the weekly Standard

MARCH 12, 2007 $3.95

LET'S MAKE A DEAL
NOEMIE EMERY

Before the Wall Came Down

Gerd Wiesler (Ulrich Mühe), STASI functionary

JOHN PODHORETZ
on the great new movie about East Germany, 'The Lives of Others'


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In the new issue of the Hoover Digest . . .

What Pinochet Did for Chile

The strongman is dead—but his country's prosperity lives on

He directed a coup against an elected president and presided for 16 years over a military regime that violated human rights, shut down political parties, canceled elections, constrained the press and trade unions, and engaged in other undemocratic actions. But as one editorial headline said: "Augusto Pinochet tortured and murdered. His legacy is Latin America's most successful country."

How can this be? Pinochet's paradoxical legacy includes a peaceful and constitutional transfer of power and a democracy that since 1990 has been vigorous and stable. Moreover, the economic policies of most nations in the Americas, Europe, South and East Asia, and the former Soviet Union have followed Chile's lead away from socialism and extreme state capitalism and toward the free market. By contrast, Fidel Castro's totalitarian regime in Cuba has lasted 48 years and remains a dismal, impoverished, dynastic anachronism. And when will Castro be brought to account for his abuses?

—Robert Packenham and William Ratliff

How I Spent My Libyan Vacation

Sun, sand, and surgery on a most memorable trip to Tripoli

It's impossible not to have a perverse curiosity about proverbially lunatic Libya. Not just its 35 years of sponsoring revolutionaries, terrorist operatives, and hit squads that hunt down dissidents—or the colonel's order years ago that all Libyans, even in teeming Tripoli, were to raise chickens. More bizarre still are reports that Muammar Gadhafi has abruptly liberalized his police state, ridding himself of weapons of mass destruction, reopening embassies, and inviting Libyans and Americans to be friends. So I couldn't resist when an educational cruise line invited me to lecture in Libya on its magnificent antiquities.

At first, all went well. The beautiful ruins, the talkative, curious, optimistic people who seemed to have been jolted from a long sleep . . . but all was not well. Actually, I was not well—a medical emergency would put my life in the hands of Gadhafi's surgeons. As the anesthetic took hold I glimpsed a minaret out the window and a poster of Gadhafi glaring down from the wall—and I felt a strange sense of well-being.

—Victor Davis Hanson

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Books & Arts

the weekly Standard

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Upgrading the CFR

Needless to say, The Scrapbook was delighted to learn that Angelina Jolie will soon be joining the august ranks of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Our initial instinct, of course, was to snicker quietly to ourselves about the Council's new member: *Lara Croft Tomb Raider*, the changeable tattoos, the vial of (then-husband) Billy Bob Thornton's blood hanging around her neck, the tabloid drama of her (ongoing) love affair with Jennifer Aniston's (now-ex) husband Brad Pitt—and the recent birth of her son (Shiloh Nouvel Jolie-Pitt), fathered by the aforementioned Mr. Pitt, in Namibia.

But the better angels of our nature took hold, and we remembered that Miss Jolie is also a goodwill ambassador for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, and stole the show at the 2005 World Economic Forum in Davos, where she talked about her work with refugees in the war-torn precincts of Asia and Africa. Why, just last week she published an op-ed piece in the *Washington Post* entitled "Justice for Darfur." Come to think of it, Ambassador Jolie will be an adornment and a credit to the Council on Foreign Relations.

The truth is, her appointment tells us much more about the Council than it does about Ambassador Jolie. The Council on Foreign Relations, in its comfortable quarters on Manhattan's East 68th Street, is usually described as the citadel of American foreign policy, the book-lined clubhouse for those Wall Street lawyers, senior academics, and aging Yale men who guided the Republic into the American Century.

Well, that was true in, say, 1958. In recent years, however, the Council has served as the Carter—and later Clinton—administrations in exile. (It's now headed by Richard Haass and serves as the Powell State Department in exile.) Its recent presidents have included such eminences as Peter Tarnoff (Cyrus Vance's right-hand man) and Leslie H. Gelb, another veteran of the Jimmy Carter State Department and a onetime *New York Times* columnist. Gelb's last journalistic crusade was on behalf of Columbia professor Gary Sick's crackpot "October Surprise" theory that Ronald Reagan stole the 1980 election by secretly dispatching his running mate, George H.W. Bush, to Paris to persuade the Iranians to prolong the imprisonment of American hostages in Tehran.

Professor Sick, needless to say, is also a member of the Council. Ambassador Jolie may well raise the tone. ♦

"To Soldier Again"

We missed this when he took command of the coalition in Iraq three weeks ago, but General David H. Petraeus's February 10 message to his troops is well worth a read:

"To the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Civilians of Multi-National Force-Iraq:

"We serve in Iraq at a critical time. The war here will soon enter its fifth year. A decisive moment approaches. Shoulder-to-shoulder with our Iraqi comrades, we will conduct a pivotal campaign to improve security for the Iraqi people. The stakes could not be higher.

"Our task is crucial. Security is essential for Iraq to build its future. Only with security can the Iraqi government come to grips with the tough issues it confronts and develop the capacity to serve its citizens. The hopes of the Iraqi people and the coalition countries are with us.

"The enemies of Iraq will shrink at no act, however barbaric. They will do all that they can to shake the confidence of the people and to convince the world that this effort is doomed. We must not underestimate them.

"Together with our Iraqi partners, we must defeat those who oppose the new Iraq. We cannot allow mass murderers to hold the initiative. We must strike them relentlessly. We and our Iraqi partners must set the terms of the struggle, not our enemies. And together we must prevail.

"The way ahead will not be easy. There will be difficult times in the months to come. But hard is not hopeless, and we must remain steadfast in our effort to help improve security for the Iraqi people. I am confident that each of you will fight with skill and courage, and that you will remain loyal to your comrades-in-arms and to the values our nations hold so dear.

"In the end, Iraqis will decide the outcome of this struggle. Our task is to help them gain the time they need to save their country. To do that, many of us will live and fight alongside them. Together we will face down the terrorists, insurgents, and criminals who slaughter the innocent. Success will require discipline, fortitude, and initiative—qualities that you have in abundance.

"I appreciate your sacrifices and those of your families. Now, more than ever, your commitment to service and your skill can make the difference between victory and defeat in a very tough mission.

"It is an honor to soldier again with the members of the Multi-National Force-Iraq. I know that wherever you serve in this undertaking you will give your all. In turn, I pledge my commitment to our mission and every effort to achieve success as we help the Iraqis chart a course to a brighter future.

"Godspeed to each of you and to

our Iraqi comrades in this crucial endeavor."

David H. Petraeus
General, United States Army
Commanding ♦

Speaking of Iraq . . .

Looking for more information on the ongoing military campaign in Baghdad than you can find in your local paper—something, that is, going beyond the headlines trumpeting suicide bombers? Allow us to recommend two new online features at *weeklystandard.com*. In cooperation with the Institute for the Study of War, we will be publishing in fortnightly installments an analysis of the campaign in Iraq by military historian Kimberly Kagan, author of *The Eye of Command* (University of Michigan Press, 2006), and founder and executive director of the aforementioned institute (*www.understandingwar.org*). The first edition of Kagan's "Iraq Report" can be read or downloaded at *weeklystandard.com*.

Also, daily at our foreign policy blog, *WorldwideStandard.com*, independent analyst and acclaimed "warblogger" Bill Roggio will be publishing a roundup of analysis and reporting from Iraq, the "Roggio Report." ♦

Can't Make This Stuff Up

The Scrapbook received an email come-on last week for a seminar hosted by *Campaigns and Elections* magazine. The theme: "All Things Ethical." The agenda items (among others): crisis communications, direct mail standards ("How far can you go?"), and "Ethical Principles vs. Real World Considerations." The venue: "Las Vegas, NV, at the extravagant Flamingo Las Vegas!"

We're guessing, when it comes to a showdown, that Real World Considerations trump Ethical Principles. ♦

www.pottymouth.com

This may or may not come as a surprise, but there's more profanity on "The Internets" than in traditional media. Lots more. The enterprising blogger Patrick Ishmael (*newsbuckit.blogspot.com*) did an, excuse the pun, quick and dirty analysis of the ideological divide in online trash-talking. Make that, ideological chasm. He did a Google search for comedian George Carlin's famous "seven dirty words" on popular lefty and righty blogs. Lefty Daily Kos took top honors with 146,000 pages containing one or more of the words in question. Its lefty competitor, The Huffington Post, was close behind with 109,000. No right-wing site reached even 10,000 on the Carlin scale.

A commenter at the site refined the methodology to account for overall site size, finding a "'7 words' to pages" ratio of "1 profanity every 2 pages" for Daily Kos and "1 every 121 pages" for the Free Republic ("the foulest" of the righty sites). The study "isn't scientific," Ishmael warns, "but hey, it's pretty @*%#$&! close." ♦

Casual

I'll Take Manhattan

A coworker once gave me a cartoon featuring two guys at a bar, one saying to the other: "When I was a child, I drank like a child, but when I became a man I put away childish drinks."

The cartoon brought to mind my favorite mixed drink back in college: the Tom Collins. Somehow I got it in my head that there was no better way to say "Hey, I'm a grownup" than by ordering that delectably sweet and citrusy blend of gin and Collins mix, plus an orange slice. Friends would make fun of me, but I insisted the Tom Collins was a most sophisticated drink. And I would sip it through a tiny straw.

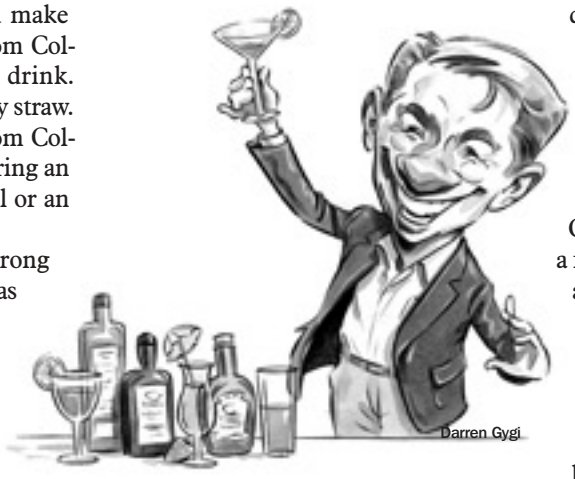
I can't imagine ordering a Tom Collins today. It would be like ordering an Amaretto Sour or a Fuzzy Navel or an Old Fashioned.

Hold on, you say: What's wrong with an Old Fashioned? This was the question posed by another colleague in his mid-twenties. He had taken a liking to this libation, consisting of bourbon, Angostura bitters, a sugar cube, orange slice, and a cherry. I, on the other hand, much prefer a Rob Roy (whiskey, sweet vermouth, and Angostura bitters) or a Manhattan (bourbon, sweet vermouth, Angostura bitters).

Neither impressed my friend. Soon, other coworkers got involved in the debate, each with his own opinion as to which cocktail was the more mature. We found ourselves in search of a definitive answer to that age-old question: Why don't you order a real drink?

First, let us define the term "cocktail" by turning to the ultimate cocktail book, *The Ultimate Cocktail Book*. "Cocktails are alcoholic mixed drinks, which are usually a mix-and-match concoction of at least two different liqueurs or spirits. They have enjoyed an enormous revival in fashion in recent years, with many exciting new cocktail bars opening." Indeed.

The book continues, "Most of these cocktail bars offer a 'happy hour' in the early evening when drinks are half price—an added incentive that has no doubt added greatly to their popularity." Which is all well and good. But what do you drink when Bud Lights aren't $2 a bottle and rail drinks aren't $4?



We can easily eliminate a few cocktails, such as anything with the suffix "tini" other than a martini (as in Appletini or Crantini) as well as the entire drink menu of T.G.I. Friday's, including the New Ultimate Margarita, Ultimate Hawaiian Volcano, Ultimate Mudslide, and Ultimate Long Island Tea. (As a brief aside, my 6' 4" giant of a brother-in-law will order a Long Island iced tea even at a four-star restaurant, but considering he is from Holland, he gets a pass.)

This basically leaves us with whiskey or a martini. Of course an entire essay could be devoted to the martini, what H.L. Mencken called "the only American invention as perfect as a sonnet," so I shall bypass the issue of preference, as in gin or vodka, shaken or stirred, type of garnish, or the amount of vermouth. (The standard ratio is 4 gin or vodka to 1 vermouth, though some like it drier: Ernest Hemingway preferred a ratio of 15 to 1.)

Nevertheless, the martini family is large, and the Old Fashioned, Manhattan, and Rob Roy are all members. In his *Wall Street Journal* column, cocktail maven Eric Felten categorizes the Old Fashioned under "Non-Girly Drinks for Guys With a Sweet Tooth," while the Manhattan falls under "Female-Friendly Non-Girly Drinks." A seasoned bartender at Sam and Harry's steakhouse, however, claims he has never served a Manhattan to a woman.

On the other hand, Al Fedorowsky, the bartender at Jimmy's on K Street, doesn't recall ever serving a Rob Roy to a woman in his 33 years of bartending either. So that would make it the manliest of the three drinks? "It's a drink for 65-year-olds," Al replies.

Taking a taste test, I found the Old Fashioned to be flavorful but to a fault. Because the drink is made with a muddler, by the time you near the bottom of your glass, your cocktail has become a Dole fruit cup with bourbon. (My "Old Fashioned" drinking friend, after conducting his own taste test, now declares his allegiance to the Manhattan.)

Al considers rating such drinks as the Old Fashioned, Manhattan, and Rob Roy to be arbitrary and notes that the one thing they all have in common is that they are "old drinks," up there with the Sidecar, Gimlet, and Brandy Alexander.

Perhaps in our pursuit of "real drinks," we've ventured too far in the direction of the cocktail. Maybe it all comes down to less is more (besides which, the fewer ingredients, the cheaper the drink). I asked Al, who quit drinking 16 years ago, if he were to have a "real drink," would it be a Manhattan, Old Fashioned, or Rob Roy? He said, "Vodka."

Victorino Matus

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A Civilized Pastime

Regarding Victorino Matus's "'Civilization' and Its Contents" (Feb. 26): I've loved Sid Meier's games for a very long time (ever since playing his Silent Service submarine simulator—maybe my favorite Christmas present ever—for endless hours when it came out), and I appreciated getting to know a little more about where Sid's sensibilities come from. I, too, have become a fan of Guitar Hero, as I proudly watch my sons play the game. I would call this a "useful" enterprise; or as the Germans might call it, *Spieltrieb*—the "work" that is carried out while we are at play.

Allan Collister
Berkeley, Calif.

I am well over 60 and have been playing Civilization, or "Civ," for 10 years. It is my all-time favorite! I even enjoy the graphics when I get blown to hell!

Rod Stanton
Cerritos, Calif.

Langley's Limits?

Michael Rubin's "Privatize the CIA" (Feb. 5) makes some intriguing points, but it should be viewed in light of what it is—a theoretical piece by an academician.

Our first experience with a formalized American intelligence service was under the Lincoln administration. It was a private sector venture and a horrible failure. The Pinkerton Agency not only failed to provide accurate intelligence on what was essentially a domestic enemy, the Confederacy, but it also utterly failed to protect the president on the night of his assassination.

As for today's challenges, I (a former CIA case officer) can visualize a myriad of private sector contractors, all competing against each other with the White House on their version of "ground truth" in our confusing modern world. No thanks. Our naive and myopic approach to intelligence, born out of our Pilgrim/Puritan/Shaker/Quaker heritage, is enough of a burden

to bear without superimposing a layer of private sector lobbying and competition over the top.

Wayne E. Long
Nairobi, Kenya

Michael Rubin responds: Wayne E. Long too readily dismisses outside-the-box thinking and so reflects the culture of Langley. Far from a theoretician, I was a consumer of CIA products, which fumbled the most basic facts. The growth of private analytical shops—mentioned in the essay—is a testament to CIA failure, as is Langley's past misanalysis of the Soviet economy and the Iraqi weapons program both before and after 1991. Long's disdain for competition symbolizes the CIA's complacency and unwillingness to reform. Rather than defend a shoddy system, Long would better serve the intelligence community by elaborating on how he might fix it.

Acknowledgment

In Matthias Küntzel's "Iran's Obsession with the Jews" (Feb. 19), we failed to acknowledge the translator of several of the Arabic and Farsi sources quoted. These materials were translated and published on the web by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI). The editors regret the oversight.

Correction

Stephen Hess's "Ike's Second Army" (Feb. 26) lists Secretary of the Interior Fred Seaton as an Eisenhower appointee who subsequently ran for office. Actually, Hess meant Seaton's assistant, Ted Stevens, now Alaska's senior senator.

• • •

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Energy. From the ground, the sun, or both?

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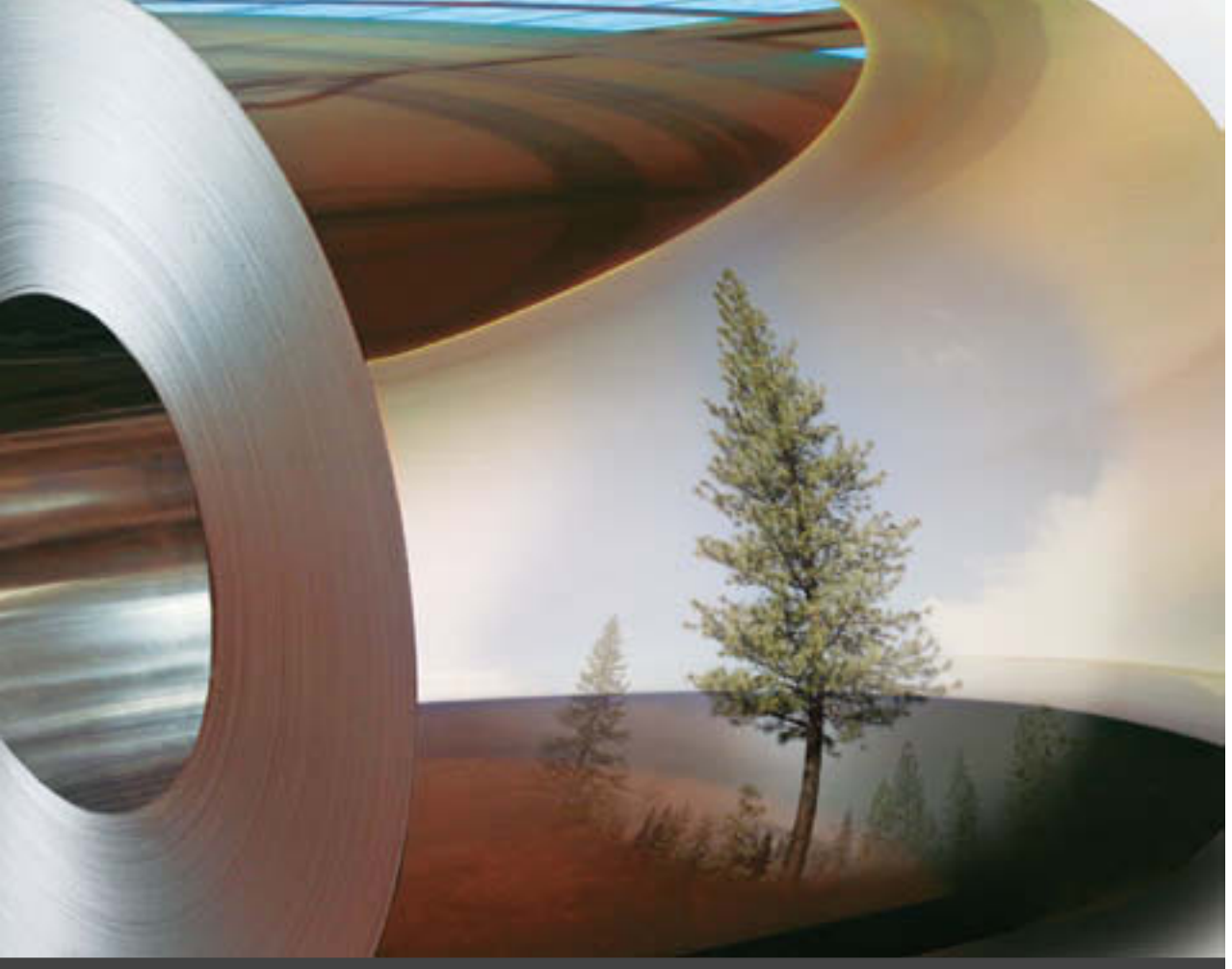

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A message from the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI)

the weekly Standard

Just Say No

As the saying goes in Washington, when you're not on offense, you're on defense. This isn't so bad if you play good defense, as congressional Republicans and the White House have been doing. As a result the outlook for Republicans and conservatives isn't as bleak as it seemed right after last November's midterm election. And Democrats and liberals have found that enacting their agenda is far more complicated than they imagined when they captured Congress.

Democrats have themselves to blame, at least in part. They've tried to do the impossible: govern Washington from Capitol Hill. It never works. Republicans tried it after they won Congress in 1994, only to be thwarted by President Clinton in the climactic clash in 1995 over a government shutdown. They lost because they misread their mandate and overreached. Now Democrats are doing the same, particularly in their attempts to obstruct President Bush's counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq.

The message Democrats took from the 2006 election was that Americans want to clear out of Iraq as hastily as possible, whatever the consequences for Iraqis and the Middle East. So House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her caucus got behind Representative John Murtha's strategy for micromanaging the war and draining Iraq of American troops. Victory? That's not in commander-in-chief Murtha's playbook. And once it became clear his scheme might endanger the troops in Iraq, moderate Democrats began to protest, as did an antiwar Republican, Walter Jones of North Carolina. Murtha became an albatross.

In the Senate, Democrats proposed a different tack: repeal or drastically weaken the resolution passed in October 2002 authorizing the war. A vote on this was urgent, Senate majority leader Harry Reid declared. But not so urgent that Democrats would permit a second vote on a resolution to continue funding the troops in Iraq. Democrats were wary of scrapping the option of cutting Iraq war funds, maybe later this year. But they feared being accused of not supporting the troops. This is when Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell stepped in. He organized one filibuster, then another, that blocked the Senate from taking up the war issue unless Democrats also allowed a vote on the Republican funding resolution. Democrats were flummoxed and still haven't figured out how to proceed.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration moved ahead to deploy more troops in Iraq and begin the counterinsurgency campaign in Baghdad—a campaign that provides a realistic hope of pulling victory from the jaws of defeat. To justify their opposition, Democrats claim it's not a new strategy. They are factually wrong. Bush may have been slow in ordering a counterinsurgency drive, but it is new.

That leads us to domestic policy, where Democrats are again experiencing a thumping. Pelosi impressively drove six liberal measures through the House in the "100 hours" stunt in January, but all six are now bottled up in the Senate. Several will pass—a minimum wage hike, subsidies for energy research—but only with serious alterations by Senate Republicans. The most egregious of the bills, which would have injected government price-fixing in the Medicare prescription drug benefit, was dead on arrival in the Senate, thanks to McConnell.

Organized labor's agenda, pursued slavishly by Democrats, has met a similar fate. Even before "card check"—which would have allowed unions to organize without an election by secret ballot—cleared the House last week, McConnell had pulled together enough Republicans (more than 41) to filibuster and kill the legislation. House Republicans, while losing the vote, did a good job of painting the bill as unconscionable.

A second labor bill would have imposed collective bargaining on Transportation Security Administration (TSA) employees, and the Republican response demonstrated how Senate Republicans and the White House can perform as a political tag team. Senator Jim DeMint of South Carolina signed up 36 Republicans to oppose the TSA bill. Though short of the number needed to filibuster, it was sufficient to sustain a veto. The White House promptly said Bush would veto the bill.

What all this means is no secret. When Republicans stop feeling sorry for themselves, they can be effective. They can't get much of what they want. They're not on offense. But they are preventing Democrats from gutting the war effort in Iraq and from imposing on Americans a vast liberal program they didn't vote for. This is a worthy endeavor and Republicans are off to a good start.

—Fred Barnes, for the Editors

Give Abboud the Boot

Why does Syria need two ambassadors in Washington? BY DAVID SCHENKER

It's been two years since the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafik Hariri caused the United States to withdraw its ambassador from Syria. But even as the U.S. embassy in Damascus continues to function without its senior diplomat, Syria maintains not one but two ambassadors to Washington. Officially, Syrian president Bashar Assad's top diplomat in the United States is Ambassador Imad Moustapha. Assad's second, unofficial—but reliably pro-Syria—envoy is Lebanon's ambassador to Washington, Farid Abboud.

The absence of a Lebanese ambassador to Washington who is accountable to his own government reflects the ongoing Syrian influence in Lebanon and the fractious nature of Lebanese politics. While the Bush administration has adapted to this dynamic by finding alternative interlocutors to Abboud, the situation remains problematic for Lebanon.

Abboud has been in Washington for eight years, a remarkable tenure given the typical ambassadorial rotation lasts only four years. He was appointed by the pro-Syria Lebanese president Emile Lahoud—who himself was chosen by Assad. And despite the tectonic shift in Lebanese politics away from Syria following the assassination of Hariri, the unabashedly pro-Syria, pro-Hezbollah Abboud remains ensconced in the embassy. The anti-Syrian Lebanese government of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora has thus far been incapable of dislodging him.

Not that they haven't tried. Last summer, during the Hezbollah-Israel war, Abboud was recalled to Beirut for condoning Hezbollah's attacks on CNN. Instead of returning to Beirut with his tail between his legs, Abboud stayed in Washington. Lebanon's strife-ridden parliamentary politics have allowed Abboud to remain ensconced in the ambassador's residence.

Abboud has been, in effect, protected by the ongoing power struggle between Hezbollah and the so-called March 14 forces, the anti-Syria alliance led by Siniora. In November 2006, after Hezbollah cabinet ministers—including Foreign Minister Fawzi Salloukh—withdrew from the government in a gambit to attain more political power, Siniora tried to appoint 58 new ambassadors, all of whom had already been vetted. The move was blocked by pro-Syria president Lahoud, who refused to approve the new diplomats in the absence of the Hezbollah foreign minister's consent. Months later, the deadlock continues, and Abboud's title remains.

But Abboud's ability to function as a diplomat has been seriously eroded. Essentially, Abboud has spent the last six years of the Bush administration largely isolated, having little or no contact with executive branch personnel. Since 2003 Abboud has met with only one senior administration official—then Deputy Secretary of Defense-designate Gordan England—but the meeting happened only because of negligence on the part of one of England's junior staffers. As a matter of policy, the administration has treated Abboud as a Syrian official and has studiously avoided contact.

The ongoing quarantine of Abboud has thrust the Lebanese deputy chief of mission Carla Jazzar—a longtime foreign-service professional unaffiliated with Syria and not beholden to President Lahoud—to the forefront of Lebanese diplomacy in Washington. Much to the chagrin of Abboud, for the past few years Jazzar has surfaced as the de facto charge d'affairs, the primary senior Lebanese diplomatic contact with the U.S. government. And by all accounts, she has proven an outstanding interlocutor. Indeed, many had hoped that after Abboud, Jazzar would be appointed ambassador.

In October, however, it was announced that Antoine Shadid, a veteran Lebanese professional diplomat, would replace Abboud. (Abboud has been reassigned to Tunisia.) Rumors abound as to when Shadid will finally be posted, but given the crisis in Lebanon, it can't be soon enough. Jazzar has done a fine job representing her country both with the U.S. government and in the media, but the uncertain dynamic of a deputy chief of mission loyal to Lebanon and a lame duck ambassador beholden to Syria has not advanced Lebanon's interests in the United States.

The challenges facing the pro-democracy government of Prime Minister Siniora are extremely complex and daunting. Making matters worse is the fact that Beirut's senior representative in Washington neither represents nor advocates on behalf of the elected government in Lebanon. While the Bush administration has long considered Abboud a problem, it has avoided taking any steps to expel him, lest unintended and potentially damaging consequences ensue.

The Bush administration has committed itself to supporting the Siniora government in its struggle against Syria and Iran. And in this context, it would be helpful if the senior Lebanese diplomat in the United States also truly represented and supported his government in Lebanon. Given the ongoing crisis in Lebanon, Washington and Beirut are looking forward to Abboud's eventual departure. His eviction notice is long overdue. ♦

David Schenker is a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. From 2002 to 2006, he was the Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestinian affairs adviser in the office of the secretary of defense.

Reader of the Free World

A literary luncheon with the president.

BY IRWIN M. STELZER

Anyone who thinks President George W. Bush is spending sleepless nights worrying about the machinations of the Democratic Congress, or figuring out how a lame duck president can limp from the political battlefield with honor intact, had better think again. And anyone who likes to regale his friends with references to that illiterate cowboy in the White House is due for some considerable embarrassment when the nonpartisan studies of the Bush years begin to hit the bookshops.

Those are two of the conclusions I reached watching the president in action at a luncheon—more accurately, a seminar—he convened last week to discuss the most recent of the many histories he has read, Andrew Roberts's splendid *History of the English-Speaking Peoples Since 1900*, a tome that picks up where Winston Churchill's four volumes on the subject left off. Among those joining the president and Roberts at last week's White House lunch were the distinguished Victorian historian Gertrude Himmelfarb, neocon intellectual Norman Podhoretz, Paul Gigot, editor of the *Wall Street Journal*'s influential editorial page, theologian Michael Novak, and a smattering of journalists.

"History informs the present," the president had said at another of these meetings to which he invites small groups of writers, historians, and pundits to discuss some work that has caught his eye. On this occasion the president said he had three goals—to get more people to read Roberts's book, to see what the history of the English-speaking peoples has to teach us today, and to "pander to you powerful opinion makers." That last combination of candor and flattery was disarming in the extreme.

On one subject the president needed no lessons from Roberts or anyone else in the room: how to handle pressure. "I just don't feel any," he says with the calm conviction of a man who believes the constituency to which he must ultimately answer is the Divine Presence. Don't misunderstand: God didn't tell him to put troops in harm's way in Iraq; belief in Him only goes so far as to inform the president that there is good and evil. It is then his job to figure out how to promote the former and destroy the latter. And he is confident that his policies are doing just that.

His dealings with Tony Blair and the Blair team have made him well aware that this view contributes to European nervousness about his political decisions. Bush, who must have more things on his mind than the names of minor U.K. political figures, did remember that it was Blair's media guru, one Alastair Campbell—hardly a household name in Washington—who interrupted a Tony Blair press conference to say, "We don't do God." And he frowned as he recalled that Blair's poll-driven advisers had dissuaded the prime minister from saying "God bless you" to the British troops he was sending off to Iraq.

All of this led the president to turn the conversation to the old question of what exactly is "evil" and what constitutes "good." The discussion centered on Novak's contention that although there is indeed "evil," there is no such thing as absolute "good." Bush didn't buy that line, preferring to agree with Podhoretz's rejection of Arthur Koestler's conclusion that man is in a battle between black and "various shades of gray." Bush's formulation is that we are engaged in a war between absolute evil and good *principles*, which principles are, the president readily admitted, practiced by imperfect men.

Discussion then turned to the special relationship of America with Great Britain, and how it will be affected by Blair's retirement in a few months' time. Roberts told the president that Washington would have no problem with Gordon Brown, who will almost certainly succeed Blair as leader of the Labour party and prime minister. Brown admires America, is unlikely to pull troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan, and will continue to support Britain's nuclear submarine program. Tory Leader David Cameron, said this self-styled "Thatcherite Tory" historian, is another matter. In a reprise of several talks delivered in Washington last week, Roberts spoke with a mixture of sadness and annoyance of Cameron's appalling speech on the fifth anniversary of September 11, which called on America to be "patient" and on Britain to end its "slavish" deference to the United States. That, along with Tory foreign-policy spokesman William Hague's attack on Israel for its "disproportionate" response to Hezbollah's kidnapping of one of its soldiers and cross-border rocket attacks, means a Tory victory would bode ill for the special relationship.

Bush was unperturbed. The special relationship is "unbelievably powerful," he said, and transcends such differences as exist between any given president and prime minister. "Who would have thought that a left-of-center prime minister and a conservative president could combine as we have done to try to bring democracy to Iraq?"

But the president did want to know more about the extent and reasons for the rise of anti-American feeling in Britain. "Is it due simply to my personality?" he

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wondered, half-seriously. "Is it confined to intellectuals?" asked a guest. Roberts led with a reminder that no British intellectual would style himself an "intellectual," prompting the president to add, "Neither would a Texas politician." The combined Roberts-Stelzer response: The causes of rampant anti-Americanism do indeed include dislike of Bush. But there are others: the war in Iraq; anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian sentiment, laced with some covert anti-Semitism; and resentment of American power. Roberts urged the president not to concern himself with these anti-American feelings, since in a unipolar world the lone superpower cannot be loved. His advice: "Get your policies right and history will prove a kind muse."

I added an anecdote, recalling that my wife, Cita, and I abruptly left a posh London dinner party when the guests began attacking Bush and the United States. "Many thanks for that, but you'd better not move to New York City or you will starve to death," advised the president, bringing a hardy "Amen" from the New Yorkers.

On to the lessons of history, as taught by Andrew Roberts. First: Do not set a deadline for withdrawal. That led to the slaughter of 700,000 to 1 million people in India, with the killing beginning one minute after the midnight deadline. Bush wondered if there are examples of occupying forces remaining for long periods of time, other than in Korea. Malaysia, said Roberts, where it took nine years to defeat the Communists, after which the occupying troops remained for several years. And Algeria, added Bush, citing Alistair Horne's *A Savage War of Peace* for the proposition that more Algerians were killed after the French withdrawal than during the French occupation.

Second lesson: Will trumps wealth. The Romans, the tsars, and other rich world powers fell to poorer ones because they lacked the will to fight and survive. Whereas World War II was almost over before Americans saw the first picture of a dead soldier, today the steady drumbeat of media pessimism and television coverage are sapping the West's will.

Third lesson: Don't hesitate to intern our enemies for long, indefinite periods of time. That policy worked in Ireland and during World War II. Release should only follow victory.

Lesson four: Cling to the alliance of the English-speaking peoples. Although many nations have joined the coalition in Iraq and Afghanistan, troops from Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand are doing the heavy lifting. U.S. policy supporting the European constitution, and closer involvement of Britain in the E.U., should be reversed. Had there been a European constitution, Britain "would have been unable to help you in Iraq."

Fifth lesson: We are fighting an enemy that cannot be appeased; were that possible, the French would already have done it—a Roberts quip that elicited a loud chuckle from the president.

The closing note was a more serious one. Roberts said that history would judge the president on whether he had prevented the nuclearization of the Middle East. If Iran gets the bomb, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other countries will follow. "That is why I am so pleased to be sitting here rather than in your chair, Mr. President." There was no response, other than a serious frown and a nod.

Exactly one hour after we had taken our seats, the president announced that he has to work for a living, and adjourned the luncheon seminar. It is fair to say that the few people I spoke with as we left shared my impression. Here is a man who is comfortable in his own skin; whose religious faith guides him in his search for the good, without leading him to think he has a private line to God to find out just what policies will serve that purpose; who worries less about his "legacy" than about his standing with the Almighty; who is quite well read (in addition to Roberts's monumental history, Bush has circulated copies of Natan Sharansky's *The Case for Democracy* to his staff, and recommended Mark Steyn's *America Alone*); and who believes that the president of the United States must be, to use his much-derided coinage, "the decider. ♦

A Merck-y Business

The case against mandatory HPV vaccinations.

BY MICHAEL FUMENTO

Legislators in some 20 states are considering making mandatory Merck & Co.'s Gardasil vaccination for the human papillomavirus. In Texas, Republican governor Rick Perry bypassed the legislature and ordered it on his own. The requirement there applies to 11- and 12-year-old girls entering 6th grade.

The benefits seem clear. FDA-approved for females age 9 to 26, the vaccine has been shown to be 100 percent effective at preventing disease from the two HPV strains that account for 70 percent of all cervical cancers. Government estimates are that there will be 11,150 cases and 3,670 deaths from cervical cancer in 2007. So what's not to like?

Plenty.

One argument is that a mandate removes parental authority. Which it does, but so do all mandatory vaccinations. The difference here is that while Perry claims the HPV vaccine is no different from the polio vaccine, polio is transmitted through the breath, while HPV is transmitted by sexual intercourse.

As Robert Zavoski, physician and president of the Connecticut chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, explained to the *Hartford Courant*, "Vaccines previously mandated for universal use are those which protect the public's health against agents easily communicated, responsible for epidemics, or causing significant morbidity or mortality among those passively exposed to the illness." He added, "HPV is not an agent of this sort."

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The other argument, which many Christian groups have made in addition to the one about parental authority, is that a mandatory vaccination will encourage promiscuity. This idea has been mocked. District of Columbia councilman David Catania, sponsor of a mandatory HPV vaccine bill, for example, insists, "This vaccine no more encourages sexual activity than a tetanus shot encourages you to step on a rusty nail."

But again, the analogy is faulty. There is no biological urge to step on rusty nails. There is, however, a powerful urge to have sexual intercourse that begins at puberty. It's an urge that nations and religions throughout history have sought to control in various ways because sexual intercourse, while pleasurable to the participants at the time, can have consequences that are deleterious to the individuals later as well as to society as a whole.

When you insist that 11-year-old girls receive shots to protect them from dangers attending sexual intercourse, you are sending them a message. In fact, you're even sending their male peers a message. And it is one that conflicts with the message that sexual activity is best left to people who are more mature.

Still, what about those preventable infections and cancers? HPV infection is usually fairly benign; in fact, a study just released by the CDC says about 27 percent of U.S. females aged 14 to 59 years have it. Importantly, only 2.2 percent of those women are carrying one of the two virus strains most likely to lead to cervical cancer. Usually infection is asymptomatic; but in a minority of cases it leads to tiny cauliflower-like bumps on the genitalia (or anus) that will disappear on their own or be zapped off by a doctor. And in a much smaller minority of cases, infection leads to cell irregularities that become cervical cancer.

The 3,670 deaths from cervical cancer expected this year are a tiny fraction of the 270,100 projected female deaths from all cancers. Further, both the incidence and the death rate for cervical cancer are dropping. The incidence was 14.8 per 100,000 women in 1973 according to federal data, but down to 7.1 per 100,000 by 2003. Meanwhile, the incidence of cancer generally increased. "Cervical cancer was the only cancer among the top 15 cancers that decreased in women of all races and ethnicities," according to the American Cancer Society. Cervical cancer death rates declined steadily from 5.6 per 100,000 in 1975 to 2.5 in 2003.

The main reason for the declines in both incidence and death is the Pap test or Pap smear. Public health campaigns and individual physicians have sought to convince women to get these tests, in which tiny samples are scraped from the opening of the cervix. Moreover, computer imaging has improved the reading of these smears, leading to fewer false results. Early treatment has also improved, with the use of a laser to vaporize cells showing abnormal growth.

Pap smears are not 100 percent effective at finding cells before they become cancerous, but they have the added benefit of detecting pre-cancerous cells with causes other than HPV. These include other sexually transmitted diseases. Remember, too, that Gardasil prevents only 70 percent of HPV infections that lead to cervical cancer. Thus, even women who have been vaccinated must still be encouraged to get Pap smears every three years.

Yet if the Gardasil inoculation sends a message about intercourse, it also sends a much stronger message about Pap smears. Why bother when one is already protected (mostly)

from the big danger, cervical cancer? Psychology must be considered as well as physiology.

The usefulness of detection programs is enhanced by the long latency time from HPV infection to cancer. According to physician Mark Spitzer, a gynecologist at New York Methodist Hospital, in a small minority of women, "viral persistence may result in the development of a carcinoma in situ lesion [remaining within the cervix] about 8 or 9 years later. The transition from carcinoma in situ to microinvasive cancer takes a long time, since the median age of microinvasive cancer is approximately 41, or about 12 years older than carcinoma in situ. The median age of [potentially lethal] invasive carcinoma is not for another 7 years after that."

Do the math. After an initial latency period of, say, 8 months (but possibly "many years or decades"), add an additional 8 years, plus 12 more years, plus 7 more years before we have a life-threatening, invasive carcinoma—28 years total. That's why the age bracket with the highest rate of death from cervical cancer is 45-54 and the second highest is 55-64. HPV is generally a young woman's disease; cervical cancer generally that of older women. Averages, of course, are just that. Some will develop the cancer sooner and others later. But once you realize we're talking about an almost three-decade-long period that doesn't begin until the woman first has intercourse and becomes infected, the speed with which politicians are trying to foist these mandates upon parents seems unwarranted.

Indeed, cervical cancer could conceivably be a thing of the past before today's young vaccine candidates reach middle age. As computers become more powerful—with developments such as Intel's "teraflop chip," Hewlett-Packard's nanochip, and even quantum computing—drug and biologic testing will be transformed, made vastly faster and more effective. Yet as long ago as 1999, a CDC representative testified before Congress that with then-current medical technology and heightened awareness of the need for Pap smears, cervical cancer was "nearly 100 percent preventable."

So why such urgency on the part of lawmakers? Maybe it reflects urgency on the part of Gardasil's maker, Merck & Co. Last December, at a briefing on Wall Street, the president of global human health at Merck, Peter Loescher, remarked that he stresses "speed, speed, speed" in a product launch. That may be because another HPV vaccine, Cervarix from GlaxoSmithKline, was submitted to the European Union for approval about a year ago, and GSK is expected to submit it to the FDA this year.

Moreover, in January GSK announced a head-to-head clinical trial against Gardasil, indicating it believes it may have a superior product. In any event, Cervarix would certainly cut into the profit margin of Merck's vaccine, which, at $360 for the series of three inoculations, is the most expensive vaccine available.

To that end, "Merck is bankrolling efforts to pass state laws across the country," according to the Associated Press. The *Baltimore Sun* was the first to report that Women in Government, a national advocacy group of female state legislators that's been lobbying hard for mandatory Gardasil vaccinations, has been taking Merck money. "In addition to vaccination mandates, Merck supports measures that would require private insurers and Medicaid to cover the cost of the vaccine," said the *Sun*. The paper also relayed the estimates of Wall Street analysts: "The vaccine is expected to reach $1 billion in sales next year, and state mandates could make Gardasil a mega-blockbuster drug within five years, with sales of more than $4 billion."

The AP meanwhile reported it obtained documents showing Gov. Perry's chief of staff met with key aides about Gardasil the same day its manufacturer donated money to Perry's campaign. That day, Merck's political action committee forked over $5,000 to Perry and $5,000 total to eight state lawmakers.

"It's not the vaccine community pushing for this," physician Martin Myers, director of the National Network for Immunization Information, told the *Sun*. Myers, former head of the federal National Vaccine Program Office, added, "Many of us are concerned a mandate may be premature, and it's important for people to realize that this isn't as clear-cut as with some previous vaccines."

Finally, in the face of all this bad publicity, Merck announced it would stop lobbying for mandatory vaccination.

In any event, the real need for an HPV vaccine is outside the United States. According to the World Health Organization, cervical cancer worldwide strikes half a million women yearly and kills 250,000 of them. In developing countries it is the greatest cause of cancer deaths in women. There, neither incidence nor death rates are falling. WHO has also found that "cervical cancer screening programs in [Latin America and the Caribbean] have generally failed to reduce cases and mortality rates largely because of inadequacies in treatment and follow-up." That's where these vaccines need to go, with support from such philanthropies as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Obviously, though, the price will have to come way down from that $360.

None of this is to deny that HPV vaccines have the potential to save lives and possibly also money in the U.S. market—though cost considerations must take into account that under a mandatory program, we would be shelling out $360 per vaccine for tens of millions of people. This is not to say these vaccines shouldn't continue to be available to women and parents who feel they can afford them. It is to say we can afford to wait for Merck to receive some healthy competition. Nor should the concerns of those worried about both the loss of parental control and the encouragement of early sexual intercourse be dismissed so lightly. ♦

Tancredo's Credo

One-note Tom.

BY DAVID HARSANYI

Denver

Don't worry: Tom Tancredo—the latest Republican to stick a toe in the presidential waters—knows exactly what he's doing. The Colorado congressman's sporadic inflammatory outbursts are merely part of a symbiotic relationship with the media. The process goes something like this: (1) Tancredo lets fly with a provocative statement, (2) the media run with statement, meeting their right-wingers-are-fanatics quota for the day, and (3) Tancredo's name recognition grows.

Take Tancredo's recent assertion that Miami is a "third world country." The comment provoked humor columnist Dave Barry to retort by calling him a "xenophobic dimwit" and "stupid idiot" (really, the insults were funny in context). But the very fact that Barry used his nationally syndicated column to hammer a representative from a quiet suburban Denver district proves that Tancredo is far from an idiot.

"Calculating politician" might be a more appropriate description. Like anyone in his line of work, Tancredo craves publicity. Feeding off a growing agitation over illegal immigration, the congressman has an edge on his colleagues. Many of Tancredo's supporters have legitimate concerns about border enforcement; others believe the United States is turning into Guatemala; and then there's a group that is convinced George Bush—with the help of sinister multinational corporations—is trying to sell our sovereignty to China for kicks. To save America from these various self-inflicted calamities, Tancredo has formed a presidential exploratory committee.

Tom Tancredo

Tancredo, who boasts a 99 lifetime rating from the American Conservative Union, has, in recent weeks, brandished his credentials on various bread-and-butter issues as evidence that his concerns are wide ranging. "It appears to me that there is a void, which I think I can fill, [being] a true conservative with a conservative history," Tancredo recently explained. "I believe I can play a role, and I believe I can be viable."

But of course, he's not a viable candidate. He's defined by one issue. The question is, How does the congressman intend to propel that issue to the forefront of the 2008 Republican presidential primary race?

If history is any indication, he intends to do it loudly.

Tancredo, we should assume, will go on the attack, demanding that his primary opponents take substantive policy positions on immigration. You can envision the confrontation now: Tancredo wants to know if Sam Brownback supports "amnesty" for illegal aliens. "Well, do you, punk?"

Then again, Tancredo is already on record accusing Brownback of being "as left as they come" on border control and John McCain and Rudy Giuliani of being "disastrous" candidates. McCain, one of the Senate's leaders on comprehensive immigration reform, is the author of what Tancredo calls the "McKennedy Plan."

Will Tancredo's hostility toward the senators and Giuliani benefit someone like Mitt Romney? Perhaps the more pertinent question is: Does anyone actually covet Tancredo's approval to begin with? After all, there's baggage that accompanies this four-term congressman. It's not only the border-first conservatives who connect with Tom Tancredo. You have your Lou Dobbs Democrats (a spot-on expression coined by Jacob Weisberg of *Slate*), populists, isolationists, protectionists, Buchananites . . . and worse.

David Duke thinks that Tancredo is "pretty good" and a candidate he would "probably vote for" come Election Day, at least according to a piece in the left-wing *Nation*. Your average politician would hightail it to the nearest microphone and immediately distance himself from that unseemly endorsement.

Illustration by Drew Friedman

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Not Tancredo. He offers up a perfunctory statement about the dangers of presuming guilt by association.

He may have a point. But accusations of bigotry have hounded Tancredo his entire career. The congressman admits that he doesn't much like it when people call him a racist or xenophobe. He insists, "In my heart, I know that I'm not." Having met Tancredo on numerous occasions and watched him interact with his constituents and fans, I have a hard time believing the affable congressman is Father Coughlin in an unstylish sweater.

Yet, it's virtually impossible to ignore the ugliness that can surround him. Only recently, speaking in Columbia, South Carolina, at a gathering of the "Americans Have Had Enough Coalition," Tancredo reportedly hung out with a gaggle of neo-Confederates from the local chapter of the League of the South—who held a barbeque in his honor. On the other extreme, it's been reported that Tancredo accepts financial support from the likes of John Tanton, a Malthusian environmentalist, who is the antithesis of anyone's idea of a "true conservative."

Obviously Tancredo, a self-styled outsider, doesn't feel constricted by traditional political alliances. This is the man who claims Karl Rove told him to never "darken the door of the White House" after he criticized the president's immigration policy. (Sometimes I wonder if this drama was based on a true story—as it fits a little too neatly into Tancredo's opportunistic narrative.) In any event, opposing the president doesn't exactly merit a profile in courage these days.

"It's not a secret that I have burned a lot of bridges here," Tancredo once said about his time in Washington. "My ability to get anything done around here is based around my ability to make this into a national issue. My megaphone is pointed at the ear of America." Will his megaphone make a difference this primary race? And if he fails to accomplish his goal, will Tancredo opt to become a third-party candidate, with the potential to siphon pivotal votes in states like Iowa and Colorado?

Does Tancredo have the national support and monetary muscle to become a political spoiler in the mold of Ross Perot or Ralph Nader?

T.Q. Houlton, a spokesman for the Tancredo for a Secure America Exploratory Committee, claimed, "We've had no intention to run as a third-party candidate, ever, and we'll never consider that because he's a Republican, period." So there is no reason to doubt Tancredo will remain under the Republican tent—though some Coloradans might recall the congressman, after championing term-limits in his home state, broke that pledge.

Tancredo recently handed over the chairmanship of the Congressional Immigration Reform Caucus—a group he has led since his first term in the House, and which has grown from 16 members to over 100—to Rep. Brian Bilbray of California. It was seen as another sign that Tancredo is focused on making some hay.

But we all know Tancredo's serious. What we don't know is if it will matter. ♦

MICHAEL RAMIREZ

THE INCONVENIENT TRUTH

House of Cards

The unsound loans that fueled the housing boom are starting to collapse. BY ANDREW LAPERRIERE

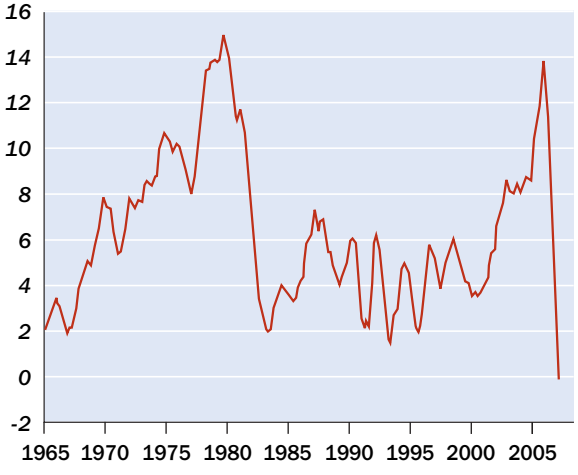
Last week the stock market experienced one of its largest drops since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. While there were a number of causes, one major factor is investor concern that problems in the subprime mortgage market—which caters to consumers with poor credit ratings—are going to spread. This could lead to higher-than-expected foreclosures, job losses in construction and real estate, lower consumer spending, and possibly a recession.

Despite low interest rates and an economy operating at essentially full employment, during the past few months subprime mortgage delinquencies have spiked to record territory. About two dozen subprime lenders have closed their doors, and the stocks of several major subprime lenders have plunged. Home prices are roughly flat nationwide in the last year, but, as the chart shows, the rate of appreciation is in free fall. After soaring the past few years, real estate prices in southern Florida, once the epicenter of the housing boom, have dropped in the past year by 6 percent in Miami and 18 percent in Sarasota-Bradenton, according to the National Association of Realtors. What's going on?

It is becoming increasingly clear that the housing boom was built on a weak foundation: easy money. The boom started in earnest when the Federal Reserve slashed interest rates in response to the 2001 recession. The lower rates cut monthly payments, boosting demand for housing and pushing up home prices. As home prices kept rising, loan terms became easier but fewer loans went bad, because homeowners in financial distress could usually refinance or sell their homes at a profit.

Look Out Below!

Year over year change in the price of existing houses*



*The price changes shown in the graph are a 12-month average, seasonally adjusted.

SOURCE: ISI / NAR

But the Fed's loose monetary policy also created a credit bubble that led to today's problems. Confidence in ever-rising home prices and cheap money fueled speculation, which in turn boosted demand and pushed home prices higher still. Another major factor: the insatiable demand by investors for mortgage-backed securities, which provided the funds for a five-fold expansion of subprime lending. (Because "subprime" borrowers have a less than stellar history of paying their bills on time, they pay a higher rate of interest, always alluring to investors with a stomach for risk.) Some of the growth of subprime lending was a favorable development that put homeownership within reach for millions of lower-income people.

But in the past couple of years, loans once known in industry parlance as "toxic waste" have become standard practice. For example, borrowers with checkered credit histories have been able to buy a home with no down payment and no verification of income. What's worse, the initial mortgage payment typically accounts for close to half of the borrower's (nonverified) gross income—and even that high payment is based on a teaser rate. Most subprime loans are 30-year adjustable rate mortgages (ARMs), but the interest rate resets after two years, and the payment rises significantly. Critics call these so-called 2/28 loans "exploding ARMs." The Center for Responsible Lending estimates that one in five subprime loans originated in the past two years will end in foreclosure.

But the lack of prudent lending standards hasn't been confined to the subprime market. In fact, the same risky practices (little or no down payment, no verification of income, high payments as a share of income, low teaser rates) began in the Alt-A market, a not-so-easy-to-quantify middle ground between subprime and prime borrowers. Fully 81 percent of Alt-A loans were extended with reduced or no documentation required from borrowers, according to First American LoanPerformance. *Inside Mortgage Finance*, an industry publication, estimates that subprime loans accounted for 24 percent of the consumer market last year and another 16 percent were Alt-A loans. So, fully 40 percent of mortgages originated in 2006 were risky.

Given the relatively fixed supply of homes, the spike in demand fueled by risky mortgages was a key factor in the unprecedented increase in home prices. Even as the housing market has cooled, the price-to-income ratio and other common-sense metrics of

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home valuation are still off the charts. It now costs half as much to rent as to own in the Mid-Atlantic and many other regions, powerful evidence that the market price of real estate is divorced from its underlying economic value.

Credit bubbles that create these kinds of economic anomalies inevitably produce a financial train wreck, which is already happening in the subprime market. Speculators who bought homes in the heady days of the boom started selling once the momentum turned, which, along with modestly higher interest rates, helped stop price appreciation in its tracks last year. Now that losses from bad subprime loans are climbing, investors in mortgage-backed securities are bailing out and banks are tightening their underwriting standards. What's more, the bank regulators, who in this case were quicker to spot the problems than investors, have been tightening lending standards, and under pressure from Congress are in the process of tightening standards on subprime loans.

It's already harder to get a risky loan—and about to get harder still—and these tighter credit conditions will reduce the demand for housing at a time when the inventory of homes for sale is near record levels. Therefore, the boom's virtuous cycle (easy money, increased demand for housing, higher home prices, looser lending standards) is now reversing and becoming a vicious one (higher foreclosures, bigger losses for banks and investors, tighter credit standards, less demand for housing, lower home prices, still higher foreclosure rates).

But the tighter credit conditions are only just beginning, so the worst of the economic fallout from the housing slump is probably ahead of us. The issue economists and investors are wrestling with is how much lower home prices and rising delinquencies will reduce employment, business investment, consumer spending, and overall economic growth. No one knows by how much, but these forces will lower growth and leave the economy vulnerable to recession.

Naturally, as more and more families lose homes to foreclosure, two questions will increasingly be asked in Washington: "Whose fault is this?" and "What can we do about it?" The truth is, there is plenty of blame to go around, but there are not many *productive* policy options.

Politicians won't be inclined to blame consumers, but most home buyers knew—or should have known—that there is no free lunch. The consumers who paid higher rates for "no doc" loans so they could fib about their income and qualify for a bigger mortgage, the speculators who gambled on Vegas condos, or borrowers who cashed out the equity in their home and exchanged their 30-year fixed rate mortgage for a "pay-option" ARM had to have known they were taking a risk.

But one also doesn't have to sort through too many junk-mail solicitations to find unscrupulous lenders who misrepresented the risks of these loan products. In addition to the mortgage brokers and banks, the Wall Street firms that securitized these mortgages and the credit rating agencies that blessed their creditworthiness will make especially inviting political targets.

Unfortunately, there isn't much Congress can do without making the problem worse or creating a significant moral hazard. If Congress tries to punish the lenders beyond the harsh penalty financial markets are likely to inflict, it will further discourage banks from making loans and will create a credit crunch. If it tries to bail out consumers, as some on Capitol Hill are contemplating, it might make the problem worse by giving homeowners, many of whom could muddle through without a bailout, perverse incentives (default and lower your mortgage payment). If a bailout is less about debt relief and more oriented toward restructuring debt, it might drag out the downturn, just as the Japanese government's efforts to insulate banks and businesses from bad loans delayed for years Japan's recovery from its real estate bust. A better approach would have been to allow bankruptcies and a fresh start.

Policymakers need to proceed with caution. The Federal Reserve went too far in cutting rates to cushion the economy from the fallout of the tech bubble, and today's problems in the housing and mortgage markets are the unintended consequence. If, as the evidence strongly suggests, many consumers have taken out risky loans they cannot afford to pay back, then home prices will continue to drop, and significant financial hardship is largely unavoidable. ♦

Let's Make a Deal

Social conservatives, Rudy Giuliani, and the end of the litmus test

By Noemie Emery

Next year may see the party of the Sunbelt and Reagan, based in the South and in Protestant churches, nominate its first presidential candidate who is Catholic, urban, and ethnic—and socially liberal on a cluster of issues that set him at odds with the party's base. As a result, it may also see the end of the social issues litmus test in the Republican party, done in not by the party's left wing, which is shrunken and powerless, but by a fairly large cadre of social conservatives convinced that, in a time of national peril, the test is a luxury they cannot afford. For the past 30 years of cultural warfare, there has been only one template for an aspiring president of either party with positions that cross those of its organized activists: Displeasure is voiced, reservations are uttered, and soon enough there is a "conversion of conscience" in which the miscreant—Dick Gephardt, Al Gore, George Bush the elder, even the hapless Dennis Kucinich—is brought to heel in a fairly undignified manner, and sees what his party sees as the light. The Giuliani campaign seems to be departing from this pattern. And this time, a pro-life party, faced with a pro-choice candidate it finds compelling on other grounds, is doing things differently. It is not carping or caving or seeking a convert. Instead, it is making a deal.

One has to wend one's way back through the litmus test saga to see just how big this could be. In 1980, the parties for the first time took radically opposed views, with a plank in the Republican platform calling for a constitutional amendment to ban all abortion, while the Democrats (over the protests of President Carter) insisted abortion should be not only legal, but funded by taxpayers. Four years later, these planks, and the lobbies that backed them, were fully entrenched. By 1988, top tier candidates in both parties had undergone forced conversions; and in the 1990s, both sides attacked their dissenters full bore. In 1992—The Year of the Woman—Democrats famously silenced pro-life Pennsylvania governor Bob Casey at their New York convention, parked him up in the bleachers where no one could see him, and gave his slot to a pro-choice Republican. Four years later, pro-life groups pulled Republican nominee Bob Dole through a knothole, torturing him for a week before denying his suggestion that an expression of "tolerance" for those who dissented be inserted into the plank. As late as 2003, the Democratic candidates began their campaign season with a joint appearance at a NARAL fiesta, all eight of them tugging their forelocks before the group's leader and pledging allegiance, while a repentant Gephardt begged her forgiveness for the pro-life views he had been so ill-advised as to utter two decades before.

With this in mind, it was no minor matter when a small number of conservatives began to float ideas about how Giuliani and the party's activists might all get along. As early as August 2004, from the Republican convention in New York, David Frum was dispensing helpful suggestions: "He should not try to deny or conceal his own views," he wrote of the mayor. "He should not invoke Lee Atwater's 'Big Tent' . . . nor should he spend minutes and minutes parsing his views. . . . His job is not to persuade pro-life Republicans to agree with him, but to assure them that they can live with him." The *Powerline* blog weighed in in June 2005. "Some pundits think [Giuliani's] views on the social issues will bar him from getting the nomination," wrote Paul Mirengoff. "I disagree. . . . There is a national, largely bipartisan consensus that issues like gay marriage and abortion should be decided democratically, and not by the courts. If Giuliani emphasizes the process issue, and says . . . the key question is whether such issues are to be decided democratically, by legislatures, or autocratically, by judges, he could forge a solid Republican majority." *National Review* recalled a precedent. "The late Sen. Paul Coverdell," its editorial stated, "supported legal abortion. But once he won his primary, pro-lifers supported him since he promised to vote to ban partial-birth abortion, oppose public funding of abortion, and support conservative nominees to the judiciary."

The 2006 midterms, aka "the bloodbath," brought more people over. Texas pollster David Hill, writing in the *Hill*, observed that "Giuliani might bargain with the right. He's a transactional politician who might welcome the entreaty, and concede even more than McCain."

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Actually, Giuliani had been dealing already, by taking the bloggers and pundits' advice. In 2006, he campaigned for many pro-life candidates, spoke out against judicial activism, and cited the likes of Samuel Alito and John Roberts as the kind of judges he wanted to see on the bench. There has been some resistance, but since the start of this year a sizable cadre of social conservatives have declared either their willingness to consider supporting the mayor, or their intention not to write him off. Since Giuliani emerged as a possible candidate, people have known he would have to deal with the base of his party, but everyone thought this would involve a supplicant bending of the knee and begging leave of the Republican voters he had dismayed. No one imagined that so much of that base would come looking for him, and then make it their business to hand him a strategy. But that is what they have done.

Why has this happened now, after decades of litmus-test dictates? Four reasons come to mind.

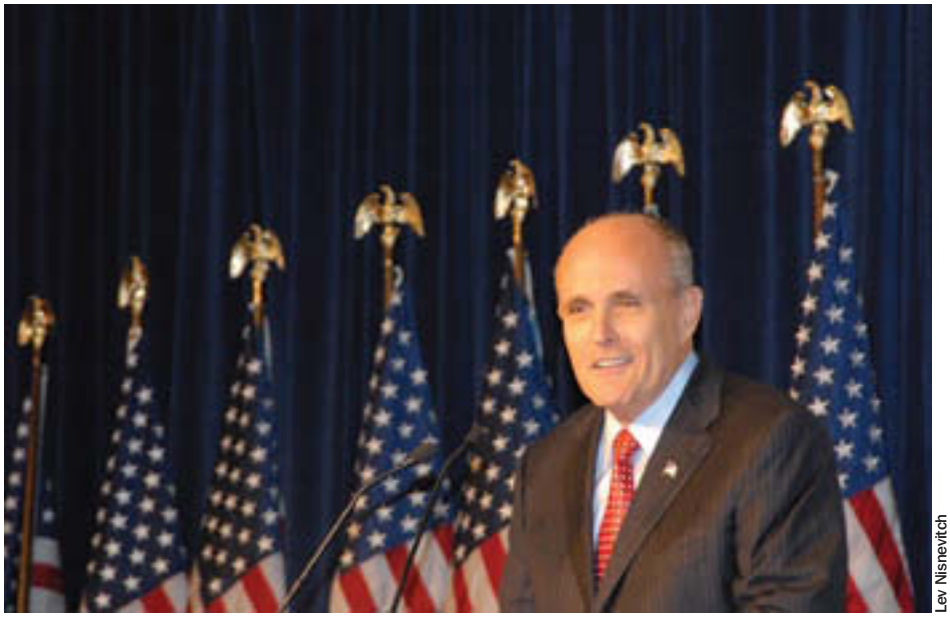
(1) The War, Stupid: There is the war, which overwhelms everything as *the* major issue in the eyes of the base. No group in the country backs the war on terror as fervently as social conservatives, whose main criticism of the president's policy is that it has not been aggressive enough. To them, Rudy is the ultimate warrior, a man who not only survived 9/11 and rallied the city, but whose success in routing the gangs of New York is a template for engaging the Islamic terrorists, and an indication that he has the resolve and the relentlessness to carry this bloody task off.

They see him as a more ruthless version of George W. Bush, someone who would not have consented to less-than-aggressive rules of engagement; who would have taken Falluja the first time, and not have had to come back later; who would not have let Sadr escape when he had him; who would not have been fazed by whining over Abu Ghraib and Club Gitmo, and would have treated critics of the armed forces and of the mission with the same impatience he showed critics of the police in New York. As nothing else, the terror war sits at a nexus of issues dear to the heart of the base: the need to use force when one's country is threatened; the need to make judgments between good and evil; the need to protect and assert the moral codes of the Judeo-Christian tradition; the need to defend the ideals of the West.

"For a majority of the GOP primary electorate, it is the war, the war, the war (and judges)," writes the influential radio host and blogger Hugh Hewitt. "The war on terror hasn't just changed Giuliani's profile as a crisis-leader," writes columnist Jonah Goldberg. "It's changed the attitudes of many Americans, particularly conservatives, about the central crisis facing the country. It's not that pro-lifers are less pro-life. . . . It's that they really, really believe the war on terror is for real. At conservative conferences, on blogs, and on talk radio, pro-life issues have faded in their passion and intensity. . . . Taken together, terrorism, Iraq, and Islam have become the No. 1 social issue." And the earth surely moved on February 21, when the writer Maggie Gallagher, as tough and principled as they come on abortion and marriage, allowed in her syndicated column that she just might consider the mayor. "I never voted for Rudy when I lived in New York City for one simple reason: abortion. . . . Why would I even think of changing my mind? Two things: national security, and Hillary Clinton's Supreme Court appointments." Keep your eyes out for more of these eye-popping moments. This one will not be the last.

(2) Not Your Father's Pro-Choice Republican: There were pro-choice Republicans before Giuliani, but they held no appeal for conservatives, and there was little desire to cut them a break. They were politicians like Christie Todd Whitman, Jim Jeffords, Lincoln Chafee, and the ladies from Maine, from the near-extinct school of northern-tier liberal Republicans, regarded as "soft" on a wide range of issues. Or they were like Bill Weld, a fiscal conservative but a libertarian otherwise, whose watchword on most issues was "anything goes." A great many things do not "go" with Rudy, an enforcer by nature, seen as a Puritan scold by most of his liberal critics, who deplored his crackdowns on porn and on crime. As he told the conservative attendees at the CPAC conference in Washington last Friday, quoting Ronald Reagan, "anyone who is with you 80 percent of the time is your 80 percent friend—not your 20 percent enemy." Previous pro-choice Republicans tended to look down on the social conservatives, to agree with the press that they were cringe-making yahoos, and to accept the condolences of the media for the terrible people they had to put up with in their party.

To the press, Rudy *was* one of those terrible people—too quick to defend the police when they were attacked on brutality charges; a fascist, a bully, and a prude. With most pro-choice Republicans, their views on abortion are only one of a set of positions and attitudes that arouse the ire of the base. Giuliani is that very rare animal, a pro-choice Republican who is also the furthest thing possible from a liberal on a wide range of issues (law and order among them). "In case after case, he refused to accept the veto of liberal public opinion," writes John Podhoretz in his *New York Post* column. "More than any other candidate in the race, Rudy Giuliani is a liberal slayer. When he rejects liberal orthodoxy, which he does



Lev Nisnevitch

Giuliani at CPAC, March 2, 2007

often, he doesn't just oppose it. He goes to war with it—total, unconditional war." If you believe that the enemy of your enemy must be your friend, conservatives have no better friend than the mayor, *bête noire* and scourge of the limousine liberals, the race hustlers, the friends of identity politics, the opponents of capital punishment, the municipal unions, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the *New York Times*. Some will want him to be president, if only to annoy all these people—a temptation too big to resist.

(3) The Shape of the Field: Strict conservatives are not all that enthralled by any of the three main contenders—Giuliani, John McCain, and Mitt Romney. This is their weakness, but also their strength, as they all tend to give each other cover along with other conservative stars. Did Giuliani leave his first wife? So did McCain. Did he leave his second wife? So did Newt Gingrich. Is he pro-choice and gay-friendly? So was Mitt Romney a scant four years ago. McCain is the only one with a firm pro-life record, but the base doesn't like him for a number of reasons, among them tax cuts, immigration, campaign finance reform, and being used by the press to score points against conservatives on too many things to enumerate.

Some day their prince may come—the conservative who hits all the bases—pro-life, pro-supply side, pro-tax cuts, pro-deregulation, and hawkish in foreign policy—but this day is not it, and that day may never arrive. In this case, as the base will be forced to cut slack to someone on something—on his public stances or his private life, on his past or present positions—they may want to do it for someone who in many ways truly excites them, who bonds with them on many issues, and who, so far at least, leads Hillary Clinton and all other comers in the polls.

(4) Mugged by Reality: After 30-plus years of fierce, intense arguments, much emotion, and many polls taken, both sides in the abortion wars have been mugged by reality, and realize that neither is likely to reach its major goals soon. Dreams of outlawing abortion on the one hand, or, on the other, of seeing it funded, legitimized, and enshrined as an unassailable civil right, have faded in the face of a large and so-far unswayable public opinion that is conflicted, ambivalent, and inclined to punish any political figure it sees as too rigid, too strident, or too eager to go to extremes. For this reason, no politician shrewd enough to make himself president is likely to go on a pro-life or pro-choice crusade. (Like Ronald Reagan before him, George W. Bush addresses the March for Life by phone and long distance; the new Democratic Congress, for its part, has wisely decided to leave the whole issue alone.) With this has come an understanding that, aside from the appointing of judges, and some tinkering with executive orders, the president's role is not large.

Purists will want someone whose heart is with them, but, in the real world, the state of the president's heart does not count: Support for abortion remained fairly high under Reagan and Bush 41, and began to fall off under Bill Clinton, the most pro-choice president in American history, strongly backed by the feminist movement, and pushed by his feminist wife. A strict constructionist justice appointed by a president who is pro-choice is no different from a strict constructionist appointed by a pro-life president, at least in the view of the practically minded, and better than an activist justice appointed by somebody else.

For some people, this argument will not be sufficient, and debates have now broken out among social conservatives. But the surprising thing is that these debates are occurring, which had not been foreseen or expected a few months ago. This is why early assessments of Giuliani's possible weakness may be misleading, among them polls indicating that many social conservatives would never back a pro-choice nominee. They do not show what might happen if the nominee pledged not to

push for a pro-choice agenda, or if he were endorsed and supported by conservative icons who vouched for him, campaigned with and for him, and swore to their backers that he was all right.

The deal in the works has been carefully crafted to make sure that no one loses too much. Conservatives would be getting a pro-choice nominee, but one who would not push a pro-choice agenda, and one who would give them (as far as presidents can be sure in these matters) the kind of judges they long for. Giuliani would not be required to renounce his beliefs, merely to appoint the right kind of judges and to remain more or less neutral in a policy area in which, to be honest, he has never shown that much interest. The Republicans will remain the pro-life party—as desired by the bulk of their voters and required by the workings of the two-party system—though now with a larger, more varied, and in some ways more competitive field of candidates. And it is worth noting in this altered context that the Democrats also are starting to change. One of the reasons Democrats now run both the houses of Congress is that canny recruiters defied their own culture war lobbies and rammed a number of pro-life and pro-gun candidates down the throats of their interest groups, assessing correctly that control of Congress was worth a few unhappy activists. They are not yet at the point of nominating a pro-life candidate on the national level, but the lid has been pried open a crack. Someday, they too may find a candidate whom they find attractive—say, for irony's sake, a Bob Casey Jr.—except for this single and glaring impediment. And at that point, they too might deal.

And now, as the litmus test slowly expires, it is time to consider its costs. It has been a very good deal for the people who imposed it, but a very bad one for the country at large. It has meant that a candidate for national office must begin by embracing ideas that have been rejected by seven in ten of Americans, while a candidate who comes close to the center of public opinion would never be allowed to compete. It has made candidates for the post of commander in chief of the world's greatest power kick off their campaigns by groveling before leaders of interest groups, which does not make them seem leaderly and causes voters to lose all respect. Worst of all, it posed the real possibility that a candidate would come forth who seemed equipped to deal with a crisis, but who, because he held the "wrong views" in the eyes of the interest groups, would not be allowed to emerge. In Giuliani, some social conservatives think they have found such a candidate and do not want to waste him. And so, they are making a deal. ♦

Michael Ramirez

Reading and Writing and Ramadan

The Muslim Council of Britain's plan for "sensitizing" the schools

By Irfan al-Alawi & Stephen Schwartz

London

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is the leading institution representing Sunni Muslim fundamentalism in the United Kingdom. An independent umbrella association of some 400 mosques, educational and charitable institutions, women's and youth groups, and professional bodies, it came into being in 1997. It has generally reflected the ideologies of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the Saudi Wahhabi cult, and the Deobandi jihadists of Pakistan, whose thinking underlay the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

The council's new secretary general is the Bangladesh-born Muhammad Abdul Bari. He succeeds the infamous Sir Iqbal Sacranie, who endorsed threats against the novelist Salman Rushdie, saying: "Death, perhaps, is a bit too easy for him." Sacranie and the MCB protested the publication of the Muhammad caricatures in Denmark. The council boycotts Britain's Holocaust Memorial Day, observed each January 27, with the argument that an occasion for remembrance should be established for all victims of genocide, and not merely for the Jews killed by Hitler. It produces a steady stream of excuses for suicide terror in Israel and Kashmir. Yet the council professes moderation.

Now, however, its authentic agenda is discernible in its new recommended guidelines for accommodating Muslim students in British state schools—equivalent to the public school system in the United States. Just published, the guidelines are entitled "Towards Greater Understanding—Meeting the Needs of Muslim Pupils in State Schools: Information & Guidance for Schools" and can be downloaded at *www.mcb.org.uk*. The guidelines call upon British schools to "respond positively to meeting the needs of Muslim pupils." It's a tall order.

The first challenge is to grasp the comprehensive nature of the Muslim faith. "The faith commitments of Muslim pupils and their families encompass all aspects of everyday life and conduct, including daily life in school," explains the foreword. To realize this, school teachers and administrators should undergo cultural awareness training. Indeed, the ordinary assumption that pupils' religion is a private matter is problematic. As the guidelines explain:

> Some community schools adopt a policy where the religion and faith of their pupils is strictly regarded as a matter of private and personal concern for each pupil and is therefore not appropriately addressed within the school. This approach makes it more difficult for schools to appreciate and respond positively to meeting some of the distinctive spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs of Muslim children.

Instead, schools should not only "recognise and affirm" Muslim needs, they should protect Muslim children from "situations involving conflicts of belief or conscience . . . likely to have an alienating effect where pupils may feel that they are not valued and may give rise to inappropriate assumptions that in order to progress in society they will have to compromise or give up aspects of who they are, and their religious beliefs and values."

This is important for standard multicultural reasons—"for Muslim pupils' sense of self-esteem and worth"—but also because Islam is special. "Although there are many similarities with other faith groups, many of the issues facing Muslim pupils are different in kind and in degree. Schools need to be better informed and have greater and more accurate appreciation of their Muslim pupils' needs."

On the matter of clothing, the MCB explains, "In principle the dress for both boys and girls should be modest and neither tight-fitting nor transparent and not accentu-

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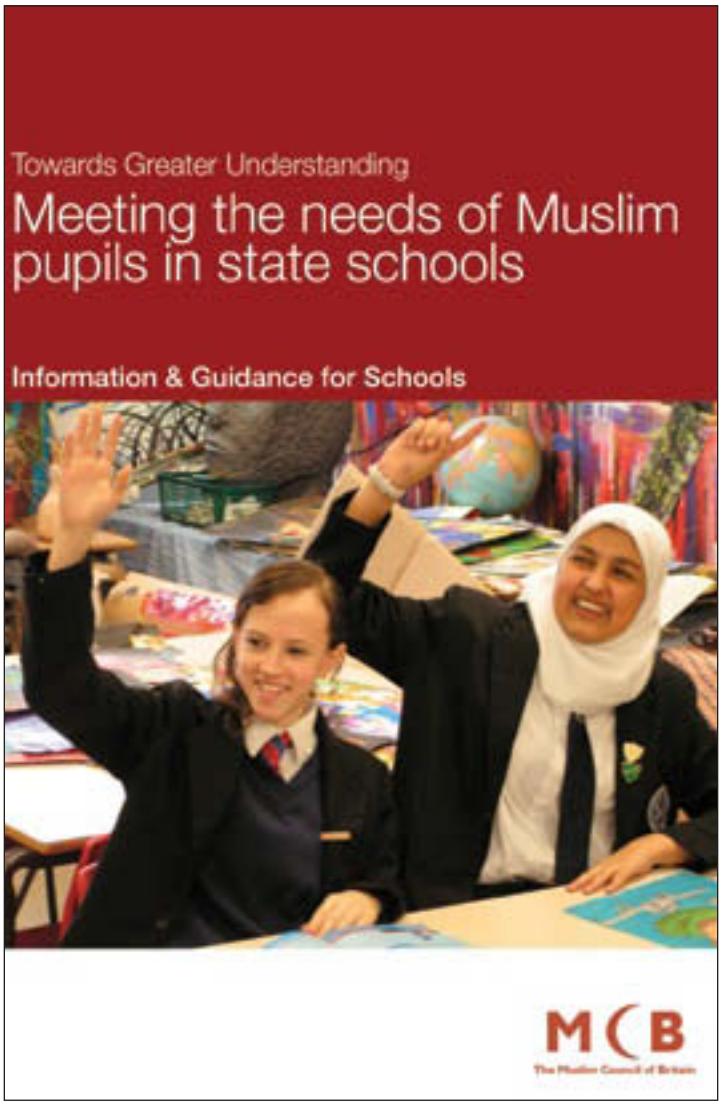


ate the body shape. In practice this means a wide variety of styles are acceptable. In public boys should always be covered between the navel and knee and girls should be covered except for their hands and faces, a concept known as 'hijab.'" A footnote adds, "For some Muslims fulfilling this requirement may mean the wearing of the jilbab (a long outer garment down to the ankles)." Further, "schools should accommodate Muslim girls so that they are allowed to wear a full-length loose school skirt or loose trousers, a long-sleeved shirt and a head scarf to cover their hair."

These comments presume that many British Muslim school children will be dressing in the manner of women in Saudi Arabia. Strict *hijab* and *jilbab* are largely absent from such Muslim countries and regions as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, Turkey, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia, and are rare among the urban population in North Africa, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and the crescent of "normal" Gulf states from Jordan to Yemen.

A two-page section of the MCB guidelines calls for a Muslim diet at meals. Then there is the need for time and facilities for prayer by Muslim children at least once a day. Again, the MCB is careful to stipulate the special requirements of fundamentalists: "Schools should be aware that some pupils may request separate prayer facilities for boys and girls, as they may feel more comfortable praying in a single-gender group." Schools should also provide extra "water cans or bottles" for washing of the hands, mouth, face, arms to the elbow, feet, and private parts before prayer.

On Friday afternoons, Muslims attend collective prayer including a sermon (Muslim males, that is: the guidelines state this is "optional or recommended" for females). The MCB suggests that "a suitable external visitor, a teacher or an older pupil" may lead the observance. This opens the door to the entry of extremist imams in state schools, much as radical chaplains have been incorporated into the American penal system.

The council urges special "awareness training" for teachers about the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. Further, MCB warns, this is a poor time to schedule examinations "since the combination of preparing for exams and fasting may prove challenging for some pupils."

Some rescheduling of studies may also be in order. We read, "Whilst fasting, Muslims are not permitted to engage in any sexual relations and are expected to take measures to avoid sexual thoughts and discourse. Schools are therefore advised to avoid scheduling the teaching of sex and relationship education, including aspects that are part of the science curriculum, during Ramadan." Thus, Islamist thought control is to be insinuated into British schools. The MCB holds up as "good practice" in state schools to include all children, not just Muslims, in celebrating "the spirit and values of Ramadan through collective worship or assembly themes and communal Iftar (collective breaking of the fast)."

Given such special pleading for Ramadan, it is unsurprising that the MCB also calls for the Muslim holidays of Eid al-Fitr (the end of Ramadan) and Eid al-Adha (the end of the pilgrimage or hajj month) to be appropriately observed:

> Schools may want to share sweets amongst all children to mark this event. In addition, schools may make the normal school meals a special Eid meal for all the children and invite some parents and special guests. Holding balls and discos to celebrate Islamic festivals would be considered inappropriate by Muslim parents.

Corbis / Stefan Rousseau

Iqbal Sacranie, with Tony Blair, at the Labour party's conference in Brighton, September 29, 2004

Piling one entreaty on another, the guidelines explain the complications of the Sunni calendar that makes consultation with outside authorities advisable for schools:

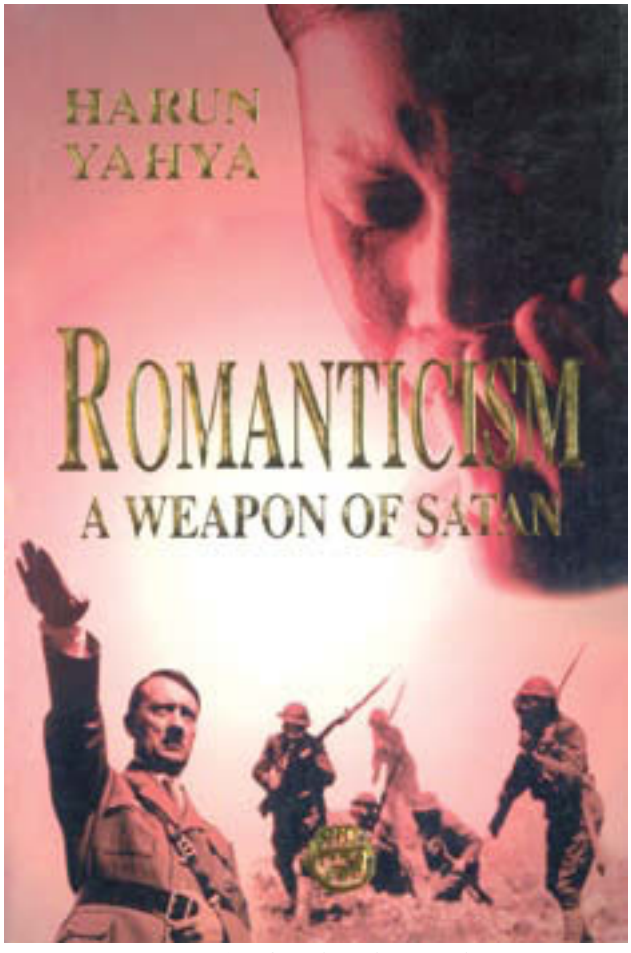
> As Eid days are based on the lunar calendar, there can be some uncertainty in determining the exact dates of the two Eids in advance. This makes planning for Eid holidays difficult. Schools are advised to liaise with their local mosque or other Muslim organisations for more information. . . . There are a number of other important occasions in the Islamic calendar which schools can recognise through assembly themes. They include the Islamic New Year (Hijrah), Night of Power (Lailatul Qadr), Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the day of Ashurah.

Turning to children's sports, the MCB reinforces its fundamentalist program for sex-segregation and modesty:

> Some sports involve physical contact with other team players, for example basketball and football. Most Muslim parents would find it objectionable for boys and girls to play such sports in mixed-gender groups. Schools can respond positively to this concern by making sure that contact sports are always in single-gender groups. . . . Some schools may have policies for children to shower at school after sports activities. These arrangements sometimes take the form of naked communal showering, which involves profound indignity. The practice of allowing Muslim children to shower in bathing costumes or shorts does not solve the problem if other pupils are naked in the same communal shower area. Islam forbids nakedness in front of others or being among others who are naked. . . .
>
> The practice of boys and girls swimming in mixed-group sessions or being exposed to complete nakedness of others, when changing, is unacceptable for reasons of modesty and decency to Muslim parents. . . . Schools should make every effort to provide a single-sex environment for swimming and allow Muslim children to wear swimwear that complies with the requirements of modesty and decency according to the teachings of Islam. Some schools have been able to meet these requirements in providing an appropriate single-gender environment and also allowing girls to wear full leotards and leggings in the pool. Provided these guidelines are adhered to, there should be no reason why Muslim children should be withdrawn from swimming lessons.

In another forthright statement of Islamic fundamentalism, the guidelines object to most dance and music:

> Muslims consider that most dance activities, as practised in the curriculum, are not consistent with the Islamic requirements for modesty as they may involve sexual connotations and messages when performed within mixed-gender groups or if performed in front of mixed audiences. Most primary and secondary schools hold dance in mixed-gender classes and may include popular dance styles, in which movements of the body are seen as sexually expressive and seductive in nature. . . . [M]ost Muslim parents will find little or no educational merit or value in dance or dancing after early childhood and may even find it objectionable on moral and religious grounds once children have become sexually mature (puberty). Some parents may consider it to be acceptable within a single-sex context provided the dance movements have no sexual connotations. As dancing is not a normal activity for most Muslim families, Muslim pupils are likely to exhibit reluctance to take part in it, particularly in mixed-gender sessions. By the same token, dance performances before a mixed gender audience may also be objectionable. . . . [P]arental requests for children to be



MCB's idea of enriching the curriculum

excused from dance should be treated as an issue of religious conscience and respected accordingly.

