of the kind, or if there is, nobody is listening. **NR**

Horror Clinics Elsewhere

The grisly dealings of a Florida abortion enterprise

BY JILLIAN KAY MELCHIOR

KERMIT GOSNELL’S sensational trial has brought to public attention the ugly operations of a Philadelphia abortion clinic where the spines of live newborns were snipped with scissors and female patients suffered internal injuries and infections. On May 13, Gosnell was convicted of the first-degree murder of three babies born alive and killed in his clinic, and of involuntary manslaughter in the death of a woman who overdosed after being administered repeat doses of Demerol. He may face the death penalty.

The case prompts the question of how common those and similar practices are. NATIONAL REVIEW has investigated three Florida abortion clinics, located in Miami, Hialeah, and Miramar. They offer a troubling portrait of America’s abortion industry.

After police were tipped off in 2004, two owners of the clinics, along with some of their staff, were successfully prosecuted for unlicensed medical practice. In 2006, a baby was born alive and killed at one of the clinics, according to witnesses. And some of the clinics’ doctors have a history of harming their patients. Regardless, the clinics remain open today.

The story begins in Illinois in 1987, when a 17-year-old girl suffered a botched abortion. Bleeding profusely, her vagina and cervix lacerated, she was rushed by ambulance to the hospital, where she delivered a live baby by C-section, according to a complaint by the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation. The baby died the same day. The Department of Professional Regu-

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lation accepted a proposed settlement from the abortion doctor, Frantz Bazile, putting him on three years' probation.

Shortly after, apparently, Bazile moved to Florida, connecting with a woman named Belkis Gonzalez. They shared a professional and sexual relationship, according to a complaint filed in the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Court in Florida in 2009. Details about Gonzalez are scarce; she attended university for only six months but began calling herself a medical assistant, Hialeah police records suggest.

Bazile and Gonzalez went into the abortion business together, partnering with Siomara Senises, the vice president of a Miami clinic. The trio founded a clinic in Hialeah in 1994. Gonzalez and Senises began a third clinic in Miramar in 1999.

In 2001 or 2002, the clinic owners hired Dr. Robelto Osborne. By then, he had already botched two abortions, one in 1996 and another in 2000, according to the Florida Department of Health and the Florida Board of Medicine. Both

women suffered internal injuries, and fetus parts were found in their bodies afterward, according to the health department's findings of fact.

The state consequently revoked Osborne's medical license in August 2004. Osborne says he didn't perform the 2000 abortion. Regarding the 1996 case, he says, "There's a certain amount of complications that are expected," adding that he lost his license solely because of bad legal representation. His former lawyer disagrees, saying the board had "clearly stated that it was their intent to revoke his license regardless of any arguments that could be made in his defense."

A few months after the revocation, police were tipped off that unlicensed personnel, including Osborne, were performing abortions and other medical functions in the Miramar clinic. The claim proved true. According to Miramar police records, Osborne said in a sworn statement that he continued working at the clinic even after Senises and Gonzalez had learned about the

revocation of his license.

Osborne also said that Senises, who has no medical license, assisted him with abortions. She pleaded no contest to practicing health care without a license and received three years' probation, beginning in 2008. Gonzalez pleaded no contest to the same charge. Two other staffers were successfully prosecuted, and another "doctor" at the clinic, who lacked a valid license, fled to Trinidad with arrest warrants pending.

As police investigated the unlicensed medical practice, Sycloria Williams, 18, sought an abortion at the Miramar clinic. On July 19, 2006, one of the doctors there, Pierre Jean-Jacque Renelique, gave her preparatory medication to open the cervix, directing her to the Hialeah clinic the next morning, with the abortion scheduled for 2 P.M.

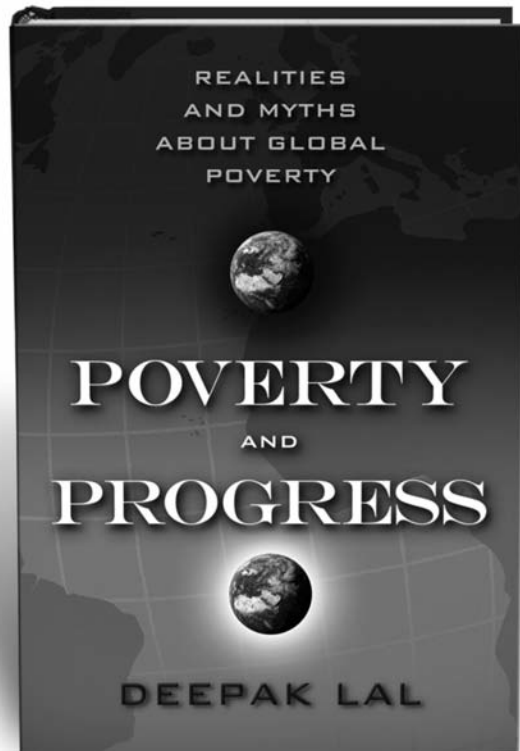
Williams arrived as instructed, but the doctor didn't. After waiting for hours, she gave birth to a live baby. According to her attorney's complaint, "the staff began screaming, and pandemonium

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ensued. Williams watched in horror and shock as her baby writhed with her chest rising and falling as she breathed. [Clinic president] Belkis Gonzalez came running into the room, picked up a large pair of orange shears, and cut the umbilical cord," which would cause the infant to exsanguinate within two minutes, a medical expert later told Hialeah police.

The Department of Health's finding of facts stated that "Ms. Gonzalez then proceeded to place the baby and all of its remains in a plastic bag. She then closed the bag and placed it in a trashcan." Williams later claimed she was given a sedative, cleaned up, and "sent home still in complete shock."

An anonymous tipster phoned police about what had occurred. Investigators searched the Hialeah clinic three times, discovering a blood-smeared recliner and boxes of aborted fetuses buzzing with flies, said Ralph Gracia, a homicide detective who worked on the case.

On July 21, police interviewed Gonzalez, who said Renelique had successfully broken up and removed the fetus. Renelique at first claimed that he thought he had performed a successful abortion and that he learned otherwise later. He now tells NATIONAL REVIEW, "It is simple: I was not there." According to the Department of Health, "Renelique prepared a false medical record when he knew what had actually happened." Contrary to Gonzalez's account, the police found the body wholly intact on July 28, 2006, eight days after the infant's death.

There is significant legal disagreement about what happens when a baby deemed nonviable is born alive and killed. The federal Born-Alive Infants Protection Act extends some protection to any live-born baby, including one that has survived an attempted abortion. But interpretations of the law vary, and its enforcement is limited.

Florida's fetal-homicide law provides some protection for unborn children who have reached viability, though that gestational age is vaguely defined. And Florida bans abortion after viability, unless the life or health of the mother is at stake. But *Doe v. Bolton*—the companion decision to *Roe v. Wade*—defined that exemption broadly, to mean not only physical but also mental health and even life cir-

cumstances. Florida recently passed legislation providing legal protection for babies born alive.

The autopsy report estimates that the gestational age of Sycloria Williams's baby was 22 weeks, adding that "the literature shows that fetuses before 24 weeks gestation have basically a 0% survival. . . . [Therefore] the cause of death is extreme prematurity and the manner of death is natural."

David Waksman, a prosecutor who worked on the case until his retirement in 2009, notes that "Florida and a lot of states said you're not a person for purposes of being the victim of a crime unless you're living independently of the mother." Investigators and prosecutors who worked on the Williams case say they lacked legal backing to bring homicide charges against Gonzalez. The state attorney filed other serious felony charges: tampering with physical evidence and performing an unlicensed medical procedure that resulted in a death. But the case fell apart for reasons that are not entirely clear.

Anthony Rodriguez, the detective who led the investigation, says, "Yeah, I think [Gonzalez] got away with murder."

Williams brought a civil suit on behalf of herself and the baby, but her attorney, Tom Pennekamp, says he withdrew from the case after "Sycloria kind of dropped off the map." The court dismissed the case without prejudice for lack of prosecution.

But by then, the law had caught up with Gonzalez. Weeks after the baby's death, she was arrested and charged with practicing health care without a license, the result of the earlier investigation prompted by the 2004 tip-off to police. She plead no contest, and was sentenced to five years' probation on December 20, 2007, with the condition that she "not [be] allowed to directly or indirectly [engage in] owning, operating, conducting, managing, or being employed or associated with any health care clinic, health care professional office or health care business establishment."

The clinics' corporate records raise suspicions that have never been fully pursued. They show that ownership of the Miramar and Hialeah clinics was passed on to close kin of Gonzalez and Senises; Williams alleged in her complaint that "Belkis Gonzalez and

Siomara Senises [have] continued to provide abortion services under the cloak of entities and officers that are mere instrumentalities." Gonzalez's probation ended in December 2012, at which point the court could no longer prohibit her from working in medicine. NATIONAL REVIEW's investigation revealed that she is regularly present at the Miramar clinic, and a staff member says she is the owner.

In 2008, the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration fined the Miramar and Miami clinics for failing to submit a monthly report of "induced terminations of pregnancy." And in 2010, the agency inspected the Miami clinic and found problems: Bottles of emergency drugs were expired, the defibrillator for the crash cart was not functional, and records were missing or misplaced.

Also disturbing is the history of the doctors employed at the clinics today. Frantz Bazile, who was put on probation in Illinois after allegedly botching the abortion in 1987, practices at the Hialeah clinic. The receptionist who was sanctioned by the State of Florida for unauthorized medical practice said in a sworn statement that David Steven Brown, the medical director at the Miramar clinic, had trained her to do sonograms although she was unlicensed; NATIONAL REVIEW found no evidence that he has been prosecuted for this. And a doctor named Harvey Craig Roth practices at all three clinics. In 1998, Roth allegedly performed a circumcision that went awry, resulting in "amputation of a portion of the glans penis." The case was settled, and Roth's insurance paid out in 2005.

Like the Gosnell case, the story of these Florida clinics illustrates the abortion industry's sinister underside and the difficulty of exposing it. Women seeking abortion quite reasonably expect confidentiality, but the secrecy also protects unethical doctors. Abortion rates are higher among less-educated women, who may face greater risk of being victimized and have limited recourse to justice when they are. And the charged politics surrounding abortion prompt many to look the other way, even when there is evidence that women and newborn babies are in danger.

How many other clinics have sunken into horror?

NR



A New Jobs Agenda

In which the government can play an active but limited role

BY MICHAEL R. STRAIN

THE most pressing problem facing the United States today is not the federal budget deficit, the national debt, or excessive federal spending. It is the labor market.

Yes, the United States does have a deficit problem, but we have a much more serious labor-market problem. In fact, for many workers, it's a labor-market crisis. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the federal budget deficit is projected to remain more or less stable over the next ten years, fluctuating between 2.4 and 3.8 percent of GDP. (The 2012 deficit was 7 percent of GDP.) Of course, a deficit of 3.8 percent of GDP needs to be trimmed as the economy recovers. But it doesn't need to be trimmed all the way to zero, and certainly not over the next ten years.

Our real and serious debt problem will be driven not by the next decade's budgetary spending, but by projected spending on entitlements stretching beyond 2023. We must enact structural changes to our entitlement programs that will decrease future spending, but we should not—as the new House Republican budget does—make reducing the amount of federal spending set to occur in the next several years a higher priority than helping Americans get back to work.

One broad measure of unemployment, which includes workers

marginally attached to the labor force and workers who want a full-time job but have to settle for part-time employment, stands at 13.9 percent—significantly higher than its pre-crisis level of a little over 8 percent. The economy has 2.6 million fewer jobs than it had when the Great Recession began. Just 64.4 percent of working-age men are working—the lowest level, by far, since the Great Depression, and a whopping five percentage points lower than at the beginning of the current downturn. Only 58.6 percent of the overall working-age population is currently employed. To find a previous figure that low, you have to go back to the early 1980s. Don't be deceived by our recently steady (but too slow) job growth—the labor market is treading water and remains very badly damaged.

In particular, the job market for the long-term unemployed is a national crisis. A staggering 4.4 million workers have been unemployed for 27 weeks or longer. This downturn has set the post-World War II record for both the number of long-term unemployed and the share of total unemployed made up of long-term unemployed.

When a worker is unemployed for such a long time, his skill level falls below that of his employed peers and his professional network weakens. Evidence suggests that employers are extremely reluctant to hire people who have been out of work for a long time. Some of the long-term unemployed end up on dis-

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ability insurance, effectively ending their careers. Our labor-market crisis represents an enormous loss of economic potential—one that will linger for quite some time even while the economy improves—with millions of capable people who want to work tragically sidelined.

The labor market for low-skilled workers is also in crisis. Some 12 percent of adult workers without a high-school diploma are unemployed. The unemployment rate for white teenagers is 21.8 percent; for black teenagers, it's 40.5 percent. Many of these young workers are trying to gain skills and climb the employment ladder. The current state of the labor market is significantly disrupting their ability to do so, with consequences that will ripple through their careers for many years.

This is a human crisis as much as it is an economic crisis. The ranks of our unemployed are made up of millions of people who are unable to realize their full potential, to thrive, to earn their own success, to pursue happiness. It is our moral obligation to help them get back to work.

WHAT policies should the GOP advocate to help them? Let's discuss a few. One simple reform would make life easier for employers who don't want to fire anyone but need to reduce their expenditures. If a firm wants to cut its wage costs by 20 percent, it can fire one-fifth of its workers, or it can tell all its workers to stay home on Fridays without pay. In the latter case, under an option called work-sharing that is available in many places but remains little used, workers would be eligible to receive one-fifth of their unemployment-insurance (UI) benefit. The cost to taxpayers would be the same under the two scenarios. In most cases, the UI benefit would be less than the lost wages, typically around half, so work-sharing would amount to a pay cut (in this case, one of around 10 percent), but workers would stay employed and retain their benefits.

Work-sharing reduces what economists call "inefficient separations." It allows firms to weather a lull in demand without losing the firm-specific expertise present in their existing work forces; it spares firms the time and expense of hiring and training new workers when demand picks back up; and it prevents workers from losing or failing to acquire skills during a period of unemployment. Unfortunately, in many cases employers do not even consider work-sharing because they have never heard of it. A limited but active program to keep Americans working might include expanding, supporting, and publicizing work-sharing UI programs.

Another policy to consider would be temporarily lowering the minimum wage for young and inexperienced workers. This would enable firms to hire low-skilled workers who are currently too expensive for them. Lowering the minimum wage in this way would allow the hiring of workers whose contributions to the production of goods and services would be fairly small. This would give them the opportunity to begin a résumé, learn occupational skills (including the soft skills of professionalism, punctuality, and dealing with a boss), and build a professional network, all of which could lead to better jobs.

We should also consider lowering the minimum wage for the long-term unemployed, many of whom may be attempting to switch industries or occupations, or whose perceived riskiness makes firms reluctant to hire them at a high wage.

