the weekly Standard

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DAVID GELERNTER

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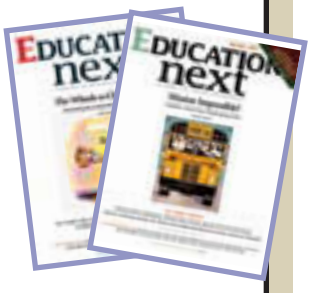

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—Peter Meyer

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Contents

June 4, 2007 • Volume 12, Number 36

Articles

Cover: Thomas Fluharty

Features

Books & Arts

the weekly Standard

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

Hair Force One

These last few weeks have been a slog for John Edwards, the former one-term senator from North Carolina who is running for the Democratic presidential nomination. First came news that Edwards's campaign had paid for his two $400 haircuts from Joseph Torrenueva, the fashionable Hollywood makeup and hair stylist. Edwards said he was "embarrassed" by his new 'do's and that an underling had scheduled the appointments without his knowledge. If we remember correctly, Democrats have called such behavior in other contexts "kicking down." Former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee then got off a great line at Edwards's expense: Congress, he said, has "spent money like John Edwards in a beauty shop."

Next, there were the revelations about Edwards's personal finances, which are bountiful. The author of *Ending Poverty in America* is worth somewhere in the neighborhood of $30 million, a little more than half of which he has invested in the Fortress Investment Group, a hedge fund incorporated in the Cayman Islands. Because education is important to Edwards, he also signed on to Fortress as a part-time consultant in order to learn about "capital markets." For this he was paid $480,000.

As good free-marketers do, The Scrapbook applauds Edwards for his financial acumen. Others, however, may conclude he is a phony populist, especially given last week's news that he charged the taxpayer-funded University of California, Davis, $55,000 to give a talk on . . . "Poverty, the Great Moral Issue Facing America." Meantime, Bob Shrum, the singularly unsuccessful Democratic presidential campaign consultant who advised the failed Kerry-Edwards 2004 campaign, has written a book in which he says John Kerry "wished that he'd never picked Edwards" to be his running mate. Ouch.

Edwards decided to change the subject last week, giving a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations (council president Richard Haass is a director at Fortress Investments) that was nothing less than a bid to lead the antiwar, anti-Bush left. In his speech Edwards said that the notion of a war on terror was something cooked up by Republicans for political gain—a "bumper sticker, not a plan."

Well. Former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani seized on Edwards's speech, saying that "Democrats . . . are in denial." Which, come to think of it, would make a pretty good bumpersticker.

It could always be worse for Edwards. At least he doesn't have Bob "0 for 8" Shrum in charge of his campaign. ♦

Moving on up

Speaking of John Edwards, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) just released a report, "Changes in the Economic Resources of Low-Income Households with Children," that he might find interesting for its glimpse into the "two Americas." The study looked at the bottom 20 percent of households with kids. It found that between 1991 and 2005 the average income of those households rose about 35 percent, making for an annual growth rate of slightly more than 2 percent. The most striking thing about the CBO study is that the real increase in income for low-income households with children took place during a time when liberals were screaming that the abolition of direct-cash-benefit welfare would create an army of the unemployed, and impoverish their children.

Suffice it to say, that didn't happen. In 1991, direct-cash-benefit welfare, in the form of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), was responsible for about 30 percent of the income of the households in question. In 2005, direct-cash-benefit welfare, in the form of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families—the program created by the landmark 1996 welfare reform—was responsible for about 4 percent of income. So, even as welfare benefits decreased, the income of America's poorest families increased.

We have to admit we were a little shocked at the reaction to the CBO report among some liberals, who did everything they could to downplay its findings. As some pointed out, the report does show that average income for low-income households with children has fallen slightly since its peak in 2000, at the height of the last boom. But it is still far higher than it was in 1991 in real terms, and higher, we'd guess, than it was 15 years before that. And the current business cycle seems about at the point where it should start producing gains among all income groups.

In any case, the lesson remains that economic growth—along with education, marriage, and work—is the only proven antipoverty program. You'd think that liberals could acknowledge good news when they see it. ♦

Cannes Update

It's not every day that a Cannes film festival audience deems something "most shocking." This, after all, is a place where people have to regularly watch Michael Moore down several trays of chocolate profiteroles at the buffet table. But even the jaded film world groupies of the Côte d'Azur were taken aback by *Zoo*, the summer's feel-good movie, if by "feel-good" you mean a "movie about people having sex with horses."

The semi-documentary is based on the scandal that ensued after a Boeing

(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of October 21, 1996)

engineer named Kenneth Pinyan died from internal bleeding when he, ummm . . . see above. At the remote ranch where he scratched his equine itch, a community of fellow animal-lovers was discovered, which is the subject of the film.

Far be it from The Scrapbook to issue any icky moral judgment based on our Eisenhower-era prudery. We thought the horse/man intercourse envelope was being pushed when humans chatted up Mr. Ed. But it seems we were woefully out of step. Kenneth Turan of the *Los Angeles Times* called *Zoo* a "strange and strangely beautiful film." Industry bible *Variety* said filmmaker Robinson Devor has "crafted a subdued, mysterious and intensely beautiful film." John Paulsen, the actor who plays Pinyan, said, "In a way, it's a classic Western, except here, it's the horse riding the man."

Zoophilia defenders—and yes, zoophilia does have defenders—like to say the horses are willing participants. If they were, The Scrapbook suspects they'd do better than Pinyan, a geeky loser whose Internet moniker was "Mr. Hands." Plus, it's mighty presumptuous of one species to read the thoughts of another. The horses can't talk, Mr. Ed-style. But basic human decency dictates we conclude that sometimes "neigh" means "no." ♦

They're Back

Every time we think we've escaped their gravitational pull, they suck us back in. We refer to Joe and Valerie Wilson, the dynamic duo who did more than anybody to convince the American left that the Bush administration "lied" us into war with Iraq. When last we heard from them, Valerie was appearing before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on March 16, disputing key findings of the Senate Intelligence Committee, such as the fact that she used her perch at the CIA to suggest her husband for his fateful mission to Niger—investigating Iraq's interest in that country's uranium.

This is where things get interesting. In a May 25 report, three GOP senators on the Intel committee undermine Mrs. Wilson's House testimony. Kit Bond, Orrin Hatch, and Richard Burr reveal new evidence contradicting her claim to the House that the idea for the Niger trip arose when she was talking to an unnamed "junior officer" about a phone call from Vice President Cheney's office asking about Iraq and Niger. Valerie claimed another officer had interjected: "Well, why don't we send Joe?" That, she says, got the ball rolling.

The problem, the senators point out, is that she first raised the idea of sending her husband to Africa in a declassified memo written the day before the vice president's office asked for the CIA's assessment of the Nigerien uranium report. Moreover, the senators write, in an interview with Senate investigators preparing the 2004 report, Wilson never mentioned the "junior staffer," claiming then that she didn't remember whether she or her boss had come up with the idea of sending Joe Wilson to Africa.

Here's hoping she has her story straight by the time she writes her forthcoming book, for which Simon & Schuster paid her a $2 million advance. ♦

Casual

The Good Soldiers

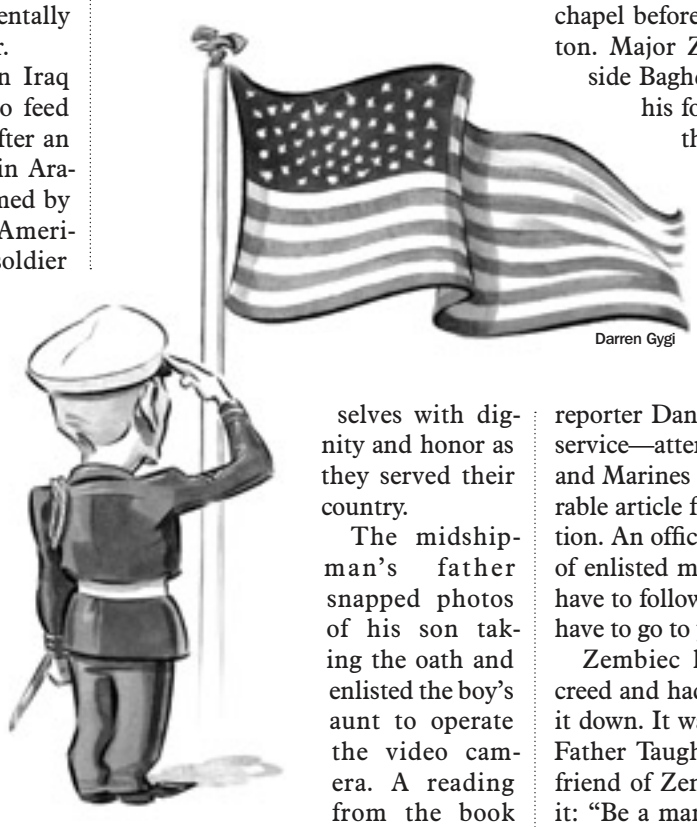
On a recent episode of *Law & Order*, a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom is the victim of a homicide. After returning from the war, he'd struggled with severe mental problems, while a bureaucratic snafu had left him without adequate disability benefits and finally homeless. He is found dead in a polluted alley. By a cruel twist of fate, his murderer, it turns out, is also a mentally unstable veteran of the Iraq war.