These strictures would seem absurd to Muslims coming to Britain from many Islamic societies in which dance is an accepted art form, including Turkey, which accounts for up to 15 percent of Britain's two million Muslims. They reveal the ambition of the MCB to press its radical agenda among all British Muslims.

As for music—sometimes considered one of the great achievements of Islamic civilization—the MCB warns in the fundamentalist manner, "Traditionally, music is limited to the human voice and non-tuneable percussion instruments such as drums." This is an ideological falsehood of some audacity. Moroccan, Algerian, Egyptian, Lebanese, Turkish, Balkan, Central Asian, and other Muslims have excelled in the composition of music on diverse stringed instruments, as well as instruments shared with neighboring cultures, such as the clarinet, piano, and Chinese percussion. To suggest that the British school system start treating this aspect of Islamic civilization—not to mention world civilization—as dangerous is to seek the impoverishment of schools and the relegation of Muslim students to the crabbed and rigid program of radical fundamentalism.

Given that British parents have no right to withdraw their children from music education, the MCB urges schools to set up procedures for the adjudication of parents' complaints. In the field of art, the MCB advances another fundamentalist dictum: "In Islam the creation of three dimensional figurative imagery of humans is generally regarded as unacceptable because of the risk of idolatress [sic] practices and some pupils and parents may raise objections to this. The school should avoid encouraging Muslim pupils from producing three dimensional imagery of humans."

The MCB skirts the hot-button issue of depiction of Muhammad, proposing only that students not be asked to draw pictures of the prophet. But it propagates another fundamentalist lie when it baldly asserts, "All Muslim children learn to read and recite the Qur'an in Arabic." Students in fundamentalist madrassas in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and a few other countries do this. But this is certainly not the case either in the United Kingdom or in most Muslim lands.

The guidelines then devote a full chapter to Islamic standards in sex and relationship education. Schools are cautioned against asking students to shake hands with members of the opposite sex, and if teachers recognize symptoms of domestic conflict in families, they are enjoined to consult a Muslim member of the staff.

The MCB pamphlet concludes with an offer of a research pack for teachers, priced at about $500. This includes a *hijab* and a prayer cap of a kind fundamentalist and other militant Muslims habitually wear (although such caps are standard Muslim headgear in Central Asia regardless of religious views). Finally, an appendix offers a list of recommended websites, including *www.harunyahya.com*, a Turkish Islamist enterprise that produces crude books attacking evolution, expressing prejudice against Jews and Freemasons, and propounding elaborate conspiracy theories that tie the mafia to the Knights Templar. Harun Yahya's venomous literature, which is translated and printed in every language Muslims read, should not be promoted in Western schools.

The inclusion of materials by a disreputable Turkish Sunni fanatic in guidelines for British state schools is a clue that should not be missed: The ambitions expressed in this booklet are not limited to the United Kingdom. The Muslim Council of Britain's vision for the establishment of a little Saudi kingdom inside every state school amounts to a manifesto for the penetration of the West by a dangerous form of Islamic fundamentalism. ♦

epa / Corbis / Matthew Cavanaugh

Justice Stevens swears in Chief Justice Roberts, 2005

The Roberts Court

And how it came to be By Terry Eastland

On July 1, 2005, with the Supreme Court having finished another term, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor announced her retirement. Weeks later, Chief Justice William Rehnquist, suffering from thyroid cancer, died. Those were the first vacancies to occur in 11 years, the longest stretch without an opening in the history of the nine-member Court. We know what happened next: President Bush named John Roberts to replace Rehnquist and Samuel Alito to succeed O'Connor, and the Senate confirmed them both.

The "inside story" of the two appointments and what they signified—"a struggle for control" of the Court—is what Jan Crawford Greenburg superbly tells in this prodigiously reported book, informed by hundreds of interviews, including of nine justices.

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She describes a selection process in the Bush administration that was both "brilliantly executed and catastrophically blundered" (see Harriet Miers). And she concludes that Bush, "despite all his missteps," achieved his goal of moving the balance of the Court to the right.

Supreme Conflict
The Inside Story of the Struggle for Control of the United States Supreme Court
by Jan Crawford Greenburg
Penguin, 340 pp., $27.95

Greenburg, who since 1994 has covered the Court, first for the *Chicago Tribune* and now for ABC News, places the story of the Roberts and Alito appointments within the larger context of the four-decades-long effort by Republican presidents to change the jurisprudential direction of the Court. Before Bush took office, Republican presidents had named all but two of the 12 new justices to take their seats since the end of the liberal Warren Court in 1969. But the Burger Court (1969-86) was, as one writer described it, "the counterrevolution that wasn't." Indeed, it was the Burger Court that, in *Roe* v. *Wade*, invented a constitutional right to abortion, a case that has troubled confirmation politics ever since. And the Rehnquist Court, notwithstanding that seven of its members were appointed by Republican presidents, was, writes Greenburg, "jurisprudentially unmoored," often failing in critical cases to take a conservative path.

Greenburg recounts how the justices, beginning with O'Connor in 1981, were chosen. O'Connor was a Reagan pick, as were Antonin Scalia and Anthony Kennedy. David Souter and Clarence Thomas were selected by George H.W. Bush. Of the five, O'Connor, Kennedy, and Souter have, in numerous ways, disappointed conservatives, while only

Scalia and Thomas have consistently won their praise. Not surprisingly, when George W. Bush ran for president in 2000, he pointed to Scalia and Thomas as the kind of justices he'd appoint. The question since the outset of his presidency has been whether, should vacancies occur, Bush would appoint jurists with a conservative approach to judging—or add to the conservative disappointment.

Greenburg reveals a White House fully aware of the mistakes made by past Republican presidents in their selection processes—and also one preoccupied with "diversity." Bush didn't want to repeat the mistake of unpreparedness committed by his father, who lacked a list of well-researched candidates to choose from in 1990 when William Brennan retired and, not wanting to delay, hastily chose the obscure Souter. Thus, early in his first term, Bush instructed his staff to develop a list of prospective justices and to conduct extensive background research on each one.

Bush aides assumed that Rehnquist would probably be the first to step down, and with that in mind, they kept an evolving short list of well-researched candidates. In early 2005, Roberts, a federal circuit judge in Washington, was at the very top, judged fit for associate justice but also chief justice. He was thought to be the best when measured by several yardsticks, including judicial philosophy.

As it happened, it was not Rehnquist but O'Connor whose seat first came open. Having previously thought about having to replace the Court's first female justice, Bush aides had cast "a wide net," writes Greenburg. But they'd found "no ideal woman or minority candidate." And upon further review, that remained the case. Assuming that Bush would eventually get the opportunity to replace Rehnquist, and could "add to the Court's diversity at that point," they decided to "put questions of race and gender aside and focus solely on judicial philosophy." So it was that Bush wound up picking Roberts, the lawyer his aides regarded most highly.

That decision annoyed O'Connor, who had wanted a woman to succeed her (and who gained her appointment in part because she was a woman, Reagan having promised to name the first female justice). But as we know, Roberts didn't take her seat. When Rehnquist died—mere hours before his nominee was to go before the Senate Judiciary Committee—Bush now had another seat to fill, and he quickly decided to withdraw Roberts for O'Connor's seat and nominate him as chief justice.

In Bush's view, reports Greenburg, Roberts had only grown in stature during his six weeks as a nominee. It was a case of the best getting even better.

With O'Connor's successor still to be determined, Bush moved away from his short list. Andrew Card was Bush's chief of staff, Harriet Miers his White House counsel, and William Kelley his deputy White House counsel. Writes Greenburg: "Card . . . told Miers and Kelley that Bush insisted on nominating a woman this time. 'No white guys,' Card said."

To their credit, the lawyers—including Miers, who had worked for Bush in various capacities over the previous dozen years—urged him to pick the person second only to Roberts on the list, the indubitably but apparently now damnably male Samuel Alito.

"They insisted he was the most qualified choice," Greenburg writes. They also knew that there were still very few "diversity candidates." In fact, they "couldn't come up with one who both was confirmable and the kind of judicial conservative" Bush wanted on the Court. One reason the list was "meager," Greenburg explains, is that during the past five years, Senate Democrats had succeeded in "eliminating candidates who would have been top contenders"—women and minorities whose nominations to circuit courts they blocked, or else approved, but only on condition that they not be nominated for the Supreme Court.

So it was that Card effectively created a short list of one when he asked Kelley (unbeknownst to Miers) to research his boss, thus committing, as Greenburg writes, "an egregious managerial mistake." The vetting, such as it was, failed to anticipate the broad and unyielding objection to Harriet Miers's nomination on the part of conservatives, whose support no Republican nominee can do without and still hope to be confirmed. Nor did the vetting yield what quickly became apparent to fair-minded observers in both parties, and would have been fatal had there been a confirmation hearing—that, as Greenburg says, Miers "was ill-prepared and uninformed on the law," especially constitutional law.

Concluding her visit with Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Oklahoma), Miers asked him, "How'd I do?"

Coburn replied, "You flunked."

Greenburg reports that, even as the prospect for Miers's confirmation moved from bad to worse, Bush wanted to fight for her, even if that meant duking it out with conservatives. "But what Bush hadn't counted on," Greenburg says, "was Miers letting him down." He thought she would be a good justice because he thought her character would prevent her from drifting to the left. But first she had to be a good nominee, something Bush had not considered. And it was now obvious "she wasn't going to learn con law in three weeks and pass a fluency exam."

One is compelled to ask: She let him down? It's hard not to feel sympathy for Harriet Miers, who was asked to assume a role that simply wasn't right for her.

Greenburg shrewdly observes that Bush's insistence on a "diversity nominee" for the O'Connor seat, and the Senate Democrats' success in eliminating so many female and minority candidates for the Court, placed the president in a situation where he wound up choosing someone who was "such a bad nominee that she couldn't get confirmed." That, in turn, gave Bush a second chance, and this time he surrendered his demand for diversity and focused on judicial philosophy, quickly settling on Alito.

"That Bush emerged from the Miers fiasco with Alito, the best possible choice according to his legal team,"

writes Greenburg, "was a remarkable twist."

Bush may have the opportunity to name another justice or two. But to this point in his presidency, he has succeeded in the selection of justices to an extent none of his predecessors did. After all, neither Bush's father, nor Ronald Reagan, nor Richard Nixon for that matter, filled Supreme Court vacancies with his best possible choices.

To be sure, it's too early to say that Bush has, indeed, moved the balance of the Court to the right through his appointments. It will take a few more years before that can be said with confidence. (And decisions this term, on the use of race in school assignments, and on the regulation of abortion, will be ones to watch.) But Bush—despite, or rather, because of the dumbfounding detour of the Miers nomination—did about as well in picking justices who might bring about a rightward shift in the Court's balance as one can imagine.

Supreme Conflict provides an engaging and fair-minded rendering of this critical achievement. ♦

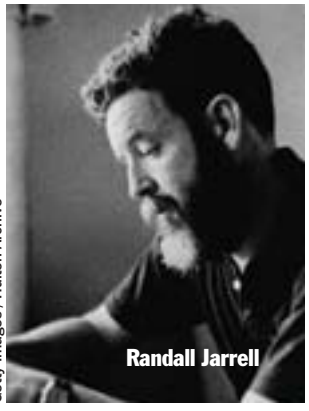
BCA

Jarrell Dug Auden

A word of thanks for literary archaeology.

BY GARRICK DAVIS

In 1952, Randall Jarrell delivered six lectures at Princeton devoted to the work of W.H. Auden at Princeton. Though his first collection of criticism, *Poetry and the Age*, would not appear for another year, Jarrell had made a name for himself as the literary editor for the *Nation* and a poetry critic for *Partisan Review*. Already he had a reputation for being deadly and accurate, so that his close friend Robert Lowell could boast that he "left many reputations permanently altered and exalted." On any number of fellow poets, Jarrell could be fascinating, but the one who enchanted (and then frustrated) him the most was Auden.



Getty Images / Hulton Archive

Randall Jarrell

Randall Jarrell on W. H. Auden
Edited by Stephen Burt with Hannah Brooks-Motl
Columbia, 178 pp., $36.50

To a semi-private audience that included R.P. Blackmur and Robert Fitzgerald, Jarrell proceeded to cavort in what he called his "gay-serious" mode on the transformation of the greatest English poet of the 20th century into an automaton of rhetorical devices. Though Jarrell thought he was in fine form—"able to think of long elaborate sentences, lovely phrases, attractive informalities, etc."—his fellow critic Blackmur was apparently unamused. As for the rest of the audience, their impressions have not come down to us.

On the basis of the evidence—now unearthed, polished, and annotated for us by Stephen Burt—Blackmur must have been suffering from constipation or envy. For this is Jarrell in the fullness of his powers, speaking at length on his favorite subject, and the results are as exhilarating as Benzedrine. They are not, let the reader be warned, an exercise in hagiography (Auden's literary executor, Edward Mendelson, should skip this book). In the first lecture, Jarrell imagines a castaway on an island reading through Auden's collected works:

> Our castaway reads all the poems that Auden has ever written. After a few days, awed at their improbable variety, he begins to think of Auden as a Proteus upon whose back he can ride off in all directions. But he does not say about the poems, "here is God's plenty." Here is far more than plenty, he looks about askance, and thinks it all some black or at least shady magic—particularly so because the magician keeps protesting, book in and book out, that it's all white, white. The castaway grumbles: "He moralizes me to the top of my bent."
>
> Ordinarily, a poet's Come back and you will find me just the same is the truth. . . . But Auden seems to be saying, Come back in five years and you'll never know me.

There is, however, a consistency to the magic. Jarrell's castaway, his ideal reader, is then rescued and handed Auden's last book of poetry to read:

> I imagine that the castaway has worked out for his book a long complicated analysis of Auden's development—this is particularly easy for me to imagine, since I have done so myself—have printed the analysis in *Partisan Review*, even—and could keep you here till midnight, and tomorrow midnight, and midnight a fortnight hence, describing Stage I and Stage II and Stage III. Our castaway would surely cry out in delight, after his first look at Auden's new book: "Stage IV! Stage IV! Oh, give me some paper, hand me a pencil!" I see him disappearing into a cabin, his lips moving as if to say, "All changed, changed utterly!"

Such is Jarrell's prose when it soars. He can be—in rapid succession—gushing, pedantic, casual, and dismissive without losing our interest. I can hear you say, "Yes, but how persuasive is it? And how fair is Jarrell ultimately to Auden and his poetry?" Let's just say that if Auden's reputation is an immovable object, then Jarrell's wit is the irresistible force—and many are moved by it. According to the *New York Times*, at a Yale memorial service

Garrick Davis is the founding editor of Contemporary Poetry Review.

in 1966, Peter Taylor told the crowd that, after Jarrell started playing with the Vanderbilt tennis team, "players like Don Budge were to be seen reading books of poetry."

How is it that such a treasure was kept in the library stacks unpublished for 50 years? And how much more of Randall Jarrell still remains to be discovered? If there was an ounce of sense in the American literary academy, Burt would be dispatched tomorrow to put together the Collected Works in a handsome edition, from the manuscripts at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (where Jarrell taught) and in the Berg Collection at the New York Public Library. As it is, we shall no doubt have to wait another 50 years to enjoy Jarrell complete and unabridged.

Stephen Burt is a poet, critic, professor, and scholar—some readers may be familiar with his reviews in *The Believer* or his two collections of poetry—but it is in this last occupation that he has rendered his best service to literature. His previous book, *Randall Jarrell and His Age*, struck me as a dull dissertation; his editing of this book is another matter. These polished lecture notes should take an honored place alongside Jarrell's four volumes of published criticism as further testament to one of the great American stylists of critical prose.

Finishing it, one remembers what the president of Jesus College murmured, in despair, after leaving one of Matthew Arnold's lectures: ". . . the Angel ended." ♦

Pax Americana

A debate on the wisdom of global primacy.

BY GARY SCHMITT

Policy disputes in Washington often seem like the proverbial ships passing in the night. Each side may signal to the other, but for the most part they are content to stay clear of contact and be on their separate ways. To the credit of Christopher Layne, a professor at Texas A&M's Bush School of Government and Public Service, and Bradley Thayer, a professor of strategic studies at Missouri State, they have set out to do their part in correcting that problem when it comes to America's grand strategy with *American Empire: A Debate.*

American Empire
A Debate
by Christopher Layne and Bradley A. Thayer
Routledge, 168 pp., $19.95

As the title indicates, Thayer and Layne lay out, respectively, arguments for and against a U.S. foreign policy whose explicit goal is maintaining American primacy on the world stage—what both call the "American Empire." Layne and Thayer are professed realists; so having power, keeping it, and using it wisely are the key ingredients of this debate. What divides the two is their estimation of the costs and benefits of a grand strategy that rests on American global hegemony.

Thayer opens the book with his case for American primacy, arguing that, indeed, America is an empire, but not a traditional one: Its influence is now mostly tied to the indirect sway and security provided by its military power, its economic muscle, and the soft power associated with its political ideals and its dominating cultural presence around the globe. Moreover, the spirit behind America's empire is the "spirit of 1776." From the get-go, Americans wanted to expand geographically and, equally important, saw their notions of political and economic freedom as "a light to the nations." In its bones, America was never a status quo power.

Yet, even if America has a hegemonic instinct, Thayer reasonably asks: Can the country pull it off? Can the United States retain its primacy, or will other powers, as most realists believe, react to such overwhelming power by challenging it? Of the available candidates for doing so—China, Europe, and radical Islam—only China presents a significant problem, according to Thayer. Europe is dying away; terrorism is a bloody nuisance but manageable—even China's longer-term prospects are iffy given its own internal problems.

And, of course, even if the United States can pull it off, should it? Here Thayer argues that, absent another realistic alternative to keep peace and stability in the world, it remains in America's interest to play the role of hegemon. It might not make us loved, but the general stability provided by the American security umbrella of alliances and forces has made the world a lot more peaceful than it otherwise would be.

For reasons of economics and the broad state of humanity, that is a pretty good return on the money.

Layne's argument is that there is, in fact, a realist's alternative to the endless pursuit of primacy: a strategy of "off-shore balancing" that amounts to a quasi-isolationist policy of selective diplomatic and military engagement. And indeed, the "offensive" realist's argument for primacy rests, Layne suggests, on paying too much attention to the lessons supposedly learned from the security problems and strategies for dealing with them that arose from centuries of competition among the powers of continental Europe. Given America's geography and weak neighbors, the security model that is far more relevant to our situation is the one adopted by maritime Britain: a small army, a big fleet, and a willingness to be quick on one's feet when it comes to finding new allies and dumping old ones.

Today's primacy advocates couple

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Reuters / Corbis / Bullit Marquez

Amb. L. Paul Bremer with Iraqi tribal leaders, Hillah, 2003

it with a policy of promoting democracy, believing that the world is a safer place when there are more democracies, not less—a thesis Layne calls the most "over-hyped and under-supported theory ever to be concocted by American academics."

According to Layne, the advantage of his alternative grand strategy is that it avoids stimulating great power rivalries, eliminates the economically disastrous consequences of "imperial overstretch," and precludes the necessity of a "national security state" in which our rights and civic culture are put at risk. Finally, it avoids the mess (e.g., Somalia and Iraq) of democracy promotion and nation-building.

American Empire concludes with brief responses by Thayer and Layne to each other's arguments, flushing out their original positions and critiques.

Specialists in the field of international security will quibble that Thayer and Layne's two grand strategies are not the sum total of grand strategies available to the American "empire." Nor will they be satisfied with the somewhat loose way in which the term "empire" is used by both authors. That both authors admit the United States is not an empire in the traditional sense seems to suggest that it isn't, in fact, an empire: Hegemony and empire are not one and the same, although admittedly their attributes can at times overlap. That said, the book does provide plenty of material for thought and, more important, debate.

The biggest problem, however, lies in Christopher Layne's dyspeptic analysis of current policy opponents. Rather than taking the opposing argument as seriously as Thayer takes his, Layne resorts to unsubstantiated claims about "neocons," the White House lying, and small cabals (the so-called "Blue Team") trying to foment a "preventive" war with China. Similarly, his dismissal of the democratic peace theory is equally over-the-top. Even if one thinks that the theory is, at times, oversold, to claim that it has absolutely no merits is bound to leave most readers with the sense that there is as much anger as argument in the case Layne is making.

An additional problem, perhaps tied to the way the book is structured, is that Layne spends the vast majority of his time criticizing the argument for primacy, without giving the reader much of a handle on his own preferred strategy's particulars. As a result, we don't know whether his model of "offshore balancing" is more British in style—that is, fairly active in playing the decisive power broker among the other competing states—or more passive in content—a la the United States in the 1920s and '30s.

If the former, a key problem with the strategy is that it requires a far more calculating style of statecraft than the United States has ever engaged in before. And even if we had Henry Kissinger upon Henry Kissinger to carry it out, would the American public really be willing to let its government play this version of international politics—shifting partners based on power relations—rather than the character of the states themselves? Surely, the disappearance of the United States as security guarantor is likely to lead to more competition among states and the creation of a more chaotic and fluid international environment. Britain had a hard enough time playing this role in its day, and found itself in numerous conflicts in any case.

If the latter, the passive "off-shore balancing" approach leads to the question of whether such a strategy results in the United States addressing a security problem at a time when it may be far more difficult to deal with. Layne's bet, at least in the case of Iran and China today, is that if the United States would only get out of the way, other powers would naturally begin to meet their challenge. Possibly. But doing so

might create an even more destabilizing competition among neighbors, or lead those same neighbors to accept China or Iran's new hegemony, fueling their ambitions rather than lessening them.

The history of international relations suggests that most great crises are the result of not addressing more minor ones initially. As Thayer argues, it is probably less costly to deal with these issues when one is in a better position to do so than to wait for them to become full-blown security problems.

And speaking of money: Layne's argument about looming imperial overstretch is itself a stretch. Even with all the problems in Iraq, a war in Afghanistan, and an emerging hedging strategy vis-à-vis China, the defense burden is still barely over 4 percent of the country's gross domestic product. The United States has certainly had far higher defense burdens in the past, while still retaining its status as the world's economic juggernaut. There may be plenty of reasons to worry about the country's economy, but "guns over butter" is hardly one of them.

Moreover, while pulling back from a forward-leaning defense strategy would undoubtedly save money, offshore balancing would still require the United States to have a major military establishment in reserve if it wanted to be capable of being a decisive player in a game of great power balancing. Is the $100 billion or so saved—or, rather, spent by Congress on "bridges to nowhere"—really worth the loss in global influence that comes from adopting Layne's strategy?

As someone who has been called a neoconservative, I suppose one would expect me to read Thayer's argument in a more friendly light—which I do. Nevertheless, his presentation suffers from its own problems.

First, in response to Layne's argument that Iraq has been an unmitigated disaster, Thayer tries too hard to put a happy face on the problem. The reality is, a strategy of primacy doesn't rest on success in Iraq. It may tell us how prepared or unprepared we are as a government for that role, but it doesn't necessarily vitiate the strategy's general validity. That said, having a strategy dedicated to maintaining primacy does, in fact, put a premium on preemption—not necessarily or even primarily military preemption, but certainly a strong impetus to use all the tools of statecraft to shape both the security environment and other states' behavior. As such, it is an inherently active and somewhat openended strategy that requires heading off challenges before they become threatening ones.

Obviously, that can lead to misjudgments about what really needs doing and what only appears to need doing. But that is less a problem—since it is no less a problem for those who want to engage in balance-of-power politics—than the fact that the American public is not especially willing to dedicate significant treasure or blood to deal with threats that are over the horizon. As someone who argued that there was a remarkable strategic opportunity available to the United States and its democratic allies in the wake of the Soviet empire's collapse, I can honestly say that, until the attacks of 9/11, the post-Cold War public was hardly seized with a determination to make the most of that opportunity.

So, while Layne's preferred strategy of sitting above the world's fray is not likely to fit well with the universalistic character of American liberalism, Thayer's problem is sustaining his strategy in the face of the other side of American liberalism, with its decided focus on the pursuit of happiness. Contrary to what Layne imagines, the issue of sustainability is not one of material resources, or even the rise of great power competitors supposedly generated as a response to U.S. primacy. As Thayer notes, America has never been more powerful, and never has a country been able to call so many of the nations of the world friends or allies. No, the real issue is public will and the quality of leadership necessary to sustain that will in the face of both difficulties, and the enervating consequences of primacy's own success. ♦

Murder Most Foul

A trio of approaches to the mystery novel.

BY JON BREEN

Swedish police detective Kurt Wallander, on medical leave for over a year because of depression after killing a man in the line of duty, is on the point of resigning from the Ystad force. But he is moved to shake off his stereotypically Scandinavian gloom and return to action when a friend, lawyer Sten Torstensson, asks him to look into the death of his father and law partner in an apparent road accident, then is himself murdered.

As the reader knows, and the cops gradually find out, the elder Torstensson was on his way back from Farnholm Castle, the lair of a wealthy international businessman whose shady affairs become the focus of the investigation.

Of all the foreign writers coming on the English-language publishing scene in the comparative bull market for translated crime fiction, Henning Mankell may be the most commercially and critically successful. Certainly he is the most popular Swedish crime writer in translation since the team of Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö in the 1960s and '70s. My own first meeting with Mankell's work, *Before the Frost* (2005), was a major disappointment, especially in light of his reputation: overlong, repetitious, and soap operatic, in common with too much contemporary British and American crime fiction, and with none of the liveliness and humor of Sjöwall and Wahlöö. But the latest Mankell in English translation is an earlier book, originally published in Sweden in 1994. Were Mankell's bad habits a more recent development? Afraid not.

The Man Who Smiled
by Henning Mankell
Translated by Laurie Thompson
New Press, 336 pp., $24.95

Promise Me
by Harlan Coben
Dutton, 384 pp., $26.95

The Protégé
by Stephen Frey
Ballantine, 313 pp., $24.95

The fashion in crime fiction is for long books—not a bad thing if the extra pages provide more depth of character, richness of background, and complexity of plot. Unfortunately, what usually comes is recapping of the same plot points over and over, irrelevant details of the protagonist's daily activities, and extra scenes and exchanges of dialogue that add nothing necessary or useful. If the dialogue has the bite and wit of an Ed McBain, the latter form of padding can be tolerable or even welcome. But the exchanges between Mankell's characters are bland and flavorless, for which I don't blame the translator: Given the mundane content, they could hardly be any livelier in Swedish.

The novel is not a total waste of time. Mankell's plot is intriguing enough, though lacking in surprises, and the detective work is often interesting. The sense of a nation in the grip of unwelcome change—in crime, police work, public administration—is nicely conveyed. The interrelationships of the police characters, including the city's first woman detective, are believably sketched. As for Wallander himself, he's a well-realized character, albeit a drag to be around when off the scent, and too much given to leaps of intuition and lapses of common sense. This could have been a reasonably diverting police procedural at half the length, but Mankell's inflated reputation remains a mystery.

In *Promise Me*, Myron Bolitar, college basketball star turned sports and entertainment agent, is throwing a neighborhood party in his suburban New Jersey home when he overhears a troubling conversation between two teenage girls, one the daughter of an old high school flame, the other of a 9/11 widow who is Myron's current romantic interest. Alarmed by one girl's account of being driven by a drunken boyfriend, Myron makes an ill-advised pledge: They can call him any hour of the day or night.

"I'll come get you wherever you are," he promises. "I won't ask any questions. I won't tell your parents."

When one of the girls goes missing after Myron has driven her in the small hours from Manhattan to the alleged home of a friend, the parents make clear what an inappropriate promise that was. Racked with guilt, he promises to bring her home. The case may be connected to the earlier disappearance of another girl from the same suburban New Jersey high school.

Since Bolitar—a heart-on-his-sleeve do-gooder and righter of wrongs, an incessant wisecracker with a core of true-believer altruism and conventionality—last appeared in *Darkest Fear* (2000), his creator has been climbing the bestseller charts with stand-alone thrillers, and there is no denying his narrative impetus and skillful reader manipulation. The complex plot provides one well-managed shock after another, the ultimate one both surprising and believable.

Drawbacks include Harlan Coben's overuse of one trendy but annoying locution (e.g., "The building had that decrepit thing going on . . ."), his impulse to valid-but-obtrusive mini-sermons on such topics as smoking and the stereotyping of fat women, and an inconsistency of tone that works against the moral issues raised and the reality of some of the characters. Is this a soap opera, or a situation comedy, or a superhero comic book?

The novel would have been better without Myron's psychopathic friend Win, a rich Caucasian variation on the over-the-top loose-cannon extralegal

Jon Breen is the author, most recently, of Eye of God.

sidekick pioneered by Hawk in Robert B. Parker's Spenser novels, and Mouse in Walter Mosley's Easy Rawlins series. Also blue-pencil-worthy are several comically exaggerated villains and obligatory walk-ons by series regulars who have nothing to do with the story.

On balance, though, this is a surefire crowd pleaser.

The Protégé, a sequel to the 2005 bestseller *The Chairman*, belongs to the glitz-and-glamour school of thriller writing, financial division. In an S-and-M session gone awry, title character David Wright accidentally kills his bondage subject by hanging, and acts to cover it up. As the most vocal, obnoxious, and promising managing director of Everest Capital, a multibillion-dollar Manhattan equity firm whose many interests include a new NFL franchise for Las Vegas and a Wal-Mart-like discount chain, Wright is so aggressive and tightly wound that his new stress is barely apparent to his boss. Chairman Christian Gillette is not a likable character, but since he turns into an action figure at every threat of violence, it's clear he's supposed to be the hero.

Stephen Frey knows the cutthroat financial world intimately, and dealmaking is a feature throughout. But like pornography, the wow factor of very big numbers gets numbing after awhile, and more complications must be provided. A book with such perfunctory characterization has to be plot-driven, but this driver weaves all over the road. Among the elements: Gillette's search for his birth mother; the mystery of his senator-father's death in a plane crash years before; a wealthy femme fatale's threat to his romance with a world-famous singer; menacing killers apparently hanging over from the previous book, dealings with the Mafia families that still run Las Vegas; a storm at sea; a supersecret U.S. spy organization; hints of al Qaeda; and the science of nanotechnology with its far-future promise of extending life.

The reader may believe the numbers, but the scenes and the people constantly seem unreal. Gillette's meeting with the puppet NFL commissioner, an ex-player way out of his depth, is a case in point: Prose and dialogue are flat and undistinguished without being gratingly (or amusingly) bad. Early on, Frey depends on the by-the-numbers novelist's favorite trick: massive amounts of exposition in dialogue, with information clearly already known to the recipient passed along for the reader's benefit.

The final surprise may astonish somebody who's never read a mystery before. Frey has enough command of pace and story structure to divert you on your next long plane ride between billion-dollar deals, but only if there's nothing better at hand. ♦

B&A

Lines in the Sand

Art and commerce in sunny Florida.

BY ARTHUR COTTON MOORE

Art Basel Miami Beach, a polymorphously perverse event if there ever was one, swamped the entire convention center in Miami Beach in early December, and was considerably inflated by more than a dozen large satellite fairs, art collections, private collections, design shows, museum shows, and special gallery events scattered around South Beach and Miami. And all of that floated on and among receptions, opening nights, fetes, galas, cocktail parties, brunches, lunches, and dinners—catering achievements, all.

Only five years old, the fair has become a leviathan, a spectacular, glorious, friendly *folie en masse.* The original Art Basel started modestly in a small, chilly Swiss city, but its American transformation in sunny, hot, pulsating Miami makes it the essential place to be for taking the temperature of the international art market. And size matters.

The wide-ranging quality of the art was generally respectable at the convention center, but oscillated wildly at the surrounding fairs. One, sponsored by the New Art Dealers Alliance—or NADA—was perfectly labeled for paintings so turgid and encrusted with layers of pigment that they could only make a paint salesman happy. The show included a six-foot-high spring-loaded rat with glowing red rectangular eyes.

The Rubell Family Collection exhibition was cleverly named "The Red Eye" because all the artists were Californians, and the curators always flew the "red eye" night planes back from the West Coast. Andy Warhol said that "everybody's sense of beauty is different from everybody else's," but homoerotic art, particularly a gang in full-scale 3D diorama, really tests that.

Video Art was everywhere. Most, in the Warhol tradition, were merely relentlessly boring, but there were enough pieces of sudden, gratuitous, loud, meaningless violence to break the spell. Simple tricks are good to get attention—like a dog apparently walking up a wall and humans dancing on the ceiling—until one realized it was done by just rotating the set or the frame.

More than a few videos achieved the level of home porno flicks shot by someone new to basic photography. However, there was one unusual piece, where a naked young woman implores the viewer to come hither, which stood out as being in focus, with positive subject matter, and occasional bursts of understandable dialogue. We are so trained to relate motion with narrative development, as in the movies, that these videos—which too often focused on endless repetition—rarely seemed

Arthur Cotton Moore, architect, planner, painter, and furniture designer, is the author of The Powers of Preservation.

Getty Images / Alexander Tamargo

Art Basel Miami Beach, 2006

to hold an audience for more than a few minutes.

In these panopticons of art, it's always interesting to see what happens to painting, sculpture, and drawing. In sculpture, beyond the aforementioned large rodent, a lot of the pieces were teetering (and tottering) assemblies of what, on close inspection, appeared to be true trash, making one long for the vacuum cleaner. In another, a silver loop suspended in air between two floor fans was more stunt than sculpture.

Despite a number of arresting pieces, painting did not show its best face, although in this Sargasso Sea, some amateurish pastoral landscapes started to look like Constables. The prevalence of intended (or unintended) primitivism was discouraging, and I do not mean the kind of primitivism from which Picasso and Braque drew strength, but a bad, cartoony, angry crudity often accompanied by bad penmanship offering vituperative scrawled messages of the type usually found on the walls in men's rooms at bus stations. Political commentary was there, although not deeply sagacious, in a picture of a black man in a KKK hood. (Of course, where is the KKK a cutting issue today?)

Drawing, as usual, was sparsely represented, except for a few artists who had painstakingly done exquisitely fine renderings in pencil that were so intensely photographic they seemed archaic in this time of easy digital photography. Indeed, the star of the show was photography, particularly the work in the Photo Miami fair. Photography used to be a lot of little black and white pictures that you had to bend down and squint to see. But it has grown up into enormous images known now by their square footage. Just as modern painting discovered that magnitude multiplies power, so has photography, and in Miami, its power was breathtaking.

Unlike video art, sculpture, and painting, photography—without shame—has rediscovered beauty, with images of such perfect composition, color, and subject that they are the strongest imprints of the fair. Things like these: I was transfixed by a 5' by 6' still life of oranges and potato peels. The razor sharp resolution of these scraps of food floating in space was spellbinding. Giant panoramas, created by photoshopping digital jpeg images together, brought a you-are-there super-realism to street scenes and views of entire cities; massive photographs showing the ruin and decay of Havana converted wretched poverty and destitution into pure abstract paintings of subtle color and composition. A badly stained wall along the Seine was mesmerizing, and reminded me of some of the best abstracts of Helen Frankenthaler.

Photography can also do the postmodern appropriation dance. One gallery showed large-scale photographs that replicated—with a real model and astounding depth—the Renaissance icon, Leonardo da Vinci's "Lady with an Ermine," an intriguing interplay between the idea of the original in paint and the copy as photograph. This largely machine-made photographic series, however, raised the perennially troubling issue of authenticity, which underscored all the large photographs that were mimicking still-life paintings.

Also provocative was the piggybacked fair, Design Miami. Centralized in the Moore Building (no relation), it was really an opening reception with the most people per square foot, all fueled by complimentary SKYY Vodka martinis, suggesting the serious possibility that we would all ignite from the friction. The architect Zaha Hadid found the last unoccupied square foot

of space, and refused to budge. It was so dense that I couldn't see the exhibits until the crowd seemed to give a collective sigh, and I felt that I had been expelled from the building like the spit pit of an olive. Before my sudden departure, I can report seeing virtuoso combinations of metal seats and desks in a continuous single twisting Möbius Strip form, executed with extraordinary craftsmanship.

Of course, not everyone came for the art. The fair was unquestionably the hottest place to be that week on earth. The parties were also generously attended—glitterati mashing up against hoi polloi to the thump-thump of the fabulous music, starry skies, warm nights. What was it all about? Money, of course. One piece, a pack of airborne Camels suspended on a string from a robotic arm, sold for $160,000. An Anish Kapoor polished stainless steel sculpture was priced at $1 million. There was everything from priceless Picassos to scribbles on toilet paper for $10,000. As at any good bazaar, there were many hawkers, including a nude male shill on a bicycle with carefully placed balloons handing out fliers to more shows, and avoiding sharp things.

Why has Art Basel Miami Beach become such a gargantuan phenomenon? I think because, with incredible ease, you get to see not only the large well-known collections, but also the private collections in the homes of ever-so-proud collectors, confirming the observation that, in a society where affluence is commonplace, the quality that sets a person apart is being cultured.

For so long, art has been touted as a new religion, and something we cannot live without. But outrageous, expensive art that has absolutely no utility except artistic credentials serves to confer on the collector an exceptional cultural status rising above the merely rich. Big-ticket art lets people know you have extra disposable money, and are a cultivated person to boot—in our fluid society, that's status you can buy. Fortunately, the fair also shows us that we can relax, because unlike diminishing resources and commodities, pricey status-giving art seems to suffer no decline in supply. ♦

BCA

Nightmare Come True

Love and distrust in the East German police state.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The pivotal scene in the magnificent new German movie *The Lives of Others*—which won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film last week—takes place in an elevator. The year is 1984, and the occupant of the elevator is a severe and profoundly intelligent senior functionary of the East German security service named Wiesler. A stray word about the inhumanity of Stasi interrogations, or a joke about the dictator Erich Honecker, is all Wiesler needs to hear to make a simple mark on a piece of paper that will ruin someone's life.

The Lives of Others
Directed by Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck

A soccer ball rolls into the elevator, followed by a towheaded boy. The elevator begins to rise.

"Do you work for the Stasi?" the little boy asks.

"What do you know of the Stasi?" Wiesler says.

"My dad says you're a bad man who throws people in jail."

Wiesler's lips twitch slightly, and as is his habit, he asks the question intended to destroy the boy's happiness: "What is the name of—" The audience tenses, expecting the boy to answer with his father's name.

Then, unaccountably, Wiesler pauses before finishing his sentence: "—your ball. What is the name of your ball?"

The boy protests that his ball doesn't have a name. He looks oddly at Wiesler, not knowing that the Stasi man, who has spent decades destroying families without a second thought, has just spared him unimaginable pain.

The question is: Why has Wiesler spared him? That is the subject of *The Lives of Others*, an immensely rich and gripping film about the moral awakening of two men.

Wiesler is a classic figure of evil—a remorseless and relentless force with all the power of the totalitarian state behind him, dedicated to ferreting out any sign of free thinking among his East German countrymen. He finds his opposite in a naïf named Dreyman, a successful playwright who has made a decent life for himself by never challenging, never opposing, and never even thinking dark thoughts about the Communist tyranny that rules over him.

The lives of Wiesler and Dreyman intersect because of a woman—Christa-Maria, the nation's best-known stage actress and Dreyman's girlfriend. Wiesler is in attendance at the premiere of Dreyman's newest play, a ghastly blend of Brechtian pseudo-profundity and labored socialist realism. Dreyman is thought to be above suspicion (in part because he's friends with Erich Honecker's daughter). But when Wiesler catches a glimpse of the playwright embracing his lead actress, he says that Dreyman ought to be watched. It's not clear what it is about the two of them together that disturbs Wiesler—jealousy, perhaps—but his suggestion is eagerly embraced.

Wiesler has spent much of his career instructing Stasi trainees in interrogation techniques. As such, he

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Sony Pictures Classics

'What is the name of . . . your ball?'

has learned a good deal about human nature—for instance, that an innocent man accused of a crime will get angrier about the injustice being done to him over time while a man with something to hide will despair and cry. But it turns out there is something strangely unworldly about Wiesler. Unable to form normal human attachments, he lives alone, watches Stalinist propaganda on television in his spartan apartment, and calls in prostitutes to whom he clings desperately. It never occurs to him that his assignment might not be because ideological purity must be maintained on the East German stage. Rather, the minister of culture is besotted with Christa-Maria and wants to secure an advantage with her.

For his part, the playwright Dreyman has managed to navigate the treacherous shoals of working as an artist in a totalitarian society. He oversteps himself early on in the film, when he mentions that his former director has been "blacklisted" and is reprimanded for using the word by the minister of culture. Fear sparks behind his eyes. He has been provocative. He quickly tries to find another word, a safer word. But he, too, doesn't know that the minister is looking for anything he can use to press his advantage against Dreyman so he can control and dominate Christa the actress.

As Wiesler finds himself pulled—unwillingly—away from his narrow dogmatism into a state of vertiginous confusion, Dreyman's safe bubble starts to collapse around him as well. He feels himself being drawn into a dangerous form of social activism, and yet feels safe doing so because he can't imagine he is being watched 24 hours a day.

He is—by Wiesler.

It's hard to know where to begin in praising *The Lives of Others*, the first movie written and directed by a 33-year-old German with the traffic-stopping name of Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck. *The Lives of Others* joins the Russian film *Burnt by the Sun* on a very short list of motion-picture masterpieces that portray the compromises a totalitarian state demands of those unfortunate enough to live inside a prison-country. And it joins *Citizen Kane*, no less, on the very short list of the most impressive debut films in the history of cinema.

Donnersmarck grew up in New York and West Berlin, and was all of 16 when the Wall came down. And yet what he has managed here is a fully conceived and realized portrait of life in the bleak, bleak East that is told with startling delicacy. We don't see truncheons beating people senseless, or prison camps, or men shot near Checkpoint Charlie. Donnersmarck conveys the horror of life in East Germany through the omnipresence of suspicion. No one can trust anyone else—friends, colleagues, lovers. Everyone is potentially compromised, and people possess what little they have on sufferance. The

state giveth and the state taketh away.

Donnersmarck has said he got the idea for the movie while he was struggling to come up with a movie scenario for a class he was taking. As a piece of music played on his stereo, he recalled Maxim Gorky's story about Lenin listening to Beethoven's 'Appassionata.' As Gorky wrote:

> "I know of nothing better than the Appassionata and could listen to it every day. What astonishing, superhuman music! It always makes me proud, perhaps naively so, to think that people can work such miracles!" Wrinkling up his eyes, Lenin smiled rather sadly, adding: "But I can't listen to music very often. It affects my nerves. I want to say sweet, silly things and pat the heads of people who, living in a filthy hell, can create such beauty. One can't pat anyone on the head nowadays, they might bite your hand off. They ought to be beaten on the head, beaten mercilessly, although ideally we are against doing any violence to people. Hm—what a hellishly difficult job!"

Donnersmarck told Alan Riding of the *New York Times*, "I suddenly had this image in my mind of a person sitting in a depressing room with earphones on his head and listening in to what he supposes is the enemy of the state and the enemy of his ideas, and what he is really hearing is beautiful music that touches him. I sat down and in a couple of hours had written the treatment."

That scene appears in *The Lives of Others*, and is limned with extraordinary stillness and compressed emotion by Ulrich Mühe, an actor heretofore unknown outside Germany who gives a performance so perfect in this, and every other moment in the film, that it's almost beyond words.

"People don't change," the minister of culture says to Dreyman at the beginning of the movie. The dramatic challenge Donnersmarck set for himself was to offer a portrait of the ways people do change even when they don't wish to change—even when it is literally life-threatening to change.

But even though *The Lives of Others* is set primarily in 1984, it's not *1984*. This is not a morality play about East Germany, or a fictional catalogue of the horrors of life under communism. It's a character study in the guise of a stunning suspense thriller. When the rigorously correct Stasi man Wiesler begins to go off the reservation, it's impossible to determine his motivation and therefore impossible to know what he's going to do next, or why. As the playwright Dreyman begins to take creative and political risks for the first time in his life, his fate is entirely in Wiesler's hands—and like the culture minister who started the investigation, Wiesler is besotted by the playwright's beautiful and talented girlfriend.

Donnersmarck's work is so fresh and so original in part because he is working with a great, rich, infinitely absorbing subject—a subject other filmmakers across the world continue to avoid like the plague. This is strange. Life under communism would seem to be among the least controversial topics one could imagine. After all, who outside of Vladimir Putin's inner circle actually longs for a restoration of the Soviet Empire? But you can count on two hands and a foot the number of major motion pictures made since the dissolution of the Soviet Union that have attempted any kind of reckoning of the human cost of communism in the 20th century.

Among the cultural cognoscenti across the world, there seems to be a hunger to let this subject simply slide down the rabbit hole. Donnersmarck found it difficult to secure financing for *The Lives of Others*, which cost a negligible $2 million to make. And the organizers of the Berlin Film Festival refused to accept it as an official entry in 2006—a decision that, in sheer aesthetic terms, has to be reckoned among the most perverse I've ever heard about. Once released, it made a sensation in Germany and is among the most successful films ever released there. That's not surprising. There are few German films since the fall of the Weimar Republic that come anywhere near *The Lives of Others*.

So why was the thought of making the movie distasteful to people? And why did the pooh-bahs of Germany's most important film festival reject it?

We can only speculate about the answer. Donnersmarck believes it's because Germany has never really dealt with its Communist past—there was little effort made to bring East Germany's murderers and monsters to justice—and that, by making *The Lives of Others,* he had upset a cultural consensus to let the past lie.

I think there may be another reason for the reluctance of the makers of pop culture worldwide to reckon with communism, and that is shame. The ideological struggle against leftist totalitarianism was something that did not arouse the interest or enthusiasm of cultural elites in the West during the Cold War. Far from it; from the 1960s onward, the default position of the doyens of popular culture was a presumption in favor of the Communist struggle, as personified by Mao, the Viet Cong, Castro, the Sandinistas, El Salvador's guerrillas, and the so-called African liberation movements.

This was not a reasoned, or thought-through, view. It was little more than fashion. And rarely, if ever, has history rendered a more devastating verdict on the wrongheadedness of fashionable Western groupthink than it did when the walls and statues came down, and Lenin was removed from his unholy pedestal.

They got it wrong. And though they may not know it, they are ashamed of it and do not wish to be reminded of it. Perhaps that's why it took a 33-year-old to make this masterpiece—a 33-year-old who was too young during the Cold War to have joined any camp in any meaningful way. Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck found a great story to tell with a great setting and he told it with peerless skill while bearing none of the scars of past ideological battles.

Maybe he will be followed by other young filmmakers and writers who can bring fresh eyes and a new perspective to the great struggle of the second half of the 20th century. ♦

The Forgotten Refugees

Why does nobody care about the Jewish refugees from Arab lands?

The world is greatly concerned about the Arabs who fled the nascent state of Israel in 1948. But no mention is ever made of the Jewish refugees from Arab lands. Their history is as compelling and arguably more so than that of the Arab refugees from Israel.

What are the facts?

Jews in Arab countries. Jews have lived since Biblical times in what are now Arab countries. After the Roman conquest, Jews were dispersed, mostly to what are now the Arab countries of North Africa and the Middle East. Many Jews migrated to the Iberian peninsula – Spain and Portugal. They were expelled from those countries at the end of the 15th century. They mostly migrated to the Arab countries, where, by now, they have been living for almost 500 years, many Jews for over 2,000 years.

There is a myth that Jews had an easy life in Muslim/Arab countries. The opposite is the case. Jews under Islam were treated as second-class citizens and worse. The relationship was governed by a system of discrimination, intended to reduce the Jews in those Arab countries to conditions of humiliation, segregation and violence. They were excluded from society, from government, and from most professions. They were barely tolerated and often, under the slightest pretext or no pretext at all, were victimized by vicious violence.

When Israel declared its statehood in 1948, pogroms broke out across the entire Arab/Muslim world. Thousands died in this violence. Their homes and businesses were destroyed, their women violated. The vast majority of those Jews fled from where they had lived for centuries. They had to leave everything behind. Most of those who were able to escape found their way to the just-created state of Israel.

Over 850,000 Jews were driven from Arab countries, most of them in 1948, at the birth of Israel. Most of the remainder were chased out during or immediately following the Six-Day War in 1967, when, in fury about the disastrous defeat, the "Arab street" erupted and subjected its Jewish population to bloody pogroms. Israel received every one of those Jewish refugees from Arab countries with brotherly open arms; it housed, fed, and quickly integrated them into Israeli society. They and their descendants now make up more than one-half of the country's population.

Jews in Arab Countries

	1948	Now
Algeria	140,000	0
Egypt	75,000	100
Iraq	135,000	100
Lebanon	5,000	100
Libya	38,000	0
Morocco	265,000	5,700
Syria	30,000	100
Tunisia	105,000	1,500
Yemen	55,000	200

A different history. It is instructive to compare the history of those Jewish refugees with that of the Arabs who fled from Israel during its War of Independence. There were about 650,000 of them. Most left following the strident invocations of their leaders, who urged them to leave, so as to make room for the invading Arab armies. After victory was to be achieved, they could return to reclaim their property and that of the Jews, all of whom would have been killed or would have fled.

In contrast to the Jewish refugees, who were quickly integrated into Israel, the Arab countries resolutely refused to accept the Arab refugees into their societies. They confined them into so-called refugee camps. Those camps are essentially extended slum cities, where their descendants – now the fourth generation – have been living ever since. The reason for the Arabs' refusal to accept them was and still is the desire to keep them as a festering sore and to make solution of the Arab/Israel conflict impossible. These "refugees," whose number has by now miraculously increased from their original 650,000 to 5 million, are seething with hatred toward Israel and provide the cadres of terrorists and suicide bombers.

The Palestinian refugees occupy a unique place in the concern of the world. Since 1947, there have been over 100 UN resolutions concerning the Palestinian refugees. But there has not been one single resolution addressing the horrible injustices done to the nearly one million Jewish refugees from the Arab states.

There have been many millions of refugees in the wake of the Second World War. With only one exception, none of those refugee groups occupy the interest of the world and of the United Nations in a major way. That one exception are the Palestinian refugees. In fact, a special branch of the United Nations (UNWRA) exists only for the maintenance of those "refugees." In the almost sixty years of the existence of this agency it has cost many billions of dollars, most of it – you guessed it – contributed by the United States.

Jewish refugees from the Arab countries are the forgotten refugees. The world, and especially of course the Arabs, claim compensation from Israel for the Arab refugees and insist on their return to what has been Israel for almost 60 years. The Jewish refugees from Arab countries, all Israelis now, have no desire to return to their ancient homelands, where they had been treated so shabbily and so brutally. But if there is to be any compensation, those forgotten Jewish refugees are certainly entitled to such compensation as much as the Arab refugees. Anything else would be an outrage and a great injustice.

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—Reuters, February 26, 2007

the weekly Standard
March 12, 2007