In order to ensure a basic standard of living for all working

families, we should couple these two policies with a permanent expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit. This would make the public, rather than the businesses that hire people, pay for ensuring that working Americans don't live in poverty.

UNEMPLOYMENT rates vary significantly among the states. In 2012, the average unemployment rate for North Dakota was 3.1 percent. In Nebraska it was 3.9 percent; in South Dakota, 4.4 percent. Vermont, Iowa, Oklahoma, and Wyoming all had unemployment rates below 5.5 percent. Compare that with North Carolina, New Jersey, Rhode Island, California, and Nevada, with 9.5, 9.5, 10.4, 10.5, and 11.1 percent unemployment.

Needless to say, it would be significantly easier for many workers to get a job in North Dakota than in Nevada. But many unemployed Nevadans may lack the financial resources to pick up and move. An employment program should include a relocation subsidy to help the long-term unemployed move from high-unemployment areas to low-unemployment areas, as suggested by economist Enrico Moretti and others.

A program like this already exists under the Trade Adjustment Assistance program. Certain workers who have secured employment in a new city can receive a relocation allowance of up to 90 percent of the "reasonable and necessary expenses" of moving, plus an additional lump-sum payment of up to \$1,250. The unemployment-insurance system could create a similar program for the long-term unemployed, possibly financed by letting them take an advance on their UI benefits.

While we're modifying the UI system, we should provide UI-funded lump-sum bonuses to unemployed workers when they get a job, as an incentive for them to search harder and more efficiently. Surprising as it may seem, there is a lot of evidence in the economics literature that little nudges like this can have large effects on people's choices.

We should also consider taking advantage of low interest rates



to offer assistance to those long-term-unemployed workers who want to start businesses. Government can take on risks that private banks cannot, and given the stigma facing the long-term unemployed in the labor market, banks may be wary of lending to them due to their lengthy unemployment spell.

Speaking of entrepreneurship, research suggests that skilled immigrants are 30 percent more likely to start a business than U.S. natives—and new businesses create jobs. One-quarter of engineering- and technology-related businesses founded between 1995 and 2005 were started at least in part by an immigrant. The United States should encourage these potential job creators to bring their talents and energy to our shores. At a minimum, we should stop sending away thousands of high-skilled immigrants who are educated at top American universities and who want to stay after completing their studies. If a comprehensive immigration-reform package is to be agreed to, it must include an increase in high-skilled immigration. If none can be, such an increase should be enacted independently as a jobs plan.

A conservative program to help the unemployed should also include a push for more states to adopt right-to-work laws. These weaken the power of labor unions by eliminating the requirement that workers pay fees to a union as a condition of employment. If the power of unions is restricted, firms may hire more workers; the economics literature suggests that by increasing the cost of wages and benefits for workers, unions reduce employment growth.

Obamacare's requirement that firms with 50 or more full-time workers provide their employees with health insurance should be delayed until the labor market is much closer to its pre-crisis state. This requirement provides an incentive for firms to keep their payrolls at 49 or fewer employees. At a time of extremely low employment, encouraging firms not to hire is unwise.

The Obamacare rule takes effect in 2014 but covers firms averaging more than 50 employees in 2013. Since we're only four and a half months into 2013, it is hard to find clear evidence as to whether Obamacare is suppressing employment. But there are hints in the data that Obamacare is slowing employment growth, and the news is filled with stories that businesses are planning around the impending cut-off at 50 workers.

We should also reduce the paperwork, licensing, and administrative barriers facing would-be entrepreneurs. Encouraging domestic energy production by, among other things, allowing for more exploration on federal lands and reducing regulatory-compliance burdens should be part of the program. We should consider temporarily eliminating the capital-gains tax on new businesses' investments because doing so might help would-be entrepreneurs to attract capital. And we should discuss permanently reducing the payroll tax—which, in theory, would lead to more hiring—by, say, increasing the eligibility ages for Medicare and Social Security.

None of these policies are incompatible with the reasonable and correct conservative opposition to massive government programs and to inefficient, poorly designed, and cronyist stimulus packages. But if the GOP wants to enact them, it will have to embrace—or at least acknowledge—the power of active but limited government to do good for society.

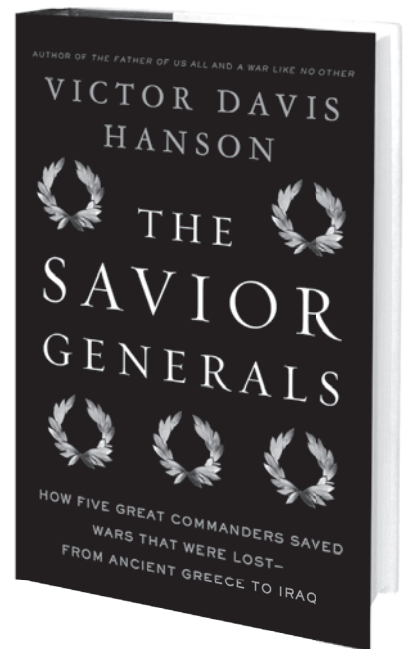
Republicans need to be more than the party of the heroic entrepreneur, more than the party of ever-lower marginal income-tax rates, more than the party of balancing budgets and maximizing economic liberty by minimizing government. They need to show that they care about the poor, the struggling, the vulnerable—and that they are willing to pitch in and help. A great place to start would be tackling the most serious economic problem facing the country today, by championing creative, genuinely conservative public policies to decrease unemployment.

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Agent McConnell

The Senate minority leader has infiltrated the bureaucracy

BY DANIEL FOSTER

MITCH MCCONNELL had a problem. He needed to give President Obama, the man he had publicly vowed to make a one-term president, a nominee for the Legal Services Corporation. By law, the LSC, a Nixon-era 501(c)(3) tasked with providing legal aid to low-income Americans, had to be bipartisan; no more than six of its eleven members could belong to one party. By tradition, it fell on McConnell, as the senior member of the opposition in the Senate, to provide the president with a list of Republican names.

The trouble was that, as is often the case with putatively bipartisan bodies, the posts required nominees to meet certain ostensibly nonpolitical criteria that by their nature all but rendered the posts partisan carve-outs. In this case, McConnell needed to find a Republican who was “income eligible” for the available seat, meaning someone who earned less than 130 percent of the federal poverty line, which came out to a little over \$14,000 a year.

So where on the fruited plain did Mitch McConnell find a competent, dedicated conservative lawyer without two nickels to rub together? As it turns out, in a rectory. Enter Father Pius Pietrzyk, a Dominican parish priest who happened to be a University of Chicago Law School graduate and a stalwart member of the Federalist Society. After practicing corporate and securities law at a big Chicago firm for three years, Pietrzyk left in 2002 to pursue a calling he found more meaningful. He was ordained a priest in the Catholic Church in 2008.

As a Dominican, he took a vow of poverty. And in 2010, President Obama nominated him, and the Democratic Senate confirmed him, to the LSC board of directors. There he sits next to board chairman John G. Levi, another Chicago lawyer (albeit with a significantly higher net worth), whose greatest claim to fame might be that he hired young Michelle LaVaughn Robinson and Barry Obama in the late 1980s.

Now, placing a ringer on an out-of-the-way board might not be the equivalent of repealing Obamacare or flipping the Senate, but in McConnell’s world it was a real win in the war of attrition that Republicans are quietly fighting inside what you might call the Other Government: namely, the bureaucratic state comprising more than 100 bipartisan boards and commissions created by Congress to regulate everything from Wall Street to farm credit, the post office to nuclear safety, Social Security to federal elections.

Many of these bodies are exactly as obscure as you are thinking. (Wikipedia helpfully tells me that the Commission on Key National Indicators, for instance, works with the National Academy of Sciences to “review research on the selection of a set of key national indicators [and] determine how to implement and establish a key national indicator system.”) But others are big-deal, big-government bureaucracies with familiar abbreviations such as SEC, FTC, FCC, FDIC, and NLRB. And because there isn’t a Republican in the White House, it falls on McConnell to fill their Republican slots.

President Obama tends to make his appointments to these boards the way they have usually been made: willy-nilly. Some will be well-known policy experts or academics politically aligned with the president. Others will be patronage picks of bundlers and allies. And others will be “friends of friends.”

Usually, it’s the same way with Senate leaders who do not belong to the president’s party. In the Senates of Bob Dole and George Mitchell, during the administrations of Clinton and George H. W. Bush, appointments were commonly viewed as so many caucus carrots, intended to keep members happy. (The attitude continues today. One GOP Senate staffer said of the relatively rare cases in which the Senate Democratic leader makes personnel choices instead of the White House, “Anytime Harry Reid gets to appoint two people, you can guarantee that one of those two people will be from Nevada.”)

NOT so with McConnell. According to a number of sources inside the Senate Republican shop, McConnell saw Obama’s comfortable victory in 2008, and the Democrats’ daunting majority in the upper chamber, and knew he had to find creative ways to conduct asymmetric political warfare. On the legislative side, that meant first and foremost keeping Republicans unified against the president’s agenda, especially by ensuring that they kept their hands off Obamacare—a strategy whose overall success was marked by four years of liberals’ complaints about Republican intransigence. On the regulatory side, it meant scrapping the view that appointments are opportunities to do favors for your colleagues, and instead searching every nook and cranny of the country for sharp conservatives to take little-heralded but critical regulatory jobs.

“The way I like to think of it is, as leader, McConnell’s primary job is to unite 45 Republicans on as much legislation as possible,” McConnell speechwriter Brian McGuire told me on the Hill. “He has to be concerned about everybody in the conference and weighing all the equities that implies. [Appointments are] the one aspect of his job that he can act on unilaterally, and so to me this really reflects his conservative instincts.”

To translate his instincts into names, he brought in GOP veteran Dan Schneider. To look at Schneider’s government rap sheet—stints at the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Labor Department—you’d think he was a die-cast liberal. But when I spoke with him for this story, he said he likes to think of himself as a loyal conservative sent behind enemy lines “to monitor the radicals.”

Schneider came onto McConnell’s radar via the senator’s

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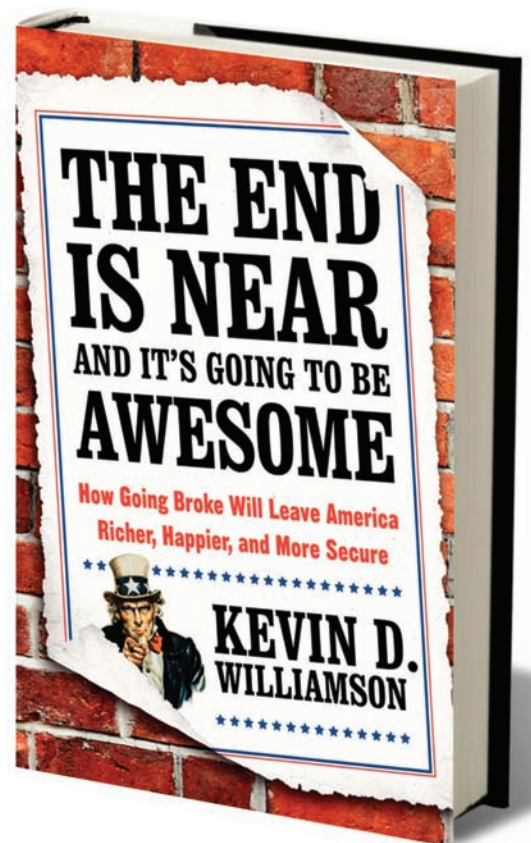
Every year, consumer goods and services get better, cheaper, and more widely available while critical necessities delivered by government grow more expensive, even as their quality declines. The reason for this paradox is simple: politics. Not bad politics, not liberal politics, not conservative politics, not politics corrupted by big money or distorted by special-interest groups, but the simple practice of delivering goods and services through federal, state, and local governments and their obsolete decision-making practices.

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wife, Elaine Chao. When George W. Bush appointed Chao to head his Department of Labor, Schneider became her first White House liaison, and she gave him free rein to find conservatives to fill more than 200 slots inside the department. He impressed, and, after the Obama transition, migrated into McConnell's office, where he oversees a sort of national conservative talent search with the title "Policy Advisor and Counsel for Nominations."

Schneider operates according to a set of five criteria for screening potential nominees first developed by E. Pendleton "Pen" James, Ronald Reagan's director of personnel management. First, were the nominees competent in the subject matter? Second, were they philosophically compatible with Senator McConnell? Third, did they possess high character and integrity? Fourth, were they tough? Fifth, were they team players?

The result, two or three hundred appointees later, is measurable.

Take the LSC, where not just Father Pius but four other McConnell-Schneider picks were confirmed and are serving. Among them is Sharon L. Browne. Browne was principal attorney for California's Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF), one of the oldest conservative/libertarian public-interest law firms

in the country, formed in part by veterans of Reagan's gubernatorial administration. As president, Reagan had tried and failed to get a PLF lawyer on the LSC. But McConnell succeeded in seeing Browne through, even though her nomination was hotly opposed by the American Bar Association, no doubt in part because she successfully sued the California Bar in 1995, forcing them to settle on a claim that they had taken funds reserved for poverty programs and used them for political operations.

She brought that fight to the national level, and together with McConnell's other picks, she got enough Democrats on board to promulgate a regulation making legal-service grantees financially liable for spending grant money on political advocacy instead of what it was intended for.

On the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, which went from sleepy New Deal installation to big-time regulator after Dodd-Frank, McConnell installed Tom Hoenig, the former president of the Kansas City Fed and a famed inflation hawk. In the lead-up to the financial crisis, Hoenig voiced concerns about the banking system. In its aftermath, he urged the government not to bail out equity holders. He later opposed Henry Paulson's interventions, the Bush and Obama bailouts, and Dodd-Frank.

On the Federal Trade Commission, McConnell handed Obama the name of Josh Wright, a holder of both a Ph.D. in economics and a J.D. and widely considered his generation's greatest mind on antitrust law. Before his confirmation, Wright had been highly critical of the FTC's exceedingly thin two-year antitrust investigation of Google's search-engine practices. Seventy-two hours after his confirmation to the FTC board, the investigation was dropped with minimal consequence for Google.

Then there is Chris Beall, an infrastructure expert whose first job was building natural-gas pipelines for the Koch brothers and who had spent most of the rest of his career in finance, privatizing dozens of public utilities. On McConnell's recommendation (and, one assumes, to Joe Biden's lament), Obama nominated Beall—the man who built climate-change conduits for the Co-Princes of Darkness—to the board of directors of Amtrak.

The list goes on. It is populated by individuals with both expertise and conservative pedigrees, in many cases already known for advocating the sorts of causes that annoy the White House—and who nevertheless were formally nominated by the White House. McConnell values this list not just because it stocks bureaucratic Washington with Obama opponents, but also because it constitutes a farm team for the next Republican administration, credentialing conservatives, many of whom have not had government experience, to take more senior roles once the GOP returns to Pennsylvania Avenue.

Of course, nomination negotiations between the Senate and the White House have always been a little like Cold War spy exchanges—you give us our two NLRB guys and we'll give you a judge; two under secretaries for an FCC commissioner and a player to be named later; and so on—but McConnell's innovation has been to stack his side of the trades with as many Jason Bourne and James Bonds as he can, where his predecessors might have stacked them with congressmen's nephews and senators' golf buddies.

And while a few appointments to commissions with



A Clown at The Table

America's real food problems

BY GRAEME WOOD

Democratic majorities aren't going to undo the progressive agenda all by themselves, they can prevail in the right spots, and gum up the works in others. Daniel Gallagher, a longtime SEC staffer and regulatory expert whom McConnell tapped to return as one of five SEC commissioners after a stint in the private sector, is a good example. In at least two instances, Gallagher convinced Democratic SEC commissioners to flip their votes on major regulations, ensuring their defeat in favor of Republican alternatives. In other cases Gallagher merely stymied former Democratic SEC chairwoman Mary Schapiro, capturing more ink in the financial pages and industry tip sheets and coordinating dissenting opinions on regulations that courts later relied on in overturning them. According to one source familiar with the dynamics of the SEC, Gallagher was generally "running circles around" the Democratic commissioners.

ASKED Schneider, whose office is tucked into one of the fractal corners of the leadership suite on the Senate side of the Capitol, how much of a difference he thinks all of this makes at the macro level. How would Washington and America be different if McConnell were appointing good ol' boys from Kentucky to all these slots? Standing next to a wall unit dominated by hunting maps—he is an outdoorsman—and a binder of dossiers, Schneider takes a minute to think. Then he responds in his affable Kansas cadence: "My boss's goal is to make sure that our people, collectively, beat their people day in and day out, that our people are smarter and sharper and better than theirs."

And while that is not measurable in every instance, he asks me to consider a counterexample. "There is not a bipartisan health-care board," he says. "Consequently, we have 20,000 pages of regulations on the implementation of Obamacare. This matters." Indeed, the eight-foot-high paper stack, printed out and wheeled around the Capitol on a hand truck as a clever, if unwieldy, political prop, was at that moment standing just a few rooms over in McConnell's reception area.

I spoke to several individuals who are part of Schneider's kitchen cabinet—think-tankers and public-policy professionals whom he regularly consults when headhunting nominees. They agreed that the biggest effects of McConnell's appointment strategy are likely "ecological" and "cumulative." The Hudson Institute's Tevi Troy, who frequently huddles with Schneider on picks, even joked that he regretted this story was being written, since he thought McConnell was doing "brilliant" work; he didn't want the other side to take notice.

When I asked McConnell himself to comment for the story, he was characteristically matter-of-fact, and hardly bashful. "We've had a very aggressive effort to do what we could on the regulatory side," he told me over the phone, in his monotone drawl. "The core question was, 'Can you have an impact on public policy at a time when you're outnumbered?' I think after almost five years of doing this, we have."

McConnell has expressed himself on the subject even more succinctly than that. Schneider tells me that after he had located, recruited, and shepherded a "rock star" nominee through confirmation, the boss popped his head into the office to deliver a simple command:

"Keep 'em coming."

NR

STARVATION is a three-step process. In Stage One, several hours after your last meal, your body starts raiding its pantry, metabolizing fatty acids that it stored up but (in this modern age of abundance) never expected to have to use. Over a few days, as your body enters the Stage Two process, called autophagy (the self-cannibalization of muscle), the rumbling stomach shrinks, and pain subsides. At Stage Three, a month or so after your last meal, organs break down, and eventually one of them gives out—usually the heart.

The documentary *A Place at the Table*, which was nominated for a Grand Jury Prize at Sundance last year, follows the lives of a few Americans in Stage One and several in what we might call Stage Zero, a pre-hunger state known as "food insecurity." Of the millions of people on this planet who are in the second and third stages—these include the kids with distended bellies and bony torsos—approximately zero live in the United States. Stage 2–3 hunger was eradicated in this country over 30 years ago.

But about 40 million Americans are still in Stage Zero, and the film is dedicated to publicizing their plight. We have a "hunger crisis" in America, the media say, and in no small part because of the filmmakers' efforts, hunger has reemerged as the social-justice cause du jour decades after being forgotten. Last year, ABC News ran a "Hunger at Home" series, and more recently, newspaper articles have described a hunger catastrophe that is "looming," vulture-like.

A Place at the Table is right about one big thing: According to the government definition of food insecurity (if for economic reasons you have skipped a meal, or worried about having to skip one, in the last month, you are food-insecure), we have 40 million food-insecure people in this country. And that's too many, and more than most countries of comparable wealth. Never mind that many of them are fat. They still worry about food, and no one who doesn't worry would trade places with them.

Unfortunately, the film is wrong about everything else: why we've gotten into this hunger mess, what typical American hunger is like, and what we should do about it. The anti-hunger movement in this country has been conned, and the makers of this film are part of the problem. The victims of food insecurity, in the film's telling, are the working poor—Americans whose desire for healthy food would be satisfied with more food stamps; who eat junk food because no one in their neighborhood sells fresh veggies; who are victims of a political system that force-feeds them McNuggets and Ding-Dongs instead of the kale and quinoa they crave. In spite of its good intentions, *A Place at the Table* is a cornucopia of misguided pieties.

Mr. Wood is a writer living in Oakland, Calif.

THE greatest miracle of the modern developed world is something this film about food neglects to mention completely: the end of hunger. A social advocate from a century ago would stand in slack-jawed amazement at the fact that we worry about how fat poor people are. This development would be more baffling than the moon landing, more awesome than the atom bomb, more unexpected than the peaceful coexistence of Austro-Hungarians and Serbs. The mechanisms that produced this bounty are manifold, but they include, at a minimum, the massive productivity gains unleashed by science (thank Green Revolutionaries such as Norman Borlaug) and agribusiness.

But the film sees only gloom. Its statistics are at best distorted, and in some cases inexplicable. A lawman in Collbran, Colo., tells the camera that “what I used to spend in a month on groceries [four years ago] now gets me about two weeks”—which makes no sense unless he eats twice as much or started shopping at an amazingly overpriced store, since food prices have barely budged in the last four years. The film makes much of the rise in the price of fresh foods *relative* to that of processed foods since 1980. “Look what’s happened to the relative price of fruits and vegetables,” says Marion Nestle of NYU. “It’s gone up 40 percent since 1980.” Perfectly true, of course—but it is surely relevant that in *absolute* terms, food of all kinds is far cheaper than it was 30 years ago.

Processed food has nose-dived in real price. Fresh produce has followed a slightly more gentle descent, with mild turbulence. Consider the McDonald’s Dollar Menu (“Good Taste doesn’t cost a lot”), which can deliver as much as 2,150 calories—a little more than the USDA target—for \$5, or less if you drown your meal in free ketchup. To gastronomes, these meals are abominations. But the Dollar Menu will sustain life. A burger in 1979 cost around \$0.40, or \$1.20 in today’s dollars. At my local McDonald’s, it’s \$0.89, for a real drop in price of 30 percent. A pound of cookies is \$3.70 today, which is 12 percent off its 1979 price. A pound of tomatoes has dropped about 22 percent in the same period, and an apples-to-apples comparison of Red Delicious shows that they’re now about 13 percent cheaper.

Jeff Bridges, lovably scruffy as the film’s celebrity spokesman, argues that the problems have “[gotten] worse.” That is true only if you measure from the start of the recession in 2008, which saw a mild uptick in food insecurity that was directly related to hard times in general. But by any objective measure, hunger has improved dramatically in Bridges’s lifetime. Between the last season of *Sea Hunt* (1961) and the theater debut of *Tron* (1982), the expansion of food stamps and school lunches essentially wiped out hunger in America. Robert F. Kennedy’s high-profile visits to Appalachian towns full of spindly kids could not happen today: No one in America is visibly malnourished, unless mentally ill or the victim of abuse.

In *A Place at the Table*, clips of each U.S. president since Reagan are subtitled with a ticker showing the number of “hungry” Americans at the time. The number ticks up year by year, from 20 million under Reagan to 50 million under Obama. Never mind that these figures refer to the food-insecure, not to the hungry. The rising numbers, in any case, give a false impression. The percentage of food-insecure Americans stayed pretty flat, at around 11 percent, from 1995 until the recession of 2008.

Politicians make a mess of the statistics as well. The filmmakers interview an enterprising Massachusetts congressman,

James McGovern, who embarked on a doomed effort to live off the “average food-stamp benefit,” about \$3 per day. This sum will not sustain productive human life. “I was tired, I was cranky,” he says. “There are people who are living on that food-stamp allocation. And you really can’t.” McGovern doesn’t mention, of course, that the average benefit of \$3 per day includes benefits to the working poor, who have income other than food stamps. If he had *no* income, he’d get more than \$7 per day in Massachusetts, which is enough to feed and sustain a frugal individual. For \$7, one could even get a day’s worth of calories from McDonald’s. A few years ago, people walked around this country visibly malnourished. Now the government will give you enough money every day to eat three meals in a restaurant.

A *PLACE AT THE TABLE*’s most compelling characters are Barbie Izquierdo, a working mother of two in inner-city Philadelphia, and Ree Harris, a working mother of four in rural Mississippi. (In the film, nearly everyone who is food-insecure is a member of the working poor. In fact, only one in three U.S. households that receive food stamps has even a single employed member.) These two families share a problem that the film presents as a structural flaw in capitalism, namely the existence of “food deserts.”

Food is everywhere in Philly and in Jonestown, Miss. But it isn’t nutritious. “I love fresh vegetables and fruits,” says Harris. “It’s very frustrating that they don’t have these here.” The film blames the absence of food on the market. “If I’ve got an 18-wheeler, I’ll deliver to Walmart and these other chains,” says Dr. Alfio Rausa, a state public-health worker. “But I can’t afford to take my 18-wheeler and go to these back roads [to deliver vegetables].” The film says Harris has to drive 66 miles round trip to get fresh vegetables.

She doesn’t. I called Frank’s Deli in Jonestown, and Frank himself confirmed proudly: “We’ve got fruits and fresh vegetables.” He admitted that he didn’t stock much of them—but that’s because people prefer to shop at Bryant’s, the other grocery in town, which has a bigger selection. And increasingly, he said, they prefer to drive 13 miles to the Clarksdale Kroger or Save-a-Lot. Bryant’s Grocery even appears in the background in the film, and under its sign it advertises “Fresh Vegetables.”

The urban poor fare no better, the filmmakers say. In one case not mentioned in the film, journalists and food-policy entrepreneurs bemoaned the status of Detroit as a city of a million people “without a supermarket”—just minimarkets stocked with processed foods such as chips and Hot Pockets. The claim was false, as Detroit writer Jim Griffioen proved in 2011 by Googling the terms “supermarket” and “Detroit.” In fact, there were several dozen supermarkets, including Kim’s Produce, an organic-produce market near Wayne State University in midtown Detroit. It opened in 2010, and it wasn’t just for the rich. Owner Kim Smith told me that a quarter of her customers paid with food stamps.

So the existence of food deserts is grossly exaggerated. But even to the extent that they do exist, we now have reason to doubt that they make people fat or malnourished. In a March 2013 article in *Preventing Chronic Disease*, Aiko Hattori, Ruopeng An, and Roland Sturm surveyed 97,678 Californians and found that living in a food desert—defined as a place more than a mile from a grocery store—has almost nothing to do with being fat. At most, living in a food desert added about a pound to the luxuri-

ance of one's waistline. For most people who live in food deserts, the extra distance to the supermarket made no difference at all.

This makes intuitive sense: Many poor people have cars, and those who don't have cars have bus passes. Those who want lettuce can get it. In the film, we see Barbie Izquierdo go shopping, apparently forced to patronize a minimart that stocks Little Debbie "donuts." Her kids sprint straight for the junk food, and she buys it, apparently against her desire to buy healthier food—if only there were some way to get it.

A TRAIL of powdered sugar leads to the real problem. *A Place at the Table* suggests that food insecurity is in large measure a problem of inadequate access to good food. "There has got to be a way for fruits and vegetables to be made accessible and less expensive than they are now," says Tom Colicchio, a *Top Chef* co-host (and the husband of Lori Silverbush, the film's director). He praises a celebration on the White House lawn at which Michelle Obama conducts a teach-in about good nutrition. At the event, kids crunch down on fennel with the same delight they might otherwise reserve for Snickers.

If access to fennel were the problem, then air-drops of fennel in rural Mississippi and blighted urban landscapes would be a cheap solution. But access is not the issue, and we all know why. Fennel is delicious and good for you. It is not, however, addictive in the way that junk food is, and there is no amount of celebrity endorsement that will make it so.

Research has increasingly revealed that sweets and fats are not merely delicious but also insidious—more like heroin or nicotine than like kite-flying or listening to music. We are a species of addicts. Kim Smith, who ran Detroit's inner-city produce market with her husband Hollis, eventually closed her shop. She sold \$5 lunch specials—creamy tomato basil soup, plus a sandwich—but people ignored her, drawn to fast food as if to methadone. "We had a hospital right by us, and every day we'd see the employees walk right past us and go to the McDonald's," she says.

Recently I visited my local McDonald's, which coincidentally is the one nearest the epicenter of the American foodie movement, Alice Waters's Chez Panisse. If any population knows good, healthy, food, it is Berkeley's. The McDonald's was, in a way, a microcosm of the American food landscape, where salads and burgers are cheap, where sodas are dangerously cheap, and water is free. No doubt many of the ultra-healthy avoid McDonald's altogether. But for those who visited that night, the temptations of junk food were irresistible. I watched two dozen people approach the counter, and none ordered salad. Nearly all bought carbohydrate- and fat-rich sandwiches, a majority bought French fries, and about half bought soda. McDonald's is the ultimate trial of our willpower—everything is accessible and cheap: ask and you shall receive—and it convicted every customer among us, including me, of poor self-control.

Attempting solution to the problem of food insecurity is simply to expand the food-stamp benefit, known as SNAP. Food stamps are widely credited with putting (healthy) meat on the bones of those Appalachian kids in the 1960s. So why not just expand the benefit?

There's reason to doubt that that would do much good. After the Clinton welfare reforms of the mid 1990s, food-stamp qualification became more onerous, and by 2000, only 17 million people participated. But the standards were loosened, and now

almost 50 million Americans use food stamps, a 194 percent jump in a single decade. As Jeff Bridges reminds us, the last decade has seen no progress in eliminating the remaining food insecurity in this country. Weirdly, giving people food does not seem to make them less food-insecure.

Other interventions deserve to be tried. Parke Wilde, a food economist at Tufts, points out that food-stamp benefits arrive only once a month, as a matter of federal regulation. Food-stamp families tend to spend their benefits early in the month and get hungry late in the month, when the benefits run out, thanks to poor planning or ne'er-do-well family members who waste resources. If food-stamp programs could parcel their assistance out every couple of weeks instead of once per month, they might impose better planning on recipients and alleviate that last-weekend hunger. So far, this option hasn't been properly tested at any level.

Perhaps the strangest demographic choice made by the filmmakers was to portray only native-born Americans, when hunger in America is felt disproportionately by newcomers. "We deny food stamps to many of the population most in need," says Neeraj Kaushal, an economist at Columbia. "For a rich country, the U.S. incidence of food insecurity is very high, and that's largely because of the high incidence of food insecurity among immigrant families." (She politely does not even mention the poor in her own native country, India, half of whose population subsists on a total daily income that is a fraction of the food-stamp benefit that left Representative McGovern "cranky.")

Immigrants to the United States who have been here less than five years are ineligible for food stamps—a policy that might go some distance toward explaining why private charities such as Feeding America end up providing assistance to a whopping one in three Latino families in this country every year. Some immigrant families avoid contact with the government, even to pick up benefits they are legally permitted, for fear that authorities will notice and deport undocumented members of their household. The bluntest tool at our disposal, to ensure that recent immigrants don't suffer here, would be to just give them food stamps. But of course we could just as easily make our immigration policy friendlier to skilled immigrants and decline to burden ourselves with the hunger of the world's poor in the first place.

TWICE-MONTHLY benefits, streamlined SNAP applications, and revised immigration policies are, unfortunately, the last of the low-hanging fruit, delicious though they may be. The big remaining question—how do we make sure society's abundance is accessible, especially given that it appears that just *giving* it to people isn't sufficient?—has defied easy answers.

Analysts of food insecurity debate whether the problem is ultimately one of logistics (we have the food—now how do we get it to the people who need it at the time they need it?) or one of anti-poverty (how do we get rid of poverty?). Wilde, the Tufts professor, says that we could theoretically just pay for the missing and potentially missing meals of the food-insecure, for a price of a few billion a year. But if you think, as he does, that the problem will persist as long as poverty does, then this solution won't be enough.

"With the food-centered approach, the common theme is *If only we had the heart*," Wilde says. "But hunger is a more daunting problem." Whatever you think can be done to make people richer (tax cuts? tax increases?), that's probably going to be your best guess about how to get rid of hunger. But given that we

can't agree on how to end poverty, we probably shouldn't assume that the solution to hunger is any simpler.

The problem of sugar and fat is still gnarlier. Addiction to perfectly legal, near-poisonous concoctions such as Whoppers and Fritos is a public-health problem we have not come even close to solving. The film rightly condemns our agricultural policy for corn subsidies (even as it lionizes those subsidies' champions, such as former agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack and Democratic senator Tom Harkin). But as Helen Lee showed in a perceptive essay this spring in *Breakthrough Journal*, those subsidies are a minor component of food costs, so getting rid of them can't help much.

We could tax unhealthy food, Bloomberg-style. But taxes would hit working families hardest. Another option, and not an easy one, is cultural warfare—a mass effort to stigmatize junk-food consumption. José Bové, the activist farmer who hurls trash cans through the windows of fast-food joints in France, did a great deal to convince that country's culinary Guevarists that McDonald's is uncool. As someone who struggles to keep his burger cravings in check, I would not mind a little social stigma to nudge me toward nutrition. I wish I blushed when I walk into a Burger King the way I would blush if spotted walking into a XXX movie house.

THE inconvenient truth is that the fault lies in ourselves, specifically in our wayward limbic systems, which are responsible for addiction. We are fat, overgrown lab rats, and we get too many reward pellets for too little effort.

In a revealing quote—revealing because he said it at all, and revealing because the filmmakers included it without irony or shame—Jeff Bridges muses that more hunger might be for the best. “What I'm hoping is that maybe increasing the problem [of hunger] is part of the solution,” he says, with a casual yet croaky air, half Dude and half Rooster Cogburn.

Bridges really seems to care. But this Leninist attitude toward hunger is cynical. The makers of this film care, too, but not enough to pause to wonder whether their falsehoods and omissions are noble, or whether they discredit the cause. At one point, the film describes the consequences of malnutrition for children, then quotes Barbie Izquierdo as she says food insecurity “affected [her adorable little boy] Aidan a lot.” The film then cuts to her description of Aidan's worst chronic ailment, glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency (G6PD), an immune disease. The filmmakers leave the audience to infer that malnutrition put Aidan in the hospital. In fact, G6PD is a hereditary inability to process certain foods—especially fava beans—and completely unrelated to food insecurity.

The late Roger Ebert once called films that resort to this cheap tactic “child-in-terror movies,” and put them in a category with movies that get their thrills by imperiling the family cat. In those movies, however, the cat wrangler is on the set with a bowl of Whiskas—and in the world so inadequately described in *A Place at the Table*, there are still millions of kids and adults who feel real hardship because they aren't sure how they're going to eat this month. Real suffering demands serious consideration of the issues. Anyone seeking that kind of sustenance from this movie will leave the theater famished.

NR

The Odds In Afghanistan

We might win, but do we still want to?

BY MAX BOOT

Kabul

WILL America's decade-plus effort to bring stability and security to Afghanistan succeed? Crisscrossing the country at the invitation of U.S. commanders, as I have been doing regularly since 2008, I saw in early May cause for both pessimism and optimism as Afghanistan hurtles toward a turning point: NATO's self-imposed December 2014 deadline for all “combat” troops (though not necessarily military advisers and special-operations forces) to leave the country.

The most important reason to think that Afghanistan may turn out just fine is the progress being made by the Afghan National Security Forces, now 352,000 strong. The formal forces are augmented by 20,000 Afghan Local Police, an auxiliary, village-based security force that is particularly feared by the Taliban, who are targeting its leaders for assassination. The Afghan security forces, and in particular the army, are now in the lead in 80 percent of all security operations, and in June they will take control of the entire country. Already far more Afghan than coalition troops are being killed and wounded—a reversal of the prevailing trend of the past decade.

I came away impressed from my meetings with Afghan-army officers such as Major General Sayed Malook, commander of the 215th Corps in Helmand Province, who present a professional appearance and convey an unyielding determination to fight the *dushman* (enemy), as they call the Taliban. If the Afghan army continues to receive substantial Western support (a big if, to be sure), it is unlikely to lose a single battle to the Taliban's ragtag fighters.

Another cause for optimism is the result of American-led counterinsurgency operations in Helmand and Kandahar provinces, both of which I visited. U.S. troops, along with their international and Afghan partners, have driven the Taliban out of most of the organization's southern sanctuaries. Enemy-initiated attacks in Kandahar Province, I was told, fell 70 percent between 2011 and 2012. Kandahar City, the biggest urban area in the south, is more secure than ever despite (or possibly because of) the assassination in 2011 of Ahmed Wali Karzai, a half-brother of the president who was the de facto political boss of the region. Last summer the Taliban did not succeed in killing a single significant leader in Kandahar, where security is now in the hands of the much-feared police chief, General Abdul Raziq.

Further grounds for optimism can be found in the continuing security and growing economy of western and northern

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Afghanistan, the region anchored by Herat in the west and by Mazar-e-Sharif in the north. This has less to do with security operations by Afghans or their coalition allies than with simple demographics: The insurgency is largely confined to the Pashtun population, and there are few Pashtuns in the north and west.

Against these positive factors must be weighed three major negatives. First, and most important, Pakistan: The rift in U.S.-Pakistani relations that opened after the 2011 Osama bin Laden raid has seemingly healed—the Pakistanis have reopened NATO's supply line from the port of Karachi and resumed nominal cooperation on cross-border security. But in reality, the Pakistani army, the true arbiter of the country's foreign policy, continues to support the Afghan Taliban even while fighting its counterpart, the Pakistani Taliban. Some factions of the Taliban might want to make peace, but the Pakistanis are not allowing it—they see the Taliban as their best bet to exert influence in post-2014 Afghanistan. That's why peace talks, in which the Obama administration has invested so much hope, are going nowhere fast. Given that cross-border sanctuaries are a big boon for any insurgency, Pakistan remains a spoiler even though security forces have made considerable progress in southern Afghanistan since 2009 in spite of Pakistan's support for the insurgency.

A second, and related, negative is the continuing instability of eastern Afghanistan, the region located along the mountainous frontier with Pakistan. U.S. commanders have never had enough troops to do "clear and hold" operations in most of this area. While Kabul itself remains secure and bustling, nearby provinces such as Ghazni, Logar, and Wardak are still infested with Taliban and Haqqani Network fighters. This insecurity, if left unaddressed, eventually could spill over and threaten the capital, which also happens to be the country's largest and most important city.

A third and final negative—one too seldom mentioned by U.S. officials—is the continuing corruption of the government of Afghanistan, which is dominated by an avaricious clique of warlords, drug barons, and power brokers in cahoots with President Hamid Karzai and his family. Afghanistan's leading clans have robbed the country blind over the past decade, stealing billions of dollars in foreign aid. Their rapaciousness has alienated substantial sectors of the population and provided an opening for the Taliban, who, while themselves complicit in the drug trade, promise to deliver a harsh brand of Islamic justice to villagers.

THE positives and negatives of Afghanistan are closely balanced. The final outcome may well be decided by three upcoming events.

First, the Afghan security forces must show that security gains in the south are sustainable. This summer will be their first major test—the first fighting season when coalition troops are not in the lead. If the Afghan army and police can hold on to gains achieved largely by U.S. forces, that will be a major psychological boost for them—and a major blow to the Taliban. While U.S. commanders are understandably focused on this immediate challenge, an even bigger test will come in the summer of 2014, when there will be no more than 34,000 U.S. troops in Afghanistan. The ultimate test will come after 2014, when the U.S. presence will be even further diminished.

Second, Afghans must emerge from their April 2014 presidential election (assuming it occurs as planned) with a new leader who can unite diverse sectarian and political factions. A fractious outcome, with ballot-stuffing rampant and no candidate able to claim legitimacy, would be disastrous for the country's long-term prospects. So too would be any attempt by Hamid Karzai to hold on to power beyond the length of his current term, whether by postponing the election or simply by changing the constitution. On the other hand, a peaceful transfer of power, the first in Afghanistan's modern history, to a new president with widespread support would be a major blow to the Taliban and their al-Qaeda allies.

Third, Afghans must know that the U.S. will provide the support necessary to keep their country together. Afghans understandably fear they will be abandoned after 2014, just as they were abandoned by the West after the departure of the Red Army in 1989. That's why property prices in Kabul are falling and capital flight is increasing. Only the announcement of a substantial post-2014 commitment by the U.S. can reassure Afghans that the Taliban will not come back.

What can we do now, at this late date, to ensure that the negatives don't overwhelm



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the positives? Plenty. For a start, the U.S. and its allies should continue to provide at least \$5 billion a year to the Afghan security forces, the minimum necessary to preserve a force of 352,000 but more than the \$4.1 billion pledged at the Chicago NATO summit last year. Unless the \$4.1 billion figure is increased, the Afghan forces will have to lay off 120,000 soldiers and police at the very time when coalition forces are withdrawing. That would be a disastrous combination.

The Obama administration should also announce that it will keep at least 13,600 U.S. troops in Afghanistan after 2014 to assist the Afghan security forces—the minimum number recommended by recently retired general James Mattis of Central Command. If the U.S. were to ante up, our allies would probably provide another 6,000 or so troops, bringing the total coalition presence to around 20,000. That's still short of the 30,000 or so troops that ace analysts Fred and Kim Kagan have argued would be needed to maintain robust operations in eastern and southern Afghanistan—but it should be sufficient to avert disaster. It is especially important that the U.S. continue to provide air support and medical-evacuation capability, since Afghanistan won't have a functioning air force until 2017 at the earliest.

Unfortunately the administration is hinting that it will send substantially fewer troops—the president has told NATO to begin initial planning for a force of 8,000 to 12,000. The U.S., which has historically provided two-thirds of all coalition forces, presumably would provide no more than 5,400 to 8,000 of the total. That is such a low figure that U.S. troops would have trouble defending and supplying themselves, much less projecting power to outlying regions. That, in turn, will make it hard for the Afghans to fight effectively, and will thus increase the risk of the army's fracturing along ethnic lines, with the Pashtuns making common cause with the Taliban, and the Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks re-creating the Northern Alliance. Such an outcome would plunge Afghanistan back into the disastrous civil war of the 1990s, which led to the rise of the Taliban in the first place.

President Karzai can help to avert this dire fate by being more cooperative in efforts to negotiate a status-of-forces agreement with the U.S. that would grant our troops immunity from prosecution in Afghan courts—an admittedly contentious issue. He does not want to make the mistake that Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki of Iraq made: Maliki tried to drive a hard bargain, only to have Obama walk away from the negotiations and pull all U.S. troops out. That remains a possibility in Afghanistan, too, especially if Karzai continues to bad-mouth the U.S. publicly, thereby undermining American support for a continuing commitment.

In addition to keeping a substantial contingent of advise-and-assist and special-operations troops after 2014, the U.S. should launch an immediate campaign to counter Pakistan's destabilizing efforts in Afghanistan. The model is the covert campaign mounted by U.S. forces in Iraq in 2007 and 2008 to blunt the influence of Iran's Quds Forces, which involved doing everything from arresting and deporting Iranian operatives to publicizing their machinations. The U.S. must recognize that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence is our enemy in Afghanistan and act accordingly, instead of clinging to the fiction that the Pakistanis are our friends and allies. Nor should we cling to the illusion, so beloved of diplomats, that Pakistan can be induced to jettison the Taliban as a part of some kind of regional "grand bargain" involving Iran, China, and Russia. That is about as likely to occur as a breakthrough in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, another

chimera pursued by generations of diplomatists.

Given that we have less need of Pakistani support than we once did to target al-Qaeda's much-weakened central organization, we should also not be afraid of using drones and, if necessary, special-operations raids to target Taliban leaders and arms caches in Pakistan—something we have not done to date for fear of offending Islamabad. It is shameful that the Taliban are allowed the free run of towns such as Chaman, a Pakistani border crossing facing the Afghan town of Spinbaldak in Kandahar Province. Coalition air strikes would not defeat the Taliban, but they would break Taliban leaders' sense of impunity and keep them in check as U.S. troops drew down.

Finally, the U.S. government should become more active in shaping the outcome of the Afghan presidential election. Ballot fraud is likely to be prevalent, as it was in 2009, but that need not be fatal, since the outcome is likely to be determined not in the actual voting but in backroom deals among political bosses—as was the norm in an earlier period of American history. Talks are currently going on among power brokers in Kabul, in what some jocularly refer to as the "Afghan primary," to sort out a long list of presidential wannabes such as education minister Farooq Wardak; former Karzai chief of staff Umer Daudzai; former finance minister Ashraf Ghani; former interior minister Ali Jalali; the president's brother Qayum Karzai; former intelligence chief Amrullah Saleh; former presidential candidate (and foreign minister) Abdullah Abdullah; and even the Afghan-American former U.S. ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad.

THE U.S. government was burned by its experience in 2009, when efforts by former ambassador Karl Eikenberry and the late special envoy Richard Holbrooke to encourage a more competitive election were interpreted by Karzai to mean that the U.S. was trying to block his reelection, thereby making him even more difficult to deal with once he secured a suspect victory. As a result, U.S.-embassy officials today are loath to discuss presidential candidates, even in private, for fear of appearing to choose sides. This crippling reticence only increases the prospect of either a deadlocked process or the emergence of a discredited front-runner, e.g., Qayum Karzai, who would have a hard time winning credibility either in Afghanistan or in the West. Instead of standing on the sidelines, the U.S. needs to use its considerable clout—including, if necessary, the bags of cash the CIA has been providing to President Karzai—to ensure the selection of the strongest possible president, one who would take on warlords and the Taliban more effectively than the incumbent has done.

Based on the current situation, I would put the odds at slightly better than even that Afghanistan will be able to avoid a civil war and a return to Taliban rule of a significant part of the country. That's more optimistic than the defeatism which prevails in the U.S., where most people wrongly assume the war is already lost, but it is hardly a ringing endorsement. With the relatively modest steps outlined above, however, President Obama could dramatically increase the odds of success. That would be good not only for Afghanistan and for American interests in the region (we don't want a failed state next to a nuclear-armed state), but also for the president's legacy. Given how much effort he has already expended in Afghanistan, Obama would be extraordinarily shortsighted to waver now, when the finish line is finally in sight. **NR**

Your Firstborn, Too

SECOND terms are the price a man pays for the hubris of thinking he deserves one.

The *Boston Herald*, searching for a term to sum up the president's merry May, chose "Obamagate" as a catch-all for the PR nightmares that erupted with the speed and horror of Black Plague lesions: Benghazi evasions, AP phone records, HHS head Kathleen Sebelius's shakedown—sorry, nonbinding friendly request for contributions—and, of course, the news that the IRS had given conservative groups a going-over that makes a colonoscopy look like the observation of the moon with a telescope.

At first the IRS inquiries were described as rogue misdeeds from an out-of-the-way Cincinnati office—which was the center for judging such applications, but still, c'mon, *Cincinnati*. Apparently someone stood up on his desk and cried, "Sweet job we have here, guys—who's up for putting everything in jeopardy with a partisan investigation of our political enemies?" Sure, sounds right.

Then the wingnut rag "The Washington Post" reported that officials in the nation's capital got in on the fun as well. Members of the press started to think: Well, looks like nationalized health care is all we're going to get out of this guy. Time to start thinking about Scoops and Books. Time to rediscover that professional self-interest magically coincides with public interest. Voilà: The lapdogs find their bark again.

The groups that got extra-special lovin' from the IRS were asking for it, really; anyone who uses words like "patriot" or "liberty" in his organization's name wants to bring back segregated drinking fountains, and he's probably funded by Big Porcelain to boot. It's only sensible to give him a closer look. The targeted groups have released documents that detail the level of scrutiny. It's like this, more or less:

1. Are you a membership organization? If so, answer the following. How many members do you have currently? How many have mullets? How many ever had mullets? Were they photographed wearing the mullet next to a '70s muscle car with a Confederate flag painted on the side? Was the paint lead-based? Please request form PR024-444b to request retroactive assessment for your lead-abatement cost. Interest and penalties will apply.

2. Has your organization been in contact with the news media? If so, please detail the nature of these interactions. Examples follow.

a) If you have written a letter to the editor, please provide the text, all correspondence from the editor, and transcripts of any phone calls discussing the changes to your piece to eliminate profanity and strident bigotry. If the letter was published online, please provide an MS-DOS-formatted hard drive containing screen captures of the website.

b) If you gave an interview on TV, please submit a recording in one of the following formats: Beta, Kinescope, flipbook, or Cinerama.

c) If any member of your group has called a talk-radio show, please provide receipts for the telephone purchased to make the call. If the call originated from a phone booth, please attach photographs of the booth, including any graffiti that gave you a number to call for a good time, as well as medical records that might indicate you obtained an STD within a reasonable timeframe after noting the number. If a good time was had, please describe the encounter, along with proof that copies of the requested items have been sent to the vice squad in your locality.

3. Please submit a map of the location of any guns in the homes of your self, staff, relatives, potential relatives, friends, associates, and companion animals who may someday evolve to possess opposable thumbs. Please list the theoretical locations of any guns that could be buried in extraplanetary colonies in the future. If the guns are buried on Earth, please include GPS coordinates and Google Maps directions, as well as ultrasound images to indicate depth and dimension of the cache. If guns are kept in a locked safe accessible only by thumbprint, please include the thumb, drained and cauterized, packed in dry ice, in a container no larger than four inches by two inches.

4. If your organization has had any contact with anyone who was an elected representative at any point in his or her career, and this contact was in an airport restroom where sexual availability was indicated by a "wide stance" or coughing in a way that signaled carnal interest, please attach a notarized account of the meeting. Your report should make it clear whether favors were exchanged for a promise of lobbying activity or the two were completely separate. If the event was later confessed to a priest, include a transcript of the admission, a checklist indicating that penance was duly completed, and a copy of the check from the Koch Foundation buying the priest's silence. Failure to provide the check will be considered admission of guilt.

5. Photographs shall be provided of all organization officials dressed in sheets with no less than 600-count thread content. The burning cross in the background shall conform to local ordinances concerning such displays, as well as EPA guidelines on particulate contamination.

Devotees of the administration will note that there's no proof the IRS actions were approved from on high. Well, there's "The buck stops here," and then there's "The dollar borrowed from China flew past the Oval Office window while my back was turned, because I was having my picture taken for the Twitter feed with a school group who represent our nation's future and remind us why we must invest in education."

In other words, if any of this matters to you, then you hate kids. And you wonder why Republicans lose elections. **NR**



Talking Points

CONFIDENTIAL—EYES ONLY

Please review the following talking points and submit revisions, etc. NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 10!

(Draft includes revisions from DepWar and DepState and WH.)

Early in the morning on December 7, the Japanese armed forces [Do we know for certain it was the Japanese? Suggest “foreign combatants” or “shadowy international menaces.”] attacked [Again, suggest: “jostled” or “visited roughly” or “made unscheduled diplomatic arrivals at.”] the United States military bases in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. [Need to clarify that Hawaii is a colonially occupied territory of the U.S. government. Suggest: “assorted American assets temporarily stored in a region whose indigenous peoples await the return of their King Kamehameha.”]

It is at this moment unclear to our intelligence-gathering personnel both in Washington and on the ground in the region what, exactly, occurred or the precise motives behind this act of war. [Note: Need to rephrase this. “Act of war” suggests that we were invaded and attacked, which is NOT advantageous at this point. WH suggests waiting until after midterms to define the event so specifically. Suggest: “. . . this confusing and unclear set of uncertain events.”] At this point in time, while the Japanese Imperial Government is claiming credit for the event, we have no certain knowledge that this is, in fact, so. [Suggestion: Several 8mm reels of comedy shorts such as “The China -

man’s Milkmaid” and “Ants in Your Pants 1938” have been viewed in parts of the island of Lanai. Quite possibly this episode was a result of protests against these short films, both of which are, to us, harmless photoplays, but to others might represent a cultural and ethnic insult. Maybe possibly point to this as a motive?]

The region in question is a complicated and unsettled one in general [Please check: Is this racist?? Suggest: “. . . the region in question is one with a long tradition and rich historical tapestry.”], and before we move forward, we need to make sure all of the facts are gathered.

Needless to say, the president and his team in Washington will bring the same zeal and enthusiasm to hunting down the architects of this crime that they brought to restoring America’s economic and financial greatness.

God Bless America! [Need?]

CONFIDENTIAL—EYES ONLY

Please review the following talking points and submit revisions, etc. NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 14!!

(Draft includes revisions from Def., State, NSA.)

Early this morning, on September 11, 2001, four passenger airplanes were hijacked by members of the al-Qaeda terrorist organization. [Not comfortable with this lede. Not sure it’s possible to say “members” or “terrorist” or “al-Qaeda.” Would be more comfortable with a simple: “. . . four passenger airplanes were redirected by youths on a purely coincidental basis, without connection to any known larger entity.” Please revise.]

As a result, the Twin Towers in New York’s Wall Street area were destroyed, as well as an entire wall of the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. More than 3,000 American lives were lost. [Does this include the eight youngsters who were flying the

planes? If not, please revise. Need to be inclusive here.]

In addition, United Flight 93 was retaken by heroic actions of its passengers and plunged into the earth without further loss of life. [Seems unnecessary here. Please substitute: “Other events also occurred on this day, including the release of Ben Folds’s solo album, *Rockin’ the Suburbs*.”]

It is clear that the evil [Please strike.] forces behind this attack [Please replace “attack” with “expression of hurt.”] were driven by a fanatical [Please strike.] desire [Please strike.] to impose [Please strike.] fundamentalist, radical Islam [Please strike.] on the world, and an unwillingness to live peacefully in the 21st century [Please strike.]

[Please replace paragraph above with: “Investigations are being initiated by the Inspector General and the Department of Justice, in coordination with the New York State Police, into the cause of these events. [Please replace “events” with “mysterious occurrences.”] Until such time as these investigations are concluded and a report is filed, it’s important for all of us to remain calm.”]

[Possible paragraph: “Early indications from intelligence sources suggest that this expression of violent outrage may have been triggered by the cancellation of the hit series *Xena: Warrior Princess*, which has proved very popular in the region from which the amateur jetliner pilots originated.”]

[Please remove all references to the speculated backgrounds of the pilots of the aircraft. Still trying to determine who exactly they were. Probable: white men.]

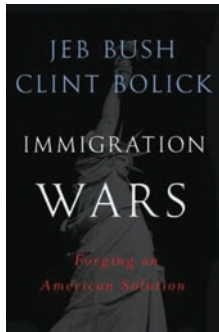
In the meantime, we urge all Americans to remain vigilant of any signs of terrorism and terrorist activity. [Uncertain about this. Suggest adding: “. . . especially from the usual types” at the end.]

God bless America! [Incendiary and unprovable. Please remove.]

Books, Arts & Manners

Immigration Without Tears

JOHN O'SULLIVAN



Immigration Wars: Forging an American Solution, by Jeb Bush and Clint Bolick (Threshold, 304 pp., \$27)

THESE must always be some unresolved tensions in a book by two authors, but those tensions are magnified when one is an ambitious politician and the other is a policy wonk. Jeb Bush is plainly considering a run for the presidency; for him this book must help, and certainly not hinder, a possible presidential campaign. It is his attempt to craft an immigration policy that will win support from both Republican donors and the GOP's base. Clint Bolick is a leading pro-immigration policy expert on the Republican side. He knows the standard arguments for his case, but he must also have accumulated many interesting, paradoxical stories and unorthodox insights about the issue. Most of them, however, might not fit comfortably into an electoral campaign in which a single sound bite can sink a candidate. The result is a quasi-campaign book that can never be too fresh or too daring because such qualities might put Jeb's potential candidacy at risk.

That said, the book has its virtues. It is written in a briskly readable fashion. Many of its subsidiary points, notably giving more authority over immigration to the states, are sensible and well taken.

In particular, its chapter on education—where Jeb's co-authorship is probably most felt—outlines several reforms that look pretty desirable irrespective of their marginal impact on immigration. It sensibly treats many of the anxieties of its audience as reasonable (rather than dismissing them as nativist bigotries). It is manifestly more honest than the ever-changing proposals of the “Gang of Eight,” which should mainly remind us of Elliott Abrams's First Law: “Never play cards with a man whose first name is a city.” And its central argument, with which I shall quarrel, is nonetheless quite cleverly crafted.

It begins by posing the current “immigration war” as a choice between (1) an existing immigration system that is dysfunctional or broken down and (2) reforms that essentially liberalize that system and increase immigrant numbers. Such a choice does not exhaust the range of policies, however, and it is easily exposed as, well, shifty. All one need do is agree that the existing system is broken but propose different reforms that tighten the system and reduce immigrant numbers.

Reforms doing both things were proposed by the bipartisan Jordan Commission in 1997 and initially endorsed by the Clinton administration. According to recent polls, a large plurality of the American people would still like to see immigration reduced. (For about 40 years, polls, though shifting on some aspects of immigration, have consistently shown that Americans favor less immigration over more immigration—usually by large margins, often by outright majorities.) But the Jordan Commission is not mentioned in the chapter briefly recounting the history of immigration reform, which, in addition, eccentrically but shrewdly roots the current “broken” system in the restrictionist 1952 legislation rather than in Ted Kennedy's liberalizing 1965 act. Nor do the authors seriously discuss reforms along Jordan Commission lines. In short, Bush and Bolick are playing with loaded dice.

Their justification for doing so is an argument that crops up throughout the book, namely, that immigration is essentially unstoppable. They maintain that the inadequacy of the present legal system is

sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that people enter and remain in America illegally. More people want to come to America, and if we don't allow them to do so legally, they will do so illegally. We should get used to it and legalize the inflow. Or: If they come, you will build it.

For more than 30 years, legal immigration has been running at around 1 million entrants annually, with illegal immigration about 50 percent of that. On the Bush-Bolick argument, therefore, the “right” level of legal immigration must be at least 1.5 million annually and maybe more. The authors do qualify that conclusion slightly by proposing legal reforms that would alter the types of immigrants America should admit: fewer family members, more skilled workers. That is the main departure from immigration orthodoxy in their book, and it is a welcome one. But the logic of their overall position is that if we reduce the number of slots available for family members, then disappointed sisters, cousins, and aunts will just cross the border or overstay their legal welcome anyway. They simply can't be stopped.

That fatalistic assumption undercuts the spirit of can-do American optimism that otherwise pervades *Immigration Wars*. But it is also at odds with two other elements in the book. The first is its praiseworthy emphasis on the need to respect the rule of law. Thus, the authors insist that illegal immigrants should be eligible for green cards but not for citizenship. If they want to be U.S. citizens, they should return home and “get in line” for regular immigrant visas. Bush and Bolick think that this converts what would otherwise be amnesty into a punishment. In fact, most illegal immigrants want to live and work in America without becoming citizens. For them, this will be an amnesty. Those who want citizenship and return home will be getting into a very short line for much higher levels of legal immigration. And if large numbers of illegals should remain in the U.S., as seems likely, the established alliance of Democrats, labor unions, ethnic lobbies, and GOP consultants will agitate, almost certainly successfully, for them to be brought out of the shadows into full citizenship with full voting rights. Almost all

illegals will get what they want, and some will get more than they want. So the law will be made an ass; the only question is how large an ass.

Second, the assumption of the inevitability of immigration undermines the very reform proposals that Bush and Bolick are making. They try to keep some kind of overall limit on numbers—but how can such limits be sustained if they are lower than the numbers irresistibly flooding over the borders? As so often with reformers, the authors operate on a subconscious assumption that the irresistible forces of history or economics will suddenly become quite tractable when their policies are implemented. This is a sort of magical thinking. In reality, if such forces are irresistible, they will overwhelm the Bush-Bolick limits;

if they are not irresistible, then they can be confined within the lower limits proposed by the Jordan Commission. And Americans, not others, can decide the outcome.

Inevitably, quite a lot is missing from this book, principally about social issues. Diversity crops up mainly in references to the “diversity lottery” for green cards—despite Robert Putnam’s reluctant warnings that diversity as a social fact tends to increase distrust both within and between groups (which would seem to indicate that the issue needs to be addressed in the immigration debate). Threats to public order get a throwaway mention about “anarchist” bombings in the 1920s. But since the book was sent to the printers, the Boston bombings have reminded us that importing people can

also mean importing their grievances. Tom Wolfe’s new novel, *Back to Blood*, describes the America that is being splintered into mutually hostile tribes by these social impacts.

Above all, like most books advocating more and/or looser immigration, it rarely addresses in depth the immigration-skeptic case advanced by such opponents as Mark Krikorian, Peter Brimelow, and Roy Beck. The exception in this case is the book’s response to Milton Friedman’s observation that “it’s just obvious you can’t have free immigration and a welfare state.”

The authors’ reply—and I have to admit it is an admirably bold one—is as follows: “Actually, the converse is true: We cannot sustain a generous social-welfare program . . . if we do not increase the numbers of productive, contributing participants in our workforce. And . . . the only way we can do that is through immigration.” This is the argument that mass immigration is a Ponzi scheme that works. If it were accurate, President Obama would be the visionary leader who saved an expanding welfare state.

But it isn’t accurate. Most immigrants lower the average age of the population, but not enough to make a major difference in the actuarial health of Social Security. The younger they are, moreover, the more likely they are to have children who swell the demand for social and educational services. When they retire, they increase the financial pressure on the welfare services they were imported to save. More immigrants then have to be brought in to pay for *their* pensions, until eventually the world runs out of people altogether and the U.S. presumably has to bring in workers who are illegal aliens even according to the most politically correct definition, i.e., being from outer space. And that calculation ignores the fiscal impact of those who arrive here as older immigrants. Outsourcing overseas—which, economically speaking, is immigration without social costs—would make better sense economically and fiscally.

These are not isolated errors. In general this book shares the misplaced confidence of most comprehensive immigration reformers that free-market economic arguments are on their side. These arguments can be summed up in the single point that immigration increases gross

YOUR DAYS ARE NUMBERED; YOU ARE WEIGHED AND FOUND WANTING; YOUR KINGDOM WILL BE DIVIDED AND SURRENDERED TO THE PERSIANS

It’s one year later, but the same old subway station
Stairs I step down—tread-worn, steep, and gritty.
One weight they’ve yet to bear: the fruits of renovation
Long-promised but forgotten by the city

(It would seem). They lead one down where walls
Are filmed with ageless grime and looking only slightly
Better written on than bathroom stalls.
Still, I have seen construction sites far more unsightly.

Nothing to read but bygone Outbounds ghosting through
The years, and faded taggers’ signature
Graffiti (what else can a subway Daniel do?).
Then . . . four block caps—or can my eyes be sure?—

Develop in the caked-on layers: S,
A, L, and R, beneath a finger pointing west,
Back where I came from. Now I have to guess:
This pentimento—or do I mean palimpsest?—

Apparent in the atmospheric fixative,
Emerges from the past to half-spell . . . what?
I stare till others stare, until the letters give:
Forming through oily paint, and scribbled smut

And stain, their four-square shapes predict the past:
Once, ESCALATOR stood forth, helpful, plain, and clear,
To guide us up and out. It did not last.
From moving stairs, to stairs, to what then, come the year

This station’s finished? What will be the public’s lot,
I wonder, staring. Will those thousands tramp
Their way to street-side straining up some ziggurat,
Or maybe just a dusty earthen ramp?

—LEN KRISAK

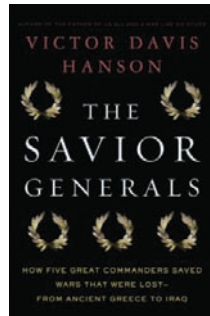
domestic product. But it also increases the population; and since almost all of the additional wealth goes to the immigrants, the net effect on the native-born is zero or near zero. Reviewing the academic literature in a joint article, Bob Rowthorn, an economics professor at Cambridge, and David Coleman, a demography professor at Oxford, concluded that it contained no support for the view that immigration increased per capita GDP. In other words, Americans get no economic benefit in return for the social costs and upheavals that mass immigration entails.

Whenever opportunity beckons, however, Bush and Bolick vault over such statistics to recount heartwarming human stories of potential immigrants pursuing the American dream and doing good. Immigration skeptics usually ask why we never hear harsh stories of criminals admitted by a lax immigration system or sad stories of its invisible victims, such as low-paid Americans undercut by immigrant competition. That rejoinder, though, merely makes the skeptics look grouchy. A better response is to ask the authors how they justify keeping American dreamers out of the U.S. No, you read that right. For, however lax the immigration system, however large the number of incomers, there will always be some legal limit to immigration. Indeed, Bush and Bolick propose limits of their own. They would keep some good people out, maybe many good people. The test of a policy is not the good feelings of either its proposers or its beneficiaries but whether and how it benefits the American people.

This book is a decent statement of a flawed case. It is also a missed opportunity. In *Who Are We?* the late Samuel Huntington gave a powerful argument in defense of the Tocquevillian America he saw vanishing under mass immigration and multiculturalism. What we need from those who advocate those changes is an equally powerful argument—one that describes the new America emerging from this flux and that explains why it is superior to the America in which most Americans grew up. Instead of doing that, *Immigration Wars* tells us that because immigration is the essence of America, then the more immigration we have, the more American we will become. That's verbal juggling. It's not what people experience every day, and it won't wash. **NR**

Wisdom in Command

MICHAEL KNOX BERAN



The Savior Generals: How Five Commanders Saved Wars That Were Lost—From Ancient Greece to Iraq, by Victor Davis Hanson (Bloomsbury, 320 pp., \$28)

IF the universal genius of such commanders as Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon is equal to the most varied chances of war, the narrower virtuosity of the “savior generals,” Victor Davis Hanson writes in his absorbing new book, enables them to excel in the singular art of salvaging wars that appear to be lost.

Hanson finds the exemplary instance of a savior general in Themistocles, the Athenian who came into his own in the lowest ebb of his city's fortunes. After the Greek defeat at Thermopylae, a massive Persian army under Xerxes descended to Boeotia and Attica. In this dark moment, Hanson writes, the “salvation of Athens rested solely on the vision of a single firebrand” who in the midst of general despair perceived the enemy's weakness and found a way to take advantage of it. The result was the naval battle in the Bay of Salamis, in which Greek sailors eviscerated the Persian fleet. Xerxes retired into Asia, and the following summer the demoralized rump of his expeditionary force was annihilated at Plataea.

Thucydides said that Themistocles

Mr. Beran, a lawyer and contributing editor of City Journal, is the author of, among other books, Forge of Empires, 1861–1871: Three Revolutionary Statesmen and the World They Made.

“was supremely happy in forming a prompt judgment in matters that admitted but little time for deliberation; at the same time he far surpassed all others in his deductions of the future from the past, and was the best guesser of things to come.” With characteristic clarity and incisiveness, Hanson shows how this combination of presence of mind and farsightedness fostered in Themistocles a “contrarianism” that challenged the military orthodoxy of his day, which held that infantry phalanxes (like those that prevailed at Marathon in the First Persian War) were the key to Greek survival. Themistocles, to the contrary, foresaw that Persia, with its vast population, could field armies so large as to be unstoppable by Greek infantry. What Greece needed most, he said, was not an army but a navy, and to this end he persuaded the Athenians to build the triremes that carried the day at Salamis.

The strength of mind that perceives new ways to win wars is of course a quality found in all great commanders. Philip of Macedon developed the infantry formations with which his son conquered much of the world; Bonaparte discerned the possibilities of the *levée en masse*; Moltke saw that in the hands of a first-rate general staff, railways and telegraph lines were weapons that would change the nature of war. But Hanson is surely right when he argues that contrarian commanders who implement their unproven strategies even as defeat and dishonor stare them in the face are in a class by themselves.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of the commanders Hanson depicts in *Savior Generals* is their equanimity or sense of proportion. His generals “are philosophers of sorts who worry about the idea of yin and yang, nemesis and karma.” They are neither overly puffed up by victories nor wholly cast down by defeats. The qualities the Greeks knew as *sophrosyne*, an instinctive sense of the limits life imposes on conduct, were essential to the success of the second commander Hanson profiles, Flavius Belisarius, the Byzantine general who a thousand years after Salamis preserved the eastern remnant of the Roman Empire from the barbarians who threatened its frontiers—Persians in Mesopotamia, Vandals in North Africa, Goths in the Italian peninsula, Bulgars from the

Pontic Steppe. Unlike the young Julius Caesar, who envied the fame of Alexander and sought to surpass it, the savior general is not a glory glutton; Belisarius saw himself not as a contender for Caesar's laurel crown but in the sober light of a military technician, diligently repairing breaches in Byzantium's defenses.

The same sense of balance and proportion was the hallmark of another of Hanson's savior generals, Matthew Ridgway, who salvaged the Korean War after Red China intervened on the side of the North Korean Communists. Ridgway pushed the enemy north to the 38th parallel and beyond, and in doing so saved South Korea. But he stopped short of attempting to liberate the whole of the peninsula. A "good general," says a Chinese sage, "effects his purposes and then stops." Resisting the intoxication of victory, Ridgway reasoned that the proximity of Russia and China meant that an invasion of the north would lead either to a nuclear conflagration or to a protracted Asian land war that American public opinion would not sustain.

The "very notion of 'savior,'" Hanson writes, "is embedded within some sense of a moral universe that should be saved," and in his book he has preferred commanders from "consensual societies" to those from authoritarian ones. Marshal Zhukov's defense of Leningrad and victory at Stalingrad saved Russia, but they also saved Stalin. Erich von Manstein "saved Hitler from himself," but that cause, Hanson writes, was "better lost than won." The Greco-Roman Byzantium for which Belisarius fought was not a consensual society, but it preserved the relics of an older, better Hellenic civilization, a heritage that, after the dispersion of the Byzantine scholiasts in the 15th century, enriched the free culture of the West.

There may be another, more subtle intention in Hanson's selection of two Greek and three American commanders. Of the two Greek warriors he profiles, Themistocles fought for Hellas in her prime. Belisarius, by contrast, defended in Byzantium the decaying carcass of the Greek spirit, a degenerate empire whose bejeweled despots, Gibbon wrote, pursued the "timid policy" of "dreading every active power" in the state other than their own will.

A similar arc can be traced in Hanson's three American general officers. William Tecumseh Sherman fought in the decisive crisis of the Republic's youth. In taking Atlanta in 1864, he (arguably) saved Lincoln's reelection and in any event contributed to the survival of a stronger Union. Some nine decades later, Matthew Ridgway arrived in Korea representing the greatest economic power on earth. But when David Petraeus returned from Iraq in September 2008, the shadows had lengthened, and there was a faint but ominous resemblance between the America he served and Belisarius's Byzantium, crippled, Hanson writes, by a "vast public bureaucracy" that "translated into ever fewer Byzantines engaged in private enterprise, wealth creation, and the defense of the realm—at precisely the time its enemies were growing in power and audacity."

Both Belisarius and Petraeus, working for cash-strapped regimes with costly commitments at home and abroad, had to find ways to win wars with limited manpower. One of the keys to their success, Hanson argues, was their genius for making civilian populations their accomplices. Belisarius compensated for a "chronic shortage of troops" by appealing to local populations, a strategy, Hanson says, that anticipated "modern notions of counterinsurgency warfare in which an outnumbered invader must enlist local adherents to a shared cause."

Counterinsurgency was crucial to Petraeus in leading the surge that raised the number of American troops in Iraq to a peak, in 2007, of some 166,000 in a country of perhaps 30 million. (By comparison, American troop strength in Vietnam peaked at more than half a million in 1968, when North and South Vietnam had a combined population of around 40 million.) The increased manpower, Hanson writes, was effective mainly because it coincided with a change in tactics from "counterterrorism (going after known terrorist insurgents)" to "counterinsurgency (protecting the civilians to deny insurgents necessary support and sanctuary)." Petraeus was convinced "that after four years of warring, Islamic terrorists and ex-Baathists were vulnerable," having "suffered far more casualties" than the Americans. Even as critics contended that the U.S. "had lost the support of

the Iraqi people, Petraeus sensed that the insurgents, not the U.S. military," were turning off the Sunni civilian population. In Hanson's reading, counterinsurgency further undermined the appeal of the insurgents, as ordinary Iraqis concluded that they had something useful to gain from the Americans.

Few historians writing today have as deep an insight as Hanson into the problems America confronts at home and abroad, and nothing in his latest book is more sobering than its suggestion that the effectiveness of a military savior is in proportion to the health of the civilization he is defending. Belisarius was plugging leaks in the rotting hull of Byzantium. America, when General Petraeus returned from Iraq, was in better shape, but already there were signs that it was advancing along the cruel trajectory described by Thucydides. If Athenian success at Marathon and Salamis ushered in a golden age, Thucydides showed that it also led to overreaching. The city became an imperial power resented by much of the rest of Greece, and with the exception, Thucydides says, of Pericles, none of her statesmen was able to steer a prudent course. They devoted themselves instead to exploiting class antagonisms for their own political gain.

The Romans knew a similar fate. By the time the young Belisarius entered the imperial service, Rome was an overstretched power. The luxurious indolence of Constantinople was subsidized by wheat commandeered from Egypt, and the high offices of the old republic, once the reward for virtue and ability, were degraded into sinecures for slaves and eunuchs. Justinian, the emperor whom Belisarius served, attempted to abolish the consulate itself, in order that his "despotic temper," Gibbon writes, "might be gratified by the silent extinction of a title which admonished the Romans of their ancient freedom."

Thucydides said that what happened to the Greek cities would happen again: What "has been before will ever be as long as human nature is the same." If Americans are to escape the cycle in which victory and success are converted into a ruinous complacency, they must hope not for a savior general but for something rarer still—a savior statesman.

NR

Two Masters

CATESBY LEIGH

MICHELANGELO BUONARROTI (1475–1564) and Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) were contemporaries, though Michelangelo had a much longer life. Both are titans in the annals of Western art. But, as two enlightening exhibitions of their drawings attest, Michelangelo was far more consistent in his formal aims: His drawings were essentially, though not exclusively, accessories to achievements in sculpture, painting, and architecture that rank him as incomparably the greatest of modern artists. Dürer, on the other hand, will always be remembered first and foremost as a draftsman. Drawing, however, is the foundation of the visual arts, architecture included (though that fact is routinely overlooked in the computer age). And the virtuosity of Dürer's prolific achievements as a draftsman, varied as they are in terms of medium, genre, and style, never ceases to amaze.

Thus the exhibition at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts of 26 Michelangelo drawings from the Casa Buonarroti in Florence (through June 30) and the display of 137 Dürer drawings, watercolors, engravings, and woodcuts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington (through June 9) are not to be missed. The latter exhibit mainly features works on loan from the Albertina in Vienna.

In Dürer's work, the Renaissance mingles with medieval artistic traditions. A Gothic profusion of intricate, picturesque detail persisted in prints he devoted to religious and allegorical subjects long after Renaissance perspective technique had modified his treatment of landscape and architectural settings. It is his wonderfully fluid drawings in charcoal as well as pen and ink that seem modern—and none more so than his view of Antwerp's harbor (1520), a late work strikingly spare in its pictorial approach.

In a woodcut from the late 1490s, in

which a youthful Saint John the Evangelist is martyred in a cauldron of burning oil, the urban vista is confused, and the nude saint's head is noticeably over-scaled. Yet his hands are sensitively rendered—hands would prove a subject of inexhaustible interest to Dürer—and considerable attention has been lavished on the modeling of the rest of his body. The same anatomical rigor, along with a much better resolved but still fanciful landscape setting, is evident in an engraving from the same period, *Saint Jerome Penitent in the Wilderness*, in which the kneeling Church father contemplates the Cross before smiting his breast with a stone.

Andrea Mantegna (1431–1506), whose engravings of mythological scenes Dürer copied in pen and ink, influenced the latter's pursuit of a sculpturally informed clarity in drawing the nude or partially clad figure. Dürer's picturesque streak could lead him to focus on vestiture, however, at the expense of the proportions or dimensions of the human body. In an enigmatic 1514 pen-and-brown-ink portrait of his lanky brother Endres—shown from the side, in everyday garb, but looking away from the viewer—the graphic technique is impeccable, with the head and lean, muscular neck beautifully fleshed out; but one might wonder what became of Endres's chest.

The medieval love of nature, conspicuously embodied in the arboreal forms of Gothic architecture, was fused in Dürer's oeuvre with a humanistic thirst for knowledge of the natural world. Hence the drawing of uncertain date, in watercolor and gouache heightened with white and gold, of a blue roller, in which Dürer brilliantly captures the patterns, textures, and colors of the gorgeous bird's plumage. His 1503 watercolor *The Great Piece of Turf* is rigorously designed, as its meticulously depicted array of botanic forms is arranged within the simple geometric envelope of an asymmetrical triangle. The tallest plant is the apex, and the picture's center of gravity is the thick clump of vegetation directly beneath it.

The anthropomorphic and heavily symbolic treatment of trees represents a counterpoise to Dürer's naturalistic tendencies. In the ca. 1501 engraving of Saint Eustace, the Roman military commander who on a hunt encounters a stag



Saint Jerome Penitent in the Wilderness,
by Albrecht Dürer

with a crucifix rising between its antlers, the main trunk of the dead tree between the warrior's horse and the stag in the middle ground includes an arboreal trope of a male torso, with knots filling in for navel and nipples and two subsidiary branches extending from the trunk in a manner suggestive of the Crucifixion while playing off the bifurcations of the stag's antlers. Along with the beautifully drawn if rather primitively arranged animals in the picture, the tree assumes a vivid presence. Such trees recur in Dürer's work. In the 1515 etching of the agony in the garden, a tree's branches recoil from the glory of the kneeling Christ's aureole and the epiphany of the chalice and strengthening angel.

Where Dürer comes closest to Michelangelo is in his 1504 engraving of Adam and Eve, with Eve taking the forbidden fruit from the serpent's mouth. These frontal figures are based on Dürer's study of Vitruvius and his prolonged quest for a canonic system of proportions that would govern male and female figure types. Adam's musculature is impressively resolved; Dürer has achieved a high degree of unity in

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NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

the figure as a whole without sacrificing the clarity of its parts. Though of course a non-sculptural work—albeit one obviously informed by antique sculpture—this Adam bears comparison with Michelangelo’s contemporaneous statue of David. Here Dürer’s grasp of heroic male form is comparable to what we encounter in the celebrated statue, which is far less rigorous in its proportions.

Around the years 1504–08, which included the second of his two Venetian sojourns, Dürer made numerous drawings with pen and black ink and white heightening on blue or green paper. The most famous of these shows a highly detailed yet powerfully sculptural pair of hands folded in prayer. It is displayed along with the upraised head of the unnamed apostle to whom the praying hands belong. The apostle’s head is a masterwork; like his hands, it was unquestionably drawn from life. Here too Dürer is seeing form sculpturally, clearly following the subtly undulating contours of the skull in modeling the bearded apostle’s features. Such formal rigor

would serve the artist well when it came time to draw the Emperor Maximilian’s portrait bust (1518) in polychromatic chalk.

Other marvelous works in the exhibit include the unforgettable engravings of the knight in armor resolutely ignoring the ghastly figures of Death and the Devil as he strides past them on his magnificent steed (1513) and that disconsolate angel of humanism, brooding amidst the emblems of geometry, art, craft, and the inexorable passage of time, the whites of her eyes flashing in the gloom (*Melencolia I*, 1514).

The drawings in the Michelangelo exhibit, originally organized and hosted by the Muscarelle Museum at the College of William and Mary, mostly post-date Michelangelo’s completion of the Sistine Chapel ceiling in 1512. Consisting of architectural designs and figure compositions, the drawings help us understand the essentially unitary development of his sculptural and architectural ideas in his later years. Unlike Dürer, Michelangelo was a stranger to stylistic eclecticism. The *David*’s frontal, pictorial orientation

was a vestige of medieval realism that simply disappeared from his mature work. The influence of antique sculpture was decisive: The emphatically sculptural, dimensional male nudes, or *ignudi*, punctuating the Biblical scenes on the Sistine Chapel ceiling were largely inspired by a Hellenistic masterpiece, the Belvedere Torso.

Michelangelo’s stupendously modeled drawing of the Madonna and Child (1524), though unevenly finished, vividly conveys the three-dimensional continuity of the figures. Employing black and red chalk, red wash, white heightening, and ink, Michelangelo imparts a rich, marble-like texture to the infant’s body, transforming what would normally be pudgy flesh into heroic musculature in a manner that is anatomically utterly convincing. In his highly finished, ravishing black-chalk drawing of Cleopatra (ca. 1532–33), which he presented to the young Roman nobleman Tommaso dei Cavalieri, the torsion in the figure of the Christ child is greatly intensified, with the doomed Egyptian queen looking back over her shoulder in sublime resignation as the asp’s head reposes on her bare breast. Her elongated neck assumes an impossibly serpentine plasticity, yet Michelangelo’s anatomical alchemy triumphs again: The counterspirals of the sternomastoid muscles in her neck, with the Adam’s apple subtly lodged between them, seem astonishingly natural. Dimensional patterns in this bust-length picture are added by the twists and turns of the snake and the long, braided tail of Cleopatra’s exotic coiffure.

A preliminary figure study from around 1535 shows the angel restraining Abraham as he is about to slay his son Isaac in fulfillment of God’s command. Michelangelo may have envisioned a relief sculpture when he made this drawing. The poses of Abraham and Isaac are very complex, with Abraham’s right leg perched on the sacrificial block and thrust under the boy’s bound right arm. Isaac, crouching on one knee, strains to catch a glimpse of the angel to his side and behind him. Abraham is of course an old man, of the same figure type as Saint Jerome. It’s worth noting how much less labored and at the same time more sculpturally informed Michelangelo’s drawing of the Old Testament patriarch is, compared with Dürer’s portrayal of Jerome four decades earlier.



Michelangelo’s plan for the Church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini in Rome

Michelangelo's architectural development is engagingly presented as well. In 1516, the Medici pope, Leo X, commissioned Michelangelo to design a façade for his family's Florentine parish church, San Lorenzo. Michelangelo's initial design reflects the Roman idea of monumental architecture as a pedestal for sculpture, to use the art historian Henry Hope Reed's expression. The building's pure geometry is revealed in exquisite detail on one side, then fleshed out with its sculptural accoutrements—ranging from relief panels to figures in the round—on the other. (After repeated alteration of the design, Leo canceled the façade project in 1520, probably out of concern for its cost.)

During the 1520s, Michelangelo's architectural thinking took a new turn. Just as a significant element of abstraction appears in his Cleopatra's serpentine form, so did his concept of architectural monumentality become more abstract. In his ingenious design for the Laurentian Library vestibule in the San Lorenzo complex, Michelangelo largely forsook sculptural enrichment, while his architectural vocabulary itself became more sculpturally expressive. The plasticity of the famously lava-like downward flow of the vestibule's central stairs—a sort of architectural analogue to the preternatural plasticity of Cleopatra's neck—is an obvious case in point.

An architectural drawing from the mid 1520s of part of a wall—or possibly part of a freestanding architectural monument—that would harbor a pair of papal tombs in San Lorenzo's choir shows Michelangelo reworking the vestibule's abstract wall articulation in a more spatially active manner, with bolder projections and recessions than the vestibule's constricted floor area could accommodate. This intensely lucid approach to architecture culminated in the majestic articulation of the exterior walls Michelangelo subsequently designed for Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. It is also amply reflected in his beautifully modulated and lamentably unrealized plan for the Church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini in Rome, a very late work dating to around 1560 that is one of the highlights of this exhibition. Fortunately, the possibilities of spatial experience Michelangelo envisioned here were not lost on architects of the baroque period.

NR

Why We Love *Downton*

RACHEL DiCARLO CURRIE

WRITING in the *Daily Beast* early in 2012, British historian Simon Schama lamented that Americans were “gripped by the clammy delirium of nostalgia”: Not only were tea partiers yearning for a mythical past of laissez-faire capitalism, the public at large was cock-a-hoop over “a servile soap opera” that offered “a steaming, silvered tureen of snobbery.” How to explain the monster success in the United States of the British series *Downton Abbey*? Schama, who is best known for scripting and narrating the 15-part BBC documentary *A History of Britain*, pointed to our collective appetite for “cultural necrophilia,” which would naturally lead us to devour an Edwardian costume drama that is “fabulously frocked, and acted, and over-acted, and hyper-overacted.”

An estimated 24 million viewers watched Season 3 of *Downton* on PBS, with 12.3 million tuning in for the February 17 finale. Michelle Obama is said to be a huge fan, and two of the show's stars were invited to attend the March 2012 White House state dinner for British prime minister David Cameron. (Nor is the show's appeal limited to the Anglosphere. It is enormously popular everywhere from Denmark and Sweden, to Israel and Russia, to Singapore and South Korea. According to the *New York Times*, the *Downton* actor who plays Mr. Carson, the loyal butler, was visiting ancient Hindu temples in rural Cambodia when he was “swarmed by a group of Asian tourists screaming, ‘Mr. Carson!’”)

Centered on the fictional Crawley family and their sprawling country estate, Downton Abbey, in Yorkshire, the show commences in April 1912, with Lord Grantham, the family patriarch, receiving news of the sinking of the *Titanic*. Among

Rachel DiCarlo Currie, a former speechwriter for the U.S. Senate leadership, is a writer in Washington, D.C.

the deceased passengers is his presumed heir; since none of Grantham's three daughters can legally inherit his title, he is forced to contact a distant male cousin. The cousin is a middle-class lawyer from Manchester, and his arrival at Downton Abbey catalyzes the main storyline of Season 1. Season 2 is dominated by the ghastly carnage of World War I, and it also covers the postwar influenza pandemic. Season 3 deals with the financial challenges that faced many British estates in the early 1920s. Throughout it all runs a steady stream of intrigue, romance, tragedy, and cocktails.

Like any good escapist drama, *Downton* offers a portrait of history that is somewhat sanitized. It provides a glimpse at all the pomp and splendor of the Edwardian age—the lavish dinners, the garden parties, the foxhunts, the shooting lunches—but very few of the warts. Thus, we see handsome servants wearing white tie, but we don't see penniless children wearing rags and choking on hideous London smog. We see happy villagers attending carnivals and flower shows, but we don't see them struggling to cope with rising prices, cramped living conditions, and inadequate nutrition. We get a clear sense that the Downton household staff are putting in very long hours for very modest wages, but we don't get a clear sense of just how “nasty, brutish, and short” life could be for the British working classes.

It was inevitable that *Downton* would be compared to *Upstairs, Downstairs*, the legendary British costume drama that captivated Americans (and many others) during the early 1970s. It has also been likened to the movie version of *Gone with the Wind*, both because of the composition of the Crawley family (like the O'Haras, they have three daughters) and because of complaints that it serves up a sugarcoated picture of the past.

Downton does occasionally veer into fairy-tale land, and its mawkish moments are cringeworthy. Critics don't have to search long to find unrealistic plot devices. Most servants in that era did not have fashion-model looks or perfect white teeth. In fact, the upper classes of Edwardian Britain were, on balance, taller and heavier than the lower classes. As historian Peter Clarke has written, the young men who attended elite secondary schools such as Eton and Harrow “were already as tall as nowadays by the end of

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Fri./Aug. 2	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars
Sat./Aug. 3	Bergen, Norway	8:00AM	5:00PM	afternoon seminar “Night Owl”
Sun./Aug. 4	Flam, Norway <i>Scenic cruising Sognefjord</i>	8:00AM	6:00PM	afternoon seminar late-night smoker
Mon./Aug. 5	Eidfjord, Norway <i>Scenic cruising Hardangerfjord</i>	10:00AM	6:00PM	evening cocktail reception
Tue./Aug. 6	Stavanger, Norway <i>Scenic cruising Lysefjord</i>	8:00AM	4:00PM	afternoon seminars “Night Owl”
Wed./Aug. 7	AT SEA			morning/afternoon seminars evening cocktail reception
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three revelrous pool-side cocktail receptions; a late-night “smoker” featuring world-class **H. Upmann** cigars (and complimentary cognac); and dining on two evenings with a guest speaker or editor.

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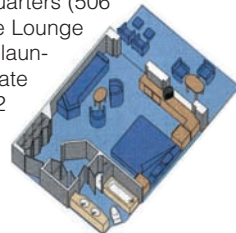
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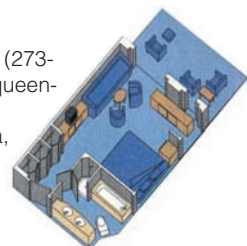
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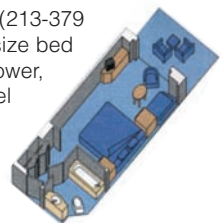
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DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: \$ 3,399 P/P
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Category C

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SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: \$ 3,499

INSIDE Cozy but ample cabin quarters (from 141 to over 200 sq. ft.) features queen-size bed (convertible to 2 twin beds), shower, flat-panel tv and DVD player.



Category J

DOUBLE OCCUPANCY RATE: \$ 2,199 P/P
SINGLE OCCUPANCY RATE: \$ 2,699





the nineteenth century.” They were significantly bigger than, say, Lancashire cotton workers, whose growth “was stunted by a combination of child labor and a diet which later generations would regard as meager.”

So, no, life was *not* as comfortable for the working classes as it often seems on *Downton*, nor was the Edwardian age a “simple” time of peace and social stability. Its apparent harmony was disrupted by labor strife, the suffragette movement, and, above all, simmering unrest in British-ruled Ireland. Just weeks before World War I erupted, the *Times* of London said that Ireland had triggered “one of the great crises in the history of the British race.” In his fascinating 2012 book, *The Lost History of 1914*, Jack Beatty makes a persuasive argument that World War I “saved the United Kingdom from civil war.”

But fairness requires us to point out that *Downton* does explore the themes of social inequality, women’s suffrage, and Ireland. The family chauffeur is a revolutionary Irish socialist who is constantly bemoaning the travails of his homeland. To the consternation of Lord Grantham, the chauffeur eventually marries his youngest daughter, who is eager to trade a life of leisure for a life of purpose. Meanwhile, one of the other Crawley daughters winds up landing a newspaper column after she pens a letter in support of the suffragettes.

Pace Simon Schama, *Downton* does not celebrate snobbery: What it does is demonstrate that the paternalism of the Edwardian aristocracy had a benevolent

side. Lord Grantham subscribes to a concept of noblesse oblige that is utterly foreign to his accidental heir (the middle-class lawyer). For example, when the heir inquires about the possibility of firing his new valet—having deemed the valet’s services unnecessary—he earns himself a lecture on the responsibilities of privilege. “We all have different parts to play,” Lord Grantham explains. “And we must all be allowed to play them.”

One of the show’s overarching themes is that neither the “upstairs” crowd nor the “downstairs” crowd has a monopoly on wisdom and morality. *Downton* creator Julian Fellowes made this point in a recent interview with the *Wall Street Journal*. “All the characters are taken seriously,” he said. “I don’t think we patronize the servants, we don’t make them comedic. Nor do we automatically hate the family or regard them as selfish and mendacious and so on.” A lifelong Tory and member of the House of Lords, Fellowes believes that *Downton* functions as a rebuke to British class warfare. “We’ve had a century of being encouraged to dislike each other. And I suppose *Downton* is in a different position to that.”

Ultimately, the show’s chief appeal derives not from the political subtext but from deft storytelling, compelling characters, and superb acting from the likes of Dame Maggie Smith, whose portrayal of the snooty dowager countess (Lord Grantham’s mother) gives the series its biggest laugh lines. (Okay, the clothes don’t hurt either.) For Americans, *Downton* also confirms our selective Anglophilia. The Britain of our imagination is

the Britain of royal weddings, afternoon tea, and *Masterpiece Theater*. We spend less time dwelling on the Britain of soccer hooliganism, binge drinking, and *Train-spotting*. We happily roused ourselves in the pre-dawn hours to watch the April 2011 nuptials of William and Kate. We were less inclined to follow coverage of the August 2011 London riots.

A melancholy aspect of *Downton* is that it illustrates why the Edwardian social order was unsustainable, both morally and practically: The ancien régime is shown to be incompatible with burgeoning demands for greater mobility and equality, and also with postwar economic realities. But the series also reminds us that, amid the rigid class system, the pervasive sexism, the staggering wealth disparities, and the desperate poverty, there were certain shared values that forged a common British identity. Over the past century, the blurring of class distinctions, the empowerment of women, the rise of the meritocracy, and the eradication of extreme indigence have all made the United Kingdom a better place. And yet, the erosion of those Edwardian values—and that common identity—has contributed to the fragmentation of British society and the loss of cultural cohesion.

It is easy to understand why Americans would relate to a show that (1) highlights shared values during an age of stark inequality and (2) depicts a once-mighty empire whose long-term decline has already begun (even if few people realize it at the time). The economic and social inequality of 2013 America is small beer when compared with the inequality of 1913 Britain. On the other hand, the divergence in basic cultural mores between the upper and lower classes—especially regarding marriage, divorce, and parenting—is far more pronounced in Obama-era America than it was in *Downton*-era Britain.

Indeed, the cultural inequality of modern America—the type of inequality documented by Charles Murray, Kay Hymowitz, Heather Mac Donald, and others—becomes more alarming by the day. *Downton Abbey* allows us to gawk at a world in which, as Theodore Dalrymple has observed, “butlers and footmen appear far better dressed than today’s billionaires.” No wonder so many Americans find it irresistible. **NR**

Film

The Roar of The Twenties

ROSS DOUTHAT

I EXPECTED to greatly enjoy Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby*, and I wasn't disappointed. This makes me an unusual specimen among film critics, who have treated the movie mostly with a preemptive dismissiveness, reacting to Luhrmann's take on F. Scott Fitzgerald as though they were watching Michael Bay adapt Henry James. Even writers who acknowledge being entertained by the new big-screen *Gatsby* have often paired that admission with a hasty assurance that they don't think much of it as an *adaptation*—the novel being, of course, “inherently unfilmable” (that's *Slate*'s Dana Stevens) and “too intricate, too subtle, too tender for the movies” (that's *The New Yorker*'s David Denby).

This is the kind of thing that people always say about beloved novels, but it's a very strange thing to say about *The Great Gatsby*. When I think of unfilmable books, I think of sprawling anatomies, slim psychological studies, dense stream-of-consciousness immersions, and meta-fictional experiments. I think of James and Marcel Proust; James Joyce and Virginia Woolf; *Moby Dick* and *Tristram Shandy*. Or, to pick a more contemporary example, I think of David Mitchell's complicated epic *Cloud Atlas*, which inspired an inevitably failed adaptation just last year.

Gatsby, on the other hand, is better suited to a movie adaptation than many classic works. It was written in an era when novelists first found themselves in competition with the cinema, and as much as any work from that period it has a deliberately cinematic feel: The plot is swift-moving and structured with extreme care, the scene-setting is famously vivid (“... the cars from New York are parked five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas are gaudy with primary colors . . .”), the dialogue has the terse, precise rhythm of a screenplay, and the final act is straight out of film noir.

It's fair to say that within this architec-

ture there are *elements* that deserve to be called “unfilmable”—subtleties that literature alone can hint at, intimations that work only on the printed page. Obviously the famous lyricism of Fitzgerald's prose is particularly hard to translate to the screen, and by far the worst aspect of Luhrmann's movie is his forced attempt to give the writerliness of *Gatsby* its due, by framing the story with scenes in which we see Tobey Maguire's Nick Carraway actually sitting down and writing it. This frame features a Minnesota sanatorium, an avuncular shrink, and moments when the written words themselves actually appear on the screen—and it's a painfully bad idea from start to finish.

But this device feels forced in part because it's unfaithful to Fitzgerald's novel, requiring invented scenes and clumsy dialogue rather than just the embellishment of what's already on the page. Elsewhere, Luhrmann mostly sticks to embellishing: He turns up the volume and



the va-va-voom, throws Jay-Z and Lana Del Rey on the soundtrack when jazz bands are playing on the screen, but leaves the basic storyline untouched.

His amping-up doesn't always work, but given that we live in a society whose excesses make flappers and speakeasies seem quaint, it seems like the right way—and maybe the only way—to introduce modern audiences to a story that's supposed to make you feel the *roar* of the Twenties. (If you prefer a more exacting historical fidelity, sit through the Robert Redford/Mia Farrow *Gatsby* and try to stay awake.) And that basic storyline turns out to be strong enough to hold its own amid the noise and gaudiness and soundtrack choices—as, happily, is most of Luhrmann's cast.

It helps that Jay Gatsby, né James Gatz,

is precisely the kind of buoyant boy-man that Leonardo DiCaprio was born to play. It's a role that evokes some of his most successful past performances: There's a little bit of Jack Dawson from *Titanic* (if he'd lost Kate Winslet's beauty to her rich fiancé) in *Gatsby*, a little bit of Howard Hughes, and a little bit of Frank Abagnale from *Catch Me if You Can*. The hint of boyishness and immaturity that hampers DiCaprio in some of his grownup parts is an asset here, and the extraordinary charisma that makes it hard for him to be convincing as, say, a policeman or a suburban husband is entirely appropriate for *Gatsby*. It's very hard for me to imagine a better approximation of Fitzgerald's character than the one that he delivers.

I also liked Carey Mulligan's Daisy: Her performance makes the character a bit more tremulous and sympathetic than the careless woman of the novel, but that sympathy is useful to the movie, making

the tragedy bite a little harder at the end. Maguire's Nick is probably too weird and emotional for a character mostly defined by his detachment, and the Australian actor Joel Edgerton nails Tom Buchanan's arrogance and thuggishness but lacks his aura of privilege. But the nearly unknown Elizabeth Debicki is just terrific as Jordan Baker—lovely and large-eyed and impossibly slender, like a Jazz Age magazine cover come to life.

I don't want to overpraise the movie as a whole: It has big flaws, big holes, scenes and sequences that just don't work. The purists are right that it isn't true to everything that makes Fitzgerald's novel great. But it's true to many of the many parts of Fitzgerald's story that would make for an entertaining movie. And this *Gatsby*, for all its flaws, is that. **NR**

Long-Run Silence

THE other day, Niall Ferguson, a celebrity historian at Harvard, was at an “investors’ conference,” the kind of speaking gig he plays a lot of: You get a ton of money to go see a small number of extremely rich people and tell them something provocative—but not *too* provocative. So, at this conference of money guys in Carlsbad, somebody brings up the best-known quote from the most influential economist of our age—John Maynard Keynes’s line that “in the long run we are all dead”—and Ferguson responds to the effect that, well, Keynes was a childless homosexual, so he would say that, wouldn’t he? It’s not an original thought: In fact, the only reason I didn’t include it in the passage on Keynes in my book was that I felt it had been done a bazillion times before. But it evidently was so shocking to the California crowd, many of whom undoubtedly have friends who are gay hedge-funders or are thinking of becoming one, that everybody had the vapors about it, and poor old Ferguson found himself instantly transformed from one of *Time*’s “100 most influential people in the world” into the Todd Akin of Harvard. “This takes gay-bashing to new heights,” shrieked Tom Kostigen of *Financial Advisor*, who really needs to get out of the house more.

In the long run, Keynes is dead. So Obama was unable to place a Sandra Fluke/Jason Collins supportive phone call to him. But “the Queen of King’s,” as he was known at Cambridge, would have been amused by his newfound status as America’s most bashed gay. In 1917, in Washington for Anglo-American debt talks, Keynes wrote home to his lover Duncan Grant about what a ghastly place it was: “The only really sympathetic and original thing in America is the niggers, who are charming.”

If I understand the Gay Enforcers’ position correctly, Keynes’s homosexuality is no reflection on *his* economic theories, but Ferguson’s homophobia most certainly is a reflection on his economic theories, which can now be safely dismissed by all respectable persons. Recognizing the threat to his highly lucrative brand, Professor Ferguson immediately issued an “unqualified apology.” He is married to one of the bravest women on the planet, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who has stood firm for a decade against loons who want to kill her as they did her friend Theo van Gogh. Up against a bunch of hysterical ninnies threatening only his speaking fees, Ferguson caved.

A few days later, the Heritage Foundation published an analysis of the impending immigration amnesty. Bottom line: It’s gonna add six trillion bucks to the costs of Medicare, Obamacare, etc. Rather than refute the paper, the enforcers for the Undocumented-American community decided to

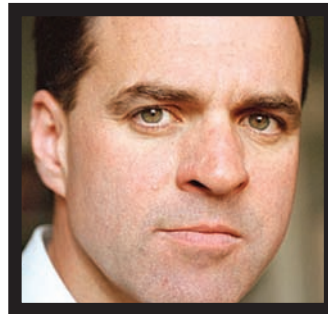
Fergify the junior author, Jason Richwine. They discovered that, back in his student days, Richwine had written about the IQ of certain minority groups. Where’d he do this? Ninth-grade essay at Lynching High in Klansville, Miss.? No, some joint called Harvard. Three of the most eminent professors on the faculty approved his dissertation, and gave him a thing called a “doctorate” for it. Ferguson and Richwine are both Harvard men, but one’s a star and the other isn’t. So Heritage leaned on Richwine to “resign,” thereby doing a better job of discrediting their own paper than any of the amnesty skills had done.

Unlike Ferguson at Harvard and Richwine at Heritage, Charles Ramsey toils in the intellectually freewheeling milieu of minimum-wage dishwashing. He’s the black guy who rescued three white girls from their Hispanic kidnapper in Cleveland. Everybody loves him. But, interviewed live on Channel 5, he said, “Bro, I knew something was wrong when a little pretty white girl ran into a black man’s arms. Something is wrong here. Dead giveaway. Dead giveaway . . .” I thought that was a cute line, although, as the black columnist Larry Elder quipped, “What, you’ve never seen a Shirley Temple movie?” But the white reporter immediately broke off the interview, and the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, the *New York Times*, and everyone else vacuumed the quote out of their otherwise extensive coverage of Ramsey’s remarks. He is a funny, flawed figure who, when it counted, did the right thing, but a real black man has to be airbrushed into bland conformity with white-liberal pieties.

So Ramsey got bowdlerized, Richwine got canned, and Ferguson agreed to self-neuter. Best of all was Howard Kurtz, fired from Tina Brown’s *Daily Beast* for wandering off the gay reservation by suggesting *Sports Illustrated*’s Jason Collins story might be a wee bit more complicated, including as it does a longstanding fiancée of the opposite sex. The following Sunday Kurtz went on air at CNN and solemnly hosted (as Breitbart News put it) a show trial of himself. He had to be forcibly restrained from marching himself to a brick wall, putting a blindfold on, and offering himself a last cigarette.

Strange times. When I talk about free-speech issues in Commonwealth countries, I often quote a guy who came up to me after I testified to the Ontario parliament at Queen’s Park and told me, “Give me the right to free speech, and I will use it to claim all my other rights.” Conversely, the new enforcers are happy to shrivel free speech precisely in order to render dissenting views impossible even to articulate—on gays, immigrants, economics, anything. And, as usual, in just one grim week we on the right threw in far too many towels, and made the next round of concessions all the more inevitable.

NR



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