The next night, on *ER*, an Iraq war veteran fakes an injury to feed his addiction to painkillers. After an overdose, he begins speaking in Arabic, repeating the words screamed by Iraqi prisoners tortured by American sadists in uniform. The soldier had memorized the words, he explains to the doctors, after translating them over and over. But he could never convince his fellow soldiers to quit the torture. He was but one good soldier fighting helplessly against made-in-America depravity.

This is one view of the U.S. military.

On Sunday, in the chapel of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, I saw another. A tall, athletic Filipino-American midshipman sat in front of me, surrounded by six members of his family, including three siblings, all of them California cool. The sister had a prominent tattoo; one brother had a soul patch and the other's hair was worn in that style resembling a rooster's crest. The midshipman, with nearly shaved black hair, sat upright in his crisp dress whites. The parents, too, and an aunt were dressed up. It was a special occasion.

The service kicked off Commissioning Week at the Naval Academy, when graduates, having completed one mission, leave for another. Fifteen minutes into the service, the chaplain announced that some of the graduating midshipmen had chosen to dedicate their commissions to serving God. When she invited them to stand, the young man in front of me and dozens of his fellow midshipmen rose and promised to conduct themselves with dignity and honor as they served their country.



Darren Gygi

The midshipman's father snapped photos of his son taking the oath and enlisted the boy's aunt to operate the video camera. A reading from the book of Timothy followed and the family read not from pew Bibles but their own, the pages marked with the distinctive yellow streaks of a highlighter.

Later, they joined the congregation for an emotional rendition of "Eternal Father, Strong to Save," also known as The Navy Hymn. The first and fifth verses honor sailors and Marines like those graduating from the Naval Academy: *Eternal Father, strong to save, / Whose arm hath bound the restless wave, / Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep / Its own appointed limits keep; / Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee, / For those in peril on the sea!*

As the music filled the chapel, the midshipman's father clutched his Bible and wiped away tears—of pride, certainly, and perhaps concern. Many of those who leave Annapolis will head to war zones in the Middle East, and some, sadly, will return to the chapel too soon afterwards for another service in their honor.

On the Wednesday of the Iraq-themed *Law & Order*, Major Douglas Zembiec, who graduated in 1995, was memorialized in the Naval Academy chapel before being buried at Arlington. Major Zembiec was killed outside Baghdad in early May. It was his fourth tour in Iraq—duty that included some of the fiercest battles in Falluja and resulted in a Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts. He left behind a young wife and a one-year-old daughter.

Washington Post reporter Dan Morse wrote about the service—attended by soldiers, sailors, and Marines of all ranks—in a memorable article for the paper's Metro section. An officer, struck by the turnout of enlisted men, told him: Your men have to follow your orders; they don't have to go to your funeral.

Zembiec had lived by a certain creed and had even bothered to write it down. It was called "Principles My Father Taught me." At the burial, a friend of Zembiec's read aloud from it: "Be a man of principle. Fight for what you believe in. Keep your word. Live with integrity. Be brave. Believe in something bigger than yourself. Serve your country. . . . Lead from the front."

And he had recorded advice for his Marines: "Never forget those that were killed. And never let rest those that killed them."

Stephen F. Hayes

You deserve a factual look at . . .

The Saudi "Peace Initiative"

Is it meant to lead to peace or to Israel's destruction?

Early in 2002, Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia granted an interview to Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times*, in which he declared that if Israel were to withdraw from the "occupied territories," full normalization of relations with the Arab countries would ensue. That interview was published in *The New York Times* on February 17, 2002. It became known as the Saudi "Peace Initiative" and was considered a "breakthrough" on the road to peace in the Middle East.

What are the facts?

An Arab ultimatum. By the time the dust settled and the Saudi "Peace Initiative" was formalized, its demands were substantially expanded. It called for 1) full Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied since 1967, including the "Syrian Golan Heights;" 2) achievement of a "just solution" to the Palestinian refugee problem; 3) acceptance of the establishment of a sovereign independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as it capital.

The most unacceptable of those three conditions is the second. As best can be determined, there were about 650,000 refugees during the 1948 War of Independence. It can be assumed that virtually all of them are by now deceased. But the claim for "repatriation" has been extended to their descendants, who are by now said to have increased to 5 million. These "refugees" have been kept in "refugee camps" for sixty years, for the purpose of keeping the sore festering and to overwhelm Israel when the time came. The twentieth century, with its wars and dislocations, has produced millions upon millions of refugees. The Palestinian "refugees" are the only ones who are being taken care of by UNWRA, an agency of the United Nations created especially for them. No other refugees have similar consideration. The maintenance cost of the "Palestinian refugees" is billions of dollars a year. Who pays for most of this? You guessed it: the United States, of course.

The clear reason that the "repatriation" of these "refugees" (or rather their descendants) into Israel is unacceptable is that, besides their absorption and integration being an economic impossibility, their influx would immediately destroy Israel as a Jewish state and as the last refuge for all persecuted Jews in the world. Some believe that the concept of Israel as a Jewish state is an anachronism and should be done away with. But the reality is that Israel was created as just that, the state of the Jews, by mandate of the League of Nations, by the Balfour Declaration and by the decision of the United Nations.

Saudi Arabia and the other Arab states that have adopted the Saudi "Peace Initiative" as their own, will not accept any discussion or any modification of their proposal. It is "take it or leave it." It is an ultimatum. They threatened that, if Israel did not accept the plan in its entirety – it will have renounced peace and will face the "lords of war."

> "The Arabs...must teach their children...that their future and their welfare are inextricably bound up with the future, welfare and prosperity of Israel."

What about the other two conditions of the "peace initiative"? Full withdrawal from the "occupied territories" is impossible, given the virulent hatred of the Arabs against the Jews, their bizarre unwillingness to even acknowledge Israel's existence and their declared intention of destroying it by any means. Israel committed the foolishness of returning the vast Sinai – an invaluable strategic buffer zone and source of all its potential petroleum needs – to Egypt. It committed the further folly of withdrawing from the south Lebanon buffer zone and the even greater folly of turning Gaza over to the Arabs. It is true that Israel and Egypt have been at peace – the coldest peace conceivable – but mortars and rockets are almost daily launched against Israeli cities from both Gaza and from southern Lebanon. One can imagine what incredible destruction would be wreaked on Israel if it were to commit the ultimate folly of turning the so-called "occupied territories" over to its deadly enemies, sworn to its destruction. The entire country – its population centers, its industrial infrastructure, its utility installations, and its international airport – would be subject to daily barrages from the Judean Heights. The most advanced weaponry, including fighter planes and tanks, and quite likely even Syrian and Iranian troops, would be stationed in the "West Bank." Without the Judean Heights and without the strategic Jordan Valley in its control, Israel would be utterly indefensible and an easy victim of those who ceaselessly dream of its destruction.

If the Saudi "Peace Initiative" is not the solution to the apparently interminable Arab-Israel conflict, what then is? The first step is for the Arabs (and for the Iranians) to accept the reality of Israel's existence and permanence, not to teach their children that the Jews are the sons of monkeys and pigs, and not to educate them to become suicide bombers and martyrs. They must teach them that Israel is here to stay and that their future and their welfare are inextricably bound up with the future, welfare and prosperity of Israel. That may be a long time in coming, but no real peace is possible without it.

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Now Can We Fight the Enemy?

The war over the war in Washington is quiet for the moment. Congress has finally appropriated funds for America's warriors without setting a deadline for their defeat. Now the president can turn his undivided attention to fighting the enemies who are attacking our soldiers.

Op-ed writers (and presidential candidates) will of course continue in the coming months to deny the obvious: That we are fighting (*pace* John Edwards) a real war on terror; that Iraq is, as al Qaeda says it is, the war's central front; and that the Iranians and Syrians are actively supporting our enemies. But the Bush administration, with congressional obstruction on hold, can move ahead with policies that deal with reality.

The reality is that foreign fighters are flowing into Iraq to kill Iraqis and Americans. Almost all suicide bombers in Iraq are foreign fighters, for whom this is the crucial battle. This means that our victory there will be an important victory in the larger struggle against terrorism—and our defeat there would embolden and empower our enemies. And the reality is that Iran and Syria are enemies. Most foreign fighters join al Qaeda in Iraq via Syria. And Iran has been sending advanced weapons and advisers into Iraq. These weapons and insurgents supported by Iran are killing our soldiers on a daily basis. There should be no doubt about the hostile role Iran and Syria are playing in Iraq today.

General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker are already focused on these realities. They've just completed a strategic review and are pursuing a joint campaign plan to win the war. But even as the leaders of the political and military effort in the theater work to grapple with real problems, some in the Bush administration continue to toy with exit strategies and diplomatic strategies that imperil the victory strategy the president has embraced.

The ghost of Donald Rumsfeld lives in some quarters of the Bush administration. See, for example, the repeated suggestions by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates that the administration might pull the plug on the current strategy in September and begin a drawdown, and the appointment of a known skeptic of the strategy as "war czar." Some officials still speak as if what matters most in Iraq is to turn over responsibility to Iraqi forces forthwith. But the Iraqi army, while gaining in experience and effectiveness as rapidly as one might expect, is still too small to make up for the withdrawal of the 170,000 U.S. soldiers actively engaged in establishing order. And there are still bad actors within the Iraqi government and security forces that are pursuing sectarian agendas. The Petraeus-Crocker campaign plan recognizes this fact. Moving to withdraw U.S. forces in the coming months—even expressing eagerness to remove U.S. forces prematurely—empowers extremists within the Iraqi government just as they are beginning to lose power, and offers al Qaeda forces the chance to regain the positions in the Sunni community they are steadily being forced to yield.

Meanwhile, the State Department toys with fantasy diplomatic solutions based on overtures toward Iran and Syria. The Iranian regime has resolved to help Iraqi militants kill as many Americans as possible. The Syrian regime permits al Qaeda terrorists to move into Iraq for the same purpose every day. These actions are not the result of some sort of miscommunication that could be cleared up with a frank discussion of real interests. They represent policy decisions in Tehran and Damascus to defeat us in Iraq. Diplomatic engagement by itself is a trap, at least until we have turned the tide in Iraq and regained leverage.

Congressional battles calling into doubt our commitment to winning in Iraq have been the major threat to progress since the president began pursuing the right strategy in January. The president, supported by congressional Republicans, has beaten back that threat. Now he needs to deal with his own administration, which has not made up its collective mind to support the president's strategy wholeheartedly. Mixed messages from Bush's advisers and cabinet undermine the efforts of our commanders in the field. The president adopted a new strategy four months ago. The new commander took over three months ago, and the new ambassador not long after. All the military units will soon be in place, and the provincial reconstruction teams constituted. This is no time to hedge or hesitate. Now is the time to put everything behind making the president's strategy—which looks to be a winning strategy—succeed.

—Frederick W. Kagan and William Kristol

A Bridge Too Far for Conservatives

The perils of working with Ted Kennedy.

BY FRED BARNES

Don't listen to Teddy Kennedy. If you belong to the small band of conservative brothers inclined to support immigration reform, the Massachusetts senator is on your side. But what he says is likely to make you anxious, vexed, or even crazed. At times, Kennedy makes the compromise immigration bill sound like the latest loopy liberal legislation to provide welfare to the world.

It's not. Indeed, much of the organized left opposes it. The AFL-CIO is especially upset about the provision to bring foreign workers here temporarily. But when you hear Kennedy on the subject, you have to wonder what they're so worried about.

The temps, Kennedy insisted last week, are "going to get the prevailing wage, they are going to be protected by OSHA, if they get hurt on the job they are going to get workmen's compensation. They are going to get worker protections. If they are working on a construction site, they are going to be covered by Davis-Bacon."

Kennedy contrasted this pampering with the fate of those poor illegal immigrants who work here now. Absent the new program, Kennedy said, they'll continue to be exploited, their rights "trampled on." They'll be injured by "sharp hooks, knives, exhausting assembly line speeds." In Massachusetts, illegal workers are "fired for going to the bathroom, denied overtime pay, docked 15 minutes' pay for every minute they were late . . . fired for talking while on the clock, forced to ration toilet paper."

As Senate floor manager of the immigration bill, Kennedy gets emotionally wound up. He exaggerates. He raises his voice. He berates Democratic and Republican senators alike. He intimidates, or tries to anyway. He is a throwback to an older oratorical style. He is a bellower, a bully, something of a blowhard. He is enormously fun to watch.

But what's important about Kennedy is that he's the ally of pro-immigrant Republicans in the Senate debate on the bipartisan immigration bill. And Kennedy is effective. The Republicans gave up a lot to get Kennedy, particularly in agreeing to "Z" visas that would allow the estimated 12 million illegal immigrants already in the United States to stay as legal residents and eventually seek citizenship.

Led by conservative Jon Kyl of Arizona, the Republicans gained Kennedy's support for three significant provisions. The first is a buildup of border security that must be completed before Z visas can be issued and other reforms implemented. The second is a temporary worker program in which the workers must return to their home country. In this bill, Kyl says, "temporary means temporary." And the third is the end of "chain migration," the practice that has allowed legal immigrants to bring their endless extended families here. If the compromise becomes law, only the immigrant, spouse, and minor children will be allowed in.

Should any of these provisions be stripped from the bill, the compromise will fall apart and immigration reform will die, for the foreseeable future anyway. And Kennedy may be the only person who can stop liberal Democrats from stripping and thus killing the bill. He's succeeded so far, and it now appears the bill will pass the Senate when debate resumes in June. The House, where there's no Kennedy counterpart, is another matter.

Kennedy single-handedly turned back an effort by Democratic senator Byron Dorgan of North Dakota to wipe out or limit the temp program. Dorgan initially proposed to strike the program entirely. Kennedy's response was ferocious. He referred to Dorgan as the "senator from North Carolina." He said, contrary to what Dorgan had argued, that illegal immigrants, not legal temps, drive down wages.

"I would like the chicken-pluckers to pay $10 or $15 an hour," he said. Today, when they hire illegal immi-

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

grants, "they do not do it." He roared at Dorgan, "Who are you trying to kid? Who is the senator . . . trying to fool?"

Dorgan later proposed to end the program after five years, another compromise-killer. This would alienate the business lobby, which supports the bill largely because of the temp program. Dorgan had the votes to win, 49-48, until Kennedy intervened at the last moment. He persuaded Democrat Daniel Akaka of Hawaii to change his vote, and Dorgan lost, 49-48. And the bill was saved.

Kennedy and Kyl easily rebuffed an amendment by Republican senator David Vitter of Louisiana to prohibit Z visas—still another compromise-destroying amendment. Kennedy also scolded Republican Jeff Sessions of Alabama for seeking to bar newly legalized immigrants from qualifying for the earned income tax credit. "This amendment would hurt children," Kennedy shouted. "We need to help children, not hurt them. They should not have to pay for the sins of their parents."

The bipartisan group of 12 senators who negotiated the compromise met daily last week (several times in Kennedy's office) to decide which amendments they would accept and which they would oppose as poison pills like Dorgan's that shatter the compromise and kill the bill.

The four Democratic senators running for president—Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, Joe Biden, Chris Dodd—were not part of these talks, and it showed. Clinton and Biden, supposedly backers of immigration reform, voted with Dorgan (and the AFL-CIO) to eliminate the temporary workers program and blow up the compromise. Obama and Dodd were absent. All four voted with Dorgan on the five-year limit, also a deal-breaker.

On the touchy issue of whether illegal immigrants should pay back taxes to get Z visas, Kennedy proved to be tolerant. He and Kyl had arranged a tradeoff whereby the collection of back taxes was scratched in exchange for Z visa holders not being credited for Social Security taxes they paid while working here illegally.

But when an amendment by Republican senator John McCain mandating payment of back taxes was introduced, Kennedy let it pass by voice vote. He and Kyl figured it was better not to oppose such a popular measure.

In the Senate, there's one more serious obstacle to passage. That's the plan by liberal Democrats—Obama is one—to restore legal immigration based largely on family ties—chain migration—rather than education, job skills, and other measures of merit. Again, if the liberals succeed, it means immigration reform is dead. Kyl and Republicans will bail out.

After the bipartisan compromise was announced, Senator Lindsey Graham returned to South Carolina, spoke to the state Republican convention, and was booed when he mentioned Kennedy. "Kennedy is in an I-want-to-legislate mode," Graham said. "When you catch him in the I-want-to-legislate mode, you can do some business." True, but Graham was wise not to bring Kennedy with him to emphasize the point. ♦

Michael Ramirez

Dr. Death Rides Again

Jack Kevorkian's movement has done better without him. BY RITA L. MARKER & WESLEY J. SMITH

What do cicadas have in common with Jack Kevorkian? They share a cacophonous anniversary. In June, after 17 years, cicadas are expected to crawl from underground across the Midwest. These grim insects produce such a din that just one can overpower other sounds. Also in June, exactly 17 years after he first made international headlines for assisting the suicide of 54-year-old Janet Adkins, Jack Kevorkian is scheduled to emerge from prison. Already, his release has become a media circus, likely soon to produce a din of its own.

Kevorkian's release may actually be bad news for assisted-suicide advocacy. Since his imprisonment for the 1998 murder of Thomas Youk, advocates for assisted-suicide legalization have strived mightily to put a benign, professional veneer on the hard business of authorizing doctors to intentionally participate in the termination of their patients' lives. With Kevorkian in prison, his gaunt visage was no longer the public face of the movement. Today's activists are far more likely to be impeccably dressed, upper middle class women who spout focus-group-vetted sound bites. (Hence the effort by the former Hemlock Society—renamed Compassion & Choices—to convince the media to drop the descriptive term "assisted suicide" for the pabulum phrase "aid in dying.")

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Contemporary advocates also have worked hard to make assisted suicide appear bland. The so-called "medical model" permitted by Oregon's Death with Dignity law has been ubiquitously touted in recent years by assisted-suicide promoters as an approach to mercy killing that can avoid a Kevorkian-style slippery slope. Legalization bills have been repeatedly filed in Hawaii, Vermont (where legislators killed them), and California, which is in the midst of its fourth political battle in eight years over assisted-suicide legalization.

But with Kevorkian soon to appear on *60 Minutes* and in other high-profile media venues, the assisted-suicide movement will find it much harder to conceal the many similarities between Dr. Death's approach during the 1990s and the legalized Kevorkianism being carried out in Oregon today.

Take, for example, one of the primary "protective" guidelines or safeguards for permitting death-doctoring in Oregon. In 1990, when Kevorkian began conducting post-mortem press conferences, he assured the nation his "patients" had to be terminally ill, and his attorney maintained that Kevorkian required proof of a terminal condition. As the body count mounted, the press maintained the myth. Even today, Kevorkian is often described as the doctor who assisted the suicides of the terminally ill.

Because assisted suicide is illegal in Michigan, however, authorities couldn't take Kevorkian's word for it, and had autopsies performed revealing that *more than half* of Kevorkian's 130 known victims were not terminally ill. Most were disabled with conditions such as multiple sclerosis. In fact, several had no serious physical illnesses that could be determined upon autopsy.

Under Oregon's assisted-suicide law, to qualify for assisted suicide, a patient is supposed to have a terminal condition, defined as a life expectancy of six months or less. As of the last official report, there have been 292 reported deaths under the law that transformed the crime of assisted suicide into a medical treatment. And how many of those who died actually had a terminal condition? Nobody knows. Oregon does not require autopsies of people who die there by legalized assisted suicide, so we don't know their actual underlying conditions.

Yet the words of one Oregon physician who regularly assists suicides indicate a cavalier attitude towards the law. Dr. Peter Rasmussen, an advisory board member of the Oregon chapter of Compassion & Choices, acknowledges his involvement in deaths numbering in the double digits. He said that predicting life expectancy is rife with inaccuracy but dismissed that as unimportant. He explained,

> [W]e can easily be 100 percent off, but I do not think that is a problem. If we say a patient has six months to live and we are off by 100 percent and it is really three months or even twelve months, I do not think the patient is harmed in any way.

Being far off the mark in predicting life expectancy certainly occurred in the case of cancer patient Michael Freeland, who was provided with a prescription for assisted suicide nearly two years before he died naturally. This apparent abuse was not reported by the state but in an article in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*. Perhaps the state's failure is due to the fact, as Dr. Katrina Hedberg and others responsible for issuing Oregon's official reports have acknowledged, that the assisted-suicide law does not authorize investigations


Associated Press

Jack Kevorkian with his suicide machine, February 1991

into how physicians determine their patients' prognoses.

Kevorkian also raised eyebrows in some quarters for having extremely brief relationships with his "patients" before helping them commit suicides. For example, *Good Morning America* noted that many of the people over whose deaths Kevorkian presided died within 24 hours of meeting him for the first time.

Similar all-but-nonexistent doctor-patient relationships have been reported in Oregon. Although a patient's requests for assisted suicide purportedly must span a 15-day period, official Oregon reports indicate that, over the last seven years, some patients have died by suicide having known their assisting doctors for a week or less.

What about that 15-day waiting period? Simple political expediency, as Kathryn Tucker, Compassion & Choices director of legal affairs, acknowledged. Speaking at a 1997 forum in Seattle, Tucker said:

> In my view, the Oregon measure, in some sense, became overly restrictive. It has a fifteen-day waiting period. And my own view of the federal constitutional claim is that a fifteen-day waiting period would be struck down immediately as unduly burdensome. As we've seen in the reproductive rights context, you can't have a waiting period of that kind of duration. But in the legislative forum, to pass, you need to have measures that convince people that it's suitably protective so you see a fifteen-day waiting period.

There are some who claim that, if he had lived in Oregon, Kevorkian would not have been able to carry out his style of assisted suicide in the state. They point to the fact that in many of his cases the deadly overdose was not provided orally but by infusion, and that Kevorkian was a pathologist who had not had a full-time position in the medical field for years. However, neither Kevorkian's method of assisted suicide nor his spotty credentials would have precluded his acting legally in Oregon.

Contrary to general perception, Oregon's law does not require that the lethal drugs be taken orally, only that someone else not administer a lethal injection. But only Youk's death—Kevorkian's last—was by lethal injection. The suicide contraptions that he used for earlier assisted suicides required the soon-to-be dead victims to self-administer, generally by pushing a lever triggering the flow of deadly drugs or carbon monoxide gas.

Once again, we see the possibility of this Kevorkian approach in Oregon. Tucker, in a 1996 interview with *American Medical News*, described a similar procedure and deemed it permissible under Oregon's law. Noting that self-administration is not limited to consuming drugs orally, she said:

> I think that technology can make self-administration possible for a broad range of patients who would not have the wherewithal to self-administer otherwise. For example, there are certainly technologies that permit patients to do things by voice activation of a computer that could generate an infusion of medication. That can be self-administration.

Thus, according to one of the Oregon statute's most fervent supporters, Kevorkian's method of assisted suicide would apparently not violate state law.

But what about Kevorkian's lack of medical experience in examining and treating patients? Kevorkian was a pathologist who did not treat patients after his medical school and residency days in the 1950s. If he had held an Oregon medical license (rather than Michigan and California licenses which were revoked because he was engaging in illegal assisted suicides), Kevorkian would have been within his rights under the law to act as an "attending physician" who could legally carry out assisted suicide. You see, in Oregon, *any* licensed physician—including any dermatologist, ophthalmologist, or pathologist—can write lethal prescriptions. It doesn't really take a lot of medical savvy to prescribe a deadly dose. To paraphrase the Geico commercial, "It's so easy even an unemployed pathologist can do it."

There are some differences, however, between Jack Kevorkian and Oregon doctors who carry out assisted suicide. In upcoming months, the Oregon docs will go ahead assisting suicides. Jack Kevorkian can't do that and stay out of jail. But he has other plans. According to reports, he's scheduled to hit the speaking circuit where he'll be commanding fees of $50,000 to $100,000. Who says crime doesn't pay? ♦

The Murtha Democrats

They've found power hard to handle.

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

The first thing on Rep. Mike Rogers's mind was: *Don't lose your cool*.

It was May 17, and Rogers, a Michigan Republican, was standing on the House floor listening to Rep. Jack Murtha chew him out. Rogers knew why. He sits on the Select Committee on Intelligence, and had tried to eliminate $23 million that Murtha, the antiwar, big-spending Pennsylvania Democrat, had earmarked for the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC). The NDIC is a costly, controversial, and scandal-plagued bureaucracy located in the heart of Murtha's district. Rogers wanted to put the $23 million into human intelligence operations and recruitment, programs he says are shortchanged in next year's intelligence appropriations bill.

Murtha disagreed. Committee Democrats backed him, and Rogers's amendment killing the center was defeated in committee. That didn't stop Rogers. He filed another amendment, this one directing the Justice Department to audit the center, which since its creation in 1993 has gone through more than a half-dozen directors and cost taxpayers about $400 million, all the while duplicating work that is done elsewhere. Again, Murtha and committee Democrats opposed Rogers. They defeated the audit amendment.

The story doesn't end there. After Kansas Republican Todd Tiahrt backed Rogers in committee, Murtha went after Tiahrt on the House floor, jabbing his finger at his colleague and threatening retribution. Tiahrt isn't discussing the exchange, but the moment was captured on C-SPAN.

That still didn't stop Rogers. Using a favorite Republican procedural tactic known as a motion to recommit, he called for the intelligence bill to be sent back to committee just before the full House voted on it at about 1 A.M. on May 11. Murtha was furious. Democrats tabled the motion to recommit, and a half-hour later the intelligence bill passed more or less on party lines, 225 to 197.

Murtha made sure other congressmen were around when he went after Rogers. He wanted to send a message. The exchange lasted around two minutes. Murtha used foul language, telling Rogers he would be sure to kill any of Rogers's earmarks if they came up in the Appropriations Defense Subcommittee, which Murtha chairs. Rogers protested, saying that's not the way things are done here. That's the way I do it, Murtha said. Murtha doesn't dispute Rogers's account.

The problem was that Murtha had just violated House rules. In their efforts to "drain the swamp" of congressional corruption after taking office in January, House Democratic leaders issued a rule saying members were forbidden from conditioning support for earmarks on another member's voting record. Rogers, a former FBI agent, saw an opportunity. On the evening of May 21 he offered a resolution on the House floor censuring Murtha for violating House rules. The House defeated the motion the next day, on a party-line vote with only a couple of defections. Rogers had gone toe-to-toe with Murtha and lost. But not before embarrassing House Democrats.

The episode illustrates the difficulties facing congressional Democrats as they leave Washington for the week-long Memorial Day recess. In short, governing is difficult, and governing from Capitol Hill is close to impossible. Democrats enter their sixth month in power having passed only one item on their "Six for '06" agenda into law: a staggered increase in the minimum wage. But even this was passed with substantial concessions to Republicans (tax cuts to offset the cost to small businesses) and as part of an overall defeat—the Democrats' retreat on Iraq war spending. Until last week, Democrats were adamant that any war bill contain a timetable for American withdrawal from Iraq. But they backed down at the last minute, passing a bill 280-142 in the House and 80-14 in the Senate that has no timetable and no restrictions on troop deployment. A majority of House Democrats, including Speaker Nancy Pelosi, voted against the appropriation. In the Senate, both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama voted No.

Meanwhile, Democratic proposals on the Medicare drug program and stem cell research have either been defeated in the Senate or will be vetoed by President Bush. Pelosi says she won't bring any immigration bill to the floor unless the White House guarantees her 60 to 70 GOP votes—something House Republicans tell me won't happen. And while the controversy over the firing of eight (or nine) U.S. attorneys last year continues to generate heat and light in the Senate, House Republicans led by Rep. Lamar Smith of Texas have defended embattled Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and his former counselor and White House liaison Monica Goodling. In the "win" column, Democrats have passed a budget plan. But that plan may end up helping Bush and the GOP, as it allows most of the president's tax cuts to expire in 2010. And taxes are a winning issue for Republicans.

On no issue are Democratic difficulties more apparent than ethics. Next to Iraq, corruption was the most important issue in last year's elections. It was solely responsible for a few Democratic

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gains, such as Nick Lampson's victory in the heavily Republican district that Tom DeLay once represented, and Tim Mahoney's close victory over Joe Negron, the Republican who had the misfortune of running for Mark Foley's former seat in a strong Republican district in Florida.

Yet many veteran House Democrats fought meaningful ethics reform, gutting a measure that would have placed restrictions on a congressman's ability to jump from Capitol Hill to K Street and forcing the House leadership to hold a vote on a separate bill requiring lobbyists to disclose the amount of money they "bundle" from clients and send to politicians. It was the House Republicans, again led by Texas's Smith, who played a constructive role, adding amendments that apply the new regulations to state and local lobbyists, extend the bundling-disclosure provision to donations to political action committees, and require lobbyists to identify the earmarks they want entered into spending bills.

The result was that on May 24 the lobbying reform passed overwhelmingly, 396 to 22. It still must be reconciled with the Senate ethics bill and sent to President Bush, but the more important question is whether the Democrats really are serious about changing the "culture of corruption." Most signs aren't encouraging. There's Murtha, unindicted co-conspirator in the 1980 Abscam bribery scandal, who continues to lord over the appropriations process. There's William Jefferson, the Louisiana Democrat with the $90,000 in cash the FBI found in his freezer. Last week a Capitol Hill newspaper reported that since January the House Ethics Committee has done nothing to further its investigation into Jefferson's alleged double-dealing.

And then there's appropriator Alan Mollohan, the West Virginia Democrat who during his 14 years in Congress has funneled hundreds of millions of dollars to his rural district. Mollohan is under investigation for using some of that money to enrich himself. Last year, under pressure from Pelosi, Mollohan gave up his seat on the House Ethics Committee. But he still chairs the Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies. It oversees . . . the FBI budget. Mollohan says he's recused himself from Justice Department matters until the investigation into his activities ends. And if you believe that's a "serious" reform, I have a bridge to sell you in Brooklyn. ♦

Bush's Colombia Deal

Will Congress give the back of its hand to a valuable ally? BY DUNCAN CURRIE

Álvaro Uribe

Associated Press / Pablo Martinez Monsivais

When George Bush dropped by Bogotá during his recent tour of Latin America, he became the first president to visit the Colombian capital since Ronald Reagan in 1982. His brief stopover was mainly symbolic: a sign of the improved security climate and a tribute to Colombian president Álvaro Uribe, Bush's closest Latin American ally. Not that Bogotá is Peoria: According to the *Washington Post*, "Colombia put 21,000 police officers on duty, lining every road traveled by Bush and shutting down much of downtown." Even so, protests turned violent. Inside the Casa de Nariño, Uribe and Bush swapped praise and affirmed their partnership in fighting narcoterrorism. As Michael Shifter of the Inter-American Dialogue puts it, "They're the only two presidents in the hemisphere that consider themselves 'war presidents.'"

Educated at Oxford and Harvard, the 54-year-old Uribe has ample reason to hate Colombia's drug-financed guerrillas: They murdered his father in 1983, during a botched kidnapping attempt. First elected in 2002 as a center-right independent, he has lobbied hard for "Plan Colombia," the American aid package that has sent more

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than $5 billion to Bogotá since 2000. To Uribe's delight, Bush expanded U.S. assistance to include military support against the rebels, noting the blurry line between "counternarcotics" relief and "counterinsurgency" cooperation. The chief insurgent network, the Marxist-oriented Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, relies heavily on cocaine trafficking. "Without drug money," said senior State Department official Deborah A. McCarthy in May 2003, "FARC units would not be able to arm themselves and dominate the amount of territory in southern Colombia that they do."

They control less territory now than when Uribe took office. He has largely pushed the guerrillas and drug gangs out of the cities and into the jungles. Murders and abductions have fallen significantly, and the economy is red hot. *Business Week* reports that "Colombia's stock market has soared fourteen fold since October 2001. Foreign direct investment and capital inflows have more than doubled, while real estate prices have tripled in many areas." This "investment miracle," marked by 6.8 percent growth in 2006, cannot be divorced from the security gains. Retired Foreign Service officer Phillip McLean observes that "the murder rates in Bogotá and Medellín are now lower than in Washington, D.C." Uribe, unsurprisingly, is wildly popular.

Besides tackling the leftist insurgents and cartels, he has also sought to demobilize and curb the influence of right-wing paramilitary groups, many of which also deal drugs, while reforming a corrupt judicial system. Reliably pro-American—he backed the Iraq war but did not deploy troops—Uribe stands in sharp contrast with Hugo Chávez, the anti-Yanqui strongman next door in Venezuela. Now Uribe is hoping Congress will endorse a bilateral free trade agreement signed last November.

Done deal? Hardly. Congress is in a protectionist mood. And Uribe has lately come under fire for human rights abuses from Democrats, including Al Gore, who snubbed him at a Miami environmental forum in late April, and House speaker Nancy Pelosi, who publicly rebuked the Colombian leader during his U.S. visit in early May. Sander Levin, the top Democrat for trade policy on the House Ways and Means Committee, has fiercely criticized the trade agreement, citing labor gripes but also paramilitary infiltration of Colombian politics. Meanwhile, Senator Pat Leahy is delaying a portion of the Plan Colombia funding on similar grounds, demanding that U.S. officials investigate reports of "extrajudicial executions by the military."

What to make of these claims? In one sense they're old news: Uribe's domestic opponents have dogged him with such allegations for years. He previously served as mayor of Medellín, the hometown of the late drug capo Pablo Escobar, and as governor of Antioquia—a mountainous department in the north of the country that is fertile paramilitary recruiting grounds. Any Colombian politician who rose to prominence in that area during the late 20th century faced the constant specter of assassination by the cartels. And because the intertwined drug and insurgent wars polluted all sides of the political spectrum, some of Uribe's political supporters appear to have unsavory connections. The right-wing paramilitaries obviously share his goal of routing FARC.

That said, Uribe's critics have yet to produce a smoking gun incriminating the president himself. "There's no evidence at all," says Shifter, "that links him with the paramilitaries." An aide to Leahy admits his boss "does not have evidence to support" charges of paramilitary ties against Uribe personally. Indeed, Leahy "wants Uribe to succeed" and maintains "a very good relationship" with him, says the aide. But Leahy believes that Plan Colombia has failed to lower the supply of cocaine, and he wants further army reform, pointing to atrocities committed against labor figures and other civilians.

But the ongoing scandals must be seen in context. Uribe has demobilized thousands of paramilitary soldiers and launched a brave campaign to expose criminal infiltration of military and civilian affairs. What he has uncovered is ugly: It reflects the awfulness of Colombia's decades-long battle against the guerrillas and the drug barons. As in post-Saddam Iraq, where the state could not provide adequate security, brutal private contractors filled the job. Before Uribe, however, the fate of Colombian democracy was a genuine question. Now the economy is booming, homicide rates have plummeted, the rebels are weakened, and thuggish warlords sit in jail. "Even on the unions' own figures," reports the *Economist*, murders of trade unionists "have

"It seems odd that an amendment requiring Congressional authorization for military action against Iran would have less support than an amendment preventing the Pentagon from planning for such action. If a member of Congress is worried that the Bush administration is preparing for a possible strike against Iran's nuclear facilities—which the administration would be unbelievably foolish not to do—then wouldn't that representative also want to require that the Bush administration seek Congressional approval before putting those plans into action?"

fallen to less than two-fifths of the number in 2001."

Polls indicate that most Colombians favor the free trade agreement with the United States. Such trade pacts are "very symbolic," says retired Latin America hand Peter DeShazo. "They show that the United States is engaged with the region." Yet this one could easily fail. The bipartisan compromise reached in mid-May will apparently allow the (much smaller) trade pacts with Peru and Panama to go through, but not Colombia's. Shifter recounts recent meetings with "left-leaning" Peruvians and Chilean socialists who expressed "utter disbelief" at America's dithering. One Chilean socialist who strongly backs both Uribe and the U.S.-Colombia trade agreement is José Miguel Insulza, secretary general of the Organization of American States.

This should send a signal to U.S. lawmakers that Latin America's "leftward drift" has been overstated, and that moderate-left governments—such as those in Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Costa Rica—are outside the orbit of Chávez-style radicalism and remain keen on market-friendly democracy. At the same time, authoritarian populism has gained a foothold in the Andes, with the rise of Chávez acolytes Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador. Peruvian president Alan García may have been indulging in hyperbole last fall when he spoke of a "cold war" raging in South America. But U.S.-led trade and democracy promotion remain crucial to blunting the appeal of oil-soaked Chavismo and helping Latin Americans conquer the scourge of *amiguismo*, or cronyism.

Should Congress spike the Colombia free trade agreement, warns Colombian vice president Francisco Santos, it would speak volumes about "how America treats its allies," and Bogotá "might need to reevaluate its relationship with the United States." It will be "a major setback," says Shifter. "It would send a clear message to Latin America that the United States is a very unreliable partner." Just what Chávez has been telling them all along. ♦

Howard's End

Australia's prime minister no longer connects with voters.

BY MAX BOOT

John Howard

AAP Image/Dean Lewins

Sydney

Everyone knows that in a few weeks' time George W. Bush will lose his closest international ally when Tony Blair steps down as Britain's prime minister. Less well known is that just behind Blair in the exit queue may be the foreign leader who is arguably a close second in the president's affections—Prime Minister John Howard of Australia.

Howard, who has been in office since 1996, is already Australia's second-longest-serving premier, having won four elections, the most recent in 2004. He has staged some remarkable come-from-behind wins in the past, but he will have to top them all if he is to prevail in this year's balloting, probably in the fall. A recent Newspoll shows Howard's Liberal party—the name, confusingly enough, of Australia's conservatives—running well behind Labor, 59 percent to 41 percent. In the past, Howard has managed to win largely on the basis of his personal appeal, but now voters say by a 49-percent to 37-percent margin that they prefer his younger rival, Kevin Rudd, who took over leadership of the opposition this past December.

What accounts for Howard's slide? And what are the implications for the America-Australia alliance? I asked those questions of a number of political observers and participants in Canberra and Sydney recently. The most widely cited answer to the former question is fatigue and complacency. After 11 years, and notwithstanding a strong economy and a popular new budget, voters are tired of Howard's government. In a way, his success is his downfall. The economy is growing so strongly that many Australians seem willing to risk a change of government, especially when the alternative does not seem especially threatening.

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Rudd is conservative for a Laborite, a nerdy former diplomat and management consultant in boxy spectacles who speaks Chinese fluently and goes to church regularly (he was brought up Catholic but now attends Anglican services). He has few ties to the unions which have traditionally been a dominant force mooring his party to the left. He is seen as a safe pair of hands to continue steering Australia ahead—a Tony Blair to Howard's Margaret Thatcher.

For that reason few expect any change of government to much affect the close relationship between Australia and the United States. While Rudd has opposed the Iraq war, he has not made opposition to U.S. policy a theme of his campaign, the way previous Labor leader Mark Latham did in 2004. Latham promised to pull Aussie troops out of Iraq by Christmas if elected—a pledge he made without consulting Rudd, his shadow foreign minister.

That kind of tactic doesn't play well in Australia; Latham wound up getting thumped at the polls. Rudd isn't repeating that mistake. He is running as a pro-American (and pro-Israel) candidate. Although a Laborite, Rudd has arguably been less critical of the United States than the current Conservative leader in Britain, David Cameron.

Indeed, Rudd went out of his way to reassure Dick Cheney, during the vice president's February visit to Oz, that even though he does plan to pull Australia's 550 troops from southern Iraq, he will not necessarily do so immediately, and he will maintain another 1,000 Australian personnel in and around Iraq to support coalition operations. Rudd also has backed Howard's plan to more than double, to almost 1,000, the number of Australian troops in Afghanistan.

From the White House perspective, it will still be a blow if Howard loses office. Along with his foreign minister, Alexander Downer, Howard has been one of the world's most stalwart defenders of the global war on terror and most eloquent critics of trendy anti-Americanism. But Rudd's accession would not occasion a crisis with one of America's two closest Pacific allies (the other being Japan). Even with China now having become Australia's second largest trading partner (after Japan), most folks Down Under, Labor or Liberal, know that, in the final analysis, their survival and safety rest with their American mates. Just as America came to the rescue in 1942, with Douglas MacArthur taking charge when Japanese invasion seemed imminent, so Australians count on America to bail them out of any future crisis.

They, in turn, are willing to help the United States carry out mutual foreign policy objectives. Australia is the only country to have fought alongside the United States in all of its major wars of the past 100 years; the Aussies, unlike the Brits, didn't opt out of Vietnam.

The Australian military may be small—with 51,000 active-duty personnel, it is little more than one-fourth the size of the U.S. Marine Corps—but it is heavily deployed. The Australian Defense Forces talk of a punishing "operations tempo" just as do the American armed forces. And, like the U.S. military, the Australians are expanding to make up for post-Cold War downsizing—albeit on a much smaller scale. The U.S. Army and Marine Corps are adding more than 60,000 troops; the Australians 6,000.

The Australians were early supporters of the war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, providing diplomatic cover against charges of unilateralism and sending their highly skilled SAS commandos to fight alongside American and British Special Forces. While the Aussies play only a small supporting role in the Middle East, they have taken the lead in managing crises closer to their shores. They led a United Nations force into East Timor in 1999 to stop attempts by pro-Indonesian militias to block that nation's march to independence, and they have stuck around long enough to midwife a new democracy. There were some setbacks last year with riots and fighting in Dili, the capital, but order was restored by troops from Australia and other nations. Earlier this month, East Timor experienced a peaceful transition from the previous president to the newly elected José Ramos-Horta, a Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Australia also has committed troops and police officers to a peacekeeping mission in the Solomon Islands. And Australian diplomats, aid workers, and soldiers remain engaged in maintaining order in other tiny island states around the South Pacific, where military coups d'état are common.

Australians are also working to prevent the growth of radical Islam in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, and other nearby states with large Muslim populations. Because of its proximity, Australia has more experts on many of those countries than the United States does, making the Aussies a valuable source of guidance and intelligence.

Delivering a speech in Sydney, I jokingly commended the audience, which included many Australian officers, for their success in establishing an Australian Empire. This was met with nervous laughter—an acknowledgment that, however politically incorrect, the jest contained some truth.

Without the old-fashioned imperial trappings, Australia is indeed playing the kind of stabilizing role that the British Empire once played and that the United States has now inherited. But not even the United States, with its 300 million people and defense spending greater than the rest of the planet combined, can handle every crisis everywhere. We may be the global sheriff, but we need a posse to be effective, and Australia has been a stalwart member of that self-selected assemblage. Other liberal democratic powers, ranging from Brazil to India, could usefully emulate its example by taking a more active role in policing their regions in cooperation with the United States and other foreign partners. ♦

Days of Their Lives

The Hillary and Bill show, America's longest-running soap opera

By Noemie Emery

First there was *Dallas* and then there was *Dynasty*, family tales of intrigue in high places, guilty pleasures that kept us couch-bound each week in the 1980s, dazed by the money, the jets, the power, the houses, not to mention the rows and affairs. Then, just as these were reaching the end of their runs, along came *The Clintons*, a riveting saga of lust and ambition, a tale that never ran out of astounding new plot turns and still keeps the world on the edge of its seat.

As we all know, the story began many years ago, when Wellesley's star feminist met the altogether too plausible Arkansas charmer on the Yale Law School campus, and the two joined their young hearts and their rampant ambitions in an audacious plan to win and share power, of a kind never concocted before. The series took off, and won a huge following, as one intriguing development followed the next. Bill became Arkansas attorney general, and Hillary helped him. Bill became governor, and Hillary helped him. Bill ran for president, and Hillary helped him, now more than ever. Bill became president, and the ratings took off, ensnaring a new, international, audience. Bill retired from office, after many adventures, having beaten back efforts to eject him for perjury. As this was happening, in an attempt to sustain the plot, Hillary ran for the Senate, won, and began running for president, opening a whole new story line, plus a whole new vein of historical interest: Sons have succeeded fathers as president; wives have followed husbands (usually dead ones) into the House or the Senate; brothers have tried to follow brothers into the White House, and failed in the effort; but never before has a former first lady tried to be elected president, and, in the process, make her husband the very first First Man.

And as the plot now heats up, it makes us look anew at the two major characters, and their complex bargain. This is crunch time for the Great Clinton Gamble, the one Hillary took in her deal with Bill: to serve his career first to gain power later, or more power sooner, than she might have won for herself. She has to put up, to prove the claim her fans have been making since the couple emerged: that *she* is the one who ought to be president, a woman of genius and destiny. And he, for this, and for all of the grief he has caused her, now has to pay up, big time.

In a sense, Hillary has always been the real star of the series. A feminist favorite at high tide of the feminist movement, Hillary had been told all her life by her friends and relations that she had a spectacular and limitless future, and, if she wanted, could Go All The Way. It was a shock and a letdown to some of these mentors when the place that she chose to go first was Arkansas, a place, so it seemed, at the far end of nowhere, in order to follow a man. Even a man with a political future seemed a comedown compared with their fantasies. "I worked hard as a woman to help her get the opportunities she was entitled to," one such woman said sadly, as she helped Hillary pack for her trek into exile. "I thought she was throwing those opportunities away."

Actually, she was on her way not to the kitchen, but to a bargain unique in American politics: She would support and advance Bill while he ran for office, while any power he won would be shared. A genial rogue, and a great favorite with some female viewers, Bill would break his marriage vows with a large cast of women, which made for some interesting plotlines and crises, but he would always keep faith with this part of their contract. Hillary had large policy roles as first lady of Arkansas. In 1990, they thought of having her run to succeed him as governor. Bill ran for president in 1992 on an openly two-for-one ticket. And once he was elected, Bill was more than true to his word.

But along the way, the division of labor had not been quite equal, and (no surprise to most female viewers) she had borne the brunt. His job was to run, be elected, and make himself famous; all of the fun stuff. Hers was to do everything else: to order their lives, make most of their money, and always to pick up after Bill. "By the mid-1980s

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. . . there had been several adjustments in the partnership, most of them made by Hillary," wrote David Maraniss of the *Washington Post*. "Year by year in their joint political enterprise, she had taken on more tasks—some that her husband had asked her to do, some that she felt obliged to perform because it was clear to her that he did not want to do them or was not good at them. . . . She was her husband's public relations troubleshooter and legal problem-solver. She provided a full range of formal and informal services. As the public relations consultant, she would devote hours to courting John Robert Starr, the managing editor of the *Arkansas Democrat*, in an occasionally effective effort to persuade him to go easier on her husband. As the lawyer, she would represent Clinton's interests, helping to resolve some of the most politically sensitive issues in Arkansas," including a dispute over a power plant in Mississippi and unresolved issues from the epic desegregation of the Little Rock public school system 30 years earlier.

Female viewers of *The Clintons*, especially, could share the concerns of the leading lady. "Some people," Maraniss wrote, "sensed a growing resentment in Hillary that she had to take on so many private duties in the partnership while at the same time she was being asked, unfairly, she thought, to sacrifice material things." Thus we all understood when Bill was elected, and she talked about becoming his chief of staff or a cabinet member. "There was some fear that she was going to get gypped out of something she had paid a real price for," an aide to the president said. But the fear was unfounded: She got what she paid for. And then the real problems began.

When the series had its national premiere in January 1992, on Super Bowl Sunday, Hillary was sporting blonde bangs and an Alice-in-Wonderland hair band, defending Bill against charges of fooling around with a lounge singer named Gennifer.

Like any successful duo, Hillary and Bill's complementary skills—her will and discipline, his political talents—could compensate for their individual deficits, and create one effective political animal. The downside was that their opposite deficits—his lack of discipline, her tin ear for politics—constantly threatened to scuttle the enterprise, creating an unending cycle of danger and rescue and blame. In 1980, Bill lost his first race for reelection as governor, partly because Hillary irritated so many people by looking and acting like a campus insurgent, with baggy dresses, thick glasses, and brown frizzy hair. Faced with the menace of early retirement, she began to turn blonder, took off her glasses, smartened her wardrobe, and became—well, not beautiful, but often quite pretty, especially in the later stages of the first run for president, when she sported soft little dresses and a well-coiffed blonde flip. Bill was returned to office, and resumed his climb upward. When the series had its national premiere in January 1992, on Super Bowl Sunday, Hillary was sporting blonde bangs and an Alice-in-Wonderland hair band, defending Bill against charges of fooling around with a lounge singer named Gennifer, who had held a press conference to detail his adultery, and who looked and dressed, with dark roots and big shoulders, as if she had wandered over from a neighboring *Dynasty* set.

The nation was mesmerized. Bill won, and they swept into office as the first First Couple ever elected, an exciting new concept in joint political leadership. As a reward, she was given early in 1993 the task of reshaping the whole health care system, which she mishandled in such a spectacular manner that one year later the Republicans won control of both houses of Congress for the first time in 40 years. This time, it was Bill to the rescue, slowly triangulating himself up out of irrelevance, while Hillary retreated from public exposure and reverted to her time-tested role as backstage adviser. In 1996, he won reelection, and the balance of power tipped back in his favor. And then, in the mother of all public sex scandals, he tipped it back over again.

One of the most appealing aspects of *The Clintons* was the way that the problems that roiled the country during the eight years of their joint term grew out of their private lives. Bill gave Hillary health care reform in return for her having helped him weather adultery charges, but was unwilling to check her when she handled it badly, and so he and his party lost Congress and were on the defensive for most of his tenure. With the crisis that was the dramatic high point of the series—the impeachment debate near the end of the couple's last term in office—the show took a stunning flight into uncharted territory, making its two leading characters go against type. Elected in part as the country's first feminist president, whose respect for women surpassed all understanding, Bill was accused of being (a) a groper, (b) a rapist, (c) a lecherous boss who cornered state employees in hotel rooms, and (d) an adulterous cad who had carried on with an intern barely older than his daughter in the Oval Office (or in a pantry close to it), on Easter

Sunday, after having first gone to church with his wife.

In the famous 1960s soap opera *Camelot*, the heroine, Jackie (the most deeply loved character ever to appear in a show of this nature), was said to have told her wandering spouse (the ferociously attractive but ill-fated Jack) that if she were ever embarrassed in public she would leave him, taking his children. Other women in series like these—Lee Hart, for instance, in the TV movie *Monkey Business*—had also suffered in silence. But with Hillary, a defiant and outspoken feminist who had sworn not to stand by her man like some helpless and put-upon housewife, the scriptwriters took a step of stunning audacity: They sent her out to campaign. With Bill in disgrace (or at least in recovery), she stepped into the void created by his absence, and went coast to coast campaigning for Democrats, rallying them against the assault on Bill by his enemies, the "vast right-wing conspiracy."

What ensued was an episode like none other in history. The right said the campaign was all about perjury; the left said it was all about privacy; but to viewers at home, it was all about Hillary: how she could stand it, what she was feeling, and how she could do what she did. It was a mystery, but all could agree that only she could have done what it was she was doing: giving her demoralized party someone to root for; and neither forgiving nor blaming her husband, but shifting her rage to his foes. It was the campaign-as-a-bad-country-song syndrome, and onlookers were mesmerized. Viewership soared. In the end, the Republicans lost seats in both houses, defying expectations and history, and giving rise to a myth: that Hillary Clinton was a brilliant campaigner of large and hitherto unappreciated political talents, who could one day win the big prize on her own. As the good husband, Bill Clinton had given her the health care issue, and she had lost Congress, and imperiled their future. As the duplicitous miscreant, Bill had imperiled himself, and given his wronged wife a springboard to a startling new future. Joan Crawford could hardly have pulled it off better. Hillary had emerged as a star.

The 1998-2000 span of *The Clintons* was the emotional high point of the show, and of Hillary Clinton herself. The idea that she was both a star and a genius was a product of the 1998 midterm elections, when she rose from the ashes and hit the trail with a vengeance, the *Pasionaria* of the impeachment ordeal, the Woman Wronged, who—without mentioning either the wrong or the wrongdoer—was asking her party to stand by her man. As a bit of theater, it was a psychological masterstroke: If you were for Bill, you could back him by following Hillary and voting against the Republican Congress; if you were enraged at Bill and wanted to teach him a lesson, you could slap him around by heeding her call and voting for Democrats, in support of the woman he had wronged. But you voted for Democrats however you felt about Bill.

Hillary's run for the Senate two years later was the same, only more so: The brave little woman was trying to find a new life. Again, people who liked and disliked Bill could both vote for Hillary. She was carrying on Bill's name and career while moving beyond him, declaring her independence while extending his name and his legacy. She had gone beyond being Bill's wife and become instead "Hillary!" a dramatic phenomenon that defied definition. Her bewildered opponent could not match this drama. And of course, she won.

It was only when she started running for president that it began falling apart. *The Clintons* had been running a very long time, and even some erstwhile fans were fatigued. Eight years had gone by since impeachment, and six years since Bill had left office; they now lived separate lives. In a strange way they had managed to trade situations: He had a symbolic role, she had a real one; she had real power, he had its memory; he was a show horse, trying to find ways to fill empty hours; she was a workhorse, grinding away at her job. Their schedules, their interests, their circles were different. They were seldom at the same place at the same time in their big houses. As the marriage lost traction, so did the story and the fascination with it: People once intrigued by the strapping young president and the trim blonde with long hair lost interest in the haggard man with white hair, and the hard-looking woman who seemed to fill out her pant suits a little too amply. As the scandals grew dim, so did her celebrity aura: She was no longer the controversial co-president, the would-be Evita, the long-suffering spouse betrayed for the dubious charms of the thong-baring bimbo. She was no longer Nora leaving the Doll's House to embrace a new destiny. She was now one of a hundred United States senators, industrious, but not all that outstanding—prosaic, pedantic, and dull.

And so, her performance is creating a problem for the show. Away from the old script, her appeal flagging, she has had problems finding a role. Thus far, her efforts have been inconclusive: Her jokes fall flat, and her accents are grating; when she tries to inspire, she is unconvincing; when she goes on the offensive, her voice can rise to an earsplitting shriek. Her charm offensives have not been too charming, and polls suggest that the more people see her, the higher her negatives rise. Things can still change, but in the year or so leading up to the very long battle, she has often run behind leading Republicans in head-to-head matchups; she is being overshadowed by a younger man,

Barack Obama, whose own story is more compelling than hers. The once thrilling drama of the first woman president has been wholly eclipsed by the still larger drama of the first viable black candidate. She is proving a harder sell than she or Bill ever imagined. And thus, as her road to power appears narrower and steeper, the pressure on Bill to save her has increased.

And so poor old Bill has been put back into harness, churning up mountains of cash. His role in a general election would be problematic—since 1998, most of the candidates he campaigned for have failed to win office—but among the Democratic primary flock, his touch remains golden, especially in raking in dough. This is not the usual scene of the spouse merely trying to back up the partner. The Clintons left the White House in 2001 with the IOUs piling up on Bill's half of the desk: He owes Hillary for his continuation in office, and for the entire year of 1998: for the *Today Show* interview in January and the "vast right-wing conspiracy," for the stiff upper lip in the drip-by-drip process, for the fess-up in August, and the walk across the White House lawn en route to the frigid Martha's Vineyard vacation; for the armchair psychiatrists and the gossip and giggles; for her stoic campaign in the congressional midterms; for the stand on the lawn in front of the White House on the dark day that he was impeached. Hence the ferocity with which he is working the phones and the Rolodex. Hence, too, the unprecedented five-minute video he has released extolling her presidential qualities. Friends say he is working harder than ever. They say he is even on time.

How will the writers survive this last challenge? Can the couple bring it off once again? If they can't, it won't be the first time a show failed when main characters tried to spin off into separate series, losing much of the magic that made the act compelling. From the start, the thing that made *The Clintons* work was the unlikely union of opposites, held together in an attraction-revulsion dynamic, with the whole adding up to more than the sum of its parts. As a sum, they are, and remain, an incredible story. As parts, however, they are merely stock players: an aging *roué*, who is almost too facile, and a grimly ambitious feminist lawyer, with a tough but conventional mind. In 1992, they seemed fresh and exciting; now they are part of the system and the problem; they were young; now they're not far from the age that the elder George Bush was when they ran against him. And if her job was tough, Bill's is still tougher: It is easier to discipline a huge and unruly political talent than to try to breathe talent into a humorless disciplinarian.

In the complex calculation of Clintonian balance, his scandals gave her the boost to get into the Senate, but may hurt her now with a national audience. The base may adore him, but he has devalued his stock with a broader electorate. Bill Clinton back in the White House, where he would rewrite the rules for First Spouses, would unsettle more than a few people. Would he be like Eleanor, and busy himself with causes? Like Bess Truman, and stay out of Washington? Go the Jackie route, and do over the White House? Wear stunning outfits at cultural evenings? Go riding to hounds?

And so the last act of this unfolding drama is revealing some interesting things. Hillary's fans have wondered for years where she would be on her own without him, free to fulfill what they saw as her limