the weekly Standard

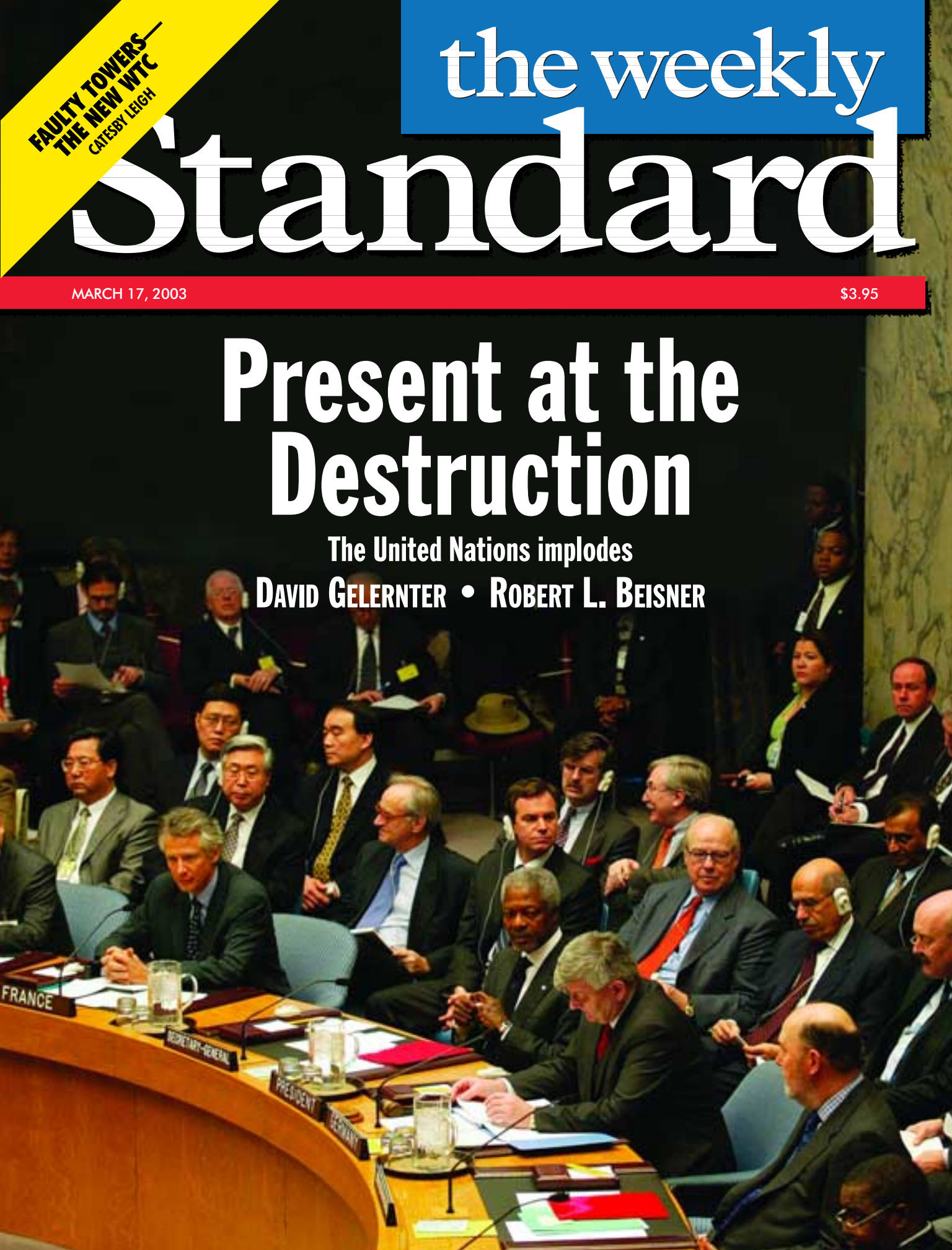
MARCH 17, 2003 $3.95

FAULTY TOWERS—THE NEW WTC
CATESBY LEIGH

Present at the Destruction

The United Nations implodes

DAVID GELERNTER • ROBERT L. BEISNER



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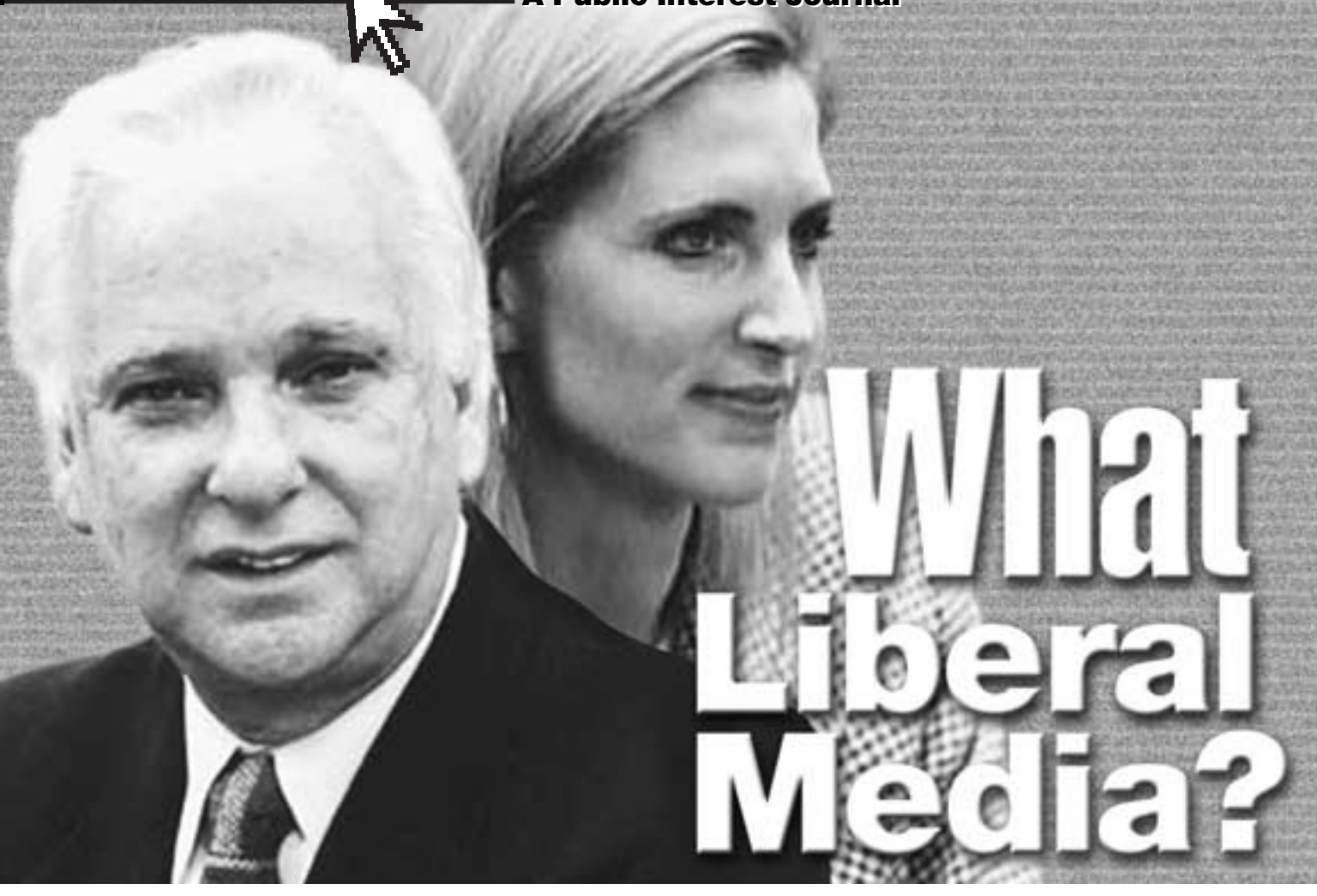

A Challenge: Let's Debate *Bias* and *Slander*

It's time for Bernard Goldberg and Ann Coulter to defend their books, *Bias* and *Slander*, which supposedly prove an old saw – that liberals dominate the news media.

After the books were published, the press lavished attention on both authors – much of it uncritical, if not fawning. Ironically, such a reception should have provided primary evidence against their allegation (if a random survey of TV pundits or *Washington Post* editorials wasn't proof enough).

Now comes Eric Alterman's new book, *What Liberal Media?* It shreds the 'liberal media' myth, and with it *Bias* and *Slander*. Alterman shows that both books rely on unfounded assertions strung together with low invective.

Coulter's errors "are even more egregious than the insults, and her footnotes are ... a sham," Alterman says. "The sheer weight of these, coupled with their audacity, demonstrates the moral and intellectual bankruptcy of a journalistic culture that allows her near a microphone, much less a printing press."

As for Goldberg, "his many undocumented, exaggerated assertions have the flavor of self-parody rather than reasoned argument.... [He] appears to have done little research...."

Alterman says the charges leveled by Goldberg and Coulter are "so extreme that, well, it's amazing neither one thought to accuse 'liberals' of using the blood of conservatives' children for extra flavor in their soy-milk decaf lattes."

Even the conservative *Boston Herald* admits Alterman's "extensive documentation and persuasive logic" demonstrate that "unabashed conservatives dominate the media."

So TomPaine.com has a challenge: We're inviting the three authors to debate at the National Press Club, with a neutral moderator and a live audience. We'll invite C-SPAN.

Alterman has accepted. Will Coulter and Goldberg? Or will they hide behind their publicists and speaking fees?

TomPaine.com
A Challenge for Bias and Slander
Featuring three excerpts from Eric Alterman's new book, ***What Liberal Media?*** *(Basic Books).*
www.WhatLiberalMedia.com.

Campaign Finance Reform: What Next?

Michael Bailey is a national fellow at the Hoover Institution and an assistant professor in the Department of Government at Georgetown University.

As he shepherded the McCain-Feingold legislation to passage, John McCain made it clear that he expected additional legislation to become necessary once politicians and interest groups learned to evade the new limits. Recent Federal Election Commission decisions and the activities of interest groups have proven him right, although he probably is not too happy about it.

One alternative for new reform would be to restrict contributions or spending. Even if this is constitutional (it usually is not), it is unwise. Studies show that the information available to voters and voter turnout increase with the amount of money spent on campaigns. In addition, taking money out of campaigns does little to affect the larger sums spent on lobbying, an activity removed from ordinary citizens. If anything, **well-funded campaigns provide a counterbalance to special interest lobbying**, in that such campaigns are more likely to publicize and punish egregious service to interest groups.

Another approach is to finance campaigns publicly. This has been a nonstarter because voters dislike spending tax dollars on politicians, something that is not surprising in light of the current formula-based system's record for presidential candidates. That formula did little to wean Gore or Bush from wealthy donors even as it wasted 16 million taxpayer dollars on the Buchanan campaign (Buchanan spent an astounding $89 per vote compared to $3.66 for Bush and $2.35 for Gore). The formulaic approach may even have distorted the election: Buchanan ran for president because he had public funding, and Nader ran because he wanted public funding. Their presence on the ballot in Florida, as we know too well, may have changed the election outcome in Florida and the nation.

Done properly, however, public financing could reduce political reliance on special interests and the wealthy without provoking voter ire. First, citizens should be empowered to decide which candidates deserve money. As Bruce Ackerman from Yale Law School suggests, each voter could be assigned a fixed dollar credit that he or she could direct to any candidate (or cause). This would dampen concern about money being spent on disliked candidates and create a means whereby candidates could run credible campaigns without constantly currying favor with corporate, union, and wealthy interests.

Second, **reclaiming the tax dollars already being spent on campaigns could provide a good start toward a serious program of public financing.** Two hundred million dollars were spent on presidential candidates' campaigns in 2000, with almost $30 million on party conventions. In addition, Congress spends $1.6 billion every year on staff, with the modest estimate that congressional staffers spend 10 percent of their time on reelection activities. Reclaiming these public campaign expenditures could provide $450 million per two-year election cycle.

The bottom line is that a significant amount of federal money goes to campaign activities. The first order of future reform should be to ensure that such funds increase the voice of ordinary citizens, rather than protect incumbents.

— Michael Bailey

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The Agent Who Wouldn't Wear a Wire

For almost a year now, a handful of current and former federal investigators and prosecutors based in Chicago have been complaining that an unnamed "Muslim FBI agent" had stymied their pre-9/11 probe of businesses associated with Saudi multimillionaire Yassin Al-Kadi.

Sometime in 2000, according to his accusers, the agent in question refused to wear a wire for electronic surveillance in the Al-Kadi investigation, on grounds that "Muslims do not eavesdrop on other Muslims"—that sort of thing. These people further contend that they reported the matter through channels to FBI headquarters at the time, but senior Bureau officials unaccountably backed up their recalcitrant Muslim employee—and ordered that the probe of Al-Kadi, who has ties to the Saudi royal family, be shut down. Weirder still, the refusenik agent was subsequently promoted and reassigned to a sensitive post as an attaché to the U.S. embassy in Riyadh. Where he remained until very recently, even though the State Department long ago —just a few months after the World Trade Center attacks—did indeed wind up formally identifying Al-Kadi as a major al Qaeda financier.

Over the past two weeks, however, ABC News and the *Tampa Tribune* have reported that the "Muslim FBI agent," whose name turns out to be Gamal Abdel-Hafiz, has been recalled from Saudi Arabia and suspended from duty by the FBI. And while the Justice Department, citing pending litigation and ongoing internal reviews, declines to talk about the matter in public, it appears that the job action against Abdel-Hafiz may actually be related to . . . University of South Florida professor Sami Al-Arian, a favorite WEEKLY STANDARD subject and, since February 20, a federal prison inmate awaiting trial on a 50-count terrorism-conspiracy indictment.

Tampa Tribune correspondent Michael Fechter—whose dogged, years-long coverage of Al-Arian surely deserves a Pulitzer Prize—reports that Abdel-Hafiz, attending an unspecified "conference in Washington" in 1998, two years before the aborted wire-tapping incident in Chicago, was approached by Al-Arian, who asked him for inside information about the FBI's Tampa-area terrorism case files. Fechter further reports that Barry Carmody, lead Bureau investigator on the Al-Arian case at the time, later asked Abdel-Hafiz to place a bugged, follow-up phone call to Al-Arian—but that Abdel-Hafiz refused to do it. Carmody tells the *Tribune* that Abdel-Hafiz's suspension is "long overdue" and says "I don't think he should have gone to Riyadh in the first place."

No, probably not. Couldn't have been much for the man to do there, after all, if investigating fellow Muslims wasn't going to be part of his job description. ♦

"France is stuck"

After September 11, we had a semi-regular feature on this page, chronicling the "Surprisingly Good Guys"—i.e., lefties who played against type and supported the war on terror. This week, we inaugurate the French edition with Bernard Kouchner's March 3 interview in *Le Monde*. Kouchner was one of the founders of the humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders and served in the last Socialist government.

Iraq is scrapping its missiles. Isn't this proof that the inspections are working?

It's proof, first of all, that they had the missiles and, on top of that, that they had anthrax and biochemical weapons.

Is it credible that Iraq would use these weapons? And, if so, against whom?

Unfortunately, it is credible, since all these weapons have already been used, and against the Iraqi people themselves.

You're pro-war?

I detest war, and over the past 40 years I've come to know war better than anybody. War is a very bad solution. But there's something worse than a very bad solution, and that's leaving in place a dictator who massacres his people. I hope we can listen to the most important actors in this whole drama, the first in the line of fire: the Iraqis who are suffering under this dictatorship.

So toppling Saddam Hussein is more important than disarming him?

Yes, it's the main goal. The weeks, the days, are running out. There's maybe a 10 percent chance that war can be avoided. By combining a military threat—which wouldn't inevitably have to be carried out—with diplomatic and public pressure, I think we could still come up with a common front that would get Saddam Hussein out of there.

Why would he go?

For now, what's keeping him there, what's giving him aid and comfort, is the fact that we in the West are divided.

So France is wrong to oppose the United States?

France's first diplomatic move was perfect—bringing the Americans back into the framework of the U.N. In the second part of the showdown, which was way too macho, France's pushing got out of hand. At one point we even

brandished our U.N. veto. This causes me infinite regret. It was extremely harmful.

So France is stuck?

Yes, we're stuck. We broadened the rift in Europe, rather than healing it. Yoking ourselves to German pacifists was a mistake. We bullied the Eastern European countries that are just emerging from their own dictatorships. That was another mistake. And finally we've opened a big rift with the United States. I blame [President Chirac] for that.

How about your Socialist friends?

Them, too. The role of France, above all, is to involve itself where there are violations of the rights of man, and to fight dictatorships. ♦

Hollywood Diversity

Just as there's an occasional outbreak of common sense in the pages of *Le Monde*, so too the entertainment world is not quite unanimously antiwar. Vince Vaughn, currently starring in the hilarious *Old School*, spent time in England working on his next project. He was inundated with antiwar talk from the Brits. He describes it this way: "I'd say one in three conversations wound up the same way, basically that 'America is the devil.' So I'd ask folks to think about the Marshall Plan a bit and get back to me." Meanwhile, Jean Claude van Damme—aka the Muscles from Brussels—says that clueless movie stars who oppose the war "are part of the axis of ignorance." ♦

Filibustering for Wimps

Funny thing about the Miguel Estrada filibuster: If you tuned in C-SPAN in the wee hours in recent weeks, you didn't get to see, as in filibusters of yore, Joe Biden or Chuck Schumer reading from the phone book. That's because Senate comity lives, rumors of its demise to the contrary notwithstanding, and the Republican leadership has been unwilling to stay up all night and force the filibusterers to follow the example of, say, Strom Thurmond, who once orated for 24 straight hours.

Washington PR king Hugh Newton, for one, is miffed, and thinks the Bush judicial nominee is worth making opponents mount a real filibuster, a subject he knows something about as one of the organizers with Reed Larson of the epic 1965-66 Dirksen Right to Work filibuster. Thurmond, he says, was one of the "stalwart" participants, "even demanding something to help him stay on the floor for ten or so hours—we got him a 'motorman's friend.'" As THE SCRAPBOOK has noted before, this "motorman's friend" was something used by trolley operators in the early 20th century in lieu of bathroom breaks.

Could the Democrats possibly be prepared for such an ordeal? Do they have the mental tenacity to keep it going for hours? And most important, what brave assistant would be willing to help out, say, Ted Kennedy with the "motorman's friend"? ♦

Casual

78 Percent of You Will Read This

Aside from the one you're holding in your hands and a few others, the best magazine in existence is *American Demographics*. This thin journal serves up on a monthly basis a relentless stream of facts, data, and theories that seem at first glance to be highly significant and culturally revealing. I pay nearly $60 a year of my own money to subscribe to this periodical, and when it comes I take out my pen, underline the amazing statistics packed into its stories, and rip out the important pages and file them away. Usually I can't find them later, but at least for a moment I have my finger on the pulse of the American public.

For example, you probably don't know who eats more frequently, female teenagers or male teenagers. But I do, because I have the March issue of *American Demographics* open in front of me. Male teens eat on average 4.6 times a day. Female teens eat only 4.2 times. Female teens are more than twice as likely as males to drink diet soda, but the males are more likely to study product labels for vitamin content.

I happen to know that people with household incomes under $25,000 a year are 38 percent less likely to do yoga than their fellow countrymen, and 54 percent less likely to go to museums. I happen to know that while only 3 percent of Americans are members of a country club, 5 percent are members of a fraternal order. I happen to know that while 34 percent of Hispanics say they would like to get liposuction treatments, only 12 percent of blacks and 20 percent of whites say they'd like to go through the fat vacuum.

Sometimes a page in *American Demographics* prompts me to do my own research. For example, thanks to an exclusive survey sponsored by the magazine, I've learned that 28 percent of Americans consider themselves "attractive." I walked down the street in Washington recently to check out the accuracy of these figures, and I came to the conclusion that at least 9 percent of Americans are deceiving themselves.

On the other hand, 11 percent of Americans say they are "sexy," a number which I think is slightly too low. Roughly a quarter of all women say they would like to get breast augmentation surgery, which I find vaguely depressing, but so do 3 percent of men, which I find downright horrifying. That means as many men in America would like to be a D cup as are members of country clubs.


Darren Gygi

Some of the figures in *American Demographics* are unsurprising. Forty-four percent of Americans have tried faith healing, but only 7 percent have tried aromatherapy. It's interesting, though perhaps not life-altering, to know that 7 percent of empty-nesters (couples over 55 with no kids left at home) purchase condoms and 2 percent purchase home pregnancy tests. Home pregnancy tests, by the way, sell faster in March than any other month, debunking old theories about May and June being the season of romance.

It's no news to say that the traditional American family is in decline. Less than one fourth of all households consist of a married couple with at least one child under 18. But it is interesting to note that the trend away from the nuclear family is slowing. According to an essay by William H. Frey, who is my favorite demographer (who's yours?), the stronger than expected showing of traditional families is caused by increased Hispanic and Asian immigration (Hispanics and Asians are about twice as likely as blacks to live in traditional families and about 50 percent more likely than whites) and by the lifestyle choices of Gen-Xers, who are abandoning the nuclear family more slowly than their predecessors.

Guess which metro area has seen the highest rate of growth in married with children households? Las Vegas, by a mile, although Vegas still can't compete with Provo, Utah, which, not surprisingly, leads the nation in traditional families as a percentage of total households.

Forty percent of Americans say they are evangelical Christians, and about a fifth say they are charismatic or Pentecostal. The share of Hispanics who consider themselves Roman Catholic is rapidly declining. The fastest growing church in the country is still Mormonism. The fastest shrinking denominations are still the Presbyterians and the United Church of Christ.

I could go on and on. This only summarizes the data in the first half of the magazine. If there were more space on the page, I could tell you which counties have higher than average spending on lawn care, whether divorcés watch more or less TV than married couples (it's not even close), which TV crime dramas are popular with men who take Viagra. But why should I give you access to all the info I pay $60 a year to acquire? After all, I happen to know that 0.3 percent of Americans are savvy trendwatchers. The rest of you poor saps haven't got a clue.

David Brooks

SBC said they really, really needed "a coherent, preemptive federal broadband policy."[1]

SBC promised Congress that they would 'wire rural America' if they could get it.

SBC assured the FCC that it would result in billions in new network investments.

So the FCC took them up on their offer

and what is SBC doing?

Nothing

except backing away from their promise to invest.[2]

SBC got what they wanted on broadband.

"Lehman Brothers analyst Steve Levy said the FCC decision freed the Baby Bells to make investments in broadband services."

Reuters, 2/21/03

Now they're backing out of their promise to invest.

"...James C. Smith, a senior vice president at telephone giant SBC Communications Inc., said the decision negated the benefits of the deregulation of broadband service. The ruling means that the phone companies have 'no additional incentive' to invest in new networks, he said, and they would not do so." *Washington Post, February 21, 2003*

Makes one wonder...

"'Considering the Bells got almost precisely the broadband relief they requested, relief they argued would lead to increased investment, their change of heart makes you wonder whether they really want to increase spending at this time,' said one Bush administration official who insisted on anonymity." *Washington Post, February 25, 2003*

...were they ever going to invest?

[1]SBC Release, 1/14/02; [2]"Bell Firms Pledge to Fight New FCC Rules", Washington Post, 2/25/03

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Give War a Chance

Frederick W. Kagan is right when he says in "War Sooner Rather Than Later" (Mar. 3) that waiting on this war is neither ethical nor practical. I would only add that the clock is also ticking on Saddam's acquisition of the fissile material needed to achieve the nuclear weapons capability he was found to be seeking after the Gulf War. To allow him to achieve full nuclear capability would be morally irresponsible in the extreme.

History is full of situations where the failure to confront a threat when it first arose was ultimately more costly than a timely response would have been. The failure to confront Hitler early on (or, more to the point, to prevent his rearming in defiance of the Versailles treaty) is a good example.

There are worse things than war—living under Nazism or communism qualifies, as does living as the hostage of a nuclear-armed Saddam who is the hegemon of the Middle East.

Ellen Heyman
Washington, DC

Le Boycott Continues

Although France and Germany are particularly worthy of a boycott by American consumers, as Irwin M. Stelzer points out in "Vive le Boycott!" (Mar. 3), I began my own personal boycott of pretty much all of Europe about a year ago. At that time, Palestinian suicide bombers regularly blew up innocent civilians in Israel, and Europe responded with spontaneous boycotts of Israel and statements of support for the terrorists (there were a few noble exceptions, like the former prime minister of the Czech Republic).

Now, instead of Belgian chocolates, we buy Ghirardelli (California) or Elite (Israel); instead of French-made aftershave, we use Neutrogena (California); instead of Beck's beer (Germany), we buy Michelob (USA) or Corona (Mexico). We even replaced all European components from our investment portfolio, using Free Asia (Japan, Australia, New Zealand) to diversify our largely America-domiciled investments. Needless to say, our foreign travel itinerary no longer includes European destinations (although a sweep through the pro-America Black Sea nations of Turkey and Bulgaria, with a side trip to Prague or Tel Aviv, could be possible one day).

Paying more for a product (to the extent that that is even necessary—it's a big marketplace out there) has never been a concern since implementing this new policy. It feels good to put one's money where one's values are.

Gil Weinreich
West Hills, CA

Rowland Responds

I must respond to Stephen Moore's "Republicans Who Love Taxes" (Feb. 17) to correct some misinformation and to outline my deficit reduction package here in Connecticut.

First, as a Republican governor for the past eight years with an overwhelming Democrat majority in the State House and State Senate, I have nonetheless been able to cut taxes by over $2 billion. I have cut literally every tax in the state, and have eliminated the state inheritance tax.

Second, it was not my proposal to increase taxes on millionaires. It was the Democrats' proposal. As a matter of fact, I have vetoed that tax twice this year.

For the past 120 days I have cut state spending to the full extent of my legal authority and I have proposed numerous budgets to cut spending even more dramatically. I have laid off 2,800 state employees—unfortunately more than any other governor in the country. I have been in a battle for state employee concessions that has resulted in protests and demonstrations, and a federal lawsuit has been brought against me by the unions.

Forty-five states have deficits this year because of the downturn in the national economy. Our deficit for the next fiscal year was projected at $2 billion, out of a $14.5 billion budget. With a Democrat-controlled House and Senate, Republican governors like me have to make some compromises in difficult times.

John. G. Rowland
Governor of Connecticut

Victim Feminists Unite

Good for The Scrapbook ("Frosty the Phallus," Mar. 10) for taking a stand for decency! I've been wishing that someone would. I'm no "victim feminist" either, but as a lady, if I attended Harvard, I'd have helped tear down the offensive ice sculpture [of a nine foot tall penis] myself. And I hope there would have been a few conservative gentlemen willing to help.

Just because liberals get offended by pretty nearly everything—and just because we have a lot of fun snickering about that—doesn't mean there aren't a few things in this culture worth getting offended about. Thank you for a much-needed reminder.

Gina Dalfonzo
Springfield, VA

• • •

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Arabian Fables (I)

How the Arabs soften up world opinion with fanciful myths.

Josef Goebbels, the infamous propaganda minister of the Nazis, had it right. Just tell people big lies often enough and they will believe them. The Arabs have learned that lesson well. They have swayed world opinion by endlessly repeating myths and lies that have no basis in fact.

What are some of these myths?

The "Palestinians". That is the fundamental myth. The concept of "Palestinians" is one that did not exist until about 1948, when the Arab inhabitants, of what until then was Palestine, wished to differentiate themselves from the Jews. Until then, the Jews were the Palestinians. There was the Palestinian Brigade of Jewish volunteers in the British World War II Army (at a time when the Palestinian Arabs were in Berlin hatching plans with Adolf Hitler for world conquest and how to kill all the Jews); there was the Palestinian Symphony Orchestra (all Jews, of course); there was *The Palestine Post*; and so much more.

The Arabs who now call themselves "Palestinians" do so in order to persuade a misinformed world that they are a distinct nationality and that "Palestine" is their ancestral homeland. But they are no distinct nationality at all. They are the same — in language, custom, and tribal and family ties — as the Arabs of Syria, Jordan, and beyond. There is no more difference between the "Palestinians" and the other Arabs of those countries than there is between, say, the citizens of Minnesota and those of Wisconsin.

What's more, many of the "Palestinians", or their immediate ancestors, came to the area attracted by the prosperity created by the Jews, in what previously had been pretty much of a wasteland.

The nationhood of the "Palestinians" is a myth.

The "West Bank". Again, this is a concept that did not exist until 1948, when the army of the Kingdom of Transjordan, together with five other Arab armies, invaded the Jewish state of Israel, on the very day of its creation.

In what can almost be described as a Biblical miracle, the ragtag Jewish forces defeated the combined Arab might. But Transjordan stayed in possession of Judea and Samaria and the eastern part of Jerusalem. The Jordanians expelled all the Jews from the area that they occupied, destroyed all Jewish houses of worship, and renamed as "West Bank" the territories that had been Judea and Samaria since time immemorial.

The attempt, quite successful, was to persuade an uninformed world that these territories were ancestral parts of the Jordanian Arab Kingdom (itself a very recent creation of British power diplomacy).

> "The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!"

Even after the total rout of the Arabs in the 1967 Six-Day War, in which the Jordanians were driven out of Judea/Samaria and of Jerusalem, they and the world continued to call this territory the "West Bank", a geographical and political concept that cannot be found on any except the most recent maps.

The concept of the "West Bank" is a myth.

The "Occupied Territories". After the victorious Six-Day War, during which the Israeli army defeated the same cabal of Arabs that had invaded the country in 1948, Israel regained possession of Judea/Samaria, which the Jordanians had illegally occupied for 19 years; of the Gaza Strip, which had been occupied by the Egyptians, but which had never been part of their country; and of the Golan Heights, a plateau the size of Queens, which, though originally part of Palestine, had been assigned to Syria by British-French agreement.

The last sovereign in Judea/Samaria and in Gaza was the British mandatory power — and before it was the Ottoman Empire. All of Palestine, including what is now the Kingdom of Jordan, was, by the Balfour Declaration, destined to be the Jewish National Home. How then could the Israelis possibly be "occupiers" in their own territory? Who would be the sovereign and who the rightful inhabitants?

The concept of "occupied territories" in reference to Judea/Samaria and Gaza is an Arab propaganda myth.

Unable so far to destroy Israel on the battlefield — though they are feverishly preparing for their next assault — the Arabs are now trying to overcome and destroy Israel by their acknowledged "policy of stages". That policy is to get as much land as possible carved out of Israel "by peaceful and diplomatic" means, so as to make Israel indefensible and softened up for the final assault. The web of lies and myths that the Arab propaganda machine has created plays an important role in the unrelenting quest to destroy the State of Israel. What a shame that the world has accepted most of it!

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the weekly Standard

The Imminent War

"There is an alternative: to open our eyes, to do more than sit and wait for the next crisis, and to shift fundamentally the direction of U.S. policy toward Saddam. Containment is no longer enough. Rather than try to contain Saddam, a strategy that has failed, our policy should now aim to remove him from power by any and all means necessary. . . . We hope the president and his advisers will begin to . . . prepare for the coming crisis. And we hope that Republicans rouse themselves from their post-Cold War torpor and see the Iraqi threat for what it is. Said President Clinton, 'This is not just a replay of the Gulf War. This is about the security of the 21st century and the problems everybody is going to have to face dealing with chemical weapons.' This is the truth. We should act on it."

So the editors of this magazine wrote in the December 1, 1997, issue, whose cover proclaimed, not so subtly, "Saddam Must Go." Saddam *will* soon be gone, thanks to the courage of one man above all, George W. Bush, very much aided by the equally impressive courage of another, Tony Blair. Obviously, we are gratified that the Iraq strategy we have long advocated—and whose contours were further specified in that December 1, 1997, issue, in articles by Zalmay Khalilzad and Paul Wolfowitz, Frederick W. Kagan, and Peter Rodman—has become the policy of the U.S. government, because we believe it is the right policy for the country and the world. But we feel no joy and little satisfaction. It would have been much better if Saddam could have been removed without war, or if he had been removed at the end of the previous Gulf War. We wish a peaceful resolution were now possible. But it is not. Wishes are not facts. Saddam has proven—he had proven by December 1997—that he will not disarm peacefully. And he must be disarmed. So war will come.

We are tempted to comment, in these last days before the war, on the U.N., and the French, and the Democrats. But the war itself will clarify who was right and who was wrong about weapons of mass destruction. It will reveal the aspirations of the people of Iraq, and expose the truth about Saddam's regime. It will produce whatever effects it will produce on neighboring countries and on the broader war on terror. We would note now that even the threat of war against Saddam seems to be encouraging stirrings toward political reform in Iran and Saudi Arabia, and a measure of cooperation in the war against al Qaeda from other governments in the region. It turns out it really is better to be respected and feared than to be thought to share, with exquisite sensitivity, other people's pain. History and reality are about to weigh in, and we are inclined simply to let them render their verdicts.

This is a moment for restating the obvious: We hope and pray the war goes as well as possible, with the fewest possible American casualties, and also the fewest possible casualties to all innocent parties, very much including the Iraqi people, who have suffered so greatly. We fear, as does the Bush administration, Saddam's chemical and biological weapons, and, needless to say, hope for nothing more than the administration's success in crippling Saddam's ability to use them. We look forward to the liberation of our own country and others from the threat of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction, and to the liberation of the Iraqi people from a brutal and sadistic tyrant.

A time will come to scrutinize our government's management of the war's aftermath, its equivocations on democracy in Iraq, its inadequate defense budget, and much else. But for now, at this moment of historic opportunity and national resolve, we simply pray for the president, his advisers, and our brave men and women in uniform.

—William Kristol

The Lavender Mafia In the Priesthood

Priestly sex scandals in the U.S. Catholic Church were few and far between before seminaries began accepting homosexuals in the 1960s. The homosexual population of the U.S. is estimated at between 2 and 10%. Homosexuals in the priesthood are now estimated to be between 30 and 60%. A major study conducted by *The Kansas City Star* found that "priests are dying of AIDS at a rate at least four times that of the general U.S. population...."

Is celibacy the culprit? No. *The Times of London* found that priests in the (Anglican) Church of England are dying of AIDS at a rate roughly 2 to 3 times greater than Catholic priests in the U.S.! Note well: The Church of England has *always* allowed priests to marry.

Not surprisingly, 90 to 98% of the publicized cases of priestly pedophilia committed by U.S. Catholic priests involve *boys* (whether prepubescent or postpubescent). Not all "gays" are pedophiles, but pedophilia — called "intergenerational love" by homosexuals — is part and parcel of the homosexual subculture, which places great emphasis on youthful physique and is notoriously promiscuous, and whose publications commonly carry themes of adult-child sex.

How did a number of seminaries get flooded with homosexuals? Not only because many bishops and religious orders have allowed seminaries to admit homosexuals — in direct violation of Vatican policy — but because certain vocations directors and seminaries reject a candidate, not because he's homosexual but because he's "homophobic" — they also reject a candidate if he's deemed "rigid" (a code word for orthodox).

In certain seminaries, professors openly dissent from Catholic teaching on homosexuality, and homosexual behavior is protected. And those orthodox, morally straight seminarians who managed to get in under the radar and who object to the scandalous goings-on are persecuted or forced out. Meanwhile, sodomites are ordained priests, and they protect and promote one another, forming what is widely known as "the Lavender Mafia," extending even into episcopal ranks.

Thanks to the media, the U.S. bishops have finally had to take a strong stand against "sexual abuse of minors." But the get-tough policy affects only some violations of the sacred vow of celibacy. It doesn't affect sex with men and other priests. As long as sodomite priests are often winked at, and certain seminaries continue to be hothouses for flamers and promote the dissent that justifies immorality, sexual license in the priesthood will continue. But it *must and will be stopped*, if not by the bishops then by us the laity.

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God and Man in the Oval Office

Contrary to what his critics say, Bush's religion is in the American mainstream. **BY FRED BARNES**

MICHAEL GERSON, the chief White House speechwriter, was recently asked by a reporter if he understood how the windup to President Bush's State of the Union address in January might have offended some people. Gerson was stunned. What Bush had said was: "The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world, it is God's gift to humanity." Clearly, the line was not a reference to any particular religion, but a humble admission that human rights are universal, as opposed to an invention of the United States. Gerson cited America's founding document, the Declaration of Independence, to the reporter, especially the part about mankind being "endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights."

The incident is noteworthy because it touches on the notion that Bush injects too much of his Christian faith into his public pronouncements. On top of that, there's the related idea that the president, as an evangelical Christian, believes he was chosen by God to lead America into a war to depose Saddam Hussein and liberate Iraq. This is widely believed in Europe and even among some of Bush's American critics. The first idea is arguable at best, the second absurd.

For sure, Bush is a serious believer. When Brit Hume of Fox News Channel asked him in a 2001 interview if he'd be willing to talk about faith, Bush eagerly agreed and said the subject was important. He told Hume he reads the Bible every morning and prays often during the day, sometimes at his desk in the Oval Office. In 1999, I had a similar experience when I interviewed Bush, then governor of Texas, about his faith. He started talking about it before I asked my first question.

Bush is hardly the first president to invoke God in his speeches. "In how he speaks of God," wrote *Washington Post* columnist E.J. Dionne, "Bush is much more typically presidential than he is painted, especially by our friends abroad." Dionne mentioned President Clinton's frequent citations of Scripture. More striking is President Roosevelt's State of the Union speech in 1942. Victory over Hitler's Germany "means victory for religion," he said. The Nazis "could not tolerate that. The world is too small to provide adequate 'living room' for both Hitler and God." That goes well beyond anything Bush has said about God and Saddam Hussein. At most, he's called Saddam "evil," which is not necessarily a religious word but still upsets relativists and many Europeans.

"The world is too small to provide adequate 'living room' for both Hitler and God," said FDR. That goes well beyond anything Bush has said about God and Saddam Hussein.

The story of Bush's born-again experience at age 40 is an oft-told tale. And it's told again in the March 10 *Newsweek* in a vivid and fair-minded article by Howard Fineman. There's a difference about Bush and his faith. In his case, it's clear that his references to God are not just talking points. He's an authentic believer.

But does the president think God is behind his foreign policy or any other policy? Yes, according to religion professor Martin E. Marty, writing in the same issue of *Newsweek*. "The problem isn't with Bush's sincerity, but with his evident conviction that he's doing God's will." Evident? Marty offers no evidence—no Bush quote or comment and no disclosure by a Bush confidant. And he's never met with Bush or talked to him, according to the president's aides. I've searched for a Bush declaration, explicit or implicit, that his policies come from God. I haven't found one.

Another complaint is that Bush devotes too much time to evangelical groups. Within days in February, he appeared at the National Prayer Breakfast and spoke to the National Religious Broadcasters. The annual prayer breakfast was begun at the behest of President Eisenhower and has been attended by every president, every year, for decades. Republican presidents, including Bush's father and President Reagan, have frequently addressed the broadcasters. In his NRB speech this year, Bush praised religious diversity and urged wealthy suburban churches to aid poor inner-city congregations.

No one has done a definitive word count, but Bush has probably talked a bit more about religious faith than other presidents. While he readily invokes God, he carefully avoids mention of Jesus Christ, and he calls for tolerance of all faiths. His comments have been confined to four specific areas: comforting people in grief, citing faith's ability to improve lives, commenting on the mysterious ways of providence, and mentioning God's concern for humanity.

At the memorial service for the seven Columbia astronauts, Bush spoke directly to their grieving families. "The sorrow is lonely," he said, "but

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you are not alone. In time, you will find comfort and the grace to see you through. And in God's own time, we can pray that the day of your reunion will come." Later, he told the broadcasters that the Columbia families "are finding strength and comfort because of your prayers and because of the Almighty God." Did he go overboard in mentioning God? I don't think so.

In his speech to the broadcasters, the president emphasized faith's life-changing power. Bush believes strongly in this, an aide says, for the simple reason that "it happened to him." Faith, he said, "defines some of the most effective social programs in America. It's that spirit of love and compassion which makes healing lives work."

Bush raised the theme of providence in his State of the Union address and returned to it in his nine-minute talk at the prayer breakfast. "We believe, as Franklin Roosevelt said, that men and women born to freedom in the image of God will not forever suffer the oppressor's sword," he said. "We can also be confident in the ways of Providence, even when they are far from our understanding." Bush said he prays to God for guidance, wisdom, and forgiveness, and he said the same when asked at his East Room press conference last week how his faith guides him on the eve of war with Iraq. He said nothing about praying for God's marching orders.

For anyone offended by Bush's reference to God as the source of human rights, as the reporter questioning Gerson was, a little history might be instructive. "Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are the gift of God?" That question was asked by Thomas Jefferson, a deist, not a religious zealot. "The rights of man come not from the generosity of the state but from the Hand of God," John F. Kennedy said in his inaugural address. No one was offended by Kennedy's comment, which Bush echoed in his State of the Union address. And no one should be offended now. ♦

Fair Weather Bipartisanship

The Democrats were all for unity against Saddam—when Clinton was president.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Democrats Lambaste Bush on Iraq. So declared the front page headline in the *Washington Post* the morning after the president's press conference. Leading the attack are Senate minority leader Tom Daschle and his House counterpart Nancy Pelosi, who are "escalating their criticism of Bush," the *Post* said, "because they think war is imminent and because Russia, Germany and France seem more opposed to it." Shortly before Bush's press conference, Daschle claimed that the administration is "rushing to war without adequate concern for the ramifications of doing so unilaterally or with a very small coalition of nations."

It is unusual, to say the least, that congressional Democrats would attack the president—with more than 200,000 American troops already deployed in the Persian Gulf—"*because they think war is imminent*." And it is astonishingly inconsistent. Forget the fact that Daschle voted with an overwhelming congressional majority last fall to authorize the use of force in Iraq. Beyond that, many of the most outspoken critics of President Bush's policy in Iraq were the most vocal supporters of bipartisan unity on those occasions when President Clinton used, or threatened to use, force against Saddam Hussein.

In early September 1996, Saddam attacked the Kurds in northern Iraq. Although it was just two months before a presidential election, many Republicans supported him, and Democrats insisted on unity. Daschle in particular was adamant. As he said then,

> I hope Saddam Hussein and those who are in control of the Iraqi government clearly understand the resolve and determination of this administration and this country. This may be a political year, . . . but on this issue there can be no disunity. There can be no lack of cohesion. We stand united, Republicans and Democrats, determined to send as clear a message with as clear a resolve as we can articulate: Saddam Hussein's actions will not be tolerated. His willingness to brutally attack Kurds in northern Iraq and abrogate U.N. resolutions is simply unacceptable. We intend to make that point clear with the use of force, with the use of legislative language, and with the use of other actions that the president and the Congress have at their disposal.

Daschle also insisted on unity a year and a half later, when there was another showdown with Saddam. On February 11, 1998, with troops massed throughout the Persian Gulf and the threat of war evident, Daschle declared that Saddam "has to agree that there will be compliance with international law and the agreements that he signed in 1991. Period."

Daschle wasn't finished. "Look, we have exhausted virtually our diplomatic effort to get the Iraqis to comply with their own agreements and with international law. Given that, what other option is there but to force them to do so? . . . The answer is, we don't have another option. We have got to force them to comply, and we are doing so militarily."

Two weeks after that, Kofi Annan

Stephen F. Hayes is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

brokered a compromise agreement—another "last chance"—with Baghdad. In announcing his deal, Annan said that he "could do business" with Saddam Hussein. When Trent Lott criticized the United Nations secretary general for saying he could "do business" with a man responsible for hundreds of thousands of dead Iraqis, Daschle rose quickly to Annan's defense. His concern was familiar: American unity.

> I don't know what purpose it serves by attacking one another at this point. I mean, if ever there was a time for us to present a unified front to Iraq, this ought to be it. . . . Let's not . . . send all kinds of erroneous messages to Iraq about what kind of unity there is within the community.

As the *Post*'s account makes clear, Daschle is no longer concerned about American unity. When I asked him last month why he now opposes policies he supported under President Clinton, he claimed: "At that time, of course, President Clinton enjoyed broad-based international support. It is essential for us to consult with the international community now."

But the "small coalition of nations"—34 at last count—that Daschle finds underwhelming is larger than the one that supported Clinton in 1998. Then as now, France, Russia, and China opposed doing anything about Iraqi intransigence. And then, as now, several allies supported our efforts. Most of the countries that supported President Clinton in 1998 support President Bush today—the notable exception being Germany.

The difference comes in support from allies in the Gulf. In 1998, of Saddam's neighbors only Kuwait backed strikes against Iraq. Our current effort has been endorsed not only by Kuwait, but Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Saudi Arabia. Big difference. Even Jordan, which didn't back President Clinton in 1998 and sat out the first Gulf War, has made noises about supporting Saddam's ouster.

Under President Clinton, Daschle and his fellow Democrats never insisted—as they do now—that the United States must seek United Nations approval before acting. Clinton made this point himself in the October 6, 1996, presidential debate: "Sometimes," he said, "the United States has to act alone, or at least has to act first. Sometimes we cannot let other countries have a veto on our foreign policy. . . . That's what I did; I still believe it was the right thing to do." He added: "We have learned that if you give [Saddam Hussein] an inch, he'll take a mile. We had to do something. And even though not all of our allies supported it at first, I think most of them now believe that what we did was the appropriate thing to do."

The "small coalition" that Daschle finds underwhelming now is larger than the one that supported Clinton in 1998.

Senator Robert Byrd, who today is calling for another congressional debate and complains of unilateralism, agreed with Clinton. Here's Byrd from September 6, 1996:

> To those who would doubt the necessity of the actions by the president, one should pose the question as to what the consequences would be in the face of American inaction. First, clearly, no other country would take the lead. The signature of the current era is such that response to aggression will not be taken up by other powers in the absence of American leadership, unfortunately. This was the case in the invasion of Kuwait. It was the case in Bosnia when, after several years of Western inaction in the face of ethnic atrocities in Bosnia, only the United States, only the United States, could bring about a credible, effective implementation of peace in that sorry part of Europe. . . . It is American leadership which is decisive to the peace in these regions, and I commend President Clinton for his decisive action. It was necessary to weaken the Iraqi leader's ability to intimidate his neighbors, and to make it clear that he will pay a price for his aggression.

Byrd seems to have changed his mind. Today, he's fighting President Bush and his "American leadership," insisting on yet another debate in Congress and warning that "this war is not necessary at this time."

John Kerry has flipped, too. "None of us knows why Saddam decided to test us now," Kerry said on September 5, 1996. "But if the history of the last six years has taught us anything, it is that Saddam Hussein does not understand diplomacy, *he only understands power*, and when he brandishes power in a manner that threatens our interests or violates internationally accepted standards of behavior, we must be prepared to respond—and with force if necessary." [emphasis added] Such force, Kerry went on, might well be used unilaterally: "The United States under President Bush and then President Clinton, led these earlier efforts to contain Saddam. Whereas some of our allies in the region are constrained from acting on this occasion, we are not."

Today, though, Kerry worries about a "rush to war" and "hasty war talk" and the Bush administration's "erratic unilateralism and reluctant engagement."

Usually it is the leaders and old lions in Congress who rise above party division in time of war, rein in the hotheads, and insist on keeping partisan powder dry until the real fighting—against the foreign enemy—is concluded. But Daschle and Pelosi are their party's leaders. Robert Byrd is the longest-serving Democrat in the upper chamber of Congress. And John Kerry is the front-runner for the 2004 Democratic presidential nomination. So much for standing united and sending a clear message to Saddam Hussein. ♦

France's Arab Problem

Chirac worries about "angry Muslims"—for good reason. BY MARC GINSBERG

UNDER THE ADAGE "save us from our friends," France's president Jacques Chirac has added to his long list of reasons for opposing a U.S.-led campaign to disarm Iraq the desire to "protect" Americans from fighting "angry Muslims." According to a French Defense Ministry official quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*, Chirac "tells his generals that the Americans don't understand what they're getting into, . . . that they don't understand what it is like to fight angry Muslims." Chirac should know. He was dispatched to Algeria in 1955 for a 13-month stint commanding a French platoon fighting "angry Muslims" during France's losing war to maintain control of Algeria.

Chirac and France have reason to be concerned about Muslim rage. But it is against France, and not America, that 23 million Iraqis will direct their anger if Chirac continues to stand in the way of their liberation. When history holds a mirror up to America's good faith efforts to release Iraq's people from Saddam's tyranny and begin transforming the Middle East into a region of greater freedom and prosperity, the contrast will be stark with Chirac's efforts to protect Saddam at all costs.

Those efforts are consistent with France's ignoble colonial record in the Middle East. The French began angering Muslims over 180 years ago, when an insult to the French consul in Algeria by the bey of Algiers in 1827 led to a military occupation of the country three years later. Using Napoleon's 1808 contingency plan for the invasion of Algeria, 34,000 French soldiers landed west of Algiers and looted, raped, and pillaged their way into the city, desecrating mosques and destroying cemeteries along their route. It was an inauspicious beginning to France's self-described "civilizing mission," whose character, according to the "U.S. Library of Congress Country Study on Algeria" was "cynical, arrogant and cruel."

After Charles X was deposed in 1830, his cousin Louis Philippe, the "citizen king," was named to preside over a constitutional monarchy. Louis Philippe concluded that although French policy in Algeria had failed, the occupation should continue for the sake of national prestige. French *colons*, or more popularly *pied noirs* (literally, black feet), poured into Algeria, seizing lands, particularly those belonging to Berber and Arab tribes, religious foundations, and villages and destroying Algeria's traditional society. This legacy is part of the background to the enormous hardships and challenges Algeria, ravaged by a bloody Islamic civil war, faces even today.

It is against France, and not America, that 23 million Iraqis will direct their anger if Chirac continues to block their liberation.

And France had other colonial adventures in the Middle East. In 1916, as it battled on the Western Front against Germany during World War I, France planned for the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire between it and Great Britain pursuant to a then-secret treaty known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Under this agreement, France gobbled up what is now Syria, Lebanon, and North Africa from Casablanca to Tunis. Britain inherited Cyprus, present day Iraq, Egypt, Palestine, and most of the oil riches of the Arabian Peninsula. The French allowed Gallic pride to get in the way of pecuniary interests. Not one of the "blue areas" allocated to France gave the French access to the Middle East's oil wealth—Britain was too shrewd for that. And French policymakers have been trying to rectify this self-inflicted "historical imbalance" ever since.

Following World War II, the French were pushed out of one colony after another. They first exiled the king of Morocco, then were forced to reinstate him and grant Morocco independence in 1956. The same for Tunisia, Lebanon, and Syria. Yet, they stubbornly held onto their prized possession, Algeria, until 1962. That year, in the hope of averting an all-out civil war in France over Algeria's future, Charles de Gaulle, President Chirac's hero, brought French troops home following a debilitating battle against hundreds of thousands of well-armed "angry Muslim" guerrillas.

Despite this inglorious history, France has not given up attempting to assert itself in the Levant—with Iraq serving as its primary target of opportunity. After the 1967 war, France abandoned Israel as a strategic ally, and relations with Iraq became central to its Middle East policy.

When Jacques Chirac became one of France's youngest prime ministers in 1974, his contemporary, Saddam Hussein, seemed an enlightened, secular leader. Saddam, after all, had quelled his own "angry Muslims." Soon after being named prime minis-

Marc Ginsberg served as U.S. ambassador to Morocco from 1994 to 1998.

ter, Chirac made his first visit to Baghdad, and Saddam reciprocated with a rare trip to the West. The two men basked in each other's diplomatic debuts, according to press reports, and together they sealed a Franco-Iraqi marriage.

Soon, Iraqi oil was flowing to France, and France was turning Iraq into its largest regional purchaser of arms. Dassault fighter bombers, Matra missiles, and Thomson electronic devices poured into Baghdad. For French firms, Iraq represented a bonanza. France even sold Iraq its first nuclear reactor—the Osirak reactor the Israelis destroyed in a bombing raid in 1982, a raid much criticized by France, but in retrospect a great service to the world. It is not by accident that Chirac has a special place in his heart for Saddam, given how Saddam helped him make his mark among French technocrats and industrialists.

Ironically, France's coddling of Saddam during Iraq's bloody war with Iran led to a wave of Iranian-inspired terrorist attacks in Paris, which were later proven to be a direct result of French military support for Iraq. How quickly Chirac appears to have forgotten what it means to suffer terrorism on one's own soil.

Today, as tempers flare between the Elysée and the White House, officials in Paris have blithely asserted that a war against Iraq is really a war for oil—that is, to quench America's oil thirst. Here, too, however, Paris may have ulterior motives for wanting to keep the Yankees out of Baghdad.

Jacques Chirac in particular may be trying to rectify the injustice of the Sykes-Picot Anglo oil grab. Perhaps the French assume that as long as Saddam is in power they will have their own gas station in the Middle East. Indeed, in informed circles it is widely asserted that French oil companies have secretly negotiated huge oil concessions with Saddam should sanctions against Iraq be lifted. Estimates suggest that the giant TotalFinaElf consortium will have development rights to roughly 25 percent of total Iraqi reserves (believed to be the second largest in the world), worth perhaps over $50 billion in exploration concessions.

Certainly, Chirac must be calculating what will happen if he is on the losing side of Washington's Iraq policy and Saddam is overthrown. It may cost France's oil companies dearly. What's more, when America helps liberate the Iraqis from Saddam's horrific rule, they will not soon forget that France, the country of "*liberté, égalité, fraternité*," stood in freedom's way in order to preserve the Chirac-Saddam marriage. Then France may once again have millions of "angry Muslims" to contend with. ♦

The Permanent Energy Crisis

And the solution we keep ignoring.

BY WILLIAM TUCKER

NO SUBJECT gets talked to death more than "diminishing our dependence on Middle Eastern oil." Yet as conflict with Iraq looms, what do we face but another Energy Crisis?

Between January and late February, the price of a barrel of oil rose from $32 to $40, highest since the first Gulf War. With war near, speculators are bidding up futures. An extremely cold winter in the United States and Europe hasn't helped. (Where is global warming when we need it?) World supplies are reeling from the meltdown of Venezuela, which provides 4 percent of global oil and 14 percent of our imports. A year ago Venezuela was producing 2.4 million barrels per day. By December it had fallen to 150,000. We've made up for the loss by increasing imports from—you guessed it—the Middle East.

Higher petroleum prices have spilled over into natural gas markets. Future contracts crept from $2 to $6 per million BTUs in 2002, then spiked at $10 in late February. Storage levels have declined 40 percent. In Texas, shortages have curtailed several electrical plants.

Over the last decade, natural gas has become everybody's favorite fuel—the supposed answer to all our energy and environmental problems. California, frantically building power stations after the 2000 debacle, now gets 45 percent of its electricity from natural gas. Nationwide, the figure is only 15 percent, but 91 percent of new plants are burning methane (the principal component of natural gas). The 14 percent of natural gas used to generate electricity now approaches the 22 percent used for home heating.

All this has brought hosannas from environmentalists. The Sierra Club has issued a "national energy plan" urging conversion to methane. It even supports a natural gas pipeline from Alaska to California. The Bush administration is also touting the project, but construction is ten years away.

We're back where we were in 1975. And the one obvious alternative that offers a way out—nuclear power—remains stuck in neutral.

Now suddenly we're back in a situation of scarcity. What happened? At bottom, shortsighted policies—driven by environmental extremism—have time and again pushed us down the path of least resistance, and lower energy supplies.

For decades, natural gas was considered too valuable to burn in electrical generators. Coal (50 percent of our electricity) and nuclear (20 percent) were deemed more appropriate. With environmentalists fighting both coal and nuclear, however, gas became the "clean" alternative. A glut from the 1980s deregulation made this seem feasible, but the outlook for the long run is not so bright: While environmentalists love burning gas, they sure don't like drilling for it.

"Most of the new wells we're punching are in the same places we've drilled for the past 100 years," says Rhone Resch, vice president of the Natural Gas Supply Association. "Our decline rate [the annual decrease in production from existing wells] used to be 25 percent. Now it's 50 percent. Basically, we keep sipping through the same straw."

Huge regions of promise—the coast of California, the eastern Gulf of Mexico, about 40 percent of the Rockies—have been closed by environmental restrictions. Even where permits are granted, environmentalists automatically oppose them. "These are public lands," says Peter Morton, of the Wilderness Society's Denver office. "You have to balance other uses and values. It comes with the territory."

"In recent years we've developed new technology for extracting methane from coal beds," says Resch. "It's very pure gas. We were extracting large amounts from coalfields in Wyoming. But environmentalists intervened, saying the original environmental impact statement didn't cover the new technology. We had to close down, putting a lot of people out of business."

"This is an industry of small operators," says Jeff Eschelman, of the Independent Petroleum Association of America. "Our members average 12 employees but drill 85 percent of new wells and produce 70 percent of the nation's natural gas. These people can't handle a lot of litigation."

Instead, increased consumption has been met by imports, mainly from Canada. But even where Canadian supplies are available, local environmental opposition makes delivery difficult. Since 1998 Columbia Gas Transmission has been trying to build a pipeline from Ontario to metropolitan New York. Opposition in Westchester County has blocked the project—even as the same people try to shut down that county's Indian Point Nuclear Station. This month electrical boilers in New York started

William Tucker is a columnist for the New York Post.

switching back to oil because gas had become too expensive.

Meanwhile the transportation system is still hopelessly hitched to oil (accounting for half our consumption). The total mileage driven by American cars has tripled since 1970. Government-mandated fuel efficiencies have only made it cheaper to drive. Alternate technologies are still far over the horizon. A hybrid electric-gas auto developed by Toyota and Honda has shown promise. The vehicle gets 70 mpg and does not use additional electricity. (It recharges off the flywheel.) The car is selling in Europe and Japan and could make a big impact if it catches on here.

The hydrogen car, on the other hand, remains a will-o'-the-wisp. Environmentalists have pushed it for a decade and President Bush scored a publicity coup by embracing it in his State of the Union address. But there is no free hydrogen in the world. Supplies will come from either (1) the electrolysis of water, which requires electricity, or (2) stripping hydrogen from natural gas. Rather than being a *source* of energy, hydrogen is simply a carrier of other energies.

So essentially, we're back where we were in 1975. Coal, oil, and natural gas all have their limits. And the one obvious alternative that offers a way out—nuclear power—remains stuck in neutral.

The private energy companies that have taken over the nation's nuclear fleet over the last decade have performed a miraculous revitalization, adding the equivalent of 25 new 1,000-MW generators simply by making improvements on old plants. Security has also been vastly improved. Unlike 100-story buildings, nuclear containment structures are designed to withstand the full impact of jumbo jet airliners. Yet despite these advantages, no new plants have been commissioned.

"We're very encouraged by the approval of Yucca Mountain, and the Tennessee Valley Authority is planning to restart Browns Ferry 1, which was closed in the 1980s," says Marv Fertel, senior vice president of the Nuclear Energy Institute. "But as for new construction, we're still testing the regulatory environment."

Meanwhile, Democrats are still beating up on the oil industry. Noting that refineries are operating at 87 percent of capacity instead of their usual 92 percent, Senator Chuck Schumer of New York has accused the industry of deliberately holding back supplies. The refineries responded that operations are lower simply because there isn't enough oil around. Senator Joe Lieberman has argued for an immediate release from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to ease prices for homeowners. Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham said he would harbor the 600-million-barrel cache for a real emergency.

While the Democrats pander to their big-oil-hating base, the real impact is being felt by oil-dependent industries. In February Dow Chemical postponed a planned expansion because of rising gas prices. American Airlines, which will spend $200 million extra on fuel this quarter, may be headed for bankruptcy.

All this is bad news for the economy. As Stephen Brown, director of energy economics at the Dallas Federal Reserve Bank, warns: "Nine of the last ten recessions have been preceded by sharply higher energy prices." Maybe it's time we started taking energy seriously. ♦

Filibuster Si, Estrada No!

The great Republican divide over how to fight for Bush's judicial nominee. **BY MAJOR GARRETT**

IT'S NOT CLEAR whether the constitutional definition of "advice and consent" will become a casualty of Miguel Estrada's fight for a seat on the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, but the possibility is serious and sobering. In a 55-44 vote, Democrats last week defeated a Republican attempt to break their unprecedented partisan filibuster of Estrada's nomination, opening the way for the simple-majority standard for Senate confirmation of judicial nominees to be replaced with a super-majority requirement. The Republic isn't there yet. But it's close.

"If we go very much further there will be obvious consequences," said Sen. Jon Kyl, an Arizona Republican. "This standard will have to be applied to both parties and by both parties. This is very close to the point where you can't pull it back."

The strain on the Constitution and Senate precedent is now obvious. Less obvious is the toll the Estrada fight has taken on the relationship between the new Senate GOP leadership team and the Bush White House. While GOP senators are loath to admit it, the Estrada debate has drifted on this long because the White House and the GOP leadership could not fashion a cohesive strategy.

Estrada is not the first fight new majority leader Bill Frist would have chosen—at least not under the restrictions imposed by the White House. Senate Republicans believe the White House has severely limited their room to negotiate.

Early on, several veteran GOP Senate staffers warned the White House and Justice Department to prepare for a brawl. They then gin-

Major Garrett is national correspondent for the Fox News Channel.

gerly asked two questions: Would Estrada answer more questions from Democrats? And was there any flexibility in the White House's objection to releasing the working memos Estrada wrote while deputy solicitor general in the Clinton Justice Department?

Senior Senate GOP staff told White House and Justice Department officials that cutting a deal on limited Democratic access to Estrada's working papers could lead to his confirmation. The White House refused. There would be no access to Estrada's working papers. Period. This adamantine posture, in the eyes of some in Senate GOP leadership circles, handcuffed Frist.

"There's some frustration," said a top GOP leadership aide. "From the very beginning we told them that was the only way out and a face-saver for everyone. But it came down to the fact that no one on the White House or Justice team wanted to walk into the Oval Office and say to the president, 'You might have to give up these memos.'"

The administration's position on the memos reflects its deeply held ethic of aggressively defending executive branch prerogatives. Though the White House has never characterized the Estrada matter as one of executive privilege (it is more akin to lawyer-client privilege), it falls into the broad category of executive branch muscularity. And while most Republicans generally support this posture, some Bush allies on and off Capitol Hill have come to question the administration's fastidiousness in the Estrada fight.

"I understand the principle, and I support it, but on this one it feels belligerent," said a longtime Republican lobbyist and ally of the Bush White House.

When a reporter last week asked Sen. Rick Santorum, the GOP conference chairman, if opposition to divulging Estrada's Justice Department memos was permanent, he snapped, "Ask the White House."

Conservatives like Sen. Kyl see the Estrada fight as purely ideological and strongly oppose cutting any deal on access to his working papers.

"It's a phony issue, a manufactured issue," said Kyl. "We want to win this, but you don't win it by breaking a principle that has served this nation well for 200 years. And if we deal on the papers, it will be something else."

But Sen. Harry Reid, the Senate's No. 2 Democrat, has said he will support Estrada if the papers are turned over and nothing objectionable emerges. Enough Democrats to break the filibuster would surely follow Reid, senior Democratic sources say.

"Their guy's not going to get con-

Michael Ramirez

firmed without them," said a top Democratic lawyer who backs Estrada. "This is not complicated. The White House is not going to confirm him without paying a price."

If that price seems too high, the White House may want to reexamine the price of the alternative, an increasingly bitter filibuster fight. While protecting the privacy of internal memos at the Justice Department, the White House may be sacrificing the 50-vote majority as the historic benchmark of constitutional fitness for the federal bench. Some Senate Republicans believe a new 60-vote standard for judicial appointments could severely hamper this president and all future presidents. And some Senate Republicans wonder why it's more important to protect executive privilege than a president's power to have judicial nominees confirmed by simple majority vote.

The White House wants the fight to drag out and political pressure to build on centrist Democrats. The White House likes the Hispanic dimension of the Estrada fight and is counting on the weight of editorial and public opinion to turn the tide.

But numerous Republican senators say the Estrada fight, for all its constitutional implications, has yet to resonate with the public. Democratic senators report no political backlash at home and see it as their duty to defend Daschle.

"This is an ideological fight, and this is a fight for Daschle to be taken seriously," said a senior aide to a Democratic senator who has teamed up with the White House on economic policy. "And my boss is with Daschle. He knows he's taken, and will take, enough flak on fiscal policy. This is a fight he's prepared to stick with."

Absent a deal on the working memos, all Estrada can bank on is White House and Republican promises to fight until they prevail. But no one in the GOP Senate leadership or the Bush White House can explain how or when that will happen. ♦

Young, Wonky, and Proud of It

Wisconsin Republican Paul Ryan makes waves.

BY KATHERINE MANGU-WARD

"AM I TOTALLY BORING, or what?" asks Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin.

Styling himself a "big supply-sider," "a policy guy," and a "political entrepreneur," Ryan happily holds forth on some of the driest topics Congress deals with—tax reform, market-based revamping of Social Security and Medicare, and his latest pet project, a redesign of the budget process. His commitment to this carefully selected set of reforms has made him an up-and-coming policy wonk on the Republican side.


Paul Ryan

Years after the Republican Revolution of 1994 fizzled, Ryan, a onetime staffer for Jack Kemp and Bill Bennett, still proudly carries the supply-side banner. He successfully lobbied for a seat on the Ways and Means committee two years ago, and has since demonstrated single-minded dedication to his economic agenda.

Just starting his third term at the tender age of 33, Ryan is young but devoid of Gen-X cynicism. He describes his marathon "listening tours," for example, as "a total rush," projecting a conviction about their usefulness that even the most seasoned politician often fails to muster.

Ryan refers to the federal entitlements he has set out to reform as "the last great vestiges of the welfare state." Entitlements make up two-thirds of the federal budget, he points out, and "have promoted a collectivist mentality, created a generation of dependency on the government, and eroded financial independence and self-reliance."

Though others in the House might talk this way in floor speeches, few are as caught up in the underlying principles as Ryan. He calls Friedrich Hayek's *The Fatal Conceit* "just a good ol' classic," and says things like, "I grew up on Hayek and [Ludwig von] Mises" at the place in a conversation where most people would say something like, "I grew up on a farm."

Before his career on Capitol Hill took off, Ryan got a BA in economics and planned to head to the University of Chicago for a Ph.D. But election to Congress put graduate school on hold.

His fondness for considering the big picture, however, led him to found the Prosperity Caucus with his "best friend in Congress," Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania. "We do a lot of briefings, a lot of dissemination of literature. We noticed that the green-eyeshade austerity wing of the party was afraid of class warfare. They fear increases in the debt, and they were overlooking issues of growth, opportunity, and free markets."

Katherine Mangu-Ward is an editorial assistant at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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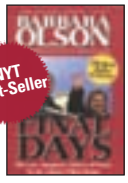

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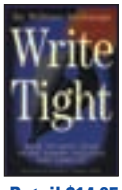

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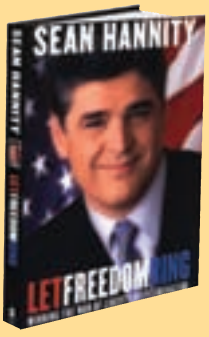

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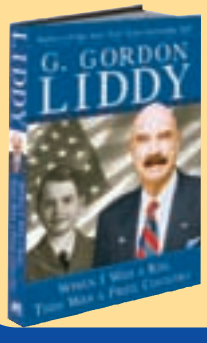

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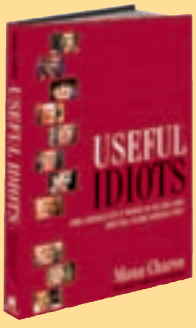

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Ryan emphasizes that he does not play professor at Prosperity Caucus meetings. "The point is to provide colleagues a breather to digest economic issues," he says. "The day-to-day details of [congressmen's] jobs are really easy to get caught up in, and they don't get the chance to think long term, to think visionary, to think about broader economic principles."

His staff, however, gets the benefit of his pedagogical streak. "I give out *Atlas Shrugged* [by Ayn Rand] as Christmas presents, and I make all my interns read it. Well, . . . I try to make my interns read it." Ryan "looked into" Ayn Rand's philosophy, Objectivism, when he was young, he says, but he is a Christian and reads the Bible frequently.

He's also the father of a one-year-old girl, with a baby on the way in June, quite a change for a man who arrived in the nation's capital a single guy. Back then, the only time he took off, he says, was to go hunting and fishing. His official biography notes that he "is a member of the Janesville Y.M.C.A., Janesville Bowmen Inc., and Ducks Unlimited," and that he's "homesick" for the Wisconsin woods. Lately, he has been trying to take Sundays off and "a Friday or Saturday for a date night" in addition to his hunting forays.

"I'm lucky," he says of his wife of two years, Janna. She is "very cool" about his schedule, and "is so helpful to me, in making me a better person, a better listener especially." He describes fatherhood as "a totally awesome, joyful thing." Being away from the family is tough, he says. "It tugs at you."

This kind of enthusiasm is hardly unusual for newlyweds and new parents, but Ryan is just as fired up about his professional concerns. Almost without taking a breath, he spills out this mind-numbing, if rosy, picture of a world with budget process reform:

> "I have a bill that rewrites the entire federal budget process and how Congress taxes and spends. The rules, which are based on the 1974 Budget Act, are designed to keep spending and taxing high. They promote pork-barreling and fiefdom-building. The rules are biased against those who would limit government and reduce taxes and clean up our tax system. My bill systematically changes the rules to take out that bias in the procedures of Congress so that we are at least neutral with respect to honest attempts to re-limit government, take pork out of spending bills, and reduce taxes permanently. I have changed the Byrd Rule so that we can get permanent tax relief. I changed the way the PAYGO scorecard works so that you cut and eliminate discretionary spending boondoggles to pay for tax reduction. I changed the way appropriation bills are designed and written so you can cut out the extraneous stuff and cut out the pork. I changed emergency spending so that it is tightly designed around what an emergency truly is, so that it is not just another convenient vehicle to put in spending outside of budget caps. I changed the way budget resolutions are written so that it is binding from the beginning of the process. That way you don't bring it towards brinkmanship at the end of the session like we do every year, and then we just spend our way out of town."

Ryan is not bashful, either, about taking credit where it's due. He is proud of his unusual career trajectory. He mentions that when he came on as Kemp's staff economist, he was "hired pretty young to do that." His chest puffs out a little when he recites, "In the last four years we have helped 9,500 constituents through individual problems with the federal government." And he recounts with obvious satisfaction the story of the first amendment he wrote that made it into a bill, back when he was a staffer working for Sen. Sam Brownback of Kansas on immigration.

But his use of the first-person singular is not Clintonesque. He doesn't talk about his feelings; he talks about his work. He talks about the possibility of a world full of "self-reliant and productive individuals."

This vision has led him to focus on a specific set of policy initiatives. "You can't be a generalist and get anything done around here," says Ryan. In addition to his budget process bill, which was introduced just weeks ago and is now being marked up, he is using his seat on Ways and Means to push the whole series of market-based reforms.

"We've shifted the debate considerably," says Ryan, optimistically, when asked how well he has succeeded on his issues. "When we write tax bills, I focus on being rear guard action in Ways and Means to protect pro-growth policies and make the arguments for growth."

Ryan has "no plans to be a lifer, an old bull." But he says "if the people of Wisconsin will allow" him, he'll stick around in Congress until he "gets a few things done." He will have succeeded, he says, when he "turns entitlements into programs that can actually encourage individualism and self-reliance and financial freedom." ♦

The Prime Ministers Nobody Knows

Why Arafat's new PM won't matter.

BY ROBERT SATLOFF

HERE'S A MIDDLE EAST riddle: Who are Atef Obeid, Muhammad Mustafa Miro, Ali Abu Ragheb, Mohamed Ghannouchi, Ali Benflis, and Abd al-Qadir Bajamal? Chances are that you're scratching your head.

Here's a hint: They work for Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, Syrian president Bashar al-Assad, Jordan's King Abdullah, Tunisian president Zine Bin Ali, Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika, and Yemeni president Ali Abdullah Salih.

Still can't figure it out? Answer: They are Arab prime ministers.

In most of the world, prime ministers form governments, run their countries, and lead their people. But in Arabic-speaking lands, the position of prime minister matters little. Except for Lebanon, with its unique confessional system, and Gulf monarchies, where the post is often filled by a brother, son, or cousin of the ruler, the Arab prime minister is just a glorified functionary—often quite able and effective, but a functionary nonetheless. That's why prime ministers are the anonymous men of the Middle East.

Arab prime ministers are usually entrusted with the messy problems (implementing economic austerity measures in Egypt, fighting Islamist vigilantes in Algeria) from which the kings and presidents-for-life prefer to stay aloof. But in virtually no case is the Arab prime minister an independent political force. Indeed, some countries—like Libya, Iraq, Sudan, and Oman—have either dispensed with the position altogether or simply appended it to the ruler's long list of titles.

None of this would merit a magazine article but for the fact that the ranks of Arab prime ministers will soon include a Palestinian. Like these gentlemen—alas, they are all men—the Palestinian premier will probably be an efficient bureaucrat. And like them, he will serve as "head of government" in name only. His tenure will be at the whim of the ruler, whose word, in the Arab world, is fiat. In the Palestinian case, that ruler is Yasser Arafat.

Last June, President Bush conditioned American support for Palestinian statehood on the emergence of a new Palestinian leadership "not compromised by terror." It was clear that Bush meant chucking Arafat in favor of a new generation of reformers, committed to good government at home and peaceful resolution of the conflict with Israel. But because Bush was too diplomatic to say so explicitly, his words allowed some diehard Arafat partisans to concoct a way for Arafat to please the critics and save himself in the process: by appointing a prime minister for the Palestinian Authority.

To make the strategy more palatable, advocates argued that this would be an "empowered" prime minister. No one has ever defined what that means. But the track record of other Arab prime ministers is crystal clear.

Arab prime ministers are historically weak reeds. Except for a bloodless coup in Tunisia in 1987, none has ascended to his country's top position in nearly forty years. No Arab prime minister has the job because of his constitutional prerogative as leader of the largest party in parliament; rather, all are appointed. No Arab prime minister actually supervises his country's army or intelligence services or determines the country's foreign policy; all this is the province of the supreme leader. Indeed, in most Arab countries, rulers trade in prime ministers as though they were leased cars. Over the past half century, for example, Jordanian kings have shuffled their governments at the rate of once every eleven months.

There is, of course, a chance that the new Palestinian prime minister will break the mold. He may surprise the world and be a strong personality, both eager and able to wrest from Arafat control over Palestinian security forces, finances, broadcasting, and negotiating strategy. But stacked up against Arafat's forty years of experience at the helm of the Palestine Liberation Organization, an Arafat appointee's chances of sidelining Arafat are pretty slim.

So, when Arafat appoints a prime minister—probably his longtime lieutenant, the 68-year-old Mahmoud Abbas—the Bush administration should not let the august description of his powers blur the political reality. Like the U.N. Security Council's minuet on Iraq, this is only a distraction that allows the local despot to divide the allies and play for time.

Nine months ago, President Bush said that the clock on active U.S. support for Palestinian statehood—a just cause in its own right—should not start ticking until the Palestinians had new leadership. Unless the new Palestinian premier shows through deeds that he is something besides a glorified Arafat flunky, rewriting Middle East history in the process, Washington should not let his mastery of English, his soothing, moderate-sounding words, or his good personal grooming substitute for the one act that would truly constitute the coming of new Palestinian leadership: the replacement of Arafat himself. ♦

Robert Satloff is the director of policy and strategic planning for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Replacing the United Nations

Make way for the Big Three.

By David Gelernter

If it were working properly, a world organization like the United Nations could offer the United States official sanction for an upcoming bout, and assure the world that the heavyweight champion (no matter what kind of lowlife he is up against) will play by the rules and rein himself in; will hit clean and fight fair. Of course this is insulting. The United States has repeatedly proved that it follows the rules and fights fair. All the same, conservatives who hate the U.N. for many good reasons must acknowledge that there has never been a hyperpower heavyweight before, and that the idea of one remains frightening to many world-politics fans. The United States is wisely led today, but hasn't always been.

America's problem is not with the idea of a world organization; its problem is with the U.N. The U.N. is no good. Too often it can't do the right thing, and so it does the wrong thing in order to do *something*. This pattern doesn't always hold (the U.N. does good occasionally), but it is more than sufficient to damn the institution as a failure, because it is woven in, not printed on.

The great essayist E.B.White was a leading booster of the United Nations, probably its most articulate American defender ever. Nonetheless: By December 1956, 11 years after the U.N. was born, even White was fed up. He saw the pattern.

The U.N. made no sense, he concluded, if members were allowed to do whatever they felt like behind the locked doors of their own "internal domestic affairs," no matter what kind of shrieking and hollering the neighbors reported. "The United Nations should never have admitted the Communist nations on *their* terms," he wrote; "that is, freedom to operate behind a wall. . . . One of the preconditions of membership in the United Nations should be that the member himself will not shut his door in the face of the Club." Obviously the same holds for Iraq and other brutal dictatorships today. In 1956, Hungarian freedom-fighters had just recently rebelled against their Soviet masters. After some initial hesitation, the Red Army arrived to reinstate its puppet government and crush the rebellion beneath its tank treads. The U.N. passed resolutions; the Soviets ignored them. "By the end of November," the historian John Lukacs wrote in 1961, "the silence of a near-graveyard settled over the tragic scene of Hungary."

An equally fundamental problem: "Aggression," White noted, "is the keystone of the Charter. It is what every member is pledged to suppress." But this is nonsense, because "aggression" has no ethical meaning in itself; it can be good or bad. (Without aggression there would be no great generals, champion chess players, top scientists, effective businessmen, important artists.) D-Day was the most spectacular piece of aggression in history. "To condemn aggression," White wrote, "is to decide *in advance of an event* the merits of the dispute."

In December '56, the U.N. had just finished condemning Israeli aggression in the Sinai—a nice piece of work in which President Eisenhower lined up with Nasser and the Soviets. If Russian tanks felt like raping Budapest, the U.N. couldn't stop them. But it was easy to condemn Israel. (Israel's best friend at the time was France; not a hopeful sign.) Condemning Israel turned out to be such fun, it became the U.N.'s signature act, like the Whiffenpoofs singing "We are poor little lambs." An expectant hush descends, the boys smile debonairly and then break into their beloved old standby: "Israeli aggression can no longer be . . ." In November 1974, the U.N. at last welcomed Yasser Arafat to its podium. "Now Zionism will get out of this world," Arafat explained sweetly, gun at his hip, "under the blow of the people's struggle." He got a standing ovation. Six months earlier, Palestinian terrorists had murdered 22 schoolchildren at Ma'alot.

The U.N. in its present shape reflects the obsolete assumptions of 1945. We gave France (for example) a

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Agence France Presse

Iraq at the Security Council—a body that has outlived its usefulness

central role and a veto because France had once been a great power, and had suffered under the Nazis. But why should France keep those unearned privileges when she grows more neo-Vichy all the time? Pétain would be proud: A brave new France that is tight with the Germans, hostile to England, intensely wary of the United States, no friend of the Jews, contemptuous of Eastern Europe, thoroughly defeatist and desirous above all of avoiding trouble and keeping peace in the neighborhood. Wasn't this (perhaps) the real France all along? Wasn't Vichy just as "authentic" as the Free French?

It was all amusing for a while, but grows thin. By 1956, the U.N. was embarrassing even to its best friends. Today it is an impediment to world safety. It should be replaced. The United States should pledge to the United Nations its strong support while it prepares a substitute. It should deny vigorously the whole time that it has ever *dreamt* of replacing the U.N. This will drive the French crazy and make everyone understand that we are serious.

Now is the time to start thinking post-U.N., not merely because the Security Council has made such a mess of Iraq but because we have remarkable opportunities. And if the experiment fails, the U.N. simply carries on, chastened.

The core of the new organization—call it the Big Three—would be a Britain-Russia-America triumvirate. The underlying principle: No credible world organization could include only countries we like. But Russia's fluid condition gives us an unusual opening. Russia is a big country with a vivid history. No organization that includes Russia could possibly be America's cat's-paw. Yet Russia is uncertain of what she wants; she is open to persuasion. Yes, that means money; but international prestige is worth even more, especially to a humbled former champion. Including Russia (but not China or France) in the ruling committee might impart just the right *soupçon* of anti-Americanism to the new organization, which must be credible yet not intractable.

The new organization, unlike the U.N., would be founded with no chatter or charter. The three countries' U.N. ambassadors would simply adjourn one afternoon to a neighborhood brownstone. They would announce: We are going to have a meeting and talk things over. We may pass some resolutions. Afterwards we will issue a report and have a press conference, and meet again when we feel like it.

And they would of course add: However big it may happen to grow, our new organization will *never* replace the United Nations!

Why build it this way, around a Big Three? Official U.S. policy favors a united Europe. A politically united Europe (first promoted by Winston Churchill) is (allegedly) a rich, peaceful, stable, responsible Europe. But the Europeans themselves—especially France and Germany—have long seen United Europe as a "counterweight" to the United States: a way to balance our resolution against their indifference, our sympathy for Israel against their sympathy for suicide murderers, our naive ideas about planting democracy everywhere (which are *so* painfully American, so Woodrow Wilson!) against their thoughtful, sophisticated disgust with mankind. "Of course," we will say, "we are solidly behind United Europe!" But why should we be?

And why not offer Britain a choice?—a way to formalize her foot-in-both-camps situation? During and after the Second World War, Churchill preached his vision of "the great English-speaking democracies" retaining their separate identities but joined in one commonwealth with shared citizenship. The idea never

caught on. No one liked it. Neither country wanted it. Today it is still a non-contender. But (of course!) Churchill was on to something. He understood that American-British friendship is a rare thing in world history, and that one strong, proven friendship is worth vastly more than a milling throng as a basis for international peacekeeping. This is still true, and the friendship still stands. Today much of Britain's intellectual elite seems as rudely and ignorantly anti-American as any in Europe. But we should pity a friend's misfortunes, and not mistake the disease for the man. (Admittedly this is easier said than done, both for the well man and the sick one.)

Russia would make the triumvirate global. Putin has been disappointing on Iraq, but we need to look beyond Iraq. Russia will be a great power again someday. We should be laying the groundwork for a U.S.-aligned and not Old-Europe-aligned Russia. Russia doesn't deserve a place in a new world-leading triumvirate—but that is exactly why it would be such a powerful gesture to offer her one. She might vote against us in the new Big Three as readily as she does in the U.N.; then again, she might rise to the occasion.

Once its brain has been replaced, the former-U.N.'s body (the police forces, aid organizations, bureaucracies) could easily be reconstituted within the Big Three. A B3 resolution won't pack quite the multilateral punch of the Security Council, but it will pack plenty.

And there will be plenty of time, too, to gather junior members. Membership would be limited to democracies or aspiring democracies that spend at least some agreed percentage of GDP on their militaries.

Thus, the right world organization for today—as the U.N. was (perhaps) right for 1945. We show our solidarity with Britain, help coax Russia onto the right side of history, and liberate world councils from overlordship by the evil, the nasty, and the irrelevant.

But what if the new world organization doesn't work? What if it never even gets started? What if Russia turns us down? Or Britain does? What if we never even ask?

We still win big just by talking about it. ♦

Wrong from the Beginning

America might have created the U.N., said Dean Acheson, but "I personally am free of the slightest suspicion of paternity."

By Robert L. Beisner

In an administration full of "unilateralists," many observers expected Secretary of State Colin Powell to be the most reliable friend of the United Nations—and perhaps he was, until French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin sandbagged him on Iraq at a meeting Powell thought had been called to discuss terrorism. Since then, Powell has almost daily told the U.N. and its admirers they should quickly get serious if they want the organization to avoid the fate of the League of Nations, ruined by its failure to face up to Italian, German, and Japanese aggression.

Regardless of how the Iraqi situation finally plays out, Powell should steel himself against feeling guilty for entertaining negative thoughts about the U.N., for he is in excellent company. Dean Acheson, who became secretary of state four years after the U.N.'s founding in 1945 and who was arguably the 20th century's greatest secretary of state, was contemptuous of the organization and hardly cared who knew it.

His contempt did not come from the U.N.'s failure to live up to expectations, for he never had any for it. From the first, he said it was an intellectual error to think of the organization as an independent entity, a freestanding body. As he told a National War College audience in 1951, the U.N. was "not something apart from its members. Its strength has no sources independent of the strength supplied by those who belong to it and are willing to back it up." Acheson would use the U.N. when there were political rewards for doing so—as when General Douglas MacArthur was the U.N. commander in the Korean War. But whenever he considered its potential intrusion a nuisance, as he did in the 1947 Greek crisis leading to the Truman Doctrine, he spared no efforts in pushing it to the sidelines. He snorted at the very idea of a body in which, as in the General Assembly, each member had an equal, non-weighted vote; this only verified the U.N.'s lack of seriousness.

Acheson believed strongly in the role of reason in human affairs and therefore in reasoned debate, but not between states hostile in belief and system. Where debate was vital and valuable was within the United States, among its leaders, and between allies who already agreed on fundamentals. Debates did not settle major international disputes—certainly not debates in an open forum, where those with a negligible stake in the question (like Cameroon and Chile on today's Security Council) could weigh in and orate with as much claim to attention as those with a large stake. The nearest one could approach the solution of international problems was through vigilant statecraft, buttressed and advanced by economic, political, and military power.

Nothing in Acheson's own experience gave the lie to this. The marshalling of such power conquered the Axis in World War II. American economic strength and political leadership quelled the crisis in Greece and charted the path to European recovery through the Marshall Plan. A politico-military alliance, NATO, reinforced that recovery and gave Soviet leaders reason to act prudently. Swift use of American military power averted a ruinous loss of repute in Korea in 1950. The most intractable world problems of Acheson's time arose where the United States and its allies were unable to apply such strength—in China, Indochina, and parts of the Middle East.

As secretary of state, Acheson had his most miserable spell at the U.N. in 1951 and 1952 when a rising Arab-Asian bloc forced lengthy discussions and debates over French rule in Tunisia and Morocco. Acheson was compelled to take public stances on issues neither the bloc nor the U.N. itself had any chance to affect. He fumed for the rest of his life about the artificial power given miniature

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states and diminutive duchies, whenever they fancied, to compel the United States "to vote on every resolution, however theoretical, however hostile to one of its allies, which any country may regard as useful in a propaganda campaign."

The error, as he saw it, of putting U.N. headquarters in Manhattan cast an especially glaring spotlight on the United States in such cases. It was simply intolerable that irresponsible people like India's Jawaharlal Nehru could "make us discuss and vote on any question at all," even though it accomplished "nothing." He was scornful of those enthusiasts—he knew many—whose hearts fluttered at the thought of universal harmony and the U.N.'s promise to eliminate war and conflict to the end of time. He believed, in the words of historian David S. McLellan, that "people who could not face the truth about human nature were for the U.N.; people who fairly squished with the juice of human kindness but who had a pretty soggy brain were also for the U.N.; people who preferred to preserve their illusions intact favored the U.N."

As President Bush and his aides have learned, however, such people are numerous throughout the world, and since the president's speech of September 12, 2002, Secretary Powell has loyally toiled to convert those of them who sit on the Security Council. Acheson at times had the greater problem of holding his own people in line. Though he had little trouble from U.N. ambassador Warren Austin, whom he noted for his "hyperbolic sincerity" and did not take into his confidence, he had to lecture other members of the delegation, including liberalism's *grande dame*, Eleanor Roosevelt, about letting their notion of the General Assembly as "the Town Meeting of the World" blind them to Washington's own interests.

On ceremonial occasions, Acheson forced himself to mouth idealistic and hypocritical sentiments about the United Nations. Alert to the organization's uses, he always countered congressional demands for expulsion of the USSR. That, he rejoined, would free the Soviet Union from obligations to the Charter and eliminate "almost the only remaining forum in which the free world can negotiate with the Soviets." None of this, however, diluted his censorious outlook, especially his loathing of the power of petty states to embarrass the United States in front of a world audience.

As a lame duck, he told the Canadian cabinet on a visit to Ottawa in November 1952 that Arabs and Latin Americans in the General Assembly had not only "contributed little or nothing" to collective security; their effort to realize social and economic goals through the U.N. had been "in the precise meaning of the word . . . irresponsible," to wit, they "advocated action, the consequences of which did not fall upon the group but fell upon others." While "they would not be responsible for what they did, . . . others would be." Nor did he ever agree that diplomacy performed before the world's millions was more honorable than behind-the-scenes talks in out-of-the-way places. On television in 1965 he snapped that "debates in the United Nations really amount to very little," were "usually rude," and too often led to exchanges of insults rather than settlements.

One of the U.N.'s largest defects, he told a gathering of old State Department friends in 1954, was its built-in dedication to the status quo and opposition to all wars on the grounds that, while "change might be desirable," it "leads to instabilities." This is a "very dangerous" position, Acheson argued: "If, say, the world had been frozen at any given period in the past, a great deal of the progress which has been made . . . would not be possible. If, for example, we had never been able to revolt against the British, or various other wars had never been fought to a conclusion, a great deal of progress would have been denied the world. And in a sense one of the great problems of the U.N.—I don't know whether it's generally recognized—is to prevent wars from being fought out. It's very dangerous to stop a war from being fought out, because no one is willing to act like a loser. And there's no proof yet that wars which are not fought out can ever really be resolved by peaceful methods."

One of the U.N.'s largest defects, Acheson said, was its opposition to all wars. Without war "a great deal of progress would have been denied the world."

Usually in going after the U.N., Acheson drew on rapiers of derision and sarcasm, as when he referred to FDR's enthusiasm for "that delusive phrase 'the United Nations'" and to the U.N. as "that legacy of the nineteenth century." Dean Rusk, noting that wartime Britons had dubbed India's parliament "the monkey house," believed Acheson had a kindred view of the U.N. When State Department veteran Ernest Gross told him the job of deputy in the U.S. mission attracted him for its "potentialities," Acheson "practically ordered me to go to a psychiatrist, in friendly fashion. He thought I ought to have my head examined." George Ball became U.N. ambassador in the 1960s, prompting a letter from Acheson saying, "I always thought you were one of the brightest guys in town, but now I'm reserving a room for you at St. Elizabeth's." The U.N., he told friends, was "certainly an American contribution to a troubled world, [but] I personally am free of

Corbis

Acheson at the U.N. with Eleanor Roosevelt and Britain's Gladwin Jebb, September 1950

the slightest suspicion of paternity." In a swipe at one of the wartime State Department advocates for a new world order, Acheson, who in his seventies often went out of his way to shock, in 1967 wrote former Foggy Bottom colleague Charles Burton Marshall that the United States had corrupted "international behavior with [its] damned moralism, beginning with Woodrow Wilson's self-determination and ending with that little rat Leo Pasvolsky's United Nations."

In office, Dean Acheson was a far more solemn analyst, and his words from 1951 compel sober attention. If the United Nations became a success, he said in a speech to magazine and book publishers, it would be because of "the strength of the United States, its economic strength, its military strength." As with NATO, "there is no substitute for the strength of the United States at the heart." Though earlier he had looked for more initiative from Britain or France, his comfort with the fact of America's power and growing faith in its leadership expanded into an unabashed belief in its necessity, as the Cold War exposed the comparative weakness of Washington's partners.

Ultimately, he thought, "the United States was the locomotive at the head of mankind, and the rest of the world was the caboose." Though he was not a unilateralist and spent hundreds of hours nurturing the Western alliance and massaging Washington's partners, a "world" body—a so-called "universal" organization—was quite another matter, intrinsically inhospitable to great power leadership. The U.N.'s champions lauded it as a forum for weak nations and powerless peoples, serving as a safety valve for venting accumulated injustices. Acheson would have observed that letting off steam might scald those nearby and was not a form of diplomacy in any case.

Even U.N. admirers who were uneasy with how the Security Council enshrined the great powers praised the General Assembly for its echo of the principle of one-man, one-vote. Acheson sneered at the illusion of national equality in international affairs. If its defenders thought the U.N. opened the way for a more virtuous diplomacy than traditionally practiced behind foreign ministries' closed doors, he might have laughed and pointed to the General Assembly itself, with its rife and cynical trading of votes from one regional bloc to another.

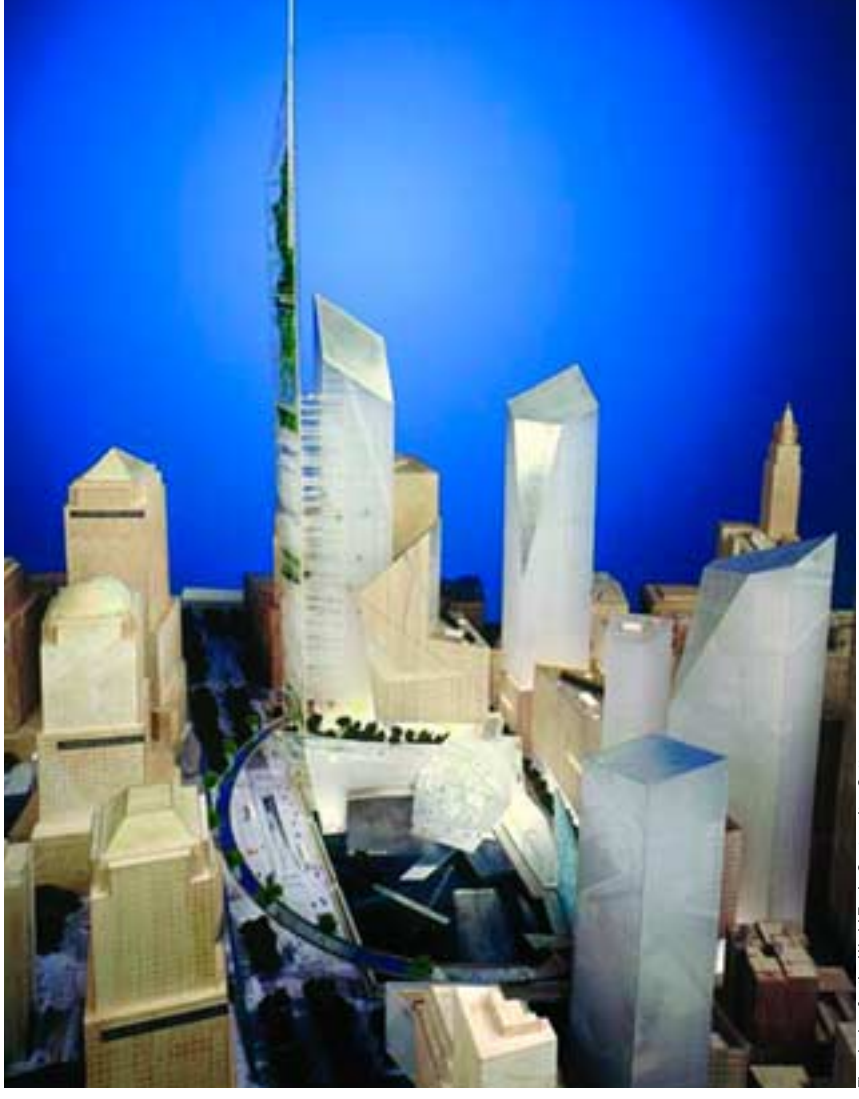
Finally, its advocates might insist that whatever its shortcomings, the U.N.'s special agencies on hunger, women, children, drug addiction, and other worthy issues do neglected and invaluable work. A disbelieving Acheson would have poured cold water on this tribute, just as he did in 1949 when Canada's Lester Pearson insisted on inserting Article 2 into the North Atlantic Treaty, emphasizing the alliance's social, economic, and cultural objectives. Acheson parodied Article 2 as embodying "every worthy aspiration that ever occurred to any human being."

Today, the Bush administration at times seems to consider the U.N. almost a foreign body somehow loosed in the bloodstream of world politics. When it was established nearly sixty years ago, President Truman proudly claimed it as an American creation. Bush occasionally sounds like Truman, but his judgment is probably closer to that of Truman's great secretary of state, who worked with the U.N. because he had to, but was not its friend. ♦

Faulty Towers

A bad idea for Ground Zero

By Catesby Leigh



The design for the World Trade Center site. Getty.

Daniel Libeskind's victory in the architectural competition for the reconstruction of the World Trade Center site is a victory for what we might call the "permanent institution of the revolution." It looks as though we will never be able to revolt against that revolt—never be able to rid ourselves of the avant-garde that ceased being avant-garde ages ago.

Now fifty-six years old, Libeskind immigrated to the United States in his early teens, graduated from the Bronx High School of Science, and studied architecture at Cooper Union. He is a product of the postmodern academy with deep intellectual roots in deconstructionism, and, as one might expect, his "Memory Foundations" scheme for Ground Zero is fundamentally conceptualist (as opposed to artistic) in nature.

Even at that, his conceptualist scheme has already been seriously compromised. His original intention was to leave fully exposed the slurry wall lining one side of the deep "bathtub" below the obliterated Twin Towers. The fact that the wall, which holds back the Hudson River, survived the September 11 catastrophe was a tremendous blessing, sparing Lower Manhattan a deluge in addition to the inferno. The slurry wall would face a pit seventy feet deep, reaching down to bedrock and encompassing the Twin Tower footprints. This abyss, which would serve as the locus for a memorial, would evoke the catastrophe, while the bedrock and the slurry wall, with its picturesque multitude of exposed metal tiebacks sticking out of its concrete mass, would symbolize the mighty foundations of democracy and the Constitution. Thematically, Libeskind would kill two birds with one stone.

Unfortunately, the slurry wall requires lateral stabilization. So a multilevel structure, possibly including a parking garage for buses, will be situated above the bedrock. This means the abyss will be limited to a space ten yards wide by a hundred yards long, running alongside the wall. The rest of the 4.7-acre memorial site will be only thirty feet deep.

Surrounding this site on two sides will be a jumble of buildings devoted to cultural uses, including a September 11 museum to be housed in a particularly bizarre structure resembling a pie slice protruding into the depression. A horizontal slit, cut out of the pie slice, creates a cantilevered mass lurking ominously over an observation platform that looks out on the memorial site. The museum building offers access to the site, as does a long ramp running along the slurry wall.

At the north end of the site, a curious architectural sliver, attached to a tall office building and crowned by a lofty antenna, will rise to a height of 1,776 feet, for obvious reasons. The sliver, an abstract sculptural form, is configured so as to play off of the raised torch of the Statue of Liberty. Half a dozen gardens representing ecospheres such as tropical forest and grassland are to be installed in the towering sliver as symbols of "life victorious." (These

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The Pentagon Memorial

Reuters

"sky gardens," by the way, are urbanistically perverse; such gardens belong outside and at ground level, where they can provide refuge from the hubbub of the street.) Several other office towers, a transit station, and retail corridors will be arrayed along thoroughfares intended to establish commemorative venues and recover a portion of the street grid that existed before the World Trade Center was built.

The architectural imagery of the Libeskind scheme involves lots of glass and metal and contorted geometry. "Like fragments of shattered crystals, they create a sense of disequilibrium, disorientation, even alienation," Mark C. Taylor, a humanities professor at Williams College, wrote of Libeskind's Ground Zero buildings in the *New York Times* in December. Admittedly, some of the more recent renderings tend to be softer and blander than earlier ones, while the sky gardens and the towering sliver's upward thrust are intended as heartening gestures.

Nevertheless, this scheme is an abomination. It uses architectural mayhem—especially in the crazy cluster of cultural buildings around the memorial site—to represent or evoke the cataclysm. Architecture is not supposed to do that, for architecture, properly understood, is an anthropomorphic art concerned with stability, usefulness, and beauty. Libeskind, like other deconstructionists, gives us no composition, in an organic, anthropomorphic sense. And to the extent they relate to the human body, the forms and spaces Libeskind creates—as at his Jewish Museum in Berlin—are often conceived to arouse sensations of constriction and confinement rather than repose or dynamic harmony.

Why does this sort of intellectual hucksterism masquerading as art win over the media and a vocal segment of the public? Part of the answer is that it conforms to a vigorously enforced historical provincialism. Within a few miles are all of New York's great buildings. This huge deposit from the past seems a burden on the conscience. Its normative artistic achievements must be disqualified—"Classical architecture is fascist!"—and free rein given to a cultural elite that thrives on the discovery of novel forms of artistic dysfunction. It should also be noted that the Libeskind scheme, with the more-or-less obligatory sunken site as a memorial and the trendy elevated ecospheres, caters to the rank sentimentality of a therapeutic culture whose passwords are "loss" and "healing." The Lower Manhattan Development Corporation has yet to select a designer for the September 11 monument that will complete the site, but the result will no doubt match the therapeutic sentimentality of its setting.

Indeed, at the Pentagon, the site of the other September 11 attack, the memorial competition already has resulted in conceptualist gimmickry: an anti-monumental landscape memorial near the now-reconstructed façade that was demolished on the terrible day. Rather than the Oklahoma City National Memorial's rows of chairs with translucent bases that light up at night, the Pentagon memorial will boast aluminum benches cantilevered over their own little illuminated pools of water. The benches resemble desktop staplers, or diving boards, and are arranged in parallel rows corresponding to the years of birth of each of the 184 victims. The orientation of the rows indicates the jetliner's path of approach, and the orientation of each bench indicates whether the victim was in the Pentagon or on the airplane. The symbolic power of this design is nil.

Will Libeskind's "Memory Foundations" scheme—which roughly duplicates the original World Trade Center's mix of office, retail, and hotel space—be carried out? It's impossible to say. The market for office space in Manhattan is soft and its future uncertain. It's also unclear how the cultural facilities might be financed. Another imponderable is the role developer Larry Silverstein, who leased the World Trade Center office space from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey shortly before September 11, will play in the redevelopment process. This, in turn, hangs on negotiations between New York City and the Port Authority over ownership of the World Trade Center site and the size of the September 11 insurance payment Silverstein receives. If Silverstein, who was on the sidelines during the Ground Zero architectural competition, winds up with a central role during the actual rebuilding, the winning design may be in for some rough sledding. But the alternative to the "cutting edge" Libeskind represents, in all likelihood, is not artistic common sense, but banality. Either way, New York seems destined to lose, again. ♦

Dawson's History

Resurrecting the work of Christopher Dawson.

BY ROBERT ROYAL

On Easter Day 1909, a nineteen-year-old Englishman sat overlooking the Roman Forum on the spot where, more than a century and a quarter earlier, Edward Gibbon had conceived the idea of writing *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. He felt moved to undertake an equally ambitious project: a comprehensive, multivolume history of culture. In a later journal entry, he described his plan as, in fact, "a vow made at Easter in Ara Coeli," and added that, since the initial inspiration, he had received "great light on the way it should be carried out. However unfit I may be, I believe it is God's will I should attempt it."

Whatever we choose to make of this story—Rome often bewitches Romantic temperaments—the sequel, though slow in developing, was quite impressive. After almost two decades, including fourteen years of quiet but intense reading and preparation, the author finally published his first book, *The Age of the Gods* (1928). He was immediately recognized as a major cultural voice. T.S. Eliot thought him "the most powerful intellectual influence in England" and invited him to become a regular contributor to his *Criterion*, as did the editors of other prestigious journals. By the time his 1948-49 Gifford Lectures were published under the title of *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture*, the praise was universal. The *Saturday Review* called the author "the most exciting writer of our day" and "unequaled as a historian of culture." *The New York Times* characterized him as having few rivals "for breadth of knowledge and lucidity of style." In England, the reaction was, if anything, even more effusive. The *Spectator* called *Religion and the Rise of Western Culture* "one of the most noteworthy books produced in this generation." The author's old tutor at Oxford, the eminent student of classical political philosophy Sir Ernest Barker, referred to him as "a man and a scholar of the same sort of quality as Acton and von Hugel."

The Dynamics of World History
by Christopher Dawson
ISI, 512 pp., $29.95

These accolades make it all the odder that today hardly anyone even knows the name of one of the twentieth century's greatest historians: Christopher Dawson. Several factors may help account for this. First, Dawson converted to Catholicism after his Roman experience, in part because he believed that Catholic Baroque culture was a central and overlooked feature in the West. For Dawson, real existing Catholicism came primarily not out of ancient or medieval Christianity—periods he admired, but thought were being overemphasized by certain Catholic apologists—but from centuries of Christian humanism. And therefore the best path to a revitalization of the spiritual underpinnings of the West lay, in his view, in the study of Christian culture. Christian culture as a specific subject offers many advantages, not least that it can be clearly identified and approached in much the same way that we can study Mesoamerican or classical culture. Christian humanism arises in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, underpins the recovery of classical antiquity, the new growth of art, and the development of early modern science. To overlook that Christian humanism was to leave the modern world both culturally and spiritually rootless.

But by itself, being a Catholic, even a Catholic with an unusual view of Western history, would not have led to Dawson's recent eclipse. Just forty years ago, Harvard's dean, Douglas Horton, recruited Dawson as the first Stillman Professor of Roman Catholic Studies, telling Dawson that the invitation was "the most important I have ever had the honor of carrying." And Dawson might have stayed in the New World's Cambridge if ill health had not forced him to return to England. But since then, Dawson's belief in religion as a central explanatory factor in the human record—from the Stone Age practices and beliefs of the "age of the gods" down to the post-Enlightenment forms of religion in the developed world—has become a kind of intellectual embarrassment, at Harvard and elsewhere. We prefer to believe that ethnicity, gender, and class, or large economic and political forces, are what make the world go, and then are surprised when we find that people are willing to commit suicide, blow up the World Trade Center towers or each other, over religious differences. Dawson would not have been surprised: Long before Samuel Huntington, he argued that the cult ultimately shaped the culture, and world civilizations.

It was perhaps fitting that this ambitious and original global vision arose in a traditional English setting. Dawson grew up in an upper-middle-class family. His father was a retired major in the Royal Artillery and his mother the daughter of Archdeacon Bevan of Hay Castle, on the border of Herefordshire and Wales, where Christopher was born. Both had serious religious and intellectual interests. The family eventually moved to a long held, if modest, estate in Yorkshire, and the young Christopher took much of his emotional love of the countryside from that experience, which he also identified with primordial reli-

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gious emotions. Much of his education took place at home. When he was sent, at ten, to a prep school, he found "a horde of savages with no common interests or ideas or beliefs or traditions." He was transferred to Winchester, where Arnold Toynbee was a classmate.

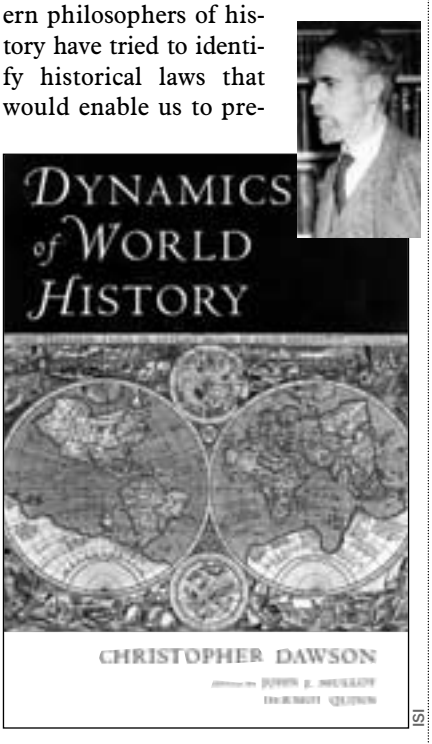
But neither Winchester nor, later, Oxford or any formal education did much for him. He later wrote: "I got nothing from school, little from Oxford, and less than nothing from the new post-Victorian urban culture; all my 'culture' and my personal happiness came from that much-derided Victorian rural home life."

The Dynamics of World History is a beautifully thought out selection from over four decades of the work that emerged from this unofficial intellectual formation. The title neatly captures another dimension of the author's thinking. For Dawson, the cultural and particularly the religious element was the most dynamic part of human history.

The economic and technological realms seemed to be the dynamos, while the religious and cultural were the elements of stability and tradition. But in Dawson's view of history, this gets things backwards. The West has a dynamic society, economy, technology, and science, he argued, precisely because of the kind of culture that developed out of Biblical religion.

This may seem to be a case of special pleading: After all, secular historians can make allowances for religious influences, and they get along quite nicely without the additional meanings religious people often want to foist on events. Yet Dawson may have the better end of this argument. To begin with, he points out that a "scientific" historian, absent knowledge of what later occurred, would have predicted that the sophisticated Near Eastern powers from the eighth to the sixth century B.C. would have the greatest subsequent influence in the world: "He could not have imagined that 2,000 years later all this drama of world history would only be remembered in so far as it affected the spiritual fortunes of one of the smallest and least materially civilized of the subject peoples [i.e., the Jewish people]. And, in the same way, what contemporary observer could have imagined that the execution of an obscure Jewish religious leader [i.e., Jesus of Nazareth] in the first century of the Roman Empire would affect the lives and thoughts of millions who never heard the names of the great statesmen and generals of the age?"

Dawson is essentially Augustinian in his view of the nature of time. Modern philosophers of history have tried to identify historical laws that would enable us to predict the future course of the human race or even to identify the end of history. For Dawson, these efforts are both wrong and essentially doomed to failure. Religious history in its broadest sense upsets any such scheme. If we believe in a God who is active in the world, as all believers except for a few Deists over a short period have believed, this introduces unpredictability everywhere. Sociologists may predict, on the basis of past history, that when a certain percentage of a population falls below poverty, revolution ensues. But neither a sociologist nor the most powerful philosopher of history can say when or where a new spiritual movement will emerge. In the most concrete historical sense, the spirit blows where it will.



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One measure of Dawson's sheer historical genius is his canny assessment of previous historians. Among the moderns, Dawson probably most resembles Arnold Toynbee, with whom he also had many disagreements, but shared a wide-ranging project. Before the twentieth century, many parts of the globe were isolated from one another and their civilizations were mutually incomprehensible. History in Europe and America by and large was Western or national, not a bad thing in itself, but a partial view calling out for enlargement as the various civilizations of the world came into contact with each other. Toynbee's efforts, whatever their success, responded to this perception.

But Dawson disagreed with Toynbee's approach, as he did with Oswald Spengler's, because he believed that they had both erred in regarding each civilization as self-contained and morally equivalent to the others. This view, so dear to our own multiculturalists, contains an obvious self-contradiction: "If cultures are completely self-contained microcosms, each with its own art and religion and philosophy and science which are unique and incommunicable, how can the historian ever get outside his own culture and see the whole process from the outside?"

Toynbee made another, highly significant error. While he saw that there were universal principles of science and ethics that were transcultural, he tried to combine this position with a morally equivalent view of civilizations that were clearly unequal by such standards: "I was always perplexed by the difficulty of reconciling the moral absolutism of his judgments with the cultural relativism of his theory." In later volumes of Toynbee's *A Study of History*, Dawson thought he saw emerging a clearer position based on what the author called the Higher Religions, which departed from the cyclical and organic theories of Spengler and allowed for something like true progress within civilizations.

Dawson's notion of progress was not, like Enlightenment or nineteenth-century idealist views, shallow and optimistic. But he wanted to preserve, and applauded it when he found it in Toynbee, the idea that there could be real human advances within and across cultures. In this he is confirming common sense: We all believe that certain things—say the abolition of slavery—constitute true progress and can affirm it absolutely and universally.

Even more worrisome to Dawson, Toynbee fitted the religions he accepted into the same kind of psychological and theological equivalence we see today. But Dawson insisted that East and West are really quite different precisely because of their religions. The East's polytheism and mythology point predominantly toward a cosmology of recurring cycles and the denial of history as meaningful in any important way.

The West, by contrast, as is evident in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, takes the linear time of history—which is also the time in which revelation unfolds—as "bound up with the historic reality of their founders, and with the establishment of a unique relation between the one God and His people." Whatever cyclical and otherworldly elements persist in the West, the story of creation and salvation makes Western civilizations dynamic and forward-looking as the East has not been. This deep structural difference, the result of religion and culture, points for Dawson to two fundamental religious and cultural types that persist and resist easy equating with one another.

Dawson early identified secular trends that only became clear to others much later. For instance, he saw that religious values would have a hard time surviving in modern secular societies, even the non-totalitarian democracies. Governments did not even recognize their intrusions into the religious sphere: "For modern education and propaganda give the community such control over the thought and emotion of the individual that religious emotion and belief no longer have free play. The inner world of spiritual experience has been opened up by the child psychologist and the schoolmaster and has become public property, so that the child can literally no longer call its soul its own." He would not have been surprised by developments in the United States and Europe, let alone by international bodies like the United Nations that have tried to impose a secular worldview as if it were a neutral force compared with religious "sectarianism."

Ultimately, the kinds of meta-historical judgments that Dawson makes depend on the quality of the history he actually wrote. Most modern historians are so mesmerized by discrete portions of the historical record that they look askance at histories that try to do much more than chronicle a bewildering array of historical data. Dawson disagreed: "The academic historian is perfectly right in insisting on the importance of the techniques of historical criticism and research. But the mastery of these techniques will not produce great history, any more than a mastery of metrical technique will produce great poetry." Beneath the calm demeanor of this proper British intellectual beat a great heart. He is a modern representative of a great historical tradition that, whatever its flaws and shortcomings, needs to be heard again if we are to understand ourselves as historical beings. Or as he put it: "An individual who has lost his memory is a lost individual, and a society that has no history and historical consciousness is a barbarous society. It is as simple as that." ♦

BCA

Limited Powers

A big novel of little ideas.

BY JOHN WILSON

Ever since 1985, when he published his first novel, *Three Farmers on Their Way to a Dance*, at the age of twenty-eight, Richard Powers has been pegged as the brainiest American writer of his generation, equally at home in both of C.P. Snow's "Two Cultures" of science and literature. His characters chat about RNA templates and the *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* the way Elmore Leonard's con men and thugs mull over a heist. So it's not surprising that Powers's eighth and most recent novel, *The Time of Our Singing*, is about the structure of time (with reference to the special theory of relativity), the nature of music, and the American dilemma of race—with special attention paid to how those three somehow shed light on one another.

The Time of Our Singing
by Richard Powers
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 631 pp., $28

Such attempts at unlikely synergies are Powers's trademark. See, for instance, his second novel, *Prisoner's Dilemma* (1988), when the narrator describes the transformation of his father, a high school teacher who experiences a revelation while "lecturing about the importance of the XYZ Affair." Realizing that his students are living their lives "in complete ignorance of the Big Picture," he sees that "the traditional teaching of history as assorted facts means nothing." It's a Damascus road experience: "From that moment, . . . everything becomes fair game in the search for connective tissue: the quiz-show scandals, the Oppenheimer case, the shady doings behind selecting this year's homecoming queen."

There's real novelistic brainpower in the way Powers brings huge swaths of such material into book after book. Unfortunately, that brainpower seems to disappear when he tries to pull it all

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together to create the Big Picture—for the Big Pictures he ends up discovering never turn out to be much more than what you'd find on the op-ed page of the *New York Times*. In *Operation Wandering Soul* (1993), which meditates on the abuse and suffering of children from every conceivable angle, a surgeon works frantically in the aftermath of a grade-school shooting spree, sewing up holes in small bodies, sorting out those who are beyond help:

> Once again, the bullet sprayer is just another sleepless burn-baby one degree worse than the rest of us, turned by ubiquitous state-sponsored terrorism, the housing-project prison on all sides of him, into trying to out-horror horror. Butcher, baker, ex-war criminal sponsored by the NSA, short-order loner, Veteran of Foreign Police Action, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, crazed chemmed-out cardboard apartment dweller. How high would you like to point the finger? Who do you want for your guilty party?

It's the determinism of Zola and Dreiser, updated with the late-twentieth-century vocabulary of the academic left. But, curiously, there's also in Powers a source of bedraggled hopefulness. At heart, he is a religious novelist, though this seems not to have been noticed by most of his admirers. Perhaps that's because the faith that informs his books has nothing to do with the personal deity of ordinary belief. At the very moment they experience the utter bleakness of abandonment, Powers's favored characters glimpse some benign possibility built into the universe, itself vulnerable, faintly but unmistakably detectable amid suffering and injustice.

So, at the end of *Galatea 2.2* (1995), the protagonist, also named Richard Powers, understands at last what the neural net he's been programming—Helen, she's called—lacks in order to achieve the goal of fully modeling human consciousness. Helen has digested masses of great literature, on which she can discourse expertly. But when Rick gives her a dose of news from the last five years, she comes a cropper on the story of a man who has a stroke while driving and causes a minor accident, whereupon the driver of the other vehicle attacks him with a tire iron: "The only motive aside from innate insanity seemed to be race. The only remarkable fact was that the story made the papers." But for Helen, this revelation takes all the zest out of the project. And then Rick divines the solution: "She'd had the bit about the soul fastened to a dying animal. What she needed, in order to forgive our race and live here in peace, was faith's flip side. She needed to hear about that animal fastened to a soul that, for the first time, allowed the creature to see through soul's parasite eyes how terrified it was, how forsaken."

Richard Powers

Farrar, Straus and Giroux

The same thing happens at the end of *Plowing the Dark* (2000), when Taimur Martin, released at last by the Islamic fundamentalists who have held him hostage in Lebanon, grasps "a truth only solitude reveals"—namely,

> the fact of our abandonment here, in a far corner of sketched space. This is the truth that enterprise would deny. How many years have you fought to hold at bay this hideous aloneness, only now discovering that it shelters the one fact of any value? You turn in the entranceway of illusion, gaping down the airplane aisle, and you make it out. For God's sake, call it God. That's what we've called it forever, and it's so cheap, so self-promoting, to invent a new vocabulary for every goddamned thing, at this late a date.

This isn't exactly the sort of faith that preaches well or is likely to spring up in a foxhole.

Now, in *The Time of Our Singing*, Powers has moved from his usual Big Pictures to the Biggest Picture of all: time itself, which—it turns out—doesn't exist. "We feel a river," a physicist explains. "In reality, there is only ocean," what we call *past* and *present* and *future* all together. The "single, linked quilt" that is History takes on a cosmic aspect, a tapestry in which all time is present: "There is no becoming. There is just *is*." The inspiration here is Einstein, who—in an often-quoted letter from 1955 written to console friends over the death of a loved one—said that "the distinction between past, present, and future is only an illusion, even if a stubborn one."

Does anyone really believe this? Evidently they do. Physicists and philosophers are at this moment engaged in vigorous debate between those who hold to a "tenseless" understanding of time and those who maintain that cosmic time is "tensed" and thus the passage of time real. Meanwhile, theologians are holding a debate about God and time, an argument more than two thousand years old but particularly heated just now.

In Powers's novel, the physicist obsessed with time is David Strom, a German Jewish refugee who has landed a job at Columbia University. Attending Marian Anderson's 1939 Easter concert on the Mall in Washington—arranged after the Daughters of the American Revolution had denied Anderson the opportunity to sing in Constitution Hall—David meets a young black woman, Delia Daley, who is so caught up in the magic of the moment that she is singing along with Anderson. Brought together by their love for music, they defy the obvious obstacles and marry.

Spanning the decades from that meeting in front of the Lincoln Memorial to the end of the twentieth century, the novel is largely narrated by the second of their three children, Joseph. The eldest, Jonah, is a musical

prodigy who achieves a career as a singer of the classical repertoire, eventually joining the vanguard of the early music revival. Joseph is a pianist; Ruth, the youngest, is also musically gifted, but after the death of their mother in a fire she gravitates toward the radicalism of the 1960s, marrying a member of the Black Panthers.

The story of the Stroms is told in a fractured chronology that is supposed to illustrate the novel's thesis about time. Their happiest moments come when the children are young and the family sings together—and the pages describing this happiness are marvelous, showing how their singing brings into reality the future that David and Delia first envisioned, where the bird and the fish can make a nest.

But what the right hand gives, the left hand takes away. Powers stages the disintegration of the Stroms with grim determinism—while sharing their hope for the future. Powers turns sixty years of history into a grotesque caricature, America into *Amerika*, with capsule summaries of salient events baldly inserted in the narrative: "For one brief moment, it was nation time, crowds of people chanting, their voices shaking with the belief that their hour had finally come. Then, just as quickly: no nation. Systematically, the U.S. government buried Black Power."

After Ruth's Black Panther husband is, in effect, murdered by the authorities, Joseph hesitantly asks her what she and her husband had been doing earlier when they were in flight from the law. He's imagining some revolutionary activity. In response, Ruth gives him a look "too weary even for disgust." What had they been doing? Running a shelter program for kids. Dispensing cornflakes. All the things the Panthers typically did. "It was the last white question I ever asked her."

This agitprop consorts uneasily with the novel's ruminations on time and music. The gnomic patter on time can be quite maddening. "If our father was right," Joseph muses, "time doesn't flow, but is. In such a world, all the things that we will ever be or were, we are. But then, in such a world, *who we are* must be all things." I'm not sure exactly what this means, but it appears to reduce Powers's quest for the Big Picture to an absurdity. And music? Powers offers pages that treat music with dazzling authority, and yet, when he seeks to make music take his side in his argument with time, he seems stubbornly arbitrary. Surely the case is much stronger, as Jeremy Begbie has suggested, for music giving weight to the *reality* of time.

But Powers himself must see that with *The Time of Our Singing*, he has gone as far as he can in the direction he started with his first book. His next novel, we may hope, will be something quite different, something less cosmic and more accountable to the quotidian. A book about *something*, not about everything. ♦

What Do Men Want?

Rick Marin knows the answer.

BY SAM MUNSON

The word "cad" was never exactly a compliment. But at least it betrayed, in the heyday of the Edwardian bounder, a certain stylishness of Malacca canes, monocles, and waxed mustaches. Of course, that was long ago and in another country. When Rick Marin calls his new memoir *Cad: Confessions of a Toxic Bachelor*, the word reveals, if not quite opprobrium, then ironically severe self-deprecation.

Cad
Confessions of a Toxic Bachelor
by Rick Marin
Hyperion, 284 pp., $23.95

Marin is right to use the word: He is a bit of a cad. A distressing, engaging account of the romantic and carnal exploits of Marin's early twenties and mid-thirties, *Cad* paints an absurd and hopelessly funny picture of dating in our anxiety-ridden times. The book opens with the story of Marin's brief, disastrous first marriage, which ended with his wife Elisabeth's departure. It provides some genuinely chilling moments, particularly his discovery of a clump of her shorn hair in a suitcase and his description of her "Kabuki-white" face as she wields a knife to cut their wedding cake.

What follows are months of what Marin calls "Bachelor Hell" in 1990s Manhattan, where Marin worked as a critic for *Newsweek* and the *New York Times*. Meticulously noting on his calendar the nights he has sex, he finds his only bright moments at Billy's Topless, a bar he frequents with his cheerfully deranged friend Tad. We are also fortunate enough to meet a few women in the book's first section: Tiina the enticingly foreign restaurateur, Moira the wholesome figure-skater and actress, Kim the sexpot Canadian tourist. At the end of the book's first section, as the divorce from Elisabeth finally comes through, a new, more promising woman comes on the scene as Marin meets, at the party celebrating his divorce, a medical student named Kay, fairly glowing with normalcy.

Given that the epigraph to the second section comes from Lord Byron's *Don Juan—Alas, the love of women! It is known / to be a lovely and a fearful thing*—we're not exactly surprised that beneath Kay's shiny exterior lie fearful

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and unlovely depths. After a premature "I love you," a rather harrowing episode involving anti-lice shampoo and a shower, and a Sunday trip to a mental hospital followed by an impromptu gynecological exam, Kay is out of the picture—only to be followed by a new, wealthier woman, also named Kay. When the second Kay's financial and emotional demands prove too much for Marin, there follow, in rapid succession, a sexologist, a Hobbitologist (Marin's coinage), and, finally, Tabitha, a young editorial intern with whom Marin achieves a certain peace. Tabitha, as another character puts it, "worships" Marin, calling him "sir" more than half-seriously. Their relationship devolves into what Marin calls an "Arrangement": occasional, "reliable" sex to ease the pain of loneliness. When the Arrangement ends, it's the first moment of real loss in the book.

But promise looms, nonetheless. The last line of the second part runs: "'She seems like a real person.'" The "she" is Ilene—and "real" is the most flattering word applied to a woman in the entire book. Marin invests more time in Ilene than in anyone else we see, with far more uncertain rewards: After ignoring him utterly at their first meeting, she develops a close, Platonic friendship with Marin (the most dreaded—by men—of all forms of social intercourse). Ilene also prompts Marin to do something unprecedented: close his other options. He says goodbye to Tabitha, ends his affair with the beautiful and infuriating Solange, and cuts his last ties to his disturbing ex-wife. But not before Marin has gone through a full-blown mating dance with Ilene, spread out over a summer: desperate and successful attempts at coming up with unrefusable dates and months' worth of weekend visits to the Hamptons.

Just as much of an emotional focus is the sudden death of his father from a stroke. Marin's affecting narration of this tragedy sets up an interesting antithesis: The book opens with the dissolution of his unsettling first marriage, which Marin recycles into "material," while he never draws in the same way on his father's death. But the first time he describes Ilene as the girl he's "going to marry" is immediately after he leaves his dead father's vacation home. The last section of the book takes on a new tone of emotional seriousness that makes its last line, the observation that Ilene "had my number now," all the more convincing.

It's hard to entertain seriously, after all this, the idea that Marin is a cad in anything other than an ironic way. *Cad* is more *High Fidelity* than *The Memoirs of Casanova* (not that you'd know it from reading some of the genuinely outraged jacket commentary). Marin is hardly a rake, though he is a masterful tactician: The opening scene of the book centers around the hilariously honest description of a bit Marin uses to get a woman into bed. Other examples of this sort of tactical effort abound, but it is very difficult to see in them the machinations of a hardened rogue. The fact that he experiences an "empty, hollow" feeling in his gut when his affairs disintegrate attests to this. Marin seems to be looking for something: probably the stability promised and never really delivered by his first marriage. About the worst thing he might be held guilty of is a run of poor judgment, ranging from the slightly bad to the insanely myopic.

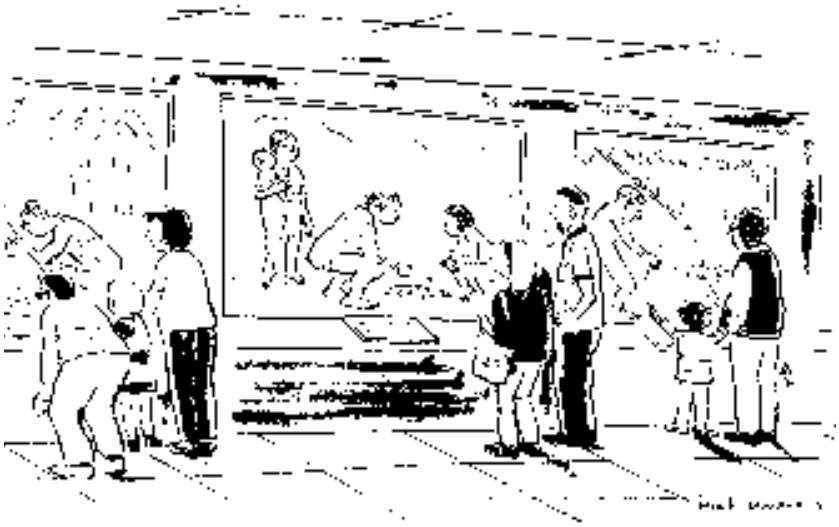

Rick Marin

Hyperion

He is also capable of genuine, if low-pitched, moral regret: The tone in which he describes his relationship with Tabitha and its subsequent disintegration verges on the remorseful, at moments. Indeed, what he puts the women he dates through seems no worse than what they put him through, from the first Kay's asperging him with Quell to Solange's annoyingly self-conscious mysteriousness. And if he is indeed such a cad, why is Viv, his editor, constantly trying to set him up with her friends? (I should mention I have another reason to exculpate him: One of my uncles appears in the book as Marin's friend and adviser.)

Aware as he is of the quirkiness of women, he never paints them in any worse light than he does himself. The women we encounter in *Cad* are examples of types, certainly: the Crazy One, the Rich One, the Young One, the Strange and Beautiful One. But they are also developed as individuals, and they are treated sympathetically and without malice. Though his prose bears all the trademarks of the modern memoir—the sarcastic quotation marks, the capitalized phrases, and the frenetic pace—Marin pulls them off without seeming self-conscious, bitter, or juvenile. The closest he comes to striking a false note is in the subtitle, "Confessions of a Toxic Bachelor."

At one point in *Cad*, Marin assumes the name "Jim Dixon," the hero of Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim*. He does it merely to write a column for a women's magazine, but there is, in fact, something of Jim Dixon's spirit in *Cad*: the frustrated acuity, the innocuous running amok, and the talent for improvisation in the face of staring absurdities. We like Jim, and we finish by liking Rick Marin. Who is incapable of feeling sympathy for someone struggling so comically in the incomprehensible back-and-forth of men and women? ♦



"The dawn of man was okay, but I'm more into the 1950s."

The Faith of the Fathers

Were a genuinely disinterested scholar—or, more likely, the proverbial Martian—to arrive and contemplate the contemporary American university, among his first observations would be the absence of Christian theology. Constituting the major thread in the fabric of the Western world, and of obvious influence in current public affairs, Christianity is naturally studied by historians and social scientists. But for complex reasons, our intellectual elites no longer take seriously, or even know, the basic elements of the Christian intellectual project.

Against this self-contradiction in contemporary intellectual life, WEEKLY STANDARD contributor Robert Louis Wilken has written a magisterial study of the first centuries of Christianity, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God* (Yale University Press, 400 pp., $29.95). A widely acclaimed scholar at the University of Virginia—and the subject recently of the beautifully produced festschrift *In Dominico Eloquio: Essays on Patristic Exegesis in Honor of Robert Louis Wilken* (Eerdmans, 454 pp., $45)—Wilken is well known for his readable accounts of ancient Christianity, particularly his 1984 *The Christians As the Romans Saw Them.*

Now, in *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*, he shows how the thinkers of the first centuries A.D. were romanced by the biblical vision of God, the world, and human destiny. The result is a book with real intellectual and practical pertinence. As Wilken insists, "the Church Fathers maintain their ground."

They do so in part because the present age has shifted back toward them. As Wilken's patient exposition makes clear, early Christian thinkers stood firmly upon a mass of thought and practice that postmodern intellectuals imagine they have discovered for themselves. The Church Fathers were perfectly aware of the central role of "texts" and "discourse," focusing their work upon the Bible, which they presumed to communicate a divine discourse. They were implacable defenders of "difference"—specifically, the difference between God and everything else. Not simply theoreticians of "community," the Church Fathers understood, defended, and extended a churchly view of reality.

And yet, the pertinence of the Fathers consists of more than their interesting convergence with postmodern preoccupations. The ancient work judges—and quite sternly, at that—the present age as well. Unlike postmodern literary professors, whose moral and metaphysical imaginations are pinched and starved, the Church Fathers did not play at interpretation and fall back on "gesture." Rather, as Wilken demonstrates in detail, the lives of early Christian intellectuals were formed by passion for the truth and a willingness to submit to the disciplines necessary to attain it.

Passion and discipline mark the point at which Wilken shows the Church Fathers most alien to our time. The early Christian intellectuals saw that the eye must be hallowed to see the depths of truth. The discipline of desire and untiring service mark the lives of all the great Christian thinkers surveyed by Wilken. Here, the Church Fathers do not "maintain their ground." They advance against the patent absurdity of contemporary humanistic study in which we fancifully imagine that the lust and greed and naked ambition that suffuse American university faculties have no bearing on intellectual formation.

It's fitting that Wilken closes *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought* with Gregory the Great, the monk and pope who lived amidst the ruins of a classical culture overwhelmed by invasion and threatened by chaos. A key figure in the emergence of a distinctively Western culture after the fall of Rome, Gregory prized the beauty of truth and placed love of knowledge at the center of life and work. Would that we who live in our own troubled times might find such a humane and humanizing way forward.

—R.R. Reno

Parody

"The Democratic ex-president and the Republican ex-lawmaker share one unusual bond: Their wives won Senate seats as they were leaving public life. Both men said they hoped not to cause trouble for the officeholders in the family."
—Washington Post, *March 7, 2003, on the weekly Clinton-Dole debates to begin Sunday night on* 60 Minutes

SHOW: 60 MINUTES (7:00 PM ET)

MAY 25, 2003, SUNDAY

TYPE: Transcript

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stakes in Iraq and the looming Medicare crisis.

CLINTON: Well, I don't know much about that stuff either, Bob. But since Hillary got in the Senate, I sure am getting an education about current affairs!

DOLE: It's wonderful, isn't it? To be so close to the center of political decision-making, right here in our nation's capital? Honestly, I don't know how our wives do it.

CLINTON: You're selling yourself short, Bob! Our job is to create a little sanctuary where our wives can do the country's work. They carry so much on their shoulders!

DOLE: You're so right, Bill! But don't ever think all your volunteer work isn't work, too!

CLINTON: You're so sweet to say so. My Hillary sure has a head for facts and figures! But she always tells me, Lovey, sometimes I think your job is harder than mine—

DOLE: Awww. It's not just baking cookies, is it?

CLINTON: No, that's for sure. And I'll tell you a little secret: In the back of my mind, sometimes I think Hillary might not have gone so far without me.

DOLE: Isn't that the truth? Did I tell you we're having the house redone? Liddy has been an angel about looking at wallpaper samples, even though sometimes I worry that it's a distraction from her work.

CLINTON: Oh, Bob, you've just got to put your foot down. We men don't stand up for ourselves sometimes. I said to Hillary, I just told her flat-out, I said, "Honey, I'm delighted you're in the Senate. But I am not going to cook for visiting dignitaries out of a fifteen-year-old kitchen."

DOLE: Oh, you're a miracle worker, Bill! Honestly, you don't look a day over forty!