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NATIONAL REVIEW

Rocky Mountain High

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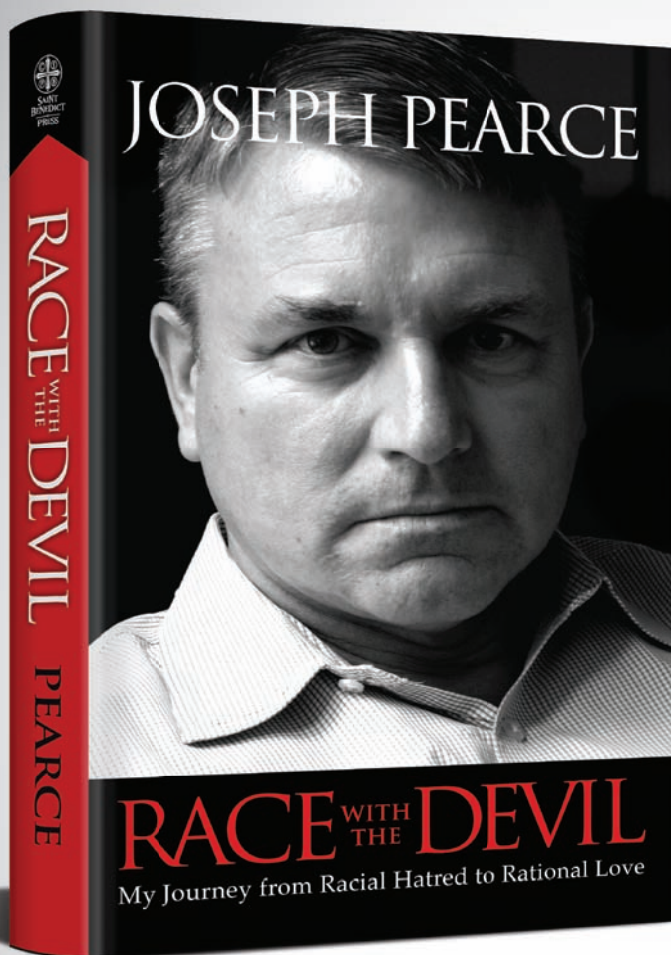
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Rocky Mountain High

It's been about nine months since Coloradans voted to legalize the recreational consumption of marijuana by adults over 21. Over the next few months, Colorado's marijuana purveyors—licit and illicit—will keep a close eye on Denver as regulators try to craft sensible policy for an industry that, at least on a federal level, is still lawless. *Betsy Woodruff*



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Persecution at the Polls

(In re “Laboratory of Islamism,” August 19) I have read several articles stating that the Muslim Brotherhood actually threatened Coptic Christians into not voting last year in Egypt’s election. Yet the election was called “democratic.” Is this true that Christians and other non-Muslims were threatened with violence if they voted, and if so, doesn’t that bring into question the issue of how “democratic” the election was of Mr. Morsi?

Frank J. Russo
Port Washington, N.Y.

DAVID PRYCE-JONES REPLIES: On several occasions before the election, mobs shouting “Allahu akbar” killed Copts and burnt out or vandalized Coptic churches and schools. Intimidation to prevent them from voting is only one aspect of the worst persecution the Coptic Christians have suffered in many centuries.

The Secret Life of Walter White

Perhaps it is more than a coincidence that *Breaking Bad*’s Walter shares a first name with another fictional Walter—Walter Mitty. Jonah Goldberg (“Life and Death on Basic Cable,” August 19) mentions that Walter sells his share in a start-up for a pittance, but doesn’t give the reason. The company becomes a love triangle, and when Walter loses the girl to the other guy, he skulks away, despite having invented the technology that makes the other two billionaires. He marries a beautiful woman, who then cheats on him with her boss. His high-school students show him no respect, and then life delivers the final insult by giving him terminal cancer. His entry into meth production begins from desperation, at first a way to obtain money for the advanced treatments his health insurance will not cover, then a means to provide for his family after the disease finally takes him. But the drug business is nasty, and survival forces him to put aside one moral scruple after another. Over time, he becomes addicted to a drug just as powerful as his blue meth: power. For the first time in his life, he is feared and respected. Mere survival is no longer enough. He wants to be the unchallenged king of meth and derives further pleasure from the anonymity his “Heisenberg” street name provides. While this does not make his actions less evil, anyone with a touch of Mitty can understand how he started down this path. I am conflicted. Evil should not triumph, but I cannot give up hope that Walter’s end will provide some redemption for the good man he once was.

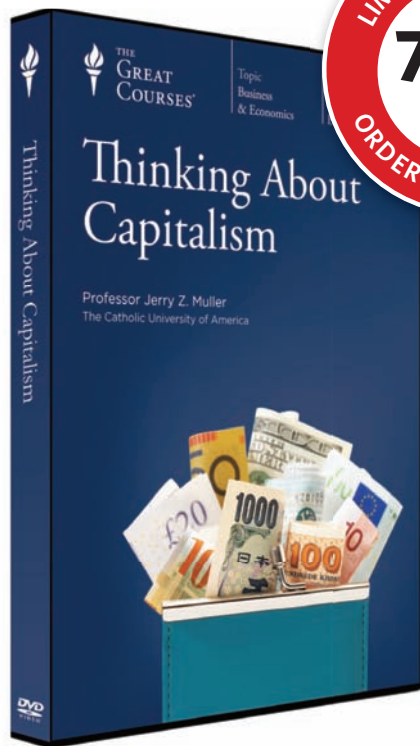


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The Week

■ Whatever happened to the wholesome, respectable MTV we grew up with?

■ In a recent interview, Senator Ted Cruz (R., Texas) said of defunding Obamacare that “if it doesn’t happen now, it’s likely never to happen.” That’s why he thinks Republicans have to use the threat of a partial government shutdown to achieve it. Other defunders have argued that to wait until Republicans have the Senate, House, and White House to repeal Obamacare is tantamount to abandoning the goal because winning so many elections is too improbable. All of this is much too defeatist. It is true that liberal programs rarely get repealed once implemented. Obamacare is, however, much more perverse than most, and in ways that have made it unpopular and may continue to do so. Republicans should seek to build an electoral majority to replace it, not wallow in despair. A Cruz aide has said that conservatives who doubt the wisdom of his strategy are in a “surrender caucus.” The senator disavows this remark, but he should take care, while making the case for his preferred course, not to announce his own surrender date.

■ As more deadlines in the implementation of Obamacare approach, the stories of its costs keep piling up: UPS will drop health-insurance coverage for 15,000 spouses because of its increased expense; Delta Airlines says its health-care costs will increase by nearly \$100 million next year, in large part because of the new law; and cash-strapped municipal governments, which will be subject to the employer mandate to provide health insurance, are cutting their workers’ hours so they will be classified as part-time employees. The law’s supporters contend that the plural of “anecdote” is not “data,” and that any national evidence of the rise in part-time employment or the dropping of health coverage is due to lingering economic weakness. So we guess the new strategy is to use one Obama failure to excuse another.

■ President Obama is boasting that his administration has achieved some of the fastest and steepest deficit reduction since the end of World War II. It has, and it did so right after achieving some of the fastest and steepest deficit increases in American history. When a 250-pound man loses 50 pounds, that’s something significant; when a 700-pound man loses 50 pounds, that’s a start. Given that Obama’s spending plans would return the deficit to the trans-trillion-dollar level in a few years, this is at best a respite.

■ The State Department took its time in releasing its review of what went wrong the night that four Americans were killed in Benghazi, Libya, almost a year ago. When the report finally was released in May, it concluded that the events, and the mistakes made in the facility’s security plans, shouldn’t end the careers of any State Department officials, but should result



See page 13.

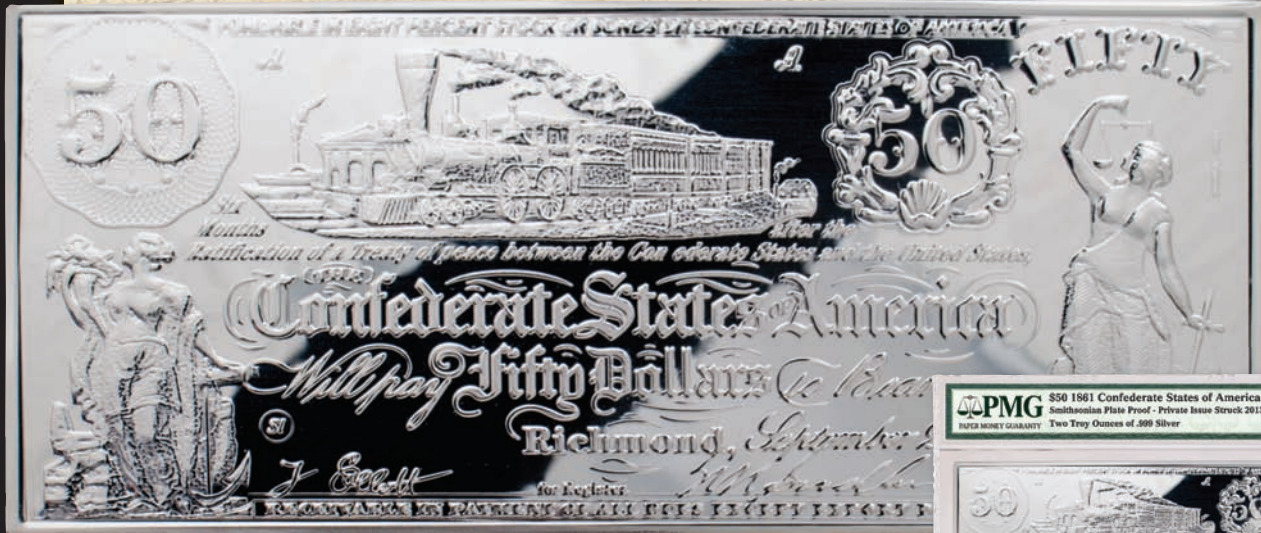
only in their transfer to other parts of Foggy Bottom. Four officials, three in the Diplomatic Security Department and one in Near Eastern Affairs, were placed on paid leave. Secretary of State John Kerry says he has now personally reviewed the findings and restored these officials to duty elsewhere. In due time, no doubt, they’ll be promoted.

■ Army private Bradley Manning was an unstable malcontent who had to be restrained during a violent fit while serving in Iraq. Yet superiors looked the other way, continuing to permit him broad security access, which he used to transfer hundreds of thousands of classified documents to the rabidly anti-American WikiLeaks operation, knowing that America’s enemies would profit from their publication. The leaked documents revealed intelligence assets, disclosed military operations, exposed intelligence assessments about foreign governments, and compromised diplomatic negotiations. A military court sentenced him to 35 years in prison—knowing that he could be released in less than a third of that time, owing to parole rules and time served. If the Defense Department does not take preservation of the nation’s defense secrets seriously, who will?

■ After his sentencing, Manning announced that he henceforth wishes to be known as “Chelsea Manning” and desires to have

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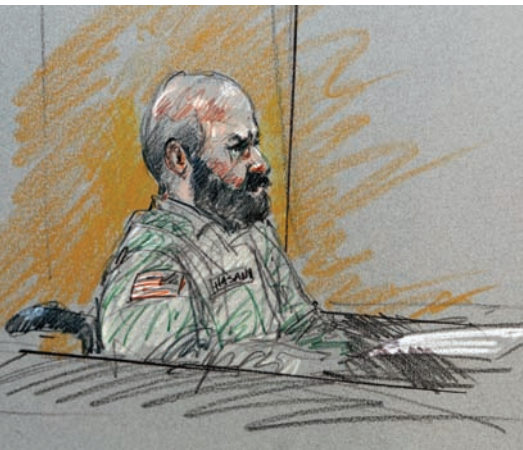
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sex-reassignment surgery. What followed was an amusing modern take on the Maoist self-criticism session: Lefty writers apologized for having been insufficiently quick to switch from “Bradley” to “Chelsea,” NPR and other liberal organizations were blasted for their “refusal to respect Chelsea Manning’s name and pronouns,” the Wikipedia article on Bradley Manning was retitled “Chelsea Manning,” and using Private Manning’s legal name or referring to his biological sex quickly came to be regarded as a hate crime. This is something between silliness and madness. Even if one is inclined to play along with the fiction that sex-change operations change a man’s sex, Mr. Manning has not undergone such a procedure, and is unlikely to do so while a guest at Club Fed. Bradley or Chelsea, he is a criminal. Such damage as Private Manning intends to do to his body is a personal matter; the damage he has done to U.S. national security is a public one.

■ As we go to press, a court-martial is hearing testimony in the death-penalty phase of Nidal Hasan’s murder trial. The Army major has been convicted on all charges arising out of the Fort Hood massacre:



13 counts of murder and 32 of attempted murder. The 2009 rampage against U.S. soldiers about to deploy to Afghanistan was the worst jihadist attack on American soil since the 9/11 atrocities—in the eyes of everyone except the Obama administration, which continues to regard it as a case of workplace violence,

the motive for which must not be uttered. Hasan declined to play along with the charade. Acting as his own lawyer, he proudly maintained that he was and is an Islamic supremacist and that he deliberately mowed down American troops in order to protect the Taliban. Nonetheless, prosecutors charged it as a straight murder case, not a terrorism one. It is a sad comment that Hasan seemed to see the issues more clearly than they.

■ Governor Chris Christie has signed a bill making it illegal for licensed psychotherapists in New Jersey to honor a minor’s request for help in becoming heterosexual. Citing mainstream medical opinion, Christie argued that such therapy can lead to depression, substance abuse, and suicidal thoughts. But presumably young people seeking to find or reinforce their heterosexuality already suffer, and now therapists willing to work with them to reach their goals are forbidden by the state to do so. No one believes, of course, that this legislation is part of a general campaign for higher standards in psychology: It is, instead, part of an effort to make a particular, contestable view of sexual psychology and morality the official policy of the state. It is to Christie’s discredit that he has gone along.

■ Banish any lingering doubts: Christie is preparing himself for a presidential run in 2016. In August, he vetoed a gun-control bill that he himself had proposed, and watered down

a gun-permitting proposal that had passed the state legislature by a significant margin. Killing the measure, Christie argued bluntly that the affected weapons had “never been used in a crime in New Jersey.” This invited the inevitable question as to why he’d proposed doing something about the weapons in the first place. The answer is obvious. Christie is trying to move from the governorship of an anti-gun state to the leadership of a pro-Second Amendment party. Have veto, will travel.

■ Al Gore is still calling people who disagree with him about global warming “deniers”—in a clear and vicious parallel to “Holocaust deniers.” In a recent interview, he said that “the ability of the raging deniers to stop progress is waning every single day.” His side, he said, is “winning the conversation.” “The same thing happened on apartheid. The same thing happened on the nuclear-arms race with the freeze movement. The same thing happened in an earlier era with abolition.” Gore’s self-congratulation is unlimited. Let’s hope his current crusade is just as successful as the nuclear freeze was.

■ House Democrats are still trying to claim that the Internal Revenue Service was politically evenhanded in reviewing groups applying for tax-exempt status. Representatives Elijah Cummings (Md.) and Sander Levin (Mich.) now point to a tranche of documents showing that the IRS directed agents to probe the applications of “ACORN successor groups.” What they ignore is that ACORN had been embroiled in scandal, which had led Congress to pull its federal funding. Tea-party groups had done nothing similar. Their offense was running afoul of a liberal bureaucracy.

■ The fact that our open-ended subsidization of higher education is raising tuitions without improving student outcomes may be slowly dawning even on President Obama. In a speech, he proposed to link student aid to measures of college performance, including the employment record of graduates: The better a college’s performance, the more aid its students would get. There can be no objection in principle to setting conditions for the receipt of federal money. The obstacles to the plan do not, however, seem to have been thought through. How, for example, can the federal government reward employment performance without in practice just rewarding collegiate selectivity in admissions? A wrongheaded but bipartisan coalition has limited our ability to track these outcomes in the first place, even for the purpose of informing families about how well colleges prepare students for work before they take out loans. The president said nothing about this issue. Partial credit.

■ The Department of Justice is suing to restrict Louisiana’s school-choice program, the theory being that choice might, as the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* puts it, “disrupt the racial balance.” Most studies have found that school-choice programs promote racial integration, and the numbers involved here are trivial: The Justice Department cites a school system that has gone from being 29.6 percent white to 28.9. More to the point, the racial balance of a school should matter less than its educational effectiveness. That’s something neither the segregationists of old nor contemporary liberals seem able to accept.

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■ Al Jazeera, the news network owned by the Qatari royal family, launched its U.S. network in August, opening in parodic fashion. To discuss unrest in Egypt, they brought in a Harvard academic—but not one with expertise in civil conflict, Egypt, or the Arab uprisings. Rather, their first guest was international-affairs theorist Stephen Walt, co-author of *The Israel Lobby*, a tract that attributes much of American foreign policy to the work of a small group of influential individuals devoted to increasing U.S. support for the Jewish state. In his appearance, Walt suggested that the U.S. would be uninterested in Egypt, the capital of the Arab world and home of the Suez Canal, were it not for our loyalty to Israel. They don't call Al Jazeera the voice of the Arab street for nothing.

■ Rob Long has one of the hardest jobs in journalism: satirizing the shenanigans of the politico-media complex. Not more than a few weeks after he published a comedic fantasy about NSA snoops using the national-security apparatus to stalk prospective love interests, it was revealed that members of the agency were doing precisely that. They called it love-int. About that, two things: First, come on, NSA, that's what Facebook is for. Second, these NSA operatives should be writing their next love letters from prison cells.

■ Ever since Ted Cruz arrived in the Senate in January, the *New York Times* has been teasing him about his Canadian birth. The senator was born in Calgary, but got to Texas as quick as he

Don't Blame China

THE decline of employment in the manufacturing sector has been one of the most reliable trends in the U.S. labor market for decades. From a high of over 19 million employees in 1979, manufacturing employment slid slowly to just over 17 million in 2000 and then fell to a low of 11.4 million in the first quarter of 2010, climbing back a bit to 11.98 million at the beginning of this year.

This decline has, of course, been driven by many factors. Automation has made it possible for U.S. manufacturers to massively increase the productivity of the workers they do employ. From 1979 to today, manufacturing output in the U.S. has increased from \$1.25 trillion to \$1.64 trillion in inflation-adjusted dollars, despite the decline in employment. In addition, workers have sensibly been drawn into employment in other sectors, such as software, where the U.S. has a significant comparative advantage.

Politicians of both parties have tended to bemoan the decline in manufacturing employment, treating it as a sign of failure. This observation itself is questionable, as a dollar earned designing software is just as valuable as a dollar earned in manufacturing, but the worst part of the conversation has been the blame game and the trade war it threatens. Listen to either party, and the entire swing is attributable to the evil actions of the currency-manipulating Chinese, who have apparently been running an organized-crime syndicate specializing in job theft.

To be sure, low-wage and labor-intensive manufacturing activities such as product assembly have shifted to China over the past few decades. Chinese workers were so numerous and so cheap that it was impossible for labor-intensive U.S. firms to compete. The latest research, however, suggests that the shift toward China is likely to be a much smaller story in the future.

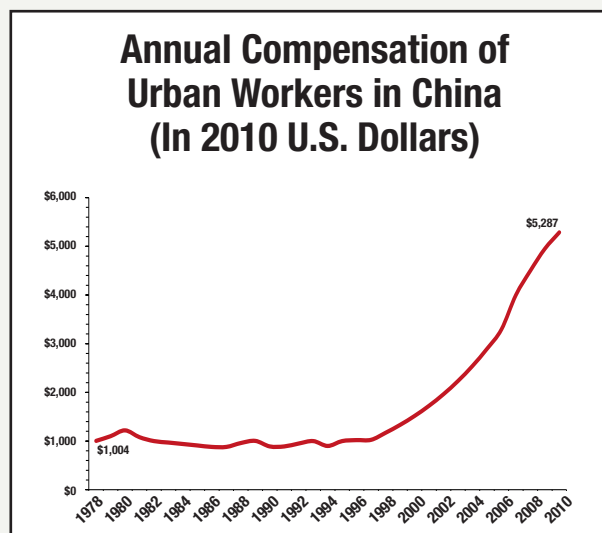
While it is true that wages in China are still lower than those in the U.S., they are rising quickly. The nearby chart shows the average urban wage in China, as calculated in a recent article by Hongbin Li, Lei Li, Binzhen Wu, and Yanyan Xiong in the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. In 1978, a typical Chinese manufacturing worker made \$1,004 in inflation-adjusted dollars—a number that barely budgeted for almost 20 years. In

2010, he made \$5,287. Although Chinese compensation would still look paltry to most American workers, it is much more costly to employ a Chinese worker today than it was in 1998—about five times as expensive.

This shift will affect the flow of manufacturing jobs for two main reasons. First, while Chinese labor is still cheaper than U.S. labor, the gap is closing rapidly and will continue to close. A manufacturer planning a new plant will have to factor future wages over the life of the plant into his calculus, and the U.S. will look increasingly attractive by that measure. Second, because of the recent sharp increase, Chinese wages are much higher than wages in countries such as Indonesia and Thailand. To the extent that labor-intensive U.S. activity is displaced by foreign production, it is much less likely that China will be seen as the culprit.

The rise of Chinese wages will, however, create one employment crisis in the U.S.: Politicians' highly developed China-bashing skills may soon be obsolete.

—KEVIN A. HASSETT



SOURCE: "THE END OF CHEAP CHINESE LABOR," BY HONGBIN LI, LEI LI, BINZHEN WU, AND YANYAN XIONG

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could, to use an old saying. He was four years old. His mother was always an American anyway (a native of Delaware). Recently, the *Times* observed that “Canada is not particularly beloved by American conservatives.” NATIONAL REVIEW, you see, “memorably ran a cover in 2007 [actually 2002] depicting a group of Mounties with the headline ‘Wimps!’ The article inside complained about the country’s ‘whiny and weak anti-Americanism.’” True. But just last March, we ran a cover that trumpeted “The True North!” We hailed “the best-governed country in North America and its exceptional leader” (Conservative prime minister Stephen Harper). Don’t tell us that the *Times* has let its subscription lapse . . .

■ North Carolina passed a voter-ID law that, the critics say, will all but reinstitute Jim Crow. The central provision is a photo-ID requirement that has passed, in one form or another, in about 30 other states and is broadly popular with the public, including blacks and Latinos. There is no evidence that such a requirement suppresses turnout. North Carolina is also cutting back on early voting, reducing the period from two weeks to one, although the state will maintain more early-voting sites that will be open for longer hours. It is ending same-day registration, but it had been an outlier among states in allowing same-day registration in the first place. (New York, home to the *New York Times*, which is predictably outraged by all this, has neither early voting nor same-day registration.) The NAACP is suing on behalf of Rosanell Eaton, a 92-year-old black woman who first registered to vote decades ago by completing a literacy test and claims the new law would disenfranchise her because her birth certificate, driver’s license, and voter record all have different spellings of her name. But her mismatched names could be easily remedied by a trip to the local board of elections, an errand she surely can take care of prior to 2016, when the law goes into effect. North Carolina’s changes are reasonable; the state’s critics are not.

■ The New Mexico supreme court ruled that state anti-discrimination laws obligate a photographer who objects to same-sex marriage to take pictures of a same-sex wedding ceremony. That might be the right reading of the legal provisions involved, which means that the legislature ought to change its statutes. One of the justices, Richard Bosson, used the occasion to lecture the photographer that her loss of freedom is “the price of citizenship” in our “multicultural, pluralistic society.” All of us must “leave space for other Americans who believe something different. That compromise is part of the glue that holds us together as a nation,” etc. It does not appear to have occurred to Justice Bosson that space for her beliefs is precisely what the photographer was after.

■ The Texas legislature has taken the unprecedented step of beginning impeachment proceedings against University of Texas regent Wallace Hall, an appointee of Governor Rick Perry who has brought unwelcome attention to such university practices as political favoritism in admissions to the UT law school, dishonest accounting, and the use of a slush fund to quietly supplement the salaries of favored professors. Representative Jim Pitts, the powerful chairman of the Texas

house appropriations committee, has been leading the vendetta. After NATIONAL REVIEW began inquiring as to whether Representative Pitts was one of the Texas pols who had leaned on the law school to admit his son, he declined to deny the accusations and announced that he would not be seeking reelection. Mr. Hall, for his part, seems to be guilty of the high crime and misdemeanor of being an acute pain in the backside of the University of Texas, and has made a series of open-records requests with which the university administration resents complying. Keeping an eye on managerial practices is precisely what boards of trustees are there to do. It is not Mr. Hall but his tormentors who have been promiscuous with the public trust.

■ Egypt’s new military ruler, General Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, is pacifying the country at a fearsome cost in lives. Civil war no longer seems to loom. No riots have erupted over the diametrically different fates of the two Egyptian presidents deposed in the so-called Arab Spring: Hosni Mubarak was released from prison, while Mohamed



Morsi is facing trial for murder. According to reports from Egypt, the man on the street who may even have voted for Morsi is now willing for the army to restore peace and quiet—and cannot understand why Washington doesn’t get the point. Under the circumstances, our best bet is to try to prod the military in the direction of decent, constitutional government—without great hope of near-term success.

■ Three years ago, Israel and Egypt had a joint blockade on the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip, and the world shook with anger. Turkey launched an international flotilla to condemn and provoke the Israelis. The eyes of the media were riveted. Since Egypt’s military coup in July, Cairo has had a staunch blockade on Gaza. A Hamas official complained that Egypt had turned Gaza into a “big prison.” But as Khaled Abu Toameh, the invaluable Palestinian-Israeli journalist, says, there are no flotillas. The world averts its gaze: “The activists do not care about the Palestinians’ suffering as much as they are interested in advancing their anti-Israel agenda.”

■ Very large rock that it is at the entrance to the Mediterranean, Gibraltar is something like a small pebble in Spanish shoes. Exactly 300 years ago, Spain ceded it by treaty to Britain, and ever since it has looked for one pretext or another to get it back. This time, the pretext is a reef of cement blocks placed underwater. The purpose, the British say, is to preserve fish stocks, and they add that Spain has similar reefs. No longer fishing at all, the British have long since abandoned their waters to Spanish fishermen, who now claim that the reef is a deliberate attempt to keep them out. Several fathoms down, Spanish divers have been filmed fixing the Spanish flag to the reef. On land, the Spanish authorities hold up the

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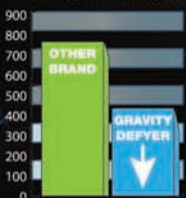
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border crossing for hours, inconveniencing, for the most part, the 7,000 daily Spanish commuters to Gibraltar. It's an unusual way of winning hearts and minds on the Rock. A recent poll showed that 98 percent of the 30,000 residents of Gibraltar see themselves as British and want nothing to do with Spain. Every British prime minister, including David Cameron, has defended the right of these people to self-determination on sovereign territory. The current spat at least allowed Boris Johnson, mayor of London and a columnist for the *Daily Telegraph*, to remind us how the King of Spain had complained to the Queen of England when Prince Charles put into Gibraltar on the royal yacht during his honeymoon. She replied, "It's my yacht, my son, and my Rock."

■ Although correctly regarded as the historical home of free speech, Britain has no equivalent of the First Amendment. In August, a 49-year-old American police officer-turned-preacher discovered this to his surprise when he was arrested for delivering a sermon about "sexual immorality" on a London street corner. Discussing his ordeal, he complained that British authorities were "intolerant to the Christian point of view." This isn't quite accurate. In truth, the British are equal-opportunity censors, allowing the "victim" to determine the severity of the "crime" and thus potentially punishing anyone who offends the sensibilities of anyone else. Soon, that authority will be stripped: Section 5, the part of the Public Order Act that gives British police the capacity to punish speakers, will be formally repealed

next month. All friends of liberty should hope that this will put an end to a disgraceful chapter.

■ Human-rights fashion is a curious thing. You never know what will arouse the conscience of people. Thousands of people have petitioned the Metropolitan Opera to dedicate its opening night to gay rights. The Met's 2013–14 season will open with *Eugene Onegin*, conducted by Valery Gergiev, with Anna Netrebko singing Tatiana. Both of those artists are friendly with Vladimir Putin. And the petitioners want the Met to take a stand for gay rights, given that the Putin government is hostile to gay rights. The company's general manager, Peter Gelb, said, "As an institution, the Met deplors the suppression of equal rights here or abroad. But since our mission is artistic, it is not appropriate for our performances to be used by us for political purposes, no matter how noble or right the cause." The Russian authorities have done any number of vile, even monstrous, things. For example, they tortured the lawyer Sergei Magnitsky to death. They have also killed journalist after journalist. Has anyone ever bothered a musician or an opera company about that? Yes, human-rights fashion is a curious thing.

■ Lee Daniels's *The Butler* stars Forest Whitaker as a black White House butler who witnesses civil-rights history from his post in the corridors of presidential power. Notwithstanding its fertile historical source material—the real-life career of Eu-

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gene Allen, who served every president from Truman to Reagan—this “docudrama” from the director of *Precious* is more of a paean to the current generation than a tribute to the past. In hurried, choppy fashion, the film portrays the events of the civil-rights movement—the sit-ins, the Freedom Rides, the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., and so on—as way stations on the road to its triumphant finale: the election of Barack Obama. Along the way, Daniels presents a familiar line-up of soft-Left presidential stereotypes: JFK is a saintly family man, Nixon an evil paranoiac, Reagan a bumbling oldster, and so on. It’s a fairly wearying tale; but it would have been more understandable in 2008, when a combination of justifiable pride and gauzy invention made Obama a racial hero. Five years of high unemployment and one nasty reelection campaign later, *The Butler* feels like a film whose time has come and gone.

■ In early August, Oprah Winfrey—who stars in *The Butler*—lucked out. Just days before the press interviews for the new movie, she found herself embroiled in a headline-grabbing international “racism” incident in which a shop assistant in Zurich, Switzerland, allegedly told the star that she couldn’t afford a \$38,000 handbag. The store’s owner, Trudie Goetz, protested to Reuters that her assistant, who doesn’t speak English, was trying to give Winfrey multiple options; Winfrey told cameras that she had been racially profiled. Many would consider it a remarkable jump from “I was treated badly in a store” to “I was subject to racist stereotyping.” But Winfrey has proven herself wholly capable of such movement before. Eight years ago, when turned away from an Hermès store in Paris after hours, Winfrey complained that the store’s refusal to let her in after it had locked up for the day was the product of the color of her skin. When the only tool you have is a hammer . . .

■ Oberlin College’s long nightmare of “campus racism”—involving attacks on Black History Month and even a sighting of the KKK—ended with the predictable confession that the affair had been a hoax perpetrated by two progressive students. Less predictable was the revelation that faculty and police knew early on that the saga was a hoax but indulged it as if it were real anyway. In the meantime, the story went national, inviting much wailing and gnashing of teeth. One would expect that, once caught, authorities would apologize and heads would roll. But this is a university: “These actions were real,” the administration said in a statement. “The fear and disruption they caused in our community were real.” Well, as real as anything at Oberlin.

■ At long last, the government has admitted the existence of top-secret Area 51, a heavily guarded preserve down in the pointy end of Nevada, and revealed some details about what the area is used for (though it still has not explained where the other 50 areas are). Area 51’s existence has long been rumored; it has been alleged to be a landing site for UFOs, and tales have circulated of an eerie, secluded reservation bustling with investigative journalists, flying saucers grounded for lack of spare parts, and little green men who look like Harry Reid. Why did the government break the secrecy? Is it all part of an amnesty plot for a new type of illegal alien, leading soon enough to the inevitable affirmative action for Martian Americans? Has DARPA been developing futuristic technologies

like death rays, flying cars, or even solar panels that generate electricity at a reasonable cost? Nothing so implausible. Instead, the military set aside Area 51 for testing and development of the U-2 and other spy planes, and there is nothing otherworldly going on there except the scenery. At least, that’s what they want you to think . . .

■ Fifteen years ago, the University of Denver changed its athletic mascot from Denver Boone, a coonskin-capped cartoon boy, to a half-hearted attempt at a hawk. No one liked the new mascot who wasn’t paid to, so it was dropped, and DU’s Pioneers went mascotless. Recently, though, students and alumni have unofficially but enthusiastically revived Denver Boone—to the administration’s chagrin, since the lad has several flaws that are fatal in today’s academia: He’s white, he’s male, and he’s presumably discourteous towards Indians. So, in typical academic fashion, the university appointed a committee. As



Patricia Calhoun reports in *Westword*: “The 76-member Mascot Steering Committee sent a survey to more than 78,000 members of the greater DU community, asking their opinion on three potential mascots—the Elk, the Jackalope, and the Mountain Explorer—each of which had two potential looks.” None of these options was anywhere near as popular as the durable Denver Boone. If the DU administration wants a symbol of what the school is really about, why not call the mascot the Denver Bureaucrat?

■ There are few things as dispiriting as an NFL exhibition game; even if your team is victorious, it’s like beating your wife at strip poker. So perhaps it was no great loss to John Coulter of Arizona and his 15-year-old son when they were ejected last month from the Cardinals’ preseason contest against the Cowboys’ third string. Still, it was an indignity; in fact, plainclothes agents actually threatened Coulter with arrest—all for violating state liquor laws by letting his son hold his beer while he took a picture. Coulter understandably deemed the suds patrol’s actions excessive, and he told them so loudly and profanely, at which point an ejection became inevitable. While cursing out police officers is both unwise and uncivil, we do sympathize with the Coulters over the officers’ overzealous response to something that deserved, at most, a friendly caution. If only Arizona police could be this effective at enforcing immigration laws . . .

HISTORY

Marching in Time

THE civil-rights revolution, like the American Revolution, was in a crucial sense conservative: It did not seek to invent rights, but to secure ones that the government already respected in principle. “In a sense we have come to our nation’s capital to cash a check,” said Martin Luther King Jr., a “promissory note” signed in “the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.” The speech he gave 50 years ago this August is a thorough, if implicit, repudiation of all anti-Americanism.

The revolution was also a religious movement, overwhelmingly made up of Christians and Jews, unashamed to be led by a minister, willing to make an explicitly theological argument for itself: “Now is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God’s children.”

Too many conservatives and libertarians, including the editors of this magazine, missed all of this at the time. They worried about the effects of the civil-rights movement on federalism and limited government. Those principles weren’t wrong, exactly; they were tragically misapplied, given the moral and historical context. It is a mark of the success of King’s movement that almost all Americans can now see its necessity.

Another mark is the decrepitude of today’s civil-rights movement. The evils the movement fought—state-sponsored segregation, pervasive racial discrimination—have been vanquished. In their place are evils that are, alas, less amenable to marches. And so King’s heirs flail about. Where he spoke of a “bank of justice,” they just trade in grievances. Today Al Sharpton, whose chief political success has been to foment enough racial hatred to yield arson and murder, can present himself as a civil-rights leader without much fear of contradiction. We will have to look elsewhere for answers to the evils that now afflict Americans, and especially blacks: lousy schools, a thriving drug trade and a misguided governmental response, the collapse of marriage.

On anniversaries like this one, left-wingers sometimes lament that King is not remembered in full. They say that he was hostile to capitalism and to the Vietnam War. It is a historically accurate point, and it is a historically irrelevant point. King is a national hero because of the American ideals he championed and brought much closer to realization. It is the march of those ideals that we commemorate this week.



SYRIA

Crossing the Line

AS we go to press, President Obama is about to launch one of the most reluctant military strikes in U.S. history.

He has been cornered into acting in Syria by his own rhetoric and the criminality of the Assad regime, which in deploying chemical weapons joins a select, fiendish club of governments willing to flout one of the most firmly entrenched international norms. When it became clear earlier in the year that Bashar al-Assad’s forces were preparing to use chemical weapons, President Obama issued a number of warnings about red lines, which he did all he could to dance around and evade once Assad indeed launched a chemical attack in April. Emboldened, Assad has perpetrated a more brazen assault that killed hundreds in the Damascus suburbs.

The outrage of our allies and the logic of the president’s own statements make it nearly impossible for him to escape acting this time. If he did somehow find a way out, it would dangerously erode the credibility of the United States. The president can’t repeatedly make threats that prove utterly empty without inviting every bad actor in the world to laugh off whatever we say in the future, in potentially much more dire and important circumstances.

The administration seems inclined to a minimal, Bill Clinton-style attack from the air. This would be better than nothing, although not without its own risks. If it is too obviously symbolic, it invites the regime to conclude that there is no real price to pay for using WMD, and continue to do so in defiance of us. On the other hand, every military intervention—no matter how limited—is unpredictable, and Damascus or its allies may lash out in ways that demand our retaliation in an unexpected escalation.

Some of our friends urge going all the way and hitting Assad so as to shake the very foundations of his regime, tilt the balance of the civil war decisively toward the rebels, and hasten his fall from power. In isolation, this is a manifestly desirable goal. Assad is not just a monster but a cat’s-paw of our enemy in Iran. If he were to lose, it would be a strategic setback to Iran, Russia, and Hezbollah, which have done so much to support him as he wages a scorched-earth campaign against his countrymen, and potentially change the balance in the region. Iran would no longer have a strategic bridge connecting it with its terrorist proxies on Israel’s borders.

The reason to stop short of working to topple Assad is the nature of his opposition, dominated by Sunni extremists who are also hostile to our interests, if in different ways. This is why the crucial question in Syria is not what we’ll do from the air, but what we can do on the ground to shape an opposition in which we can have some confidence. After Assad’s last chemical attack, President Obama said he would arm more moderate elements among the rebels, but by all accounts he didn’t follow through. We should have covert forces on the ground arming, training, and advising the rebels with whom we can work, so we aren’t leaving the field to Arab governments with their own interests in influencing the nature of the rebellion.

Both justice and cold-blooded calculation say that Assad should fall, provided he’s not replaced by something equally bad. To that end, we should be creating proxy forces on the ground. Syria is a hellish problem, to be sure, but its difficulties needn’t freeze us in perpetual indecision. President Obama’s foreign policy of impotence is a choice, not an inevitability.

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A Thousand Little Tyrants

Obama's problems are a chance to rein in the bureaucracy

BY JOHN YOO

IF there has been a unifying theme of Barack Obama's presidency, it is the inexorable growth of the administrative state. Its growth, across diverse areas, has followed a pattern: First, expand federal powers beyond their enumerated constitutional limits. Second, delegate those powers to agencies and away from elected politicians in Congress. Third, insulate civil servants from politics so they can wield their discretion without accountability. Finally, force the courts to defer unthinkingly to Congress's acts of delegation and agency regulation.

Obamacare represents the apotheosis of this administrative state. Congress claimed authority to take over one-sixth of the American economy. But instead of passing the rules for this massive new government program, the large Democratic majorities in Congress vested the

power to regulate health care in the Department of Health and Human Services. Even the Supreme Court, with a majority of Republican-appointed justices, did not stand in the way.

Woodrow Wilson, who introduced the administrative state, thought that it would allow experts to solve social problems scientifically and without the push-and-pull of partisan politics. But it has had much the opposite effect. Unaccountable bureaucracy lacks both deliberation with accountability (the virtue of the Congress) and decision with vigor (the virtue of the president).

"A feeble execution is but another phrase for a bad execution," Alexander Hamilton argued in *Federalist* 70, "and a government ill executed, whatever it may be in theory, must be, in practice, a bad government." By contrast, "good government" requires "energy in the executive," in a vigorous president who is "essential to the protection of the community from foreign attacks" and to "the steady administration of the laws." President Obama's allegiance to the liberal administrative state guaranteed that his presidency would run aground on the very shoals that Hamilton marked out. Its

operations are so vast, and its reach so sprawling, that it lies beyond the control or comprehension of any one man or group of men, making rational management impossible.

Its dispersal of authority and dilution of responsibility produced the debacle in Benghazi, where no one felt responsible for the fates of American diplomats trapped in the consulate, nor would any decision, had it come, have been executed with the speed necessary to save them. President Obama does not know the full scope of his own health-care law, nor can he and his aides figure out how to make its many moving parts work on time. His Justice Department instead resorts to the passive non-enforcement of the laws—the very opposite of energy in the executive—to try to bring coherence to its schemes and advance its policies.

This disease infects Obama's handling even of national-security affairs, where the president's virtues of "decision, activity, secrecy, and dispatch," as Hamilton described them, should be at their height. Defending the nation's security is the president's paramount duty. But where earlier presidents stoutly defended their commander-in-chief power to protect the nation, Obama's response to the demands of the War on Terror is to seek more judicial control over everything from surveillance to drones. At times, the Obama White House seems unaware of the surveillance and killing being done by his intelligence agencies and shows little interest in directing them. In a March 12, 2013, congressional hearing, for example, Obama's director of national intelligence denied that the NSA was collecting "any type of data" on Americans. And President Obama has been noticeably absent in defending anti-terrorism surveillance, leaving the job to General Keith Alexander, director of the NSA, and the chairmen of the House and Senate intelligence committees. It is difficult to imagine George Washington, Lincoln, or FDR responding to their national-security challenges with the diffidence that afflicts Obama.

However much they may enjoy watching Obama flounder, conservatives should seize his problems as an opportunity to reform the administrative state. They should begin to develop a broader agenda to change the way government works.

Their previous approach unintentionally exacerbated the problems. When

Mr. Yoo is a law professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and a visiting scholar at the American Enterprise Institute. He served in the Bush Justice Department from 2001 to 2003 and is a co-author of Taming Globalization: International Law, the U.S. Constitution, and the New World Order.

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Ronald Reagan took office, conservatives did not seek to radically downsize and transform the administrative state. Instead, they tried to tame it by making its decisions more rational. Led by Chris DeMuth (later head of the American Enterprise Institute) and Douglas Ginsburg (later a judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit), conservatives created a powerful nerve center within the Office of Management and Budget that forced all new regulations to survive cost-benefit review. Led by Antonin Scalia (later D.C. Circuit judge and Supreme Court justice) and Robert Bork (ditto—almost), conservatives sought to turn the agencies toward deregulation to spark economic growth.

Three legal doctrines sat at the core of this campaign. First, the president must have the authority to fire the heads of any and all administrative agencies. Without the power of removal, a president could not force the agencies to follow his deregulatory policies or to submit to the rigors of cost-benefit analysis. Second, as ultimately codified in the Supreme Court's 1984 decision *NRDC v. Chevron*, courts were to defer to agency interpretations of ambiguous laws, which had the effect of locating even more lawmaking power in the executive. Third, courts were to defer to agency regulations rather than give them a "hard look" unless they were "arbitrary and capricious," which meant that courts almost never overturned an agency decision on the merits.

For a time, this approach worked, because the Reagan and Bush White Houses focused their domestic policy on cutting back regulations and freeing the animal passions of the economy. The reforms clearly left the nation better off and pulled the economy out of a deep funk. But conservatives also, inadvertently, so insulated the administrative state from congressional and judicial influence that a progressive president could effectively free it from anyone's control.

One ironic outcome of the Progressive era's end run around the Constitution's checks is that, in trying to remove policy from politics, it made the system significantly more susceptible to special interests. And the Reagan Revolution, in trying to protect liberty from the excessive lawmaking of Congress, increased lawmaking by agencies, which never have to worry about voters or judges or

Congress. Rather than persuade both the House and the Senate, all the interest groups have to do now is capture the Federal Communications Commission or the EPA staff. It is unclear whether this outcome and the resulting state of our republic should be the subject of an Elizabethan tragedy or of a comedy.

If the White House does not care to force the administrative state to act in a unitary, rational manner, then agencies will be free to pursue their own ideological agendas. If the president believes government can make economic decisions better than the market, then officials can act without any effective restraint. Conservative principles have only allowed the welfare state to expand its reach, ousting the private decisions of the markets and undercutting the institutions of civil society.

Conservatives can begin the process of reform only by moving beyond the policies of the Reagan Revolution. Instead of making the administrative state more efficient and effective, they should disable and hobble it in its domestic (not national-security) operations. First, conservatives should jettison some of the favorite legal doctrines of the Scalia and Bork era. Rather than defer to agency interpretations of the laws, the courts should decide on their own whether regulations satisfy statutory requirements. Rather than give agencies wide running room to formulate regulations, courts should give the regulations a hard look or demand that they be based on scientific models and empirical evidence. Judges should also resuscitate the pre-New Deal non-delegation doctrine, which once held that Congress could not transfer true lawmaking power to the agencies but could only allow them to fill in the details of policy decisions made by the legislature.

A more aggressive rethinking of constitutional law could reexamine some classic separation-of-powers cases. Such decisions as *INS v. Chadha*, which struck down the legislative veto (which allowed the House or Senate, or even a committee, to overrule a regulation without an overriding statute's passing the full Congress), and *Bowsher v. Synar*, which limited the powers of congressional agencies, reduced Congress's ability to oversee the administrative state. If conservatives are going to put new constraints on the agencies, they should

rethink their old hostility toward Congress.

Another conservative revolution could come in the area of individual rights. Many conservative lawyers and judges, especially those who came to the fore during the Reagan years, were taught that *Lochner v. New York* (1905) was the great example of the evils of judicial activism. In *Lochner*, the Supreme Court struck down a limit on the working hours of bakers as a violation of their due-process right to make contracts. In doing so, the Court endorsed a view of constitutional rights that had held sway since Reconstruction. It was derived ultimately from the Framers' concept of natural rights, which the authors of the Reconstruction-era constitutional amendments shared. Nevertheless, conservatives endorsed the New Deal Court's rejection of *Lochner*, and distanced themselves from the defense of individual rights, because the Founding-era understanding of natural rights had been distorted into a license for the judicial activism of the Warren Court in the 1950s and 1960s.

Such activism continues to this day. Often joined by a stray conservative, such as the ever-wandering Anthony Kennedy, liberals do not hesitate to conjure new rights out of the Due Process Clause, from *Roe v. Wade*'s right to abortion to *U.S. v. Windsor*'s right to gay marriage. In their opposition to this kind of jurisprudence, conservatives have embraced an impoverished, defensive understanding of constitutional law. Instead, they should reclaim the idea of natural rights that actually informed the Framing, and give it expression in a system of meaningful legal principles that judges can enforce non-arbitrarily.

Conservatives have correctly shared the Founders' fear of excessive lawmaking, but they have focused on the wrong source: Congress. They should shift their aim to the administrative agencies, which are the greatest threat to our liberties today. Otherwise, our constitutional republic might devolve into something akin to the statist governments of Europe. President Obama's efforts to encourage just such a devolution, and the problems his administration now faces in consequence, may ironically give conservatives a new opportunity to restore the original vision of the Constitution. **NR**

People tend to refer to Mother Nature as the provider of our weather conditions, and also that her assaults to the planet and its people are unavoidable.

Some think a possible scenario might be that this civilization is outliving its opportunity to continue existing. Many previous civilizations did disappear. Have you ever wondered why?

Decades ago Richard W. Wetherill identified a *natural law of behavior, requiring people to behave rationally, honestly, and morally right*. Most people would agree that this present population certainly is not complying with that law of nature.

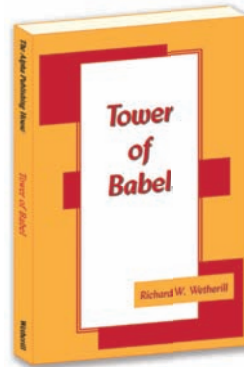
Wetherill's insight also revealed that this civilization would be the last if people continued failing to surrender to this created law of absolute right. But it would not include everybody for if a sufficient number of individuals were making every effort to conform to this natural law, they would survive and advance into the next phase of human development.

This is a message of optimism and hope, as it is the solution for an erring civilization: *conform to nature's behavioral law of right action just as people conform to nature's laws of physics. Doing so ends opposition to creation's plan for mankind and supports the creator's purpose for having created mankind.*

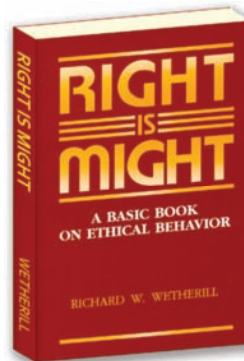
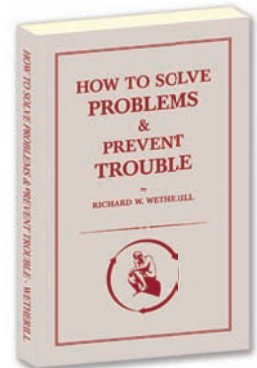
In addition, people are released from the confusion of making behavioral decisions based on what differing groups judge to be good or evil, right or wrong.

Support nature's plan to create a truly civilized civilization!

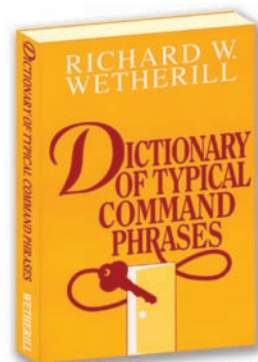
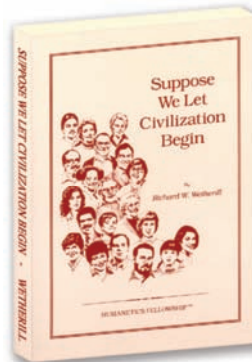
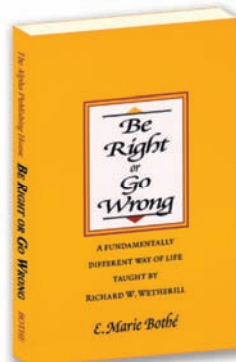
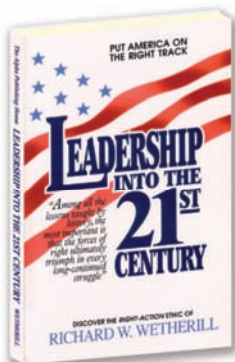
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Armed and Progressive

Vermont, Second Amendment paradise

BY CHARLES C. W. COOKE

ASK an American to guess which is the most gun-friendly state in the Union and you'll likely be treated to a whole host of wrong answers. Texas, which has a particularly strong reputation for independence, tends to come up first, with Alabama and Florida tied for second. Other questionees instinctively think of underpopulated areas: Montana? Utah? "Oh, I dunno—Idaho maybe?"

The correct answer might surprise them: It's Vermont, land of gay marriage and legal marijuana, home to the only openly "socialist" senator in America, host to the only single-payer health-care system in the United States, and the primary stomping ground of an electorally resurgent Progressive party. Odd as it may sound, Vermont, since its establishment as a republic in 1777, has been far and away the best place in the country in which to enjoy the right to keep and bear arms. It turns out that you really *can* have guns and butter.

Most of the other gun-friendly states—including what are called "Vermont carry" states, such as Arizona, Wyoming, Arkansas, and Alaska, all of which have recently thrown out their rules in emulation of Vermont—arrived at their present condition after repealing restrictions that had been gradually added to their statute books between colonial times and the 1990s. Vermont, conversely, has never had *any* gun-control laws. Its constitution boasts a bluntly worded provision in Chapter I: "The people have a right to bear arms for the defense of themselves and the State." This is backed up by a set of watertight statutes commonly referred to as the "sportsmen's bill of rights." Together, the provisions have ensured that gun control remains all but impossible.

Not only do anti-gun legislators in Montpelier have their work cut out by the state's impenetrable charter, but local

governments are hamstrung by it too. No county or city can pass gun restrictions into law without the permission of the state government—and that permission is never forthcoming. Indeed, even if it were to be granted, any limitations would likely be struck down by the judicial branch. The state's supreme court has held that *all regulation* of the manner in which arms may be borne is flatly unconstitutional. In consequence, Vermonters may not just carry concealed weapons without a permit, they may carry weapons openly on their hips, too. Short of a constitutional amendment, lesser gun-control measures appear not to have a chance in the state.

Vermont, since its establishment as a republic in 1777, has been far and away **the best place in the country** in which to enjoy the right to keep and bear arms.

Strong as they are, words written down on a two-centuries-old parchment barrier cannot on their own explain why legislators are so wary of touching the issue. That comes down to politics. "Anti-gun politicians get voted out in this state," Eddie Cutler, president of Gun Owners of Vermont, tells me. "Even the liberals have guns. Legislators don't want anything to do with gun control." Linda Waite-Simpson, a Democratic state representative who responded to last December's shooting at Sandy Hook by introducing a gun-control bill, has learned this the hard way. "If a statute has any mention of firearms in it at all," she explains, "it causes fear and trembling in the legislature."

Indeed so. Despite Waite-Simpson's conviction that Sandy Hook had "changed everything," her bill to limit magazine size and expand background checks got nowhere. Now she faces a serious challenge. "She won by a small margin before she took on the gun issue, and her opponent from the last election is running against her next year," Cutler says. "She might well lose next time."

Vermont's gun-control movement, such as it is, drew much of its recent confidence from a Castleton State College poll that purported to show 61 percent of Vermonters favoring a ban on "assault weapons," 66 percent backing the ban-

ning of high-capacity magazines, and 75 percent supporting universal background checks. Proponents were also urged on by town meetings in Strafford, Woodstock, Bradford, Thetford, Norwich, and Hartland, all of which yielded resolutions pressing state lawmakers to pursue gun control. Nevertheless, Waite-Simpson regrets, all efforts "were quickly shut down in the statehouse."

To Evan Hughes of the Vermont State Rifle and Pistol Association, this is not surprising. Hughes questions the now-famous Castleton poll, arguing that it is self-evidently ridiculous to suggest that the people of his state are more in favor of

gun-control legislation than is the country at large. Other critics point to the intensity gap, which is considerable. Gun Owners of Vermont grows quickly every time new legislation is suggested. "We currently have 3,800 members," Eddie Cutler says, "whereas Waite-Simpson's group, 'Gunsense Vermont,' has 100." Waite-Simpson readily concedes the disparity: "The gun lobby has a huge mailing list," she allows. "When they hit 'Send,' everything changes. And the legislature knows it."

After he introduced a bill to ban "assault weapons" in February, Democratic state senator Philip Baruth tells me, he "received thousands of heartfelt and handwritten notes" against his proposal. "This wasn't a boilerplate effort or a template letter from the NRA," he adds. "You can tell when people are writing for themselves. There are a lot of people in Vermont who vote Democrat, but they see guns as part of their way of life."

I asked Waite-Simpson why she thinks gun control is so unpopular in such an ostensibly left-leaning place. After all, it's easy to talk about the "gun lobby," but it doesn't actually get a vote. "It's a very libertarian state," she says. "Nobody likes to be told what to do." But, she suggests, "we're living in truly crazy times: Nobody thinks that a school shooting could happen to them,

but it could. And the gangs and drug cartels are on our city streets. Rural Vermont needs to recognize that the condition of urban Vermont requires that they be inconvenienced a little.” Cutler rejects this characterization wholesale. “We have never had a major crime problem at any point in the state’s history,” he claims. “Even back when the state was a republic we had almost no gun violence. Some people don’t even lock their doors here.”

FBI statistics support Cutler. Invariably, Vermont has the lowest murder rate in the country: In 2011, there were eight murders in the state, four of them committed with firearms; in 2010, seven people were murdered, only two of them with guns; in 2009, there were seven murders, and not a single one was committed with a firearm. In an essay discussing the abortive attempt at gun control, Andy Bromage, of the Vermont news website *Seven Days*, noted back in February that “most Vermonters aren’t touched by gun crimes” and that “gangs don’t terrorize our neighborhoods.” “Almost all of Vermont’s recent gun deaths have been suicides,” he added. “In the past two years, all but six of the 130 deaths caused by firearms were self-inflicted.” I suggest to Eddie Cutler that it doesn’t sound too much like they are suffering through “crazy times” in Vermont. “It’s paradise!” Cutler responds.

The safety of Vermont goes some way toward explaining the citizenry’s healthy suspicion of politicians who characterize gun control as a “crime-prevention” measure, as well as toward demonstrating why the professional opinion of the law-enforcement establishment carries so little weight. Even in liberal Burlington, the mere suggestion by the Burlington Police Officers’ Association that the city should attempt to pass an “assault weapons” ban prompted rifle ranges across the city to ban police officers from joining or training at their facilities.

Conversely, a full-throated defense of the right to bear arms is a way to make a name for yourself. Freshman senator John Rodgers, whose family has lived in the state for five generations, not only turns up at every pro-gun rally he can find, but went so far as to introduce an almost certainly unconstitutional “state sovereignty” bill that would have imposed criminal fines on any “federal offi-

cial who enforce, or attempt to enforce, federal law purporting to regulate certain firearms and firearm accessories in Vermont.”

Rodgers, whose pro-gun rhetoric makes Ted Cruz sound like Rosie O’Donnell, is a Democrat, and his take-no-prisoners approach serves to demonstrate that—unlike so many contemporary political issues—gun control does not break neatly down party lines. Of the state’s 30 senators, only seven are Republicans, while 20 are Democrats and three are Progressives; in the house, there are 98 Democrats, four Progressives, four independents, and 43 Republicans; the governor, another Democrat, was endorsed by the NRA and describes all changes to Vermont’s gun regime as mere “feel-good legislation.” It’s not your typical pro-gun cast.

So toxic is gun control that a proposed “assault weapons” ban introduced by Senator Baruth was, the senator tells me, “unpopular to the extent that even gun-safety people were beginning their sentences by saying ‘Look, I’m not crazy like Baruth!’” “I expected minority support,” he continues, “but I got zero support—even from the Progressives. Not a *single* other legislator would sup-

port me. There is an uneasy bargain between conservative Democrats and progressive Democrats in this state, and the one recent thing that has got them together is how much they hated my bill.”

And so, with nothing doing on the home front, pro-gun-control Vermonters look to Washington. Vermont does not prevent convicted felons from owning firearms, which means that if state police discover a felon in possession they can do little more than inform the feds. “We have very few ATF agents up here,” Waite-Simpson tells me, “so nothing ever gets enforced. We don’t even have anywhere we could store confiscated guns. We need the federal government to do its job.”

Cutler, meanwhile, is “frustrated” at the possibility that the status quo—and his group’s political success—could be overturned at the stroke of a pen. “It couldn’t be much better here,” he says. “But if they pass new laws in Washington, we have to go along with them. It’s extremely worrying.” For now at least, Vermont is as it has always been, and the right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed—not even the littlest piece. **NR**

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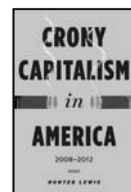
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Über-Survivor

Marko Feingold flourishes at 100

BY JAY NORDLINGER

Salzburg

MARKO FEINGOLD has a very good memory. His memories begin in 1916, when he was three. The Feingold family lived in Vienna. There were four children, four boys, one of them a baby, Emil. Their father was off at war. Their mother habitually rose at 4 to stand in line for milk and bread. She took her ration card, and she took her baby. Women with babies got to the head of the line faster. That was important, because sometimes the city ran out of bread and milk.

It was cold in the winter, and the baby caught pneumonia and died. The way Marko Feingold puts it today is, “Three of us lived, because our brother died.” There was milk and bread for the children at home because their mother took the baby.

Feingold has vivid memories of that first war: and the deprivations of Vienna. He remembers exactly what the bread looked and tasted like: It was all crumbs, not able to hang together. He remembers when his sister, Rosa, came along in 1918. The other kids were put out of the house while she was being born.

Marko Feingold was born in May 1913—more than a year before the war began. He would experience the next war too, of course. He survived four concentration camps: Auschwitz, Neuengamme, Dachau, and Buchenwald. He has been known to quip, “I could write a Michelin guide to the camps.” Today, he is the president of the Jewish community here in Salzburg. It’s hard to believe he’s 100. He is fit, sharp, active. He walks at a good clip. The words come easily: He’s in full command of facts, names, dates. He seems not to tire. He has almost a full head of hair, and much of it is dark. It doesn’t look dyed, either. He is a handsome, dashing gent, with a twinkle in his eye. With his mustache, he looks almost raffish.

Before World War II came the Depression, of course. In Vienna, people were sleeping on bridges. Feingold and

his brother Ernst went down to Italy, where life was sweeter. They were there from 1932 to 1938. Feingold says those were his six fat years: his best years. In early ’38, he and Ernst returned to Vienna, to get their passports renewed. The Anschluss took place on March 12. They were nabbed by the Nazis, and an unimaginable ordeal began.

Never believe, says Feingold, that Austria was the “first victim,” as propaganda once had it. That the country was unwillingly occupied by the Germans. Most Austrians rejoiced in the Anschluss. “The country welcomed the Germans with open arms,” says Feingold. He grew up with plenty of anti-Semitism, and was discriminated against, like others. But did he ever suspect that his neighbors and countrymen would turn against the Jews, murderously, genocidally? No.

He and Ernst were the first Austrians to be confined at Auschwitz. The camp was still under construction. From Auschwitz, Marko was sent on to one camp after the other. About every day in these camps, he says, “you could write a whole book.” He has written his memoirs (available only in German). Their title might be translated “When You’ve Already Died, You Feel No Pain.”

Needless to say, Feingold endured much torture, starvation, and other evils. I will mention a single detail: He and other inmates were forced to dig a canal with their bare hands. Ernst died in 1942. The fates of the other two siblings—Rosa and their brother Nathan—are unknown, specifically. They can be presumed killed in the Holocaust. Marko was still in Buchenwald on April 11, 1945, when the Americans came in. With other Austrians, he walked the few miles to Weimar, got on a bus, and headed home.

How did Feingold survive the camps? Was it luck, bravery, cleverness, some combination? He smiles and says—more like sighs—one word: “Zufall.” That means chance, coincidence, happenstance, amazing turns of events. For example, he was classified as “gassable” at Neuengamme. But the crematoria at the camp were not ready yet. Meanwhile, he was shipped to Dachau . . .

After the war, he could not return to his hometown, Vienna, because the authorities there would not allow Jews back in—or anyone else who had been imprisoned in the camps. These people would know who did what, when. And the Jews might

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want their property back. By unlikely twists and turns—*Zufall*—Feingold wound up in Salzburg.

Those guilty of war crimes got off lightly, he says. The Nuremberg trials took care of a few, but just a few. He says, with great specificity, that officials of the Catholic Church and of the Red Cross helped Nazis escape to South America. In Austro-Germany, the standard line was, “The SS men were bad, yes. But everyone else was merely swept up in the madness.”

Feingold spent the first three years after the war—1945 to 1948—engaged in the *Bricha*. This was the movement to smuggle Jews into Palestine, soon to be Israel. (“*Bricha*,” in Hebrew, means “escape” or “flight.”) The work was illegal and dangerous. According to Feingold, there were about 250,000 Jews in the Salzburg area: displaced persons. About 150,000 of them wanted to go to America, Canada, or Australia, where many had relatives. The other 100,000 wanted to settle in Palestine.

Feingold helped them get down to Italy, where they would take ships—leaky, barely seaworthy ones—across

the Mediterranean. These bedraggled, wretched Jews from Eastern Europe and Russia knew nothing about the Alps. Few had proper shoes or warm clothing. They were afraid of heights. Feingold led them at night, so they would see less. He told them to hug the mountainside and not look down.

He himself did not go to Palestine. Why? With a smile, he shows me an old photograph: “That is why.” The photo is of himself and a blonde woman, his first wife, Else. He met her two months after he got out of the camps. She was a Catholic Salzburger. They were married until she died in 1992. In 1998, he married his present wife, Hanna. Feingold feels like an Austrian, by the way. He always has, through everything.

Austrian though he may be, he knows a lot about Israel, and cares a lot about it. He scorns the world’s scorn of it. I ask a hard question: Does he believe Israel will survive? He doesn’t really answer, instead saying, “It has to survive.” Where else would the 6 million Jews there go?

In Salzburg, he owned a clothing store, then two: “*Wiener Mode*,” or “*Viennese Fashion*.” He retired more than 35 years ago, in 1977. But his other work—from which he will never retire, I’m sure—has been to tell people about the Holocaust. Since 1945, he has been to something like 6,000 schools in Austria and Bavaria. He has been to other institutions too, including prisons and churches. Most people are receptive to what he has to say. He makes a common observation, however: Germany has been more forthright in acknowledging the past than Austria has. Much more. In Austria, people are “still lying,” says Feingold: lying about the Austrian role in Nazism.

I decide to ask a timeworn and unanswerable question: How do you explain anti-Semitism? Why does the world hate Jews? Feingold answers quickly and confidently: “Envy. Jealousy.” He goes on to say, among other things, that Jewish families were always close-knit. Family members helped one another, and they prospered. This made others resentful.

“Slowly, slowly,” says Feingold, anti-Semitism in Austria is lessening. It is stronger in the countryside than in towns and cities. He makes an observation that is somewhat lighthearted: These days, everyone says, “I had a Jewish great-grandfather,” or, “I had a Jewish aunt,” or, “My father was half-Jewish.” There once

was a time when no one, ever, admitted to a Jewish relative.

Feingold says that he and the archbishop of Salzburg are “like brothers.” The archbishop calls him “my elder brother”; he calls the archbishop “my younger brother.” Feingold is a very liberal-minded and ecumenical person. “I work with Muslims, Catholics, atheists, anybody,” he says.

In a typical day, he gets up at 5. “I check to see if anything hurts. If it does, I say, ‘Okay, I’m alive.’” He has breakfast and reads the papers. He arrives at his office by 8—he works in Salzburg’s synagogue. He deals with his correspondence and phone calls. He attends all sorts of events: He is a pillar of the general community, not just the Jewish one. He has received many honors, local and national. There are about 70 Jews living in Greater Salzburg. Feingold knows maybe 30 of them. The rest? Many opt to keep their heads down.

A believer in Holocaust remembrance, Feingold has returned to all four of the camps in which he was confined. At home, he has helped to lay “*Stolpersteine*”: little stones that commemorate victims of the Nazis—not just Jews but Gypsies, Jehovah’s Witnesses, homosexuals, and others.

I ask Feingold whether he has ever suffered from survivor’s guilt. No, he says. “Anyone who thinks like that is crazy.” Does he believe in God? Yes, but he is not especially religious, or observant. Does he have any bitterness toward his persecutors? No. Does he forgive them? “It’s difficult,” he says, “because those people aren’t living anymore. How can I forgive them?” But then he says, “For myself, I forgive. But for others, I have no right to forgive.”

His main concern is “never again.” He warns incessantly against dictatorship. There must be no brainwashing of the young, no dictatorship in any form: “not from the left, not from the right, and not from religion.”

Naturally, he does not have a wealth of peers left. A Holocaust survivor in Bad Ischl, about 25 miles from Salzburg, died recently at 106. Toward the end of our visit, I ask Feingold a boring, standard question—one that every person of advanced age must face: “To what do you attribute your longevity?” He smiles, glances upward, shrugs a little, and says, “*Zufall*.”



Marko Feingold, August 21, 2013

JAY NORDLINGER
NR

A Hard-Boiled Music

Elmore Leonard's
contribution to literature

BY OTTO PENZLER

A BEAUTIFUL jazz riff, one that had played irresistibly and profoundly for more than six decades, went silent on the morning of Tuesday, August 20. The thing that is all wrong about that is Elmore Leonard—okay, he was 87—was meant to live forever. He will, in a way, because we all will be reading and rereading his brilliant and original mystery and crime fiction for the rest of our lives—even if you're just a kid now. But it is nearly impossible to think that *he*, the physical person, won't be around anymore.

I met him at my bookshop in New York in 1981 when his novel *Split Images* came out. I had been reading him for a while and been blown away by his previous book, *City Primeval*, so I called his publisher to ask if he would be touring and could we have him for a reading. It turned out that he had never done a bookshop event outside of his hometown, and the publicist was surprised to get a request.

Just before he showed up, I looked at the dust-jacket photo and saw this hard-eyed guy wearing a cap and squinting back at me. I wondered what I'd done, confident that if it didn't go well, he would beat the living daylights out of me. He looked just like the fellow on the dust jacket when he appeared at the top of the spiral staircase that was the centerpiece of the store and asked, "You Otto?" Once I admitted it, he stuck one hand out while his other reached around my shoulder for a hug, and he said, "You got me to New York. Thanks." It was, as Rick Blaine said to Louis, the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

That friendship began out of respect and affection for the books, for the original sound of Leonard's voice on the page. I didn't know exactly why it resonated so strongly for me, merely that it didn't

sound like anyone else, and I liked it. As time went on, I recognized that the words on the page sounded like a set at the Blue Note. I'd always known that poetry could sound like music; I had never made the leap to understand that prose could, too. Just as jazz was the great American contribution to the fullness of musical history, hard-boiled fiction was the quintessential American invention that enriched the world's literature. And no one more prolifically embodied the form than Elmore Leonard, and no one did it at such a consistently distinguished level.

Most readers of American fiction (in the U.S.A. and around the world) know the books, which so regularly won awards and hit the bestseller lists. *Glitz*, *Stick*, *Get Shorty*, *La Brava*, *Out of Sight*, *Rum Punch*, among so many others, are reliably mentioned among readers' favorites, and the people who made the movies from so many of the books were frequently smart enough to pick up his dialogue. *Hombre* (from back in the day when he wrote westerns) was the first one to get cinematic treatment, but there were other good ones, like *Jackie Brown* and *Get Shorty*, though too many that should have had their screenwriters and directors hauled straight to jail without trial, like *The Big Bounce* (made twice and described by Leonard as the two worst movies of all time) and *Stick*, for which he never forgave Burt Reynolds.

It was his habit to have a vague idea of what he wanted to write and then hunt for names for his characters (the Detroit phonebook got plenty of use). Once they were named, he felt that they were real and he could get on with it. He gave them the words—the dialogue that readers came to love and admire for its authenticity—and they provided him with the story, since he rarely knew where the plot was going to take him. Oops. I meant to say where the characters were going to take him, because by the time he had gotten to the halfway mark, his guys, as he called them, had taken over, frequently surprising him.

He liked to talk about his books while they were in progress and once was dismayed about an unexpected turn of events. He was telling a story when he said he didn't know what he was going to do. He was up to page 130 and some minor character had just shot the guy who was supposed to be the hero—or at least the most important figure in the book, as it was not Leonard's style to make his

characters genuine heroes. Few of his villains were evil, just people who wanted an easy buck, and it was often difficult to distinguish the good guys from the bad ones.

I suggested rewriting the scene in which his protagonist went and got himself killed. He looked at me incredulously. "No, you don't understand," he said. "It already happened. He's dead. You can't bring him back."

One time I praised him for the extraordinary authenticity of a conversation between black and Hispanic low-level drug dealers. Partial sentences, slang, vulgarity, rapid cadence, an undercurrent of violence. It sounded exactly right, I told him. He said, "How do you know?" Well, I allowed, I guess I don't *know* because I don't hang out with guys like that. "Neither do I," he said. "I make it up."

He did make it up, and he made it up the way no one else ever had. Of all his works, including the novels and the superb short stories, it may be that his greatest contribution to American letters (and he would not have liked a phrase quite so pompous) was his book on writing. Okay, it wasn't really a book; it was a list of his ten rules of writing, not enough to fill a page, but his publisher did get the bright idea to make it into a book, with some illustrations, printed on paper nearly as thick as another well-known list of ten rules, though they were called commandments in another time. As an editor and publisher now for nearly 40 years, I can only wish that every MFA program in the United States will come to its senses and make this little handbook required reading for all its students. Not to be read once, but to be read every day for as long as the dream of writing has hold of the heart and brain of the student.

While every one of his rules has value ("Never open a book with weather," "Never use a verb other than 'said' to carry dialogue"), the two that are the keys to his own work are "Try to leave out the part that readers tend to skip" and the general summing up: When writing starts to read like writing, get rid of it.

The mystery and crime community lost one of the greatest of the great when "Dutch" (the nickname came from a popular baseball pitcher of the 1930s, '40s, and '50s) Leonard put down his pen (he wrote all his books in longhand) for the last time. If you don't miss him, you didn't know him, or you didn't read him. I feel bad for you. **NR**

Mr. Penzler is the proprietor of New York's Mysterious Bookshop and the publisher of the Mysterious Press and MysteriousPress.com.



Rocky Mountain High

Colorado experiments with marijuana

BY BETSY WOODRUFF

Denver, Colo.

THERE'S a stretch of Broadway that's called Broadsterdam because of its medical-marijuana dispensaries. Just a block over, flanking Acoma and Bannock Streets, is a warehouse district. It's not hard to guess which of the squat drab buildings are grow-ops (marijuana-growing operations)—they're the ones wound in razor or barbed wire, with protruding cameras, barred windows, and extra air-conditioner units (the lights needed to grow plants make it hot in the warehouses, but the plants need cooler temperatures). Sometimes when you drive by, you can smell weed wafting in the breeze. And deep inside at least a few of those warehouses are vaults brimming with cash. Welcome to Colorado's marijuana industry.

It's been about nine months since Coloradans voted to legalize the recreational consumption of marijuana by adults over 21, and state lawmakers have until October 1 to figure out how to regulate the nascent industry. Retail stores are expected to be selling marijuana to anyone over 21 (including the inevitable marijuana tourists from out of state) by January 2014. And until then, the people whose livelihoods are inextricably linked to the marijuana industry—a burgeoning group

that includes black-market dealers, drug-reform activists, medical-dispensary owners, and countless others—will watch, wait, and carefully navigate the emerging regulatory terrain.

It's a situation of nigh-unprecedented touchiness. And it's a case study in the fallout of federal overextension. Under federal law, consumption of marijuana for any reason is prohibited. But D.C. has better things to do with its finite resources than go after adults who grow pot in their basements, so the onus for keeping average Joes from smoking has been on the states. And when the states of Washington and Colorado decided to let nonviolent adults do as they please, using marijuana became de facto (though not de jure) legal there.

Good for them. Marijuana-legalization advocates have long argued that prohibition is ridiculous because—among other reasons—anyone who wants to get marijuana can. If nothing else, Colorado and Washington have given legislators in the other 48 states a chance to see what happens when libertarians have their way. And thus far, the case their examples make for marijuana legalization is pretty compelling. In fact, some of the weirdest hiccups in the whole process are the result of federal policymaking failures. (Marijuana advocates are opti-

AP PHOTO/ED ANDRIESKI

mistic about the long game; Illinois just legalized medical marijuana, which means that state's sizable congressional delegation may feel pressure to reform federal policies toward the drug.)

A big part of the problem is that the federal government has a law that it can't enforce. It's simply not possible for Washington, D.C., by itself, to keep millions and millions of Americans from smoking marijuana. Even when all 50 states were on board with prohibition, it was impossible to keep weed from being about as accessible as organic arugula. Opponents of legalization say—quite reasonably—that what Colorado and Washington have done is detrimental to the rule of law. But having laws on the books that are unenforceable is equally

A big part of the problem is that the federal government has a law that it can't enforce.

detrimental. Voters in Colorado and Washington are just being pragmatic.

That pragmatism is easier voted for than implemented; it's hard out there for a marijuana entrepreneur. But there's "light at the end of the tunnel," as attorney Brian Vicente puts it. He shares an old mansion in downtown Denver with a few other marijuana-legalization advocates. The building itself looks kind of like a really nice frat house run by anal-retentives; it's clean and tidy, with a kitchen full of wine bottles and a front porch that houses plastic chairs and a bucket of cigarette butts. And it's a nexus of sorts for Colorado's anti-prohibition advocates.

Mason Tvert of the Marijuana Policy Project has a first-floor office that sports a framed copy of an essay he wrote in elementary school explaining that drugs are bad. And in a gabled room in the top of the building, Betty Aldworth, deputy director of the National Cannabis Industry Association, pushes the IRS to make the tax code at least remotely coherent for the owners of medical-marijuana shops. She's got a cartoon on her desk from web comic *Hyperbole and a Half* that shows a stick figure under a rainbow with the caption "Maybe everything isn't hopeless bulls***."

Vicente, one of the primary authors of the measure legalizing recreational use in Colorado, works with numerous clients in the marijuana industry. The new regulations give current medical centers a few options, he explains: They can stay as is, they can switch over to selling only recreational marijuana, or they can get a dual license that would allow them to sell both.

Light at the end of the tunnel, indeed, but there's one big problem that Colorado legislators won't be able to fix: the issue of growers' keeping cash in vaults. Most banks won't let medical-marijuana dispensaries open accounts with them, fearing that federal officials might charge them with money laundering or a host of other violations.

The problem doesn't affect only dispensaries. Roxanne Burns owns Ultimate Hydroponics & Organics, a small gardening-supply store tucked into a little cranny of a storefront on Broadway. It's next door to the Colorado Alternative Medicine Dispensary (and, conveniently, about a block from a Taco Bell; farther down, you can find a head shop next door to a Starbucks). Burns's business, which she runs with her son, caters to people

who grow cannabis, but it doesn't sell anything illegal. Among close observers of Colorado's so-called green rush, the consensus seems to be that it's smarter to invest in stores that supply dispensaries and growers—stores like Burns's—than in dispensaries themselves.

Ultimate Hydroponics & Organics is the kind of aboveboard mom-and-pop shop you'd think business communities would welcome. It's a clean, bright space that kind of smells like Home Depot. Nobody breaks any laws, and two happy dogs greet customers. It could be from *The Andy Griffith Show*, if Mayberry had lots of residents growing weed in their basements. But Burns says that when she first started, she had significant trouble finding a bank that would let her business open

an account. One banker, turning her down, said, "You're just going to be selling to dope dealers!"

Though Burns eventually found a bank that would take her money, countless other entrepreneurs have to use unorthodox—and risky—methods to store the cash they earn. Some open holding companies, some use offshore accounts, some launder cash into bank accounts through pawnshops, and I even heard that one bank with an out-of-state credit union that has an ATM in Denver (two guys from the dispensary go to the ATM; one deposits thousands of dollars while the other watches his back). Others just lock up the cash with the plants. "This is a nightmare," says Vicente.

And it's a nightmare the feds could end without too much trouble. According to Josh Kappel, a lawyer who works with Vicente, D.C. could do one of three things: The Treasury could specify in its banking regulations that banks are allowed to work with these companies; the DOJ could issue a statement saying it won't target banks for working with them; or Congress could pass a law saying it's permissible for banks to work with them. Representative Ed Perlmutter (D., Colo.) has a bill with bipartisan support that's intended to accomplish the third option. But its prospects in the House look bleak. That leaves business owners in limbo.

THE new laws haven't just changed life for those selling legally. Dealers who sell illicitly also have to adjust to the new landscape. I spoke with a dealer who's been selling illicitly for years—I'll call him "Isaac." Isaac lives in an upscale neighborhood in a suburb of Denver with his wife and young children. Unbeknownst to his white-collar neighbors (and his kids), he cultivates a small forest of cannabis in his basement. This in itself isn't illegal; Isaac has a permit. And he says his wife is fine with it; growing and selling pot is his full-time job. It's not just work, though; it's a passion. He was a troubled kid in high school, with violent tendencies and a burgeoning drinking problem. By age 17, he'd been arrested multiple times.

Then he started smoking pot. Before, he says, he wouldn't feel any remorse if he broke someone's nose. But marijuana changed that; he stopped getting in fights and getting arrested—weed

evened him out. He went on to college, where he studied, among other things, plant physiology, and he did graduate work in biochemistry, which comes in handy in his current profession. He says weed has been an overwhelmingly positive force in his life and in the lives of many others he has met.

Isaac doesn't expect his profit margins to change much in January. That's because he sells exclusively to people he knows. Much of his product goes to neighboring states (including Wyoming, Utah, and New Mexico), where prohibition keeps prices—and profit margins—much higher than they are in Colorado.

Isaac argues that medical-marijuana legalization changed the way Colorado's black market works more than it changed its size. That's because medical licenses let patients cultivate cannabis at home. There are essentially three steps to selling marijuana: cultivation, processing, and distribution. Medical-marijuana legalization means two of those steps—cultivation and processing—are now legal for many Colorado residents. But don't think there's a cannabis kingpin on every street corner. Many of these at-home cultivators—Isaac included—shy away from growing large numbers of plants, since cultivating 100 or more carries a mandatory minimum sentence of five years in prison.

It costs Isaac about \$600 to produce a pound of weed (not counting the cost of rent), and he can sell it for \$2,400 to \$2,600 in Colorado and \$3,200 in neighboring states. For years, he sold it for \$4,800 per pound, and he can still get that in some parts of the Deep South. Isaac says black-market prices started dropping in 2010, after the state legalized medical marijuana. Drug cartels have largely abandoned the marijuana business here, he says, as prices have fallen.

Isaac estimates that about a third of all the cannabis grown in Colorado gets exported from the state. According to an August report compiled by a network of law-enforcement agencies, in 2012 highway police nationwide seized, in total, about three and a half tons of marijuana being transported from Colorado to other states. As long as there's prohibition in other parts of the country, and as long as there are Coloradans who prefer not to pay the mark-up that legal stores will have to charge because of regulations and taxes, there will be illegal sales of marijuana in Colorado—perhaps comparable to the black market for cigarettes in New York City—and illegal sales and shipments to people living outside the state. Marijuana advocates sometimes argue that legalization in a state will eliminate its black market. That seems unlikely. But, Isaac argues, the state has a milder black market than it would have if marijuana were completely illegal.

"All the cartels want to do is make money," Isaac says. "All I want to do is make good product, and make sure my friends have good product." Selling a basement's worth of weed for a couple grand per pound is enough to make a decent living, he says, but not enough to become fabulously wealthy.

I heard the same thing—that the black market has evolved because of lower prices—from Frankie Grundler, the executive director of A New Path, a rehab center in Carbondale, Colo. "What's happened is that the price has gone down quick," Grundler says. "So there isn't this criminal component to it of making outrageous amounts of money, huge profit margins."

I met with Grundler and Stefan Bate, director of client ser-

vices, in their sunny offices a few hours north of Denver, and they told me that they think recreational legalization will be better, in the long term, for public health.

Bates says he thinks marijuana could have less of a "gateway" effect when it's sold in regulated stores instead of by dealers who could also peddle heroin, cocaine, and other drugs with far more detrimental effects.

"A lot of my clients are young guys—and they're getting younger and younger every year—but almost without fail, they tell me it was easier to get marijuana than to get booze, because alcohol is so regulated," Bate says. And he argues that if the criminal penalties for use are reduced, it will be easier for recovering addicts to get jobs, become self-sufficient, and move on with their lives.

He thinks full legalization makes more sense than legalization just for medical use. "To me, the medical-marijuana thing is absolutely ridiculous," he says. "All of a sudden you have a town full of 18-year-old kids walking around with glaucoma."

Others in the treatment industry take a less optimistic view. Scott Munson of Sundown M Ranch in Washington (which legalized recreational marijuana use a few hours after Colorado did) thinks increased dependency will be the inevitable result of legalization. He argues that as supply goes up, prices get lower, and legal consequences become less severe, the likelihood of abuse—especially among younger people—will rise. "And the consequences of that, I think, are going to be significant," he says.

PEOPLE who sell marijuana legally have to deal with a lot of the same annoying, unsexy problems that other businesses face, including cronyism and incompetent bureaucratic oversight. For instance, the *Denver Post* reports that a state audit of Colorado's Medical Marijuana Enforcement Division found questionable spending on furniture, vehicles, and BlackBerry's, as well as a host of other problems. Auditors also found that twelve doctors issued more than half of the medical-marijuana recommendations in the state, suggesting that maybe not everyone getting medical marijuana actually has a medical problem. And now unions are eagerly eyeing the industry.

Regulatory failures have hurt dispensaries that follow state law, according to Kayvan Khalatbari, co-founder of Denver Relief, Colorado's second-longest-running medical-marijuana center. "I guarantee there's people that got away with things," he says, "and that made it tougher for legitimates, because they were selling out the back door, they were selling to people that didn't have cards, they were selling to underage people, because they could get away with it."

Over the next few months, Colorado's marijuana purveyors—licit and illicit—will keep a close eye on Denver as regulators try to craft sensible policy for an industry that, at least on a federal level, is still lawless. In some ways, Colorado's law is a radical change. In a few months, anyone over 21 will be able to walk into a licensed retail marijuana store in the Centennial State and pick up some weed. In another sense, though, the new policy is just a codification of the state's status quo. Even before legalization, Isaac had a maxim on the subject: "If you can't get pot in Colorado, something's wrong with you."

NR

The Status of The Dream

*Racial integration
50 years after MLK's speech*

**BY STEPHAN THERNSTROM &
ABIGAIL THERNSTROM**

BLACK voices of gloom are a staple in reporting on race. “Dreams unfulfilled” is how the Washington Post describes the racial landscape as the nation approaches the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.’s electrifying address delivered from the Lincoln Memorial on August 28, 1963. The reporter found blacks who had witnessed the speech half a century ago. “I had hoped when I was a young man that we’d see a lot of progress by now,” said Donald Cash, a D.C. resident who is now 68. “But I think we’re going backwards,” he declared.

There will be commemorative weeklong events, as there should be. A march on Saturday, August 31, is billed as “National Action to Reclaim the Dream.” In retrospect, was Dr. King’s dream just wishful thinking, bound to disappoint? “We cannot walk alone,” he said. The destiny of blacks and whites is inextricably intertwined. But how to walk together? Sobering numbers from a recent Pew Research Center survey suggest an enduring racial chasm. Seventy percent of blacks believe they are treated less fairly than whites in dealings with the police. Almost as many (68 percent) distrust courts. Fifty-four percent perceive inequality in places of work, and 51 percent in the public schools. Forty-eight percent doubt the fairness of the electoral system, and 44 percent think the stores and restaurants they patronize are unfair to them because of their race.

Racial optimists that we have long been, we find these numbers staggering. Evidently, blacks believe they don’t get a fair break anywhere—a conviction hard to understand for those of us old enough to remember the days of brutal subjugation of blacks in the South and of a North where de facto segregation was everywhere apparent.

Actually, the claim that harmful segregation is still pervasive today is the conventional civil-rights wisdom and has been strongly endorsed by the Obama administration. In July, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced a new plan to monitor the racial composition of every American community and to make more strenuous efforts to engineer neighborhood “integration.” A newly issued rule commits HUD to a program of “affirmatively furthering fair housing.” Affirmative action has now become an obligation not only in

employment, education, and contracting but also when local governments design housing policies.

HUD’s directive betrays historical ignorance. Northern segregation 50 years ago was the product of a massive influx of blacks into northern cities. But over the past half-century, millions of African Americans have moved out of central-city ghettos into more racially mixed suburban neighborhoods, where today a majority of blacks reside. The famous 1968 Kerner Commission report, which aimed to explain the black riots that had begun in Watts in 1965, described the United States as “moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal.” This ominous division, the commission wrote, was rooted in a growing gulf between “white” suburbs and “black” inner cities.

It was not a prescient prediction. The urban areas that were once overwhelmingly black now include significant numbers of whites, Asians, and Hispanics. They have become what one sociologist has called “global neighborhoods,” and the booming cities of the South are now much less residentially segregated than the urban areas of the North and Midwest.

Ongoing residential segregation is an important charge in the indictment of today’s America as a deeply racist society. But, as one scholar has noted, most adults spend much of their waking life not in their neighborhoods but at their places of employment, where members of all racial and ethnic groups are working together. That contact surely affects interracial friendship patterns. Surveys asking people to name their close friends reveal that a high proportion of friendships in general were initially formed through contact on the job.

FRIENDSHIPS are also formed in churches. Dr. King famously said that “the most segregated hour of Christian America is 11 a.m. on Sunday morning.” Separate churches for African Americans had been the norm for most of American history, and the black church continues to play a central role in the black community. But today more than 60 percent of blacks worship in racially mixed congregations, a remarkable development that has attracted virtually no comment.

It is, of course, true that whites might have substantial numbers of black neighbors, work alongside black people, even belong to congregations that have black members, and still keep their distance in more intimate settings. Tolerating the presence of people habitually regarded as different is not the same thing as forming close personal connections.

The earliest available direct evidence about the relationship between friendship patterns and race is from a survey taken in 1964, the year that the first of the two great Civil Rights Acts dealt a fatal blow to legally mandated segregation. At that time, a mere 18 percent of whites reported having any black friends. By now, 95 percent of whites tell the pollsters that they have black “close friends,” and 91 percent of blacks say they have close friends who are white. This is another stunning change, and one that calls into question facile claims that the American people are still deeply divided into mutually hostile racial camps.

If we narrow the definition of a “friend,” the numbers are lower but perhaps even more impressive. A 2006 survey asked about “people that you trust, for example, good friends, people

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you discuss important matters with, or trust for advice, or trust with money.” It found that a slight majority of whites (52 percent) did have at least one “trusted” friend who was black, and that over two-thirds of blacks considered at least one white person to fall into the “trusted” category.

In 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of a future America in which it would no longer be taboo for people of different races to sit down “together at the table of brotherhood.” We don’t know precisely how common interracial dining was in 1963, but the figure was surely close to zero in the South and very low elsewhere. Today, 63 percent of blacks report having entertained whites in their home for dinner. The corresponding figure for whites is 48 percent. What was unthinkable in the southern states half a century ago, and relatively uncommon even in the North, is now perfectly commonplace.

But entertaining guests of a different race in one’s home does not necessarily mean that parents will be comfortable when their son or daughter chooses to date someone of another race or even marry across racial lines. The March on Washington 50 years ago coincided with the first public-opinion survey of attitudes about dating someone of another race. The question had never been asked before because pollsters assumed that it was not an issue about which opinion was divided. They were apparently right, because in 1963 a mere 10 percent of Americans found it acceptable. Today, 83 percent of whites and 92 percent of blacks have no problem with it. A remarkable 97 percent of people of prime dating age (18–29) approve of it.

Giving an approving answer when surveyed, of course, need not correspond closely with actual behavior. But recent surveys show that dating across racial lines is very common. A 2011 study found that 68 percent of black males had dated someone who was not black, and 50 percent of black females. For white males, the crossover figure was 51 percent; for white females, 40 percent. (These figures, it should be noted, are not confined to black-white pairings.)

Dating is one thing, of course, marriage quite another. Fifty years ago, “Would you want your daughter to marry one?” was not a sick joke. But attitudes about interracial marriage have changed just as dramatically as those about interracial dating. When the first question about this matter was included in a poll in 1958, just 4 percent of the public approved. A decade later, a small majority of blacks (56 percent) but barely a sixth of whites had come to find it acceptable. By 2011, 84 percent of whites and 96 percent of blacks approved.

This transformation in racial attitudes has been accompanied by profound changes in behavior. The number of blacks and whites who actually marry outside their respective racial groups has risen spectacularly. When Barack Obama was born to a black-and-white couple in 1961, interracial marriages were the rarest of exceptions. A mere 0.3 percent of all married couples counted in the 1960 census involved people of different races. By contrast, 15 percent of the Americans who married in 2008 wed across racial lines. (These numbers are not exactly comparable to the 1960 figures, which refer to all married persons, whatever their age. Marriages within a recent, brief time period are more illuminating of current marital patterns.)

The surge in marriages across racial lines has produced even more social mixing than might be thought—a lot more. That is because marriages link two individuals and also two sets of relatives—parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, even



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cousins. A recent survey asked Americans a broad question: Was “an immediate family member or close relative” married to someone of a different race? More than a third (35 percent) of all respondents reported that they belonged to racially mixed kin networks. Half of all nonwhites and 29 percent of whites were in such networks.

Precisely how much of a departure this is from the pattern of decades earlier cannot be determined; questions about this matter were not included in any earlier surveys. But an ingenious estimate by a demographer for the period 1960–2000 suggests striking change. The fraction of whites belonging to mixed-race kinship networks, it estimates, rose from a mere 2 percent in 1960 to 22 percent four decades later. The figures were remarkably high for Asian Americans and American Indians as early as 1960—81 and 90 percent, respectively. These groups were not profoundly isolated from white America even before the civil-rights revolution. By 2000, the extent of mixing with kin of another race was even higher—84 percent for Asians, and a figure that rounds off to 100 percent for American Indians.

The vast majority of blacks in 1960 had few such kinship connections. By 2000, the figure had risen from just 9.2 percent to 49.8 percent, and it is undoubtedly higher today, although still below the levels for Asians or American Indians.

AP PHOTO

These “mixed-race kinship” estimates do *not* include marriages in which one partner was Hispanic and one was not. Official federal statistics classify Hispanics not as a nonwhite race but as a quasi-racial “ethnic group,” the only ethnic group considered to be “race-like.” When Hispanics were considered as a separate group, a further study by the same demographer found that in 2000 nearly half of all non-Hispanic whites had kinship bonds with someone who was either Hispanic or nonwhite. Since the rate of interracial marriage has continued to climb in the 21st century, it is highly probable that we have by now reached a remarkable point in our social development: A substantial *majority* of non-Hispanic white family networks include nonwhites, Hispanics, or both.

Mixed-race kinship networks, of course, are not surefire solvents of long-held prejudices. It is certainly possible to feel racial aversion toward someone who has just become your relative through a marriage that you opposed. But interracial marriage has surely done more to reduce skin-color prejudices than to inflame them. If it had produced powerful backlash sentiments and a heightened desire to guard the boundaries dividing one race from another, the recent trend toward interracial marriages could be expected to grind to a halt or even reverse. So far, at least, there are no signs of backlash.

DESPITE these powerful trends suggesting the declining significance of race in social interactions, we can see plenty of what many call “segregation” in the national landscape. But defining segregation as any deviation from the norm of random distribution, as is common in social science, is deeply misguided. Some racial and ethnic clustering is a normal feature of any healthy multicultural society. How can those who celebrate “diversity” call for a nation in which every identifiable ethnic group is proportionally represented in every neighborhood, every occupation, every church? Or in which all groups have spent an equal number of years in school, and in which people show no tendency to have more than a statistically correct proportion of close friends of the same cultural background? That naïve expectation is what prompts some writers to raise such foolish questions as why very few black athletes are professional hockey players or why, as a *Washington Post* reporter asked, black ballerinas are rare. “Diversity” is an empty platitude if it is not embodied in distinctive subcultures, with functioning institutions and social patterns. Although we are unaccustomed to cite the views of Malcolm X in support of any conclusions we draw, we think he was on the mark when he distinguished segregation from separation. “Segregation,” he said, “is when your life and liberty are controlled, regulated by someone else.” Segregation is forced on people, but separation is the result of choices made by free and equal individuals.

Is the clustering of African Americans that is still evident in many spheres of life a sign that they are being “excluded” from full membership in our society? It once was, and could then properly be called “segregation.” But today, such clustering is largely the result of black people’s choices, driven by the same impulses that lead Koreans, Jews, Dominicans, and dozens of other groups to choose to concentrate in certain social niches and avoid others. The last thing we need is more social engineering to eradicate every racial disparity. **NR**

The Army You Haven’t

*Why Washington is slashing
the defense budget*

BY JIM TALENT

WHEN Barack Obama assumed office in 2009, the American military was already fragile. The last major military build-up had happened 25 years before, in the Reagan administration. Years of high deployment rates beginning in the 1990s, coupled with inefficiencies in the Department of Defense and underfunding of procurement and modernization projects, had caused the armed forces to shrink and rust. The Navy and Air Force were too small, and all three services desperately needed to replace their ships, planes, and vehicles with new, technologically more advanced equipment.

In 2010, Congress created a National Defense Panel to review the status of the military. It unanimously concluded that under then-current budget trends “a train wreck was coming” for the armed forces.

Since then, the situation has worsened: The government has reduced defense spending on three occasions, making close to \$1.5 trillion in cuts over the ten-year budget window. The government currently plans to spend approximately \$575 billion (adjusted for inflation) on defense in 2020, which is \$100 billion less than it spent in 2010, and over \$200 billion less than Secretary of Defense Robert Gates thought would be necessary in 2020. At the beginning of August, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced the result of a Pentagon study on the effects of the sequester, which imposed the most recent cut, of \$500 billion. The study was officially called the Strategic Choices and Management Review, or SCMR, and known (not entirely tongue-in-cheek) within the defense community as the “scammer.”

The SCMR assumed three possible budget scenarios: one in which the sequester was repealed after this year, one in which it was not repealed, and an “in between” scenario in which there was a partial repeal. The study found that unless the sequester were fully reversed, the military would have to cut either capacity or capability. If capacity, the Pentagon would slash the Army to as few as 380,000 active-duty soldiers, eliminate as many as three of the Navy’s eleven carrier strike groups, reduce the Marine Corps from 182,000 to as few as 150,000 personnel, and retire the Air Force’s older bombers. If capability, the military would take a modernization “holiday” for a decade, ending or reducing the few current modernization programs.

The SCMR had many shortcomings. For one thing, it never

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confronted the connection between “capacity” and “capability.” Numbers matter; at a certain point, technology cannot make up for the deficiencies of a force that is too small. For another, its budget projections are probably too optimistic. Even without the sequester cuts, for example, the naval shipbuilding plan was not adequate to buy the number of ships that the department says it needs. But whatever its deficiencies, the SCMR at least confirmed officially what everyone already knew: If current trends continue, the United States will within a few years no longer be a global military power, in the sense of having neither a consistent, comprehensive global presence nor the ability to project power effectively and quickly throughout the world.

My concern here is less with the *effect* of the cuts on the military—those are not surprising to anyone familiar with the Defense Department—than with the *reasons* for them. Why is the government, on a bipartisan basis, reducing America’s defensive capabilities at a time when the threats to the United States are so manifestly growing? It’s rare that any of our leaders directly address this question. They made the cuts without any analysis of the impact and without giving any specific justification. But it is possible to discern the impulses behind their actions. Let’s consider them now, and provide some responses.

We can’t afford to fund defense adequately. Reducing the debt is a matter of national security and justifies accepting additional risk to America’s national interests.

Concern about the debt has been selective, to say the least. At the same time as the defense cuts were beginning, the \$800 billion stimulus package was going into effect. Not a dime of that was spent on our military force structure. The theory was that a vast increase in spending was necessary to get the economy moving. Whatever the merits of that theory as economic policy, why couldn’t it have applied to defense spending? Was investing in Solyndra or state-government grant writers better for the economy than replacing aging military inventory with equipment produced by American workers in high-tech manufacturing plants?

If the stimulus is counted—and there’s no reason it shouldn’t be—the only major category of spending that *has* been reduced in the last four years is defense spending. By any measure, defense spending has been reduced by far more than the rest of the budget. Yet anyone who looks at the federal budget can see that the real problem is the growing structural gap between the amount the government is collecting and will collect, and the amount it pays out and will pay out, for entitlement programs. That gap, which is currently estimated to range up to \$85 *trillion*, hasn’t been reduced at all. It’s likely to get even bigger as long as our leaders relieve the political pressure to reduce it by only taking steps—such as slashing the defense budget—that make the short-term

deficit smaller. Entitlement programs are consuming more and more federal revenues, inevitably squeezing the entire discretionary budget, including defense. Cutting defense isn’t the solution to the budget crisis; it’s a symptom of it, and it’s becoming a short-term political enabler of it too.

But forget about the entitlement programs for a moment and look only at the publicly held debt of the United States—the debt attributable to accumulated deficits over the years. Currently it stands at \$16.7 trillion, or about 105 percent of current GDP. The defense sequester will save at most \$50 billion per year, or about 0.3 percent of GDP; the total defense cuts from the last four years will save at most about \$150 billion per year, or about 0.9 percent of GDP. (They won’t actually save that much, because part of the planned savings comes from deferring training and necessary maintenance on vital equipment. That backlog will have to be reduced—even our government won’t keep large parts of its military sidelined indefinitely for want of training and maintenance—and when it is, the cost will be much greater than if the work had been done on time in the first place.)

That means that our leaders are dismantling the finest professional military in the history of the world in order to reduce by less than 1 percent of GDP each year a debt that is already 105



percent of GDP—in a world where Iran is getting nuclear missiles, North Korea has threatened to turn the United States into a “sea of fire,” China’s power is surging, and al-Qaeda is strong enough to force the closure of 22 American diplomatic posts across Africa and the Middle East for more than a week. The polite, Washington phrase for this is “accepting more risk.” In the House, Republican Paul Ryan and Democrat Jim Cooper call it putting the Pentagon “on a diet.”

Former secretary of defense Leon Panetta, who is at a stage in his career in which he can afford to be more frank, called it “shooting ourselves in the head.”

The United States can reduce waste in the Pentagon and use the savings to maintain defense.

There is waste in the Defense Department, and its costs aren't just financial. For one thing, the compensation system is unbalanced, so that younger members of the military are often cash-strapped while the retirement package is so generous, and retirement is permitted at such an early age that highly productive senior personnel often feel as if they *must* retire because of the financial advantage to their families. Additionally, the acquisition system is broken: Programs that should take five to seven years

The current funding shortfall is so great, and its consequences so devastating, that it may create the political will to eliminate waste.

to procure often take a decade or two, which has undermined confidence that the Pentagon could actually acquire the inventory it needs even if money were available. Obviously, waste of this kind should be eliminated. But that's not an answer to the current crisis facing the military, for three reasons.

First, the funding shortfall has now grown so great that it dwarfs any potential savings. The SCMR estimated that \$10 billion could be saved over the next five years by reforming the Defense Department. That figure may be achievable, but it would represent less than one-tenth of the cuts in the last four years alone, not to mention the bill accumulated from years of underfunding military modernization.

Second, much of what Washington calls wasteful Pentagon spending either isn't waste or wouldn't save money in the short term. For example, many claim that money could be saved by eliminating foreign bases. But unneeded foreign basing has already been largely eliminated; the bases that remain are the cheapest way for the United States to project power and sustain a global presence. Another round of closing domestic bases, even if politically possible, would actually increase expenditures in the short run (closing bases costs money); the savings, if any, come only in the out years.

Another example is compensation reform. Cutting active-duty pay or retroactively reducing retirement benefits would be wrong on principle and impair recruitment and retention. Military personnel are *volunteers*. They don't have to serve, and they will be less likely to if, after years of hard fighting, the nation shows its gratitude by cutting their pay and benefits. The right answer is to rebalance the compensation system over time, grandfathering in most of the current personnel. That will produce significant savings as soon as eight or ten years down the road, but it is not an answer to the current crisis.

Third, most of the solid ideas for waste-cutting reform have been around for years. Nothing has happened, because real reform usually carries a political downside. President Obama has been personally hands-off on the subject, and few in Congress relish laying off thousands of civilian employees or cutting military-retiree health care. It's much easier politically to cut force structure. The current funding shortfall is so great, and

its consequences so devastating, that it may create the political will to eliminate waste. That's about the only good thing about the current crisis. But no one should bet on its happening, and in any event it won't come close to solving the problem.

Our allies should bear more of the burden, and if we reduce our defenses, they will.

The short answer: They won't. The Europeans have been cutting their defense budgets more than the United States, and for the same reasons. The Australians announced an increase several years ago, backed away from it, and are now spending less on defense as a percentage of GDP than ever before. Taiwan has been decreasing its military's budget. Japan, which along with Taiwan is most threatened by China's growing power, announced

this year that it will increase its defense spending for the first time in eleven years—by less than 1 percent.

Our allies can bear a greater share of the burden than they now do, particularly in Asia. But that will happen, if at all, over the long term, and only if they have confidence in America's commitment and leadership. The smaller powers in the region won't risk irking the Chinese with new defense capabilities unless they believe that America will be there to back them up. (Japan might rearm on its own, but that would bring with it a whole set of undesirable complications. Ask the South Koreans how comfortable they would feel about a Japanese rearmament that occurs outside the umbrella of American power.)

From conservatives: *The government is too big and should be reduced.* From liberals: *The military-industrial complex is too powerful.*

Conservatives are right to worry about the size of government, but they should distinguish between activities that are necessary and legitimate and those that are not. Forcing people to buy health insurance isn't the same thing as providing for the common defense. The Constitution creates a limited central government of enumerated powers; the chief function of that government, and its only mandatory duty, is defense of the nation.

The Department of Defense operates the tools of hard power—the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines—against foreign threats. Its chief missions since World War II have been the following: Protect the American homeland from direct attack (an increasingly vital and difficult mission in an age of asymmetric weapons); protect the rights of Americans to trade and travel in the “common” areas of the world—the seas, the air, space, and cyberspace; maintain presence and power in parts of the world that are vital to American interests (chiefly Europe and Asia) so as to deter or at least contain aggression; and anchor an international order within which disputes can be peacefully resolved and democratic institutions have the best chance to grow, in the belief that such a system provides the greatest margin of safety for the American people.

Those are necessary and fully constitutional functions of the federal government, and the part of the government that performs them is not too big; if anything, it's too small.

The “military-industrial complex” may have been formidable during the Eisenhower years, but not anymore. Years of underfunding procurement have caused the defense industrial base to shrink. From 1990 to 2000, the number of major-surface-combatant shipbuilders fell from eight to three. The number of fixed-wing-aircraft developers also fell from eight to three. For the first time in 100 years, the military has no new manned aircraft under design.

There really is no powerful political constituency that fights for the “top line” of the defense budget—the total amount spent on defense each year. There are contractors who lobby to fund their particular programs, governors who lobby for National Guard bases, and health advocates who lobby for Pentagon medical-research money—but no powerful special interest that fights to increase total defense spending. Does anyone familiar with Washington believe that defense would have been singled out for budget cuts if there were?

America has been engaged in too many adventures abroad. We have no business fighting long and dirty wars in behalf of people who often don't even want us in their country.

Or as President Obama likes to put it, we should engage in “nation building at home.”

The unspoken premise of this argument is that America's capabilities might tempt it to engage in unnecessary conflicts, and that if the armed services are unprepared for those missions, they won't be ordered to do them. But when has that been true? The United States has engaged in five major conflicts since the end of World War II: Korea, Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm in Kuwait, and the engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan. The only one of these operations for which America was prepared was Operation Desert Storm. Read the story sometime of Task Force Smith and the Battle of Osan, the first major engagement of the Korean War. Our government had cut the military so much after World War II that the American forces were poorly equipped and had no plan to defend South Korea. They were ordered into combat anyway, and were overwhelmed in that early engagement.

America never anticipated or prepared for Iraq or Afghanistan. In the mid 1990s, the working assumption of our defense policy was that the United States would not face an existential threat for at least a decade, and for the foreseeable future would not have to put large numbers of boots on the ground for extended periods of time. As a result, the active-duty Army was cut almost in half, and the government failed to procure equipment necessary for counter-insurrectionary conflict, such as up-armored Humvees. Within five years, the 9/11 attacks occurred, and two years after that America was engaged in two conflicts that both required large numbers of boots on the ground—despite our lack of preparedness. The costs have been clear: Many of our soldiers and Marines have had to engage in multiple tours of duty; even those who were not killed or wounded will be dealing with the physical and emotional consequences for decades.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said at the time, “You go to war with the army you have.” He was right. And when the military is unprepared for a conflict, it's not the politicians who suffer for it. It's our servicemen and -women who must bear the

consequences when civilian leaders who are weary of current wars decide not to prepare them for future ones.

In February, Senator Rand Paul (R., Ky.) gave a speech at the Heritage Foundation in which he essentially argued that the United States has engaged in too many military adventures and should prepare to contain rather than confront aggression, including Iranian proliferation. Whatever the merits of the various options regarding Iran, Senator Paul was surely right that a meaningful national debate on foreign-policy strategy is long overdue, and so far among conservatives only he (and Senator Kelly Ayotte, of New Hampshire, in a more recent speech) have even attempted to begin one.

But how does America contain aggression except by preparing to defeat it? Intervention requires strength, but containment does too. Containing an Iran emboldened by the possession of nuclear weapons would require a fully deployed missile-defense system, constant and increased naval presence in the Persian Gulf and Eastern Mediterranean, and reinforced American military bases in the Middle East. And all of this would have to be achieved while maintaining enough deterrent strength to contain aggressive actors elsewhere, such as China.

OUR government has a poor record, to say the least, of predicting world events. The top brass at the Pentagon have no idea what the foreign-policy inclinations of future administrations will be. In fact, if recent history is a guide, the next president may not have any foreign-policy inclinations at all: The last three were chosen despite the fact that they had virtually no experience in international affairs. The best that the Pentagon can do—if their civilian masters give them the resources to do it—is to prepare all the tools that a future president might reasonably need to deal with the crises that can be foreseen. There is no guarantee that future presidents will make good decisions, but depriving them of options will certainly not prevent them from making bad ones.

Ronald Reagan was arguably America's greatest post-war foreign-policy president. He was the only one who systematically built up America's armed forces while being very selective in their use. He declined to become involved militarily in the Lebanese civil war. He sent arms but not men to the Afghan rebels. He used a low-risk operation in Grenada to dispel Vietnam-era doubts about American resolve. He outflanked the Soviets' strategic build-up by proposing global missile defense.

Reagan was not uniformly neoconservative, neo-isolationist, Wilsonian, or realist. But he understood the truth that transcends those divisions: While strength does not guarantee success, weakness guarantees failure. Without power, nothing America does will work. Our red lines will be crossed; our sovereign rights will be ignored; our diplomats will be insulted and attacked; our foreign aid will bring nothing in return; our peaceful gestures will be seen as signs of decline; our friends (and there still are many) will be disheartened; and our enemies (they are still few in number, but real) will push harder and harder—until finally America is confronted with unavoidable challenges for which it is unprepared, and in which the stakes are higher than anyone would like.

Sound familiar? *It's exactly what is happening now.* And it will continue to happen unless our leaders shake off their malaise and begin purposefully to restore the tools of power without which the country they are supposed to be protecting cannot be safe. **NR**

The Helvetica Type

*Will Switzerland work
if it's no longer Swiss?*

BY KEVIN D. WILLIAMSON

Zurich

SWITZERLAND is an excellent place to see stereotypes substantiated. If a train is scheduled to depart at 4:28 P.M., it departs at 4:28 P.M., not 4:30 P.M. or 4:46 P.M., and the passenger compartments and stations are as clean as the white tablecloths in restaurants at opening time. The Tessinerplatz, near the Enge train station, is tidier than any comparable public space in the urban United States, and the crosswalks that connect it to the train station do not have WALK/DON'T WALK signs—the ubiquitous commuter Audis and Mercedes-Benz taxis serving the nearby hotels stop for pedestrians without the need for a blinking light to tell them to do so. Conversely, where there are crossing signals, pedestrians patiently wait for the light to change, even when there is no traffic in sight. You see members of the national militia commuting to and fro with the folding stocks of their SG550 assault rifles poking out of their baggage, but you might go days without seeing a police officer. There are guns everywhere, and no sign of crime.

A train conductor who missed me on her first go-round confronted me, clearly in distress, wanting to know where I got on the train. I told her where and suggested that she must have overlooked me. “It is not possible,” she said, a phrase I would hear in many contexts during my Swiss travels. I showed her my ticket. She exhibited tightly controlled distress, and then I was served coffee, which, along with the punctuality, is the only way in which Swiss trains are superior to their U.S. counterparts. Wi-Fi? *It is not possible.* But in a country with relatively few destinations that take more than a couple of hours to reach by train, coffee and punctuality are what really matter.

In Zurich, the received wisdom goes, everybody you meet is a banker who drives a convertible and wears a suit on Saturdays, and that's not entirely untrue, though the presence of Google's European headquarters has loosened up the corporate culture a little bit. The financial capital of the country is an eminently civilized place, a city of only 400,000—approximately the population of Tulsa—but home to more than 200 bookstores and dozens of museums, theaters, concert halls, and other cultural venues. On a Friday night, there are many bottles of wine and \$18 cocktails being consumed in the bars and restaurants in the old city, but no sign of public drunkenness. There is a much more liberal attitude about smoking than in New York City or Austin, but you can walk for miles around Lake Zurich and hardly see a cigarette butt.

It is shockingly expensive, in part because it is Switzerland and in part because the value of the franc has soared in response to the

seemingly endless euro crisis. The Swiss lament the effect of the supercharged franc on their tourism and exports, but they lament a little smugly. And they seem to have a great deal to be smug about, rated first place on everything from the Legatum Institute's rankings of best-governed countries to the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index. Switzerland's per capita GDP is 5 percent higher than that of the United States, it's in a three-way tie with Japan and San Marino for first place in life expectancy, its literacy rate is 99 percent, and its murder rate is one-seventh the American one. Challenged at a public forum by an admirer of Sweden who pointed out that the Scandinavian social democracy had very little poverty, Milton Friedman retorted that there were no poor Swedes in the United States, either. Switzerland brings up the same question: Is it successful because of the character of its institutions, or is it successful because it is full of Swiss people? Is it the federalism and direct democracy, or the buttoned-down, tidy, punctual, efficient, conservative, thrifty, German-speaking people without the atavistic appetite for invading their neighbors?

There is much to admire in Swiss political institutions. Former Republican presidential candidate Ron Paul jokes that he'd like to be the president of Switzerland—“Nobody would know who I was,” he says. And it is true that many Swiss, even those who keep up with the political news, do not know who their president is, which is unsurprising inasmuch as the country does not really have one. Its head of state and national executive is a seven-member council whose members rotate through one-year terms as “President of the Swiss Confederation,” a primus inter pares office that carries with it no special authority or trappings. Switzerland has a relatively sparse history of national aristocracy, and its modern executive is in line with its democratic and republican heritage. American presidents spend tens of millions of dollars or more every time they leave the White House; members of the Swiss federal council get around on trams and commuter trains like everybody else. They are frequently seen in public without special security precautions, and constituents are known to stop them on the street to discuss matters of interest. There is no Swiss Air Force One, a fact of which the Swiss people should be proud. (Harry S. Truman, who presided over less imperial times, got around in a presidential airplane called “The Sacred Cow.”) The members of the federal council do have access to a handful of government airplanes: two Dassaults, a Beechcraft, and a Cessna. Rush Limbaugh has grander jets. When George W. Bush landed at Heathrow to visit with Tony Blair, he brought along 700 people—150 national-security advisers, 50 political aides, four cooks, a team of doctors, 200 assorted bureaucrats, and, according to London's *Telegraph*, a “15-strong sniffer-dog team.” Bush brought more sniffer dogs to London than the Swiss finance minister brought officials with him to negotiate a trade deal with China.

UP until the 1990s, the Swiss federal government employed about 2 percent of the country's work force; today, after military cutbacks and the privatization of some state-run enterprises, that number is closer to 1 percent, the vast majority of them working for the railways and the post office. Outside the workers in those national enterprises, the federal government employs only 32,000 people. Because tax rates must be set by statute and because all Swiss statutes are subject

to public referendum, Swiss citizens essentially set their own tax rates. Taxes are imposed separately by the federal, cantonal, and municipal governments, so there is a great deal of variation in tax burden depending on one's place of residence, from a top marginal rate of 32.3 percent in Jura to one of 12.3 percent in Zug. According to a 2010 study by the consultancy KPMG comparing effective net income taxes and social-insurance taxes across countries, \$100,000 in income was taxed at a considerably lower rate in Switzerland (about 16 percent) than in the United States (almost 25 percent). The Swiss pay other taxes as well—a modest VAT and a capital tax—but enjoy much lower corporate-income taxes, exemption from double taxation in many circumstances, and, perhaps most important, no national capital-gains tax.

That of course makes Switzerland very attractive to high-income people, especially to wealthy foreigners who benefit

The economic environment and the Texas-style gun culture offer conservatives a great deal to like about Switzerland.

from certain special tax provisions in their favor, particularly the ability to calculate one's tax liability based on expenditures (in practice, 30 percent of five times one's annual rent or the rental value of an owner-occupied home) rather than on actual income. That is, unless those foreign nationals happen to be subject to one of two national tax regimes that attempt to seize their nationals' income regardless of where in the world they earn it—the first is North Korea, the second is the United States.

The tax climate makes Switzerland especially appealing to non-American foreigners who are Swiss at heart, meaning people who make Donald Trump money but do not feel any particular desire to apply gold leaf to the millwork in the boudoir. The Swiss like to say that in Switzerland, everybody is middle class; that's more aspiration than fact, and there is a nouveau riche demographic mad for diamonds and Lamborghinis, but they are held in gentle scorn, the way old Silicon Valley hands chuckle at newly minted millionaires having their "red-car year" before settling into a sensible, grey German sedan. Oprah Winfrey claimed to have been mistreated at *Trois Pommès*, a high-end boutique in Zurich, and her story reeks of a very non-Swiss odor of "DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?" I visited the boutique in question, and I did not find the staff especially friendly—I found them especially Swiss, which is to say helpful and polite and disinclined to chit-chat, especially in English. During her travels at home, Ms. Winfrey complained of being denied admittance to an Hermès boutique that had closed for the day. I went by the Hermès shop in Zurich and asked what would happen if I should try to enter the store to do a little after-hours shopping: "It is not possible." Ms. Winfrey was in town to celebrate the nuptials of Tina Turner, a longtime resident of the Zurich suburbs (she lives in a home picturesquely named the *Château Algonquin*) who is said to speak fluent German and who was wed to a German music executive. While Ms. Winfrey was nonplussed by the etiquette of examining \$35,000 handbags, she never got around to asking the more important question: Why does Tina Turner of Nutbush, Tenn., reside in Switzerland? And why, a few months before her wedding, did she participate in another civil ceremony in Zurich, one of an arguably more consequential character? In January, Tina Turner renounced her

U.S. citizenship, one of a record number of Americans to do so this year.

The economic environment and the Texas-style gun culture (see "Armed, Not Dangerous," *NATIONAL REVIEW*, February 11, 2013) offer conservatives a great deal to like about Switzerland. The combination of peace, prosperity, independence, federalism, and well-ordered democracy produces some very good results, though by no means utopian ones. Zurich recently installed a series of publicly funded drive-through prostitution stations, new controls on executive compensation were a smashing success in a national referendum, and while the presence of state-supported churches would drive secular-minded liberals foaming mad, conservatives must mourn the fact that the number of Swiss who identify as irreligious climbed from 1 percent in 1970 to 20 percent in 2010. The churches are mostly empty, though the church bells ring the hours—as though Switzerland, of all places, were

in need of expensive timepieces. Catholicism, the largest religious affiliation in Switzerland, is in decline, as are Protestantism and Judaism. No credit for guessing which religion has seen powerful growth since 1970.

When liberals point to the successes of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, conservatives habitually retort that ethnolinguistic homogeneity plays an important role in those societies: Diversity, it turns out, is nobody's strength, while a relative lack of diversity is associated with social trust and with more trustworthy institutions. People are less likely to cheat those who remind them of their grandmothers, and public servants are more solicitous of the well-being of people who remind them of themselves. Beyond homogeneity, the Nordic countries have long and well-established traditions of social solidarity, honesty, and cooperation. Grafting Swedish institutions onto Louisiana would not turn New Orleans into Stockholm. So what about the admirable Swiss institutions? Would they long survive in a culture that is not Swiss?

THE first of the invaders came as infiltrators, holing up in cheap hotels and setting up camp in tents around Lake Zurich. They began as a trickle, hardly noticeable, and then turned into an army, 1 million strong, an occupying force that would radically change Zurich in a matter of hours. They are the products of the American ghettos—the black ghetto and the white ghetto—though few of them are Americans. The world-bestriding thump of rap music starts in the early afternoon, and soon the smell of marijuana—that great global signifier of low-level miscreants—wafts through the mellow sunshine around the lake.

The Zurich Street Parade, heir to Berlin's Love Parade, is a global happening, one that brings more than twice as many visitors to Zurich as the city has residents. The global youth culture may be reflexively anti-American, but it is at the same time as American as a McDonald's double cheeseburger, wrappers from which are soon strewn about the Tessinerplatz as pools of vomit fester on the sidewalk in front of the nearby Hotel Ascot. The Street Parade is a celebration of electronic dance music and the

subculture associated with it. Signs and fliers beg participants to forgo the use of drugs and other antisocial behavior, but these attempts to encourage self-government are categorically ignored. Soon, the previously unseen Zurich police are engaged in heated confrontations in the park, shouting first in German and then in Italian at vandals about their business before the sun has even set. Revelers in front of the Enge train station pelt cyclists with bottles, and the sounds of police and ambulance sirens soon are drowning out the church bells.

After dark, things get worse. The dancers follow around several dozen “Lovemobiles,” from which DJs play the music that the million have come to hear. They are costumed, and living up to their costumes—stripper chic blending into hooker chic, biker chic fading into prison chic, sexy/slutty variations on hippies, Scotsmen, construction workers, soldiers, *commedia dell’arte* characters, lederhosen-clad Germans, and a psychedelic tribute

crossings with explosives to be detonated in the event of an invasion by the Germans, Soviets, or other adventuresome European powers. They should have blown them up before the Street Parade got under way, but instead they added 100 trains to the schedule, facilitating the sacking of their city with efficiency and punctuality. An elderly gentleman goes to throw away his newspaper and is confronted by an overflowing trash can, which he looks at as though it were an alien artifact. Trash piled in the street? *It is not possible.* (But it is.)

“Dance for Freedom” is this year’s theme, but the freedom to do what? The freedom to say no to a rabble intent on treating Zurich like Keith Moon used to treat hotel rooms? That, too, apparently is not possible.

Secular Zurich has nowhere to go on Sunday mornings, and many of the city’s shops and cafés are closed. That gives the municipal authorities an opportunity to clean up, which, judging by the state of the congealed vomit on the sidewalks, should take most of the day.

In the contest between Swiss institutions and the ascendant world youth culture, the Swiss, descendants of fearsome mercenaries though they may be, don’t stand a chance. Consequently, the Swiss are thinking, quietly and politely, about what makes them Swiss. More than 30 percent of the population today is either foreign-born or the children of immigrants, many of them from culturally related European countries such as Italy and Germany, many of them globe-trotting gazillionaires but many of them not. Switzerland’s health-care system, which has many admirable features, has long imposed price controls on doctors, which has meant that fewer Swiss enter the medical profession and more immigrants take on those positions. Without quite saying as much, Switzerland has recently launched a program to reduce the foreign-born share of its medical work force. In 2007, the Swiss People’s party, at that time the largest party in the

parliament, pressed for strong immigration reforms, including the deportation of the families of immigrants convicted of crimes. Foreigners commit four times as much crime in Switzerland as the native-born, and pointing out that fact earned the Swiss People’s party an investigation by the United Nations. In 2013, Switzerland announced the imposition of quotas on immigration from Western Europe in order to stem the tide of those fleeing ruined euro-zone economies for the safe haven in the Alps.

Back on the train, which takes off 28 seconds after its scheduled time of departure, one sees familiar territory. Train travelers see the back end of everything, whether in Stuttgart or New Jersey, and the graffiti that begins a few blocks from the Zurich station suggests that the barbarism of the Street Parade crowd is not entirely imported. For all of its well-scrubbed prosperity, there is a whisper of Matthew Arnold’s “melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,” a sense that the peak of Swiss civilization may be in the past, and that what awaits is managing a gradual decline that still looks pretty good next to the rapid decline of the European Union. Whether what comes next looks more like the Street Parade or more like the French *banlieues* or more like something else cannot be known. The Swiss have a bit of time and great deal of money to smooth things over as they figure it out, but perhaps not as much of either as they would like. **NR**



to the Rubik’s Cube. A man dressed in a satyr costume, complete with furry white legs, relieves himself in front of a Prada shop. The only people wearing suits are members of the neighborhood’s Orthodox Jewish community. Trash fills the streets, broken glass, fast-food wrappers, Heineken bottles, Stoli bottles. A fellow is having what looks to be a bad reaction to a class of psychoactive drugs with which the electronic-dance-music scene has more than a passing familiarity. And, of course, everywhere the faces are painted blue—not the blue of William Wallace’s bravehearts, but the inescapable blue of the iPhone screens underlighting their visages. It is ugly, chaotic, menacing, and thoroughly un-Swiss.

Except for the money part. Robert Soos, a spokesman for the police department, says the “positive effect of the Street Parade is undisputed.” He needs to take another look at the numbers: A local newspaper estimates the economic impact of the Street Parade at about \$200 million, or \$200 per participant, about the cost of a cheap hotel room and breakfast in Zurich. The ravers seem to be doing a fair amount of damage per capita, and it would not be surprising if the city in fact lost money on the event, especially once one accounted for the business lost by firms that shutter their establishments for the barbarian invasion.

It is said that the Swiss wired their bridges, tunnels, and train

Attack of the Acronyms

SOME cable show, some channel, some Sunday: another think-tank smart guy laying out the risks for landing a right cross on Bashar Assad's chin. (If you could find it. SpecOps might have to get close and paint it with a laser.) If the United States does nothing, it will be accused of indifference to Muslim suffering. If it does something, it will be accused of aggression against Muslim people. He might have added that if the United States reduced its ethanol subsidies, or issued regulations about the acceptable amount of airborne particles generated by sawing through drywall on construction sites, it would be seen by some people in the region as a proof of Jew-run perfidy that brought down Morsi by bouncing lasers off the moon.

Hence a tepid national reaction towards intervention in Syria. Even a "surgical strike," which sounds odd. A doctor never says "That heart valve is weak, so I'm going to nail you in the sternum with a sledgehammer." A surgical strike means a piece of ballistic wizardry that flies through the window and blows up some employees. You could just imagine Saddam Hussein weeping after cruise missiles took out a ministry. *I just had the place painted. New shrubs out front. All gone. Okay, I surrender.*

Here's a suggestion: Take it right to Assad's house. Drop a MOAB on his crib. "MOAB" stands for Mother of All Bombs or Massive Overhead Air-Burst or Mucho Overwhelming Awesome Boom or something; the name was probably chosen because it sounds Biblical. *Yea, did the children of Moab lie down by the river and lament, being sad and much besmitten by the Hittite minions of Baal.* For that matter, call the bomb "BAAL": Big and Awful Loud. Someone might want to call it the Big Old Matter Buster, but "BOMB" didn't quite narrow it down.

Speaking of acronyms: The U.N. has a particularly euphonious moniker for the team intended to look for evidence of chemical weapons: UNMIAUCWSAR. (Pronounced "UNMIAUCWSAR.") Best to use something honest, like POTSSED, or Parade of Toothless Scowling European Diplomats; at least you know who's showing up. UNMIAUCWSAR doesn't incite fear in anyone except the translator who's trying to get the letters in the right order.

Anyway. A MOAB or BAAL or Kinetically Assisted Bashar-Oriented Ordnance Matériel (KABOOM) on the dictator's house would have wide-ranging implications, as they say.

1. *Vogue*, which ran the lovely profile on Mrs. Assad when they named her hubby the Mideast's "top dead-eyed ophthalmologist reformer," could offer up the photos of their elegant house with its tasteful furnishings and stylish decorations, right down the verdigris patina on the

copper drains that led from the torture rooms to the sewer. (To be fair, that was in the guesthouse.) After-action reports could tell whether they'd sufficiently degraded Mrs. Assad's capability to impress the media in the future, or whether she still had enough Western-style rooms to mount a successful image-rehabilitation campaign. "In the ruins of privilege, a widow struggles to rebuild." That sort of thing.

Perhaps she's already out of the country, but her Instagram feed shows her working soup kitchens for refugees. Really. Forty-seven people have probably been purged for not "liking" the pictures within three minutes of posting.

2. Other dictators might pay notice. If there's anything they fear, it's being dragged out by their heels and strung up while people pelt them with rocks. But surely losing all the creature comforts figures in their calculations as well. Take away the nice big house, and the other one, and the one outside of town, and the one on the lake, and oh by the way there was a fire at the Italian villa, they're calling it suspicious—and the thug gets a sick realization that all that time spent arranging the DVDs just so (alphabetically? by genre?) was for naught. Worst of all, the U.S. took out the house where he had the password for the Swiss accounts written on a Post-It note on the computer.

They're hurt when they lose planes and airfields and tanks, but it's not personal. What do you do when your bed's gone and you can't remember your Sleep Number on the high-tech adjustable mattress? Call up the Mossad and say "I know you probably had that bugged too; can a fella ask a favor?"

Assad should realize he'll spend his last hours in underground bunkers with dust raining down from the ceiling and a cheap fan going back and forth and squeaky chairs that get on everyone's nerves. But that's not enough. The entire regime has to go, so the vacuum can be filled by all the reasonable pluralists who are in the field right now. Yes, yes, you've seen the horrible YouTube video of the Syrian fighter who cut out his foe's heart and ate it on camera, but there has to be someone who just cut out the heart and gave it to a stray dog. The moderate element.

Once they're in power we can send in some advisers and diplomats, hire some locals to stand around with Nerf guns, and wait for another Benghazi, spurred when someone posts a fake picture on Instagram of Mrs. Assad reading the Koran in a bikini or an equally outrageous offense.

After the administration has arrested the picture-poster, and John Kerry has issued a sonorous, droning defense of the administration's reaction, people will look back to Hillary Clinton's spunky performance at the Benghazi hearings and marvel at what a fighter she was. Let's elect her president.

Warning: Some Muslims may regard this as indifference, or aggression. Possibly both.

NR



The Long View

BY ROB LONG

From the Twitter feed of Kim Jong Un, @youthcaptain

If a person sends many Twitter @replies to another person and that person doesn't even have the courtesy to follow back, that's it, I'm done. #overyoualreadyscarlettjohansson

Tweeps! Get ready for a fitter and hotter me! About to get really into personal fitness. Here's a totally nude "before" pic: [instagram.com/rd5f.jong](https://www.instagram.com/rd5f.jong) #say-goodbyetothefatboy

@youthcaptain just checked into Kim Jong Un Fitness Center Saturday, August 24, 2013 10:23 A.M.

@youthcaptain just checked out of Kim Jong Un Fitness Center Saturday, August 24, 2013 10:35 A.M.

Questions for you, @anthonyweiner re lighting and depth-of-field issues, also: how do you meet girls online in the first place? Please follow me back so I can DM you.

Trying to get along better with Uncles. Showed @unclebae my dream journal from last year, with the dream sketches of the missile-bearing flying horses. He rolled his eyes. #tigeruncle #doesntanyonerespect-creativityinthiscountry?

Love that you spoke truth to power, @bradleymanning. Always welcome here in #northkorea! Need to stick together to bring about a new world.

Just read @nytimes piece on the "recovering" economy under @barackobama. Man, if I could only get that kind of coverage around here! #onlyhalfkidding #barackhasitsoeasy

Agree with @alsharpton and others: America is never going to heal until it eradicates racism in ALL of its forms and deals honestly with gun violence @piersmorgan

Hey, Tweeps! Which noise-canceling headphones are best for reducing noise of starving millions? Going on a road trip and need to prepare. #newdaftpunk #nodistractions

Wait. Re: other Tweet. Just saw news. Is @bradleymanning a dude or not a dude? If not a dude, what can I say? #hotness #getyourselftoponyongyang

I know that internal and border security is important. I am not a six-year-old. But when I'm watching Pretty Little Liars I prefer not to be disturbed by meetings. #unclebaeneedstogo

@youthcaptain just checked into Kim Jong Un Fitness Center Monday, August 26, 2013 11:30 A.M.

@youthcaptain just checked out of Kim Jong Un Fitness Center Monday, August 26, 2013 11:45 A.M.

Hey! @mileycyrus! Haters gonna hate! Loved you at the #VMAs. Follow me back so I can DM you! (And yes! That is a euphemism!!!)

This: www.salon.com/whyasianmen-makebetterlovers

Wishing @benaffleck all the luck in the world as he tackles the role of #thedarkknight. Don't understand why my audition tape didn't even merit a courtesy callback, but doesn't diminish my respect for my competitors. #nuke-hollywoodimserious

Even I'm not watching MSNBC. And if you can't get the leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to watch Rachel Maddow . . . Hang. It. Up. #evilgeniusrogerailes

Um, @basharassad, cannot fill most recent order for #wmd until ALL previous invoices have been paid. This is a business here. Running a dot com, not a dot org, if you get my drift. #waiting-forbanktocall

Hey! @anthonyweiner! What do you think of them apples?? [Twitpic.com/4rrft6](https://www.twitpic.com/4rrft6) #nohomo #dudes-canadmireotherdudes

Great leadership council meeting today. Feel like I'm finally getting the respect I deserve. Generals have agreed to build me an Iron Man suit. #tideisturning

Today's discovery: cannot twerk while wearing a jumpsuit. #lifelessons

If you have your uncles executed and have the executioners send you #snapchats of the events, my advice is, go into settings>preferences and make sure you set the timer to 10+ seconds. Default settings too short to really know which uncle is getting it when. Just FYI.

@youthcaptain just checked into Kim Jong Un Fitness Center Tuesday, August 27, 2013 4:11 P.M.

@youthcaptain just checked out of Kim Jong Un Fitness Center Tuesday, August 27, 2013 4:24 P.M.

@edwardsnowden Love your message and your activism. Would love to have you come to #pyongyang and hang with me.

Okay, @edwardsnowden, re last Tweet: hang = hang out. No hidden message there! Just clarifying! Also, you're a dude, right? No worries if not, just asking to avoid recent weirdness with @bradleymanning, who isn't going to be a chick for another 10 years and I cannot wait that long.

Simply do not understand why someone who goes to the gym as much as I do is not losing any weight. Have to rethink entire fitness plan. Can't stand smirking from @unclenoh when I'm resizing my jumpsuits. #trainersfault

@mileycyrus Thanks for the follow back! Please PLEASE check your DMs. Media hype re: Pyongyang is true! It is the "new hip destination for the young glitterati." Check it out: www.newkoreanworkerdaily.com/coolpyongyang

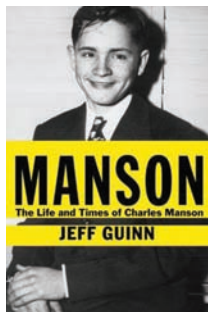
Yesterday was watching old movies of military executions and eating cold hot dogs dipped in mayonnaise. Does everyone eventually turn into their parents? I sure am. #bigquestions #philosophicalfriday

Only way to wipe the smug smile off of personal trainer's face, it turns out, is to set him on fire. "Give me one more?" Can do, d-bag. #revenge #alwaysthefatkid #setbulliesonfire #fightweightism

Books, Arts & Manners

American Nightmare

FLORENCE KING



Manson: The Life and Times of Charles Manson, by Jeff Guinn (Simon & Schuster, 495 pp., \$27.50)

SOMETIMES a book is so good that the reviewer does not know where to begin. It doesn't happen often, but this is one of those times. I have tried out a dozen different ledes but they all seemed inadequate to the task. I can't sit here any longer staring at a blank screen or I'll miss my deadline, so I'll get right to it: Jeff Guinn, a former investigative reporter with books on Wyatt Earp and Bonnie and Clyde to his credit, has produced not only the best biography of Charles Manson, but the best study of American true crime since Victoria Lincoln's *A Private Disgrace: Lizzie Borden by Daylight*.

Manson makes a good test case for the notorious American attention span. To people who were adults in 1969, when he ordered his brainwashed female followers to murder rich Hollywood celebrities, including pregnant actress Sharon Tate, he was considered the epitome of La-La Land decadence and hippie depravity. Now, with the 21st century upon us, he is vaguely remembered as a cool outlaw in the Robin Hood mold by today's college students, who can buy T-shirts displaying his picture in their campus gift shops. Both memories lean too heavily on the

exotic, because he was actually a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant blue-collar hick.

Born in Cincinnati, across the river from his family's native Kentucky, he grew up in McMechen, W.Va.: a small town immune to all change emanating from World War II, a seedy, rancorous Brigadoon where men were men, women were women, and blacks were you-know-what. He was the product of a church-going grandmother and a dance-going mother who got pregnant at 16 by an alpha-male rake who promptly took off. Somehow she inveigled another, tamer man into marrying her to give the baby a name, but this Manson (nothing is known of him) soon left as well, and Charlie's mother turned to crime to support herself. She went to prison for robbery and attempted kidnapping, and Charlie went to live with her sister in McMechen.

A poor student, he showed some interest in music and liked to sing, even if it meant going to church. Small for his age, he burst into tears when the other boys beat him up; his uncle, who would tolerate nothing short of rawhide masculinity, called him a sissy and made him wear a girl's dress to school. He turned into a compulsive liar and stole anything that wasn't red-hot or nailed down, until he was shipped off to the first of many reform schools. (These included Boys Town, from which he escaped after four days and then stole a car.)

The only thing that got him out of reform schools was his 21st birthday in 1955, because they could not hold an adult. He married a girl named Rosalie and had a son, Charles Jr., supporting them fairly well for a time by stealing cars and unloading them in Florida until he was caught and sent to prison. There he heard about an easier way to make a living: pimping. Using his inborn gift for picking brains, he consulted the pimps among his fellow prisoners and they, flattered, responded volubly: "Look for the ones with Daddy problems," they advised. Keep them separated from family and friends; make sure they have nobody to turn to but their pimp; alienate them from everything in their past; master them sexually to establish dominance. Above all, "stay away from the complete nuts,"

because you will have to spend too much time propping them up: "Look for cracked but not broken. The trick is to make them love you and fear you at the same time."

Charlie imbibed this totally, just as he did the advice he got from the man he called his "personal guru," Dale Carnegie, author of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. He was not alone in his enthusiasm; Carnegie was such a popular author among convicts that the prison system offered inmates a correspondence course from the Dale Carnegie Institute. "There was always a waiting list of prisoners eager to sign up," writes Guinn, clearly savoring the irony. "Prison officials believed Dale Carnegie's positive outlook on life was just what the moody Charlie needed. He was jumped ahead of everyone on the list and enrolled."

The how-to list that Carnegie provides in *How to Win Friends* is merely a codified version of the instinctive ways Charlie had manipulated people since childhood: "Begin in a friendly way. . . . Make the other person feel important. . . . Talk about what he wants and show him how to get it. . . . Let him feel that the idea is his." No con man would argue with any of this. Later on, when police, judges, juries, and the entire country struggled to understand how Charlie got unquestioning obedience to his sanguinary orders, they could have found the answer in Dale Carnegie and the advice of the pimps.

Charlie used the correspondence-course con again before he was freed in 1967. "Prison officials were always glad when inmates embraced a faith that encouraged positive attitudes," writes Guinn. "Faith helped boost potential for parole." And so, Charlie embraced one, to the toe-curling delight of naïve prison officials, who proudly noted in his record: "He appears to have developed a certain amount of insight into his problems through his study of Scientology. Manson is making progress for the first time in his life."

It is difficult to cite the best parts of such a consistently superb book, but one section stands out as an example of a classic literary technique rarely seen in the slush pile of mediocrity that American publishing has become. This is the "over-

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view,” an intensified backdrop of time and place to give the biographical subject more “thereness.” William Manchester did it and Tom Wolfe still does, but the gold standard of overviews has long been the opening chapter on the Whig Ascendancy in Cecil’s *Marlborough*. Jeff Guinn matches it with his vivid descriptions of the San Francisco area in the late 1960s, when Manson settled there after he was paroled:

As student rebellion exploded in America, Berkeley was Ground Zero. . . . Of all the places he could have chosen for a post-prison destination, Berkeley was the one guaranteed to plunge him straight into the deepest waves of national upheaval. . . . Some of the young people he passed near the campus brandished placards and chanted slogans about America waging war and Charlie must have wondered what war, so isolated had he been. During his reform-school years from 1947 to 1954 he had no inkling of China’s fall to Communism or American troops in Korea. The reformatories offered classes in shop and welding but not current events. He could not have found Vietnam on a map.

Berkeley streets were a sea of protest signs: Students for a Democratic Society, the Free Speech Movement, anti-war, anti-draft, civil rights, women’s rights, the environment. There were also signs celebrating free love, which wrecked the pimping business Charlie had envisioned. Drug dealing was also out; pot was cheap and easy to find. What else was there for him? “He had no interest in a war overseas, anything that kept down blacks and women was fine with him, and the only free speech he cared about was his own. . . . Their focus was on changing the world, not on doing things for Charlie. He soon realized that Berkeley was not the place he was looking for.”

Pimping and drug dealing were also unnecessary in another part of the Bay Area, but this part was overflowing with people who were even more naïve than the prison officials. Ever since Paul McCartney had visited the hippie enclave in the Haight-Ashbury district and proclaimed it “colorful and fun,” misfit teenage runaways had poured into San Francisco from all over America, their numbers rising to some 300 a day in the “Summer of Love.” Greyhound buses belched them out into “a virtual bazaar of paths to true enlightenment. There were

street preachers everywhere. It was possible, within any few Haight-Ashbury blocks, to be exposed to a wide variety of proselytizers: Buddhists, Hindus, fundamentalist Christians, Satanists, socialists, anarchists, pacifists, isolationists, and plenty of poseurs adopting guru guise for the purpose of seducing gullible youngsters seeking someone to tell them what to do and how to think.”

Hippies, unlike the Berkeley radicals, believed in gentleness instead of revolution. They wanted to show the world that

church because he could sing there came to see himself as a rock star. The Beatles were hot and he was obsessed by them, convinced that he could win even greater fame if the right people heard him perform. That meant moving to Los Angeles and worming his way into the heart of somebody who could do him some good.

It is at this point that the author, who has already transfixed me with every other aspect of his writing, does so yet again with his treatment of a subject in which I have absolutely no interest what-

In every sense, one theme runs through and defines Charles Manson’s life. He was **the wrong man in the right place** at the right time.

human nature was basically good by trusting one another and sharing their possessions until love was universal and evil was no more. “It was ingrained in Charlie to take advantage of everyone that he could. The master manipulator could not have found a more perfect hunting ground. Reinventing himself as a Haight guru and gaining a flock of worshipful followers was irresistible.”

The pimps were right. In the two years leading up to the murders, Charlie followed their advice to the letter and put together a band of sycophantic handmaidens eager to do whatever it took for the privilege of being allowed to serve him. There was no need to separate them from familiar ties because they had already run away from home, several with credit cards that he used until their rejected parents caught on and canceled them.

New recruits or anyone who seemed to be slipping from his grasp had to prove they trusted him by letting him throw knives at them while they were tied to a tree. If they remained serenely motionless, he praised them; if they flinched, he got mad. Soon enough they were all like Sweet Alice of the old ballad “Ben Bolt”: They wept with delight when he gave them a smile and trembled with fear at his frown.

Charlie liked songs, but not this kind. He preferred the ones he wrote that he sang to the girls, accompanying himself on a guitar he bought with somebody’s daddy’s credit card. The incorrigible delinquent who nonetheless had liked

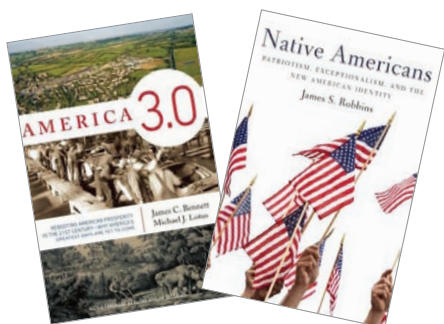
soever: the rock-music recording industry. Although my favorite song is “Annie Laurie,” I was soon into flip sides, album texts, musical plagiarism, uncredited composers, the troubles of Beach Boys drummer Dennis Wilson, and the stalling tactics of Doris Day’s son, Terry Melcher, the boy-wonder music producer and the make-or-break king of rock-’n’-roll dreams. Charlie might not have had much of an ear for music, but his perfect pitch for human nature got him past doors to the guys at the top.

Jeff Guinn relates the details of the bloody events of August 1969 while avoiding the post-murder letdown usually found in true-crime books (he even makes parole hearings interesting reading). Most satisfying of all, however, is his refusal to find the slightest extenuating circumstance for his protagonist. He rejects out of hand the “near-universal belief that Charlie is a product of the 1960s,” because he is also a product of the 1930s, the 1940s, and the 1950s. “Already a social predator and an opportunistic sociopath” long before the murders, he was instead “a horrific coincidence [because] the ’60s made it possible for him to bloom in full, malignant flower. In every sense, one theme runs through and defines his life. He was the wrong man in the right place at the right time.”

It’s Nature vs. Nurture, and about time, too. No more blaming decades and centuries and regions or anything else big enough to hide in. Nature takes the hit in this flawless book, so don’t miss it. **NR**

E Pluribus Bonum

JOHN FONTE



America 3.0: Rebooting American Prosperity in the 21st Century—Why America's Greatest Days Are Yet to Come, by James C. Bennett and Michael J. Lotus (Encounter, 264 pp., \$25.99)

Native Americans: Patriotism, Exceptionalism, and the New American Identity, by James S. Robbins (Encounter, 250 pp., \$23.99)

THE mantra “We are a nation of immigrants” is repeated endlessly, but this incantation is essentially misleading. The addition of one adjective, “assimilated,” as in, “We are a nation of assimilated immigrants,” would greatly clarify our understanding of American identity. The question then becomes, Assimilated to what? Samuel Huntington argued (correctly) that immigrants have, for the most part, assimilated into the culture, language, and institutions formed by the original settlers who emigrated from the British Isles. Thus, we are a nation of settlers and assimilated immigrants. Two new optimistic books from Encounter grapple with this issue of American identity.

In a long bibliographical essay, the authors of *America 3.0* explain that their book is the product of ten years of research into the cultural foundation of America. Building upon co-author James Bennett’s previous work on the Anglo-sphere, this new book is buttressed by

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scholarship in archaeology, anthropology, and historical analysis, particularly the work of French anthropologist Emmanuel Todd, English anthropologist-historian Alan Macfarlane, and English historian James Campbell, the foremost modern expert on the Saxons.

“Our American culture today,” Bennett and his co-author, Michael J. Lotus, tell us, “is part of a living and evolving organism, spanning centuries.” At the center of that culture is the American nuclear family. In the American nuclear family (as opposed to the traditional extended family), individuals are free to select their own spouses; grown children leave their parents’ homes and form new households; women enjoy a high degree of freedom compared with those in other cultures; children have no legal right to demand any inheritance from their parents; parents have no legal right to demand support from their adult children; and people have no right to expect help from their relatives.

The consequences of the American type of nuclear family, according to Bennett and Lotus, are that Americans are more individualistic, entrepreneurial, and mobile than other peoples. Suburbia is a major consequence, as American nuclear families prefer dispersed single-family homes over dense urban arrangements. Despite what they admit are “chaotic” changes in American family life, Bennett and Lotus do not “anticipate a basic change in cultural attitudes” that are “shaped by upbringing, language, institutions, and unconscious patterns of behavior that take centuries to form.”

Applying their anthropological-historical analysis, the authors note that the nuclear family emerged among the English. Bennett and Lotus state explicitly that the English family type became the American-style nuclear family, and this “underlying Anglo-American family type was the foundation for all the institutions, laws, and cultural practices that gave rise to our freedom and prosperity over the centuries.”

America 3.0 contains two well-researched chapters on the history of family structures and related cultural institutions among the English and among the earlier Germanic tribes (the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes) that formed the cultural basis of the English nation. Thomas Jefferson, among others, heralded the Saxon roots of American liberties. But

examinations of the Anglo-Saxon inheritance in American institutions became absorbed in 19th- and 20th-century racialist theories, which were totally (and rightly) discredited. Bennett and Lotus and the modern scholars they cite make it clear that when discussing “Saxon roots,” they are talking about culture, thoroughly distinct from race or ethnicity.

The bulk of *America 3.0* is focused on the future. America 1.0 started during the colonial period, took off during the Founding era, and began to fade away in the middle of the 19th century. It was a period of individual- and family-scale farms and businesses. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were products of this era, which has “never lost its grip on the American imagination.”

The years between 1860 and 1920 proved to be a transition period between America 1.0 and America 2.0. Americans developed a new system of “big units,” large corporations, big cities, and eventually bigger government and labor unions. By the New Deal, America 2.0 was firmly in place. Its heyday came in World War II and the two decades following the war. Bennett and Lotus tell us that America 2.0 was “great in its day. But it is over.” The government sector of America 2.0—the “Blue Model” or “Welfare State”—is failing. We do not know when America 2.0 will end (parts of it will survive, just as parts of America 1.0 have survived), but we are now in a period of transition between America 2.0 and America 3.0.

The future America 3.0 is described, in a chapter titled “America in 2040,” as a decentralized, networked era of prosperity. Social programs have been stripped from the federal government and sent to the states. There are 71 states (the larger ones—California, Texas, New York—have subdivided) and some functions are performed by multistate compacts. Cities, counties, and townships have taken on more responsibilities. Decentralization leads to a “big sort,” as families and individuals sort themselves by communities, religions, politics, and lifestyles. With the “big sort” and minimized federal role, “the need for a national consensus on most issues is nonexistent.” This also means that (despite the continued existence of the red-blue political split) a decentralized “social settlement” could evolve on the most contentious social issues. Bennett and Lotus

foresee more individual freedom and material wellbeing, with the U.S. remaining the world's leading political and economic power.

To help the country achieve the status of America 3.0, the authors offer a raft of detailed policy prescriptions related to decentralization, including the following: shifting political power to the states; reducing public debt (a “big haircut,” or the equivalent of bankruptcy); abolishing the federal income tax and replacing it with a consumption tax; and creating an alliance for decentralization that would place social issues beyond the power of the federal government and federal courts and into the hands of state legislators and voters. In the end, the authors contend, America 3.0 is possible because its formation would be consistent with America's deepest cultural roots and institutions. It is an updated version of the best of America 1.0.

Bennett and Lotus have produced a very important evergreen book making a strong case for their myriad arguments. Interest among the conservative intelligentsia should be intense. There have already been endorsements from Glenn Reynolds, Michael Barone, Jonah Goldberg, and John O'Sullivan. Rebuttals from our friends at the Claremont Institute are sure to come: As Straussians rather than Burkeans, they will insist that politics (the Declaration of Independence) trumps culture (the nuclear family).

The other new Encounter book, James Robbins's *Native Americans*, is an optimistic celebration of American identity, patriotism, and exceptionalism. Robbins tells us that American identity is fighting a two-front war against multiculturalists and globalists. This reviewer could not agree more. The federally imposed “diversity” project assumes an oppositional posture toward American culture, dividing citizens into antagonistic ethnic boxes. Once in these legal categories, individuals are labeled as members of either a “victim group” or the “oppressor class.”

Robbins rightly rejects all of this. He argues that we need a definition of American ethnicity that is based not on race but on American culture and values. Most of all, this means we should self-identify as Americans. Robbins makes it clear that he disdains the concept of hyphenated Americans: He scorns the

idea that he is an “Irish-American” or a “white non-Hispanic” American. “My Americanism,” he declares, “needs no prefix or suffix.”

In 1980, the Census Bureau began asking questions about one's ancestry, suggesting categories such as German, English, Irish, African-American, etc. Robbins traces how an increasing number of people listed their ancestry simply as “American.” In the 2000 census, over 20 million people identified their ancestry as “American,” making this the fifth-largest ancestry group. Robbins has fun tracking down where these “Americans” live. The highest proportion of “Americans” (over 50 percent) live in southeastern Kentucky. “Americans” are the plurality in Kentucky, West Virginia, Tennessee, and Arkansas. The most “Americans” live (in descending order) in Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, Ohio, Kentucky, and California.

Like Bennett and Lotus, and unlike many in America's contemporary elite, Robbins believes there is a distinct American culture. He cites data from the Bradley Foundation Project on National Identity that indicate that 84 percent of our citizens believe that there is “a unique American national identity based on shared beliefs, values, and culture.” Further, writes Robbins, the American melting pot has formed a single people “rooted in shared language, foundational stories, history, experience, culture, belief systems, national myths, and political culture.”

Robbins doesn't quote a July 22, 1966 letter from gubernatorial candidate Ronald Reagan to former president Dwight Eisenhower, but—in political terms—the letter is more relevant today than when it was written half a century ago. Reagan wrote to Ike: “I am in complete agreement about dropping the hyphen that presently divides us into minority groups. I'm convinced this ‘hyphenating’ was done by our opponents to create voting blocs for political expediency. Our party should strive to change this—one is not an Irish-American but is instead an American of Irish descent.”

The coercive “diversity” project and a bloated welfare state have only gotten worse in the years since. Bennett, Lotus, and Robbins are pointing out a better direction for our country. **NR**

Egyptian— And Endangered

PAUL MARSHALL



Motherland Lost: The Egyptian and Coptic Quest for Modernity, by Samuel Tadros (Hoover Institution, 262 pp., \$19.95)

MEDIA reports on current events in Egypt have called a little attention to a fact frequently ignored: that there are millions of Christians in that country.

These Christians are usually called “Copts,” a word derived from “Egypt,” and can claim descent from Pharaonic and Ptolemaic ancestors. Their liturgical language, Coptic, derives from Egyptian Demotic. The Coptic Orthodox Church, which embraces over 90 percent of Egypt's Christians, traces its founding in Alexandria to Saint Mark, the author of Mark's gospel. Their church calendar dates from 284, the start of the reign of their worst persecutor, the Roman emperor Diocletian. They have produced some of the greatest theologians of the church, including Clement, Origen, Cyril, and, most important, Athanasius, the major shaper of the Nicene Creed.

The churches in the West broke with the Copts because of the latter's dissent from the rulings of the Council of Chalcedon in 451. They were accused of being “monophysite”—that is, believing that Christ had only one nature—and this

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led to their ongoing persecution by the Byzantines. After the Coptic and Roman Catholic Churches issued a joint declaration in 1973 on their common views of the nature of Christ, the accusation of mono-physics has largely been dropped, although key theological differences remain. However, the division at Chalcedon has rendered the Egyptian Church largely unknown in the West. Its founding of Christian monasticism, its major contributions to theology and art (especially textiles), and its role in the shaping of Celtic Christianity are forgotten except by specialists.

In the modern age, Egypt's major Christian presence, like that of the tens of millions of other members of religious and ethnic minorities in the Middle East, continues to be hidden from the West by the use of obscuring terms such as "the Muslim world" or "the Muslim-Arab world," which elide their existence.

In the first two chapters of his excellent new book, Samuel Tadros gives us a much-needed succinct survey of earlier Coptic history. (Full disclosure: Tadros is a colleague of mine, though I have had no input into his book.) But this survey is only a prolegomenon to his two major interrelated themes. One is Egypt's struggle with modernity, inaugurated by the traumatic shock of Napoleon's invasion and shattering of the Mamluk armies in 1798, and developed through Mohammed Ali's subsequent attempts to modernize Egypt's state apparatus so that it could resist European militaries. Tadros concludes that "the answers developed by Egyptian intellectuals and by state modernizers to the challenge that modernity posed eventually revolved around the problem of Islam. How to interpret and deal with the apparent contradiction between Islam and modernity has been the key question." The continuing struggles, often bloody ones, over this question unfold daily on our television screens.

The other major theme is the Copts' own struggle with modernity: "Copts were faced with a separate crisis. . . . The onslaught of foreign missionaries, the challenge of reforming an ancient institution, the impact of the modernizing state, and the clash between the clergy and the laymen were hallmarks of that modern crisis. The laymen's rise to prominence in the state's service and their attempts to answer the overall Egyptian question in turn shaped their approach to the Church."

Tadros links these often separated histories to show how Egypt's struggles have shaped and been shaped by the Copts. In so doing, he wants to counter "two dominating narratives that have shaped the understanding of the Coptic predicament." The first is "eternal persecution," wherein the plight of modern Copts is read simply as a continuation of their suffering under Roman and Byzantine emperors, Islam, and Western colonialists. This narrative underplays the Coptic elite's own struggles with modernity, the peculiar challenges precipitated by the arrival of competing Christian denominations, the Church's consequent internal conflicts, and its amazing renewal in the last half-century.

The second narrative is a "National Unity discourse" that claims that at the heart of Egypt, there has always been, between Copts and Muslims, an unbreakable bond that has withstood the test of time.

Marshall's critique of this "National Unity discourse" is the most pertinent to current Egyptian politics, especially in his analysis of the foibles of Egyptian liberalism: "The failure of liberalism in Egypt did not result in the Copts' current predicament. Rather, it was the very approach that liberalism took that brought about this predicament."

Tadros argues that "the specifically Egyptian crisis of modernity, understood as a question of the compatibility of Islam

with modernity . . . [has] shaped the way Copts were viewed and led to their banishment from the public sphere as a community, though not as individuals." This is because Egyptian liberalism, such as it has been, emerged "not from an independent bourgeoisie but from civil servants, men whose lives were tied to the state and whose conceptions were inherently shaped by that. With no tension between the individual and the state, Egyptian liberals' ultimate dream would be a repetition of the story of Mohammed Ali, an autocrat imposing reforms from above on a reluctant population."

Hence, the elites who rejected Islam as the basis for politics and the nation turned instead to the state and to nationalism and embraced the myth of Egypt as a homogeneous nation: "Diversity was neither acknowledged nor tolerated. . . . Either one was an Egyptian or something else, but not both." This stress on homogeneity was incoherently combined with a portrayal of Egyptian history as the cooperation of Muslim and Copt, and the contradiction between the two claims was never addressed. In this narrative, any complaint by Copts about their treatment needed to be suppressed as a threat to national unity and identity—a pattern that continues to this day.

A further feature of the liberal-nationalist ideology was that, while seeking to borrow from the West, it remained fanatically anti-Western, an attitude it shared with the pan-Arabists, the Islamists, the socialists, the Communists, and the fascists. The fact that, in contemporary debates over the deposition of President Morsi, all sides in Egypt now accuse the U.S. of backing their opponents is due to more than incompetent American diplomacy: It is a deeply rooted, habitual political response.

Tadros's historically informed description of Egypt's ongoing failure to come to terms with modernity reveals the shallowness of most contemporary American commentary, rooted as it is in the categories of parochial Western modernity. He shows how Egypt's "Arab Spring" has continued in the patterns of the country's history for at least the last century. Similarly, although he finished his book long before Morsi was overthrown on July 3, his analysis shows why the Muslim Brotherhood's, the opposition's, and the army's actions repeat the same dynamics. His depiction is not despairing,

NIGHT WISDOM

Face framed with a few
lonely wisps of gray,
the dark haired lady
suggested gently, over coffee,
to the young mother,
bone weary, with a babe
who had cried through the night,
but now slept, as the mother
could not,

that there was a deep voice
within her little one,
as the man he would become,
with a strength
he could not have
without her weary devotion,
provided as the gift of love,
time, and time again,
through the lonely night.

—WILLIAM W. RUNYEON

but it is acutely sobering.

He describes the growth of the Coptic Church worldwide, but his conclusions concerning Christians in Egypt do seem to be despairing: “A Church that has withstood diverse and tremendous challenges is now threatened in its very existence.” Political changes have altered the manner, but not the fact, of persecution. Recent years have seen the massacres carried out by Gamaa Islamiya and Islamic Jihad in the 1990s, Mubarak’s ongoing failure to defend Copts from attack or to punish their attackers, and the increased number of assaults since Mubarak was overthrown, both under the military and under the Brotherhood.

Even with the Muslim Brotherhood out of power since July 3, the situation has worsened yet again. Brotherhood spokesmen and media have singled out the Copts as instigators of their downfall, and Christians are now subject to daily violent attack. Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri has waded in with videotaped accusations that Copts are working to establish their own state in Upper Egypt—recycling a hackneyed accusation that has been repeated for centuries, even by Anwar Sadat in 1980 before he confined the Coptic pope, Shenouda III, to a monastery for three years and arrested many bishops and priests.

Tadros fears that many Copts now believe that their only hope for a livable future is through emigration, and many are fleeing to America, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere. It is the wealthier and more educated who find it easier to leave, thus weakening those left behind. This will affect not only Christians: “When Copts leave Egypt, it is a loss not only to them and their Church. A country and region will lose a portion of its identity and history.” As Egyptian-American commentator Maged Atiya has said: “More painful than contemplating how Copts might fare when shorn of Egypt is the thought of how Egypt might fare when shorn of the Copts.”

But, as Tadros notes: “Coptic history . . . has also been a story of survival, endurance in the face of persecution, and the courage and blood of martyrs becoming the seeds of the Church.” This is a Church that, despite the vicissitudes of nearly two millennia, remains the largest non-Muslim minority between India and the Atlantic. It may survive much more. **NR**

Happy Anniversaries

JAY NORDLINGER

Salzburg

THE music business loves an anniversary. If presenters didn’t know who was born when, or who died when, how would they know what to present? This year is a “Wagner year,” and also a “Verdi year.” Both of those composers were born in 1813. So they’re celebrating their bicentennials—or we are. In reality, every year is a Wagner year and a Verdi year: They are staple composers. But, in 2013, they are receiving extra attention, if possible.

So is Benjamin Britten: It is his centennial—the centennial of his birth. (He died in 1976.) Britten is a major composer, and you might even call him a staple. But he could probably do with a “year.”

In any event, the Salzburg Festival has been celebrating all three composers—in particular, Verdi, four of whose operas have been performed, or will be. Wagner has had to settle for two. Fortunately, his ego can take it.

One of the Wagner operas is *Rienzi*, a rarity. More formally, the opera is titled *Rienzi, der Letzte der Tribunen*, or, *Rienzi, the Last of the Tribunes*. This is a Roman spectacle. It was Wagner’s third completed opera, and his first commercial success. Its overture has long been a popular piece—an orchestral staple. But few know the opera beyond the overture.

Wagner took the story from Edward Bulwer-Lytton, that much-mocked novelist (and poet, and politician, etc.). Bulwer-Lytton opened, not his *Rienzi*, but another novel with “It was a dark and stormy night.” *Peanuts* made this line famous. And it’s supposed to be the epitome of bad writing. There is a Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest, in which people compete with one another to write badly. Bulwer-Lytton also came up with phrases and sentences that are as natural to us as air: “the great unwashed,” “the almighty dollar,” “The pen is mightier than the sword.”

Beat that, as William F. Buckley Jr. would say.

Wagner’s *Rienzi* is composed in the grand-opera style, epitomized by Giacomo

Meyerbeer. Indeed, Hans von Bülow cracked that “*Rienzi* is Meyerbeer’s best opera.” (Bülow was the conductor who was married to Liszt’s daughter Cosima, who soon took up with Wagner.) Others have countered, “Actually, *Rienzi* is Meyerbeer’s worst opera.” Whatever our opinion, Meyerbeer was a big influence on Wagner, and a benefactor of the younger composer personally. Among many other kindnesses, Meyerbeer helped get *Rienzi* staged. Wagner later repaid him by launching a campaign of vilification against him.

Why? First, because Meyerbeer was another composer. Second, because he had helped Wagner, including with money (and beneficiaries often resent their benefactors). But the third reason is the most important: Meyerbeer was a Jew.

We should talk about Hitler for a second (but no more). It’s a sad fact that he adored *Rienzi*. He had the overture played at his rallies. He possessed the manuscript. Apparently, he requested the manuscript for his 50th birthday in 1939. The Wagner family happily obliged. *Rienzi*, in Wagner’s own hand, was with him in the bunker, at the end.

That said, Hitler also adored *The Merry Widow*, Franz Lehár’s operetta, and the best-loved operetta ever. Hitler saw it over and over. And there is no taint on the *Widow*, so far as I know.

Rienzi is Meyerbeer-like, for sure, and it also has dashes of Carl Maria von Weber and Rossini. The music from the overture wends its way all through the opera. Often, the score is blowsy or bombastic, full of forgettable rhetoric. But now and then, Wagner peeps through: We hear the genius who would go on to compose *The Ring*, *Parsifal*, and other works.

The Salzburg Festival presented *Rienzi* in a concert performance, which is to say, unstaged. It also presented the opera cut—sharply abridged—which is no sin. The orchestra was the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra, based in Vienna, and the conductor was Philippe Jordan, a Swiss. He is the son of Armin Jordan, the late, esteemed conductor. Philippe is now almost 40, but he still looks like a kid—like he could belong to this orchestra.

The overture, from these forces, was weak, without the necessary sound, and without gravitas. Had Salzburg

employed a boy to do a man's job (so to speak)? But elsewhere in the opera, the orchestra was plenty competent, and admirably nimble. Jordan is a fine, alert, polished conductor—as he proved when he made his Salzburg debut almost ten years ago.

Singing the title role, Rienzi, was an Englishman, Christopher Ventris, who is a bona fide heldentenor. They are thin on the ground. He had some struggles, but that is assumed, where heldentenors are concerned. I might mention, too, the bass-baritone in the small role of Kardinal Orvieto: the Chicago-born Robert Bork. He sang judiciously.

The other Wagner opera here at the festival is *Die Meistersinger*, that grand comedy. Salzburg also did Verdi's grand comedy, his last opera, *Falstaff*. They are doing *Don Carlo* too. And *Nabucco*, the opera from which we get the beloved hymn "Va, pensiero."

Along the way, Salzburg presented a curiosity, a rarity: *Giovanna d'Arco*, i.e., *Joan of Arc*. This is an early Verdi opera, seen and heard at least as seldom as *Rienzi*. It, too, received a concert performance. The story is based on Schiller's version of Joan, more or less. And about the music, I will say this: If Verdi depended on *Giovanna* for his reputation, we might not have heard of him. But there is still Verdi in it—and a great performance of this opera can make your hair stand on end.

In Salzburg, we received such a performance. An Italian conductor, Paolo Carignani, conducted a German orchestra, the Munich Radio Orchestra. Carignani was clear, authoritative, and impassioned. *Giovanna* is a three-singer opera, essentially, and those singers are as follows: a soprano, Joan; a tenor, Charles VII (or Carlo, here); and a baritone, Joan's father, called Giacomo.

Joan sounded dark and Slavic in this performance, as she was sung by Anna Netrebko, the Russian star. Netrebko was scorching. At times, Joan sounded less like the Maid of Orléans than like the Battle Axe of the Steppes or something. Yet Netrebko did the necessary subtle singing as well. She had some wayward notes, as she usually does, but her musical and dramatic intelligence overcame everything, as it almost always does.

Carlo was a real Italian tenor—a genuine, rugged Verdi tenor—and those are

as thin on the ground as heldentenors. He was Francesco Meli, a Genoa native in his early 30s. He sang with power, yes, but also with control and some beauty. His hand gestures tended to the parodic, but he can work on those.

In the baritone role, Giacomo, was one of the great tenors of our time: Plácido Domingo. Once upon a time, he was Carlo, and he recorded that role, too. But these days, he is singing baritone roles—though he still sounds like a tenor who's using his middle voice. When he sang a high F from Carlo, for example, he sounded like he could go miles above it.

And, throughout the opera, he sounded magnificent. Giacomo calls himself an "old man"; Carlo calls him a "bold old man." Domingo is one, yes. How old is he, exactly? Seventy-two, according to official records. In reality, he may be older. For at least 15 years now, I've called him "the ageless Spaniard," and I see no need to stop now. On the Salzburg stage, he was virile, magnetic, overwhelming. The longer the evening became, the stronger he got. He seemed to draw energy from his exertions.

From all of these performers, *Giovanna d'Arco* was, indeed, hair-raising. It was opera in the raw, Italian blood and guts, sheer testosterone (and whatever the female equivalent is). A Schubert string quartet, it was not. But everything has its place.

Benjamin Britten, the centennial man, was represented primarily by his *War Requiem*—a masterpiece, by almost anyone's reckoning. Britten wrote it for the consecration of a new Coventry Cathedral in 1962. (The prior cathedral was destroyed in the war.) The *War Requiem* mixes traditional Latin texts and poems of Wilfred Owen, the "war poet" (meaning, World War I poet).

Britten was a pacifist, and a proud one. In World War II, he was given a complete exemption from service by the British government—an exemption given to only a handful. Britten refused even to play the piano for the troops, holding that such an activity would feed the war machine. He said to the relevant authorities, "The whole of my life has been devoted to acts of creation (being by profession a composer) and I cannot take part in acts of destruction." Because others would, Britten went on to have his glorious career in the land of his birth.

He scored the requiem for massive forces: soprano, tenor, and baritone soloists; chorus and boys' choir; organ; and two orchestras—a full orchestra and a chamber orchestra. The specific soloists he had in mind were a Russian, Galina Vishnevskaya (wife of the cellist Mstislav Rostropovich), an Englishman, the tenor Peter Pears (Britten's lifelong partner), and a German, the baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. Salzburg, too, had a Russian soprano: Netrebko. And an English tenor: Ian Bostridge. Not a German baritone, however, but an American one: Thomas Hampson.

The conductor was Antonio Pappano, whose nationality is multiple. He's an Englishman—indeed, he's Sir Antonio now. He's Italian, thanks to his parentage. And he's American, thanks to some formative years on our shores. He is also one of the best conductors in the world, the music director of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and of the Santa Cecilia orchestra in Rome. It was that orchestra that played in Salzburg, along with the Santa Cecilia chorus, plus a Salzburg boys' choir.

Pappano conducted consummately: with efficiency, understanding, and musical instinct. He gave a lesson in musicianship. He allowed no fussiness—and Britten, more than most composers, is killed by fussiness. And he allowed no sentimentalism. The music-making was pure, while scanting no emotion.

Netrebko was scalding and imperious, rather like her predecessor, Vishnevskaya (than whom no one has ever been more scalding and imperious). Alternatively, she was plaintive, according to the music's shifts and demands. Bostridge sang with his usual thoughtfulness and skill. He seemed an authentic, timeless voice of England. Hampson, too, did justice to his part, contributing, among other things, beauty of sound. It is possible not to like the *War Requiem*, or not to be wild about it. But it would be hard to imagine a better performance. If there is such a thing as secular prayer, or prayerfulness, these forces, along with Britten, achieved it.

I began this report by knocking "anniversaryitis" (to use an old coinage of mine): the habit of organizing music around anniversaries. There are worse organizing principles, however. And the Salzburg Festival has put on a very good show.

NR

Film

Small Ball

ROSS DOUTHAT

I COMPLAIN fairly often in this space about the slow decline of middlebrow entertainment—the way superheroes and franchises have crowded out original storytelling, the way the economics of the blockbuster has made it hard to get even a medium-budget movie off the ground, the way it’s difficult to imagine today’s Hollywood greenlighting many of the classics of my childhood and teenage years. (“Wait, you’re saying he just learns karate from some old guy and then goes on to win a tournament? That’ll never justify our marketing budget! Why can’t we make him a karate superhero instead?”)

These are familiar complaints to anyone who follows the film-industry conversation, and so it’s always good to have a glass-half-full response; and recently the optimist’s case was supplied by my comrade in right-of-center movie criticism, the *Washington Free Beacon*’s Sonny Bunch. He argued that, thanks to technological advances that make it easier than ever to shoot and edit, and distribution channels such as Netflix and Amazon that make it easier to catch up with obscure titles in your living room, the decline of the \$40 million movie may actually end up ushering in “a golden age of small-budget cinema,” thick with interesting small movies made “at \$5 million a crack.”

I won’t say that I was persuaded by Bunch’s argument, in part because I haven’t liked any of the recent small-budget titles (*The Bling Ring* and *Only God Forgives*, among others) that his mini-essay mentioned.

But his thesis crept back into my mind while I was watching *In a World . . .*, which stars Lake Bell and also marks her eccentric, entertaining directorial debut. Bell is an actress you might recognize: She’s played supporting roles in a few middling romantic comedies (*It’s Complicated*, *What Happens in Vegas*, and the like) and showed up as a guest star on several sitcoms. In those parts, she’s

struck me as the kind of female performer—unconventionally pretty, well suited to comedy, not a bombshell or an athlete—who doesn’t have much of a chance in today’s big-screen landscape, and whose career tends to dead-end in gal-pal roles unless she leaps to television or catches an extremely lucky break. (The always-better-than-her-material Judy Greer is an example of this type; so is Amy Acker, the star of Joss Whedon’s recent shot-on-the-cheap *Much Ado About Nothing*.)

Apparently Bell felt much the same way about her own likely trajectory, because she cobbled together the money to make a comedy whose story, set in the obscure corner of Hollywood where the men who do voice-overs on movie trailers are treated as royalty, doubles as a protest against the priorities of the industry as a whole.

She stars as Carol, the underachieving, dorky, semi-hapless daughter of a sonorous, self-satisfied, chauvinist voice-over legend (Fred Melamed). He’s awaiting



Lake Bell in *In a World . . .*

his lifetime-achievement award; she’s still living in his spare bedroom, making ends meet by teaching movie stars how to do a Cockney accent. Or rather, she’s living there until he decides that it’s time for his twentysomething girlfriend to move in, at which point she decamps for the apartment shared by her sister (Michaela Watkins) and her husband (Rob Corddry), becoming a third wheel in a marriage

that’s about to hit a rough patch.

From this low point, though, Carol finds a way to rise. First, she swipes a voice gig out from under her father’s heir apparent, Gustav (Ken Marino), a preening pretty boy with pipes. Then, with the help of an audio technician (Demetri Martin) whose devotion is apparent to everyone save her, she manages to put herself in the running for the trailer voice-over for Hollywood’s latest mega-budget tentpole, *The Amazon Games*, whose producers have decided to resurrect the classic trailer opening line: “In a world . . .”

This setup lets the movie take swipes at Hollywood gender bias (“The industry does not crave a female sound,” Carol’s dad lectures her), the emptiness of blockbusters (what we see of *The Amazon Games* looks like *The Hunger Games* crossed with *Clan of the Cave Bear* and then rewritten by a six-year-old), and even the “sexy baby” voice that so many Southern California women seem to cultivate.

But there’s much more to *In a World . . .* than a series of industry-related barbs. Too much more, sometimes: The movie is a little overplotted (too much time is spent on the sister and her marriage problems) and Bell has assembled a great cast without always giving them great characters to play. Nick Offerman, so great as Ron Swanson on *Parks and Recreation*, is wasted in a supporting part that never really brings the laughs, and the script as a whole is always about 20 percent less funny than it thinks it is.

Which is to say that this might have been a slightly better movie with, yes, a somewhat bigger budget and the extra cooks in the kitchen that studio money buys—with someone punching up the script, someone giving notes and feedback, someone worrying a little more about what audiences would think, and so on.

But then again it might have been worse—and anyway it’s an academic question, since a movie like this, with these stars and this story, would simply never have been made at even a slightly higher budget.

The fact that it did get made, in defiance of Hollywood’s priorities, is not necessarily a sign that small-budget movies are ready to fill the void left by the collapse of the middlebrow. But it is a reason to be glad that such movies exist, and to root for them to prosper. **NR**

There's a Place



RICHARD BROOKHISER

EVERY man has the place he hangs out. The employees of this magazine, at its old location, had the fancy Italian restaurant for editorial lunches and dinners. But for daily use we went to the burger joint with military insignia displayed over the bar (the owner had fought at Imjin River) or the not-fancy Italian restaurant whose owner had briefly been a Yankee (with slight encouragement he would interrupt Dino or Frank to sample the play-by-play account of his lone homer). Five conditions must be fulfilled before any place achieves placehood. It must be close; it must be comfortably within budget; they must know you; you must know them; and anytime you go you must also know a number of the other patrons, either because you all went there together, or you went separately but simultaneously, as if by pre-arrangement. Your money is good, your smiles are returned, you return all smiles, and you come and go on feet not wheels.

There is a welfare office a block from my house and those who go there also have a place. Hillary Clinton's husband ended welfare as we know it, but the city keeps its own programs going, like a Native State under the Raj. The building that houses the welfare office occupies almost half a block. It is tall, square, old, and plain; the only ornaments are the flags hanging over the front door, the Stars and

Stripes and the flag of the city, quaintly decorated with an Indian and a Dutchman.

Every weekday during office hours, a stream of people come and go, while a small crowd waits. Is there no place to wait inside? Given my experience of hospitals, post offices, courts, and other public spaces, the answer is either that there is no place, or that whatever place there is is jammed. (Or smoking is forbidden. Sidewalks—the last don't-tread-on-me space in the city.)

Clients and their companions are a diverse lot: blacks and Hispanics, Hasids and Muslims. (They arrive via a big subway station nearby; the street signs aboveground are confusing; I often direct wandering newcomers to this location.) What unites them, and distinguishes them from other pedestrians, is their pace. In a city of bustle, they shuffle. If I were seeking relief from a bureaucrat, would I shuffle too? At what x , if x is the percentage of my neighbors and ancestors engaged in the same pursuit, does shuffling commence? Discuss. Meanwhile the forecourt of the welfare office is a low-speed zone.

A handful of small businesses have sprung up to serve the crowd. There is a hot-dog vendor under a blue and yellow umbrella. His rivals purvey a U.N. of meats—gyros, Italian sausage, Philly cheese steaks, all guaranteed to be halal. What a country—any believer can partake of our dullest food.

Most interesting is the bookseller. Literacy is in decline, everything is going to YouTube and Instagram. But the bookseller is there day in, day out. His offerings are all for small children, the pages stiff and bright. Kitties teach how to count; cows say moo. Some of his stock is single-sheet: a poster of the human body; placemats showing the presidents, or famous African Americans (after 2008, I realized the new editions would have a subject in common). When it drizzles he spreads a clear plastic sheet over his wares to keep everything dry. One day a gust of a summer storm snuck under the covers and sent books scurrying down the sidewalk and across the street. I retrieved one from under a parked car. He always finds takers; the mothers here may not walk as fast as I do but they will get something for

their kids.

These entrepreneurs have acquired neighbors—the phone scammers. They are the best-dressed people on the block, and the most voluble (the food vendors and booksellers don't talk much, perhaps because English is their second language). The phone scammers are all-American, jive division, and they want you to share their blessings. The most common initial reaction from their marks seems to be puzzlement; they really have to work to make their pitch. And yet there is always a new phone owner or two signing on the dotted line. They are quick amateur sociologists, as any good salesman must be; I am never approached, whether because I am tall, white, white-haired, or I otherwise radiate some aura of old-fart untimeliness (I still have a landline).

What is most striking about the place outside the welfare office is how incommodious it is. The building has a few front steps, and a ramp for wheelchairs, which narrows the sidewalk a bit. The carts and tables of the vendors lined up along the curb narrow it still more. In the remaining gap everyone jams up, as on a subway platform at rush hour. There is no place to sit, hardly even any place to lean; people make do with the railings of the ramp, or the wall of the building. This year the sidewalk needed repair, perhaps because chips might cause stumbles which would create endless hassle. So foot traffic was rerouted into a narrow chute on the street, while the merchants and those they served simply had to move their whole show 50 feet away. It seemed an endless process; entire weeks passed when nothing appeared to be happening and rain fell dismally on temporary tarps. And yet a new sidewalk finally did appear, whereupon the whole show moved back to its wonted location. The saddest thing about the place is that it is no place. At night the building goes dark, the sidewalk is empty, except perhaps for a bum.

What goes on inside the building? Where is the place of the administrators and personnel inside? I never see anyone wearing the insignia of office—a necktie, a plastic ID badge—buying a hot dog, a halal cheese steak, or a kitty-counts book. Mysteries down the block. **NR**

Party Politics

PROWLING my hotel room the other night, I discovered a copy of the latest *Vogue*, kindly provided by the management. So, after bringing myself up to speed on Jennifer Lawrence—a “girl on fire,” apparently—I turned to a profile of Susan Rice. She was the girl sent to put out the fire, dispatched by the Obama administration to slog through all the Sunday talk shows the weekend after Benghazi and blame it on some video. In Sir Henry Wotton’s famous formulation, an ambassador is a man sent to lie abroad for the good of his country. In the case of Susan Rice, a U.N. ambassador is a broad sent to lie to her country for the good of her man—viz., Barack Obama. Happily, it worked. A year on, the director of the video is still in custody, and Miss Rice is now national-security adviser. So she and *Vogue* were in party mood:

“It’s a warm evening in June, and guests are assembling for a party she’s throwing in honor of LGBT Pride Month at the penthouse of the Waldorf Towers, the official residence of the U.N. Ambassador. Actress turned humanitarian activist Mia Farrow, wearing blue tinted glasses, is one of the first to arrive. Within minutes she’s joined by *The New York Times*’s executive editor, Jill Abramson . . .” And soon things are swinging: “They mingle and sip sparkling wine in the elegant living room next to a framed portrait of Oprah Winfrey and First Lady Michelle Obama resting their heads on Rice’s shoulders . . .”

Presumably *Vogue* subscribers are impressed by this sort of thing, but it would seem an odd opening paragraph for a profile of even recent U.N. ambassadors. Hey, maybe I’m wrong; maybe *Vogue* profiled cocktail soirées *chez* John Bolton attended by Andie MacDowell or Valerie Bertinelli, and with the great man photographed between Phil Donahue and Barbara Bush, or Merv Griffin and Mamie Eisenhower. Who knows? Out there, in a ramshackle outpost somewhere on the fringes of the map, brave Americans abandoned by their government are dying on a rooftop. But here in the metropolis the dazzling klieg-light luster of Mia Farrow and Jill Abramson plunges all else into shadow.

If you’re not looking at the world through Mia Farrow’s blue-tinted glasses, if you’re in Beijing or Moscow, Ankara or Canberra, it’s the shadow that everyone sees, very clearly—the sepulchral Habsburgian twilight of a dimming power enjoying its last waltz. Like Vienna exactly a century ago, America retains a certain creative energy, if you’re willing to put Jay-Z up there with Franz Lehár. It is at the forefront of therapeutic culture: If Freud had thought to stick his couch on a TV set, he might have made as much dough as Oprah, or at least Dr. Phil. As Vienna sat on an underground “river of sex” (as William Boyd calls it in his recent novel *Waiting for Sunrise*), so in America the river

is overground and its Niagara-like roar the unceasing background din of daily life: A New York mayoral candidate twitpics his penis. A putative successor to San Diego’s grope-fiend mayor is caught masturbating in a city-hall men’s room. Miley Cyrus in her scanties “twerks”—or is twerked upon (I’m not sure I can reliably say which)—live on TV. Yawn. Next . . .

No one could be further from the octogenarian Franz Josef than our young emperor, but even hip courtiers draw the line at *lèse majesté*, and so rodeo clowns who disrespect the sovereign are banned for life. On the distant horizon, the contours of the post-American world begin to rise, but the preoccupations of our ruling class grow ever more myopic. One of the world’s richest women flies all the way to Switzerland in order to confuse a Zurich boutique selling \$38,000 handbags with an Alabama lunch counter 60 years ago, to the consternation of the poor shopgirl who knows nothing of America’s peculiar parochial obsessions, has never heard of Trayvon Martin, and lives in a city where pretty much the only black women around are the more fashion-conscious African dictators’ consorts in town to visit their safe-deposit boxes. But, as at the Hofbau, the ancient social rituals of our own court permit no diversion from the program: If it’s Tuesday, it must be racism.

Alas, in the world beyond the penthouse of the Waldorf Towers, it’s harder to tell whom the A-list invites should go to: From Afghanistan to Egypt, a debt-ridden America bankrolls its own eclipse, betraying friends, promoting enemies, despised by both. In the dog days of summer, the new national-security adviser tweets it in from her pad in the Hamptons or wherever, even as the hyperpower readies for its next unwon war: After America’s slo-mo defeat in the Hindu Kush, and its ineffectual leading-from-behind in Libya, and its thwarted Muslim Brotherhood outreach in Cairo, Obama is confidently dispatching the gunboats to Syria. If you’re Bashar Assad, you must be as befuddled as that Zurich handbag clerk: Hillary hailed you as a “reformer”; no senatorial frequent flyer courted you more assiduously than John Kerry; the guys trying to depose you hate the Great Satan far more than you do, and are the local branch office of the fellows who turned lower Manhattan into a big smoking hole. Yet Washington is readying to take you out—or at any rate, in George W. Bush’s unimprovable summation of desultory Clinton-style warmongering, readying to fire a \$2 million cruise missile through a tent and hit a camel in the butt. The only novelty with this latest of ineptly rattled sabers is whether Tsar Putin will stand by and let Obama knock off a Russian client.

Putin, Assad, General Sisi in Cairo, and many others think they have the measure of Obama, Kerry, and Rice. Poor deluded fools. If only, like Mia, they could see them through blue-tinted glasses . . .

NR

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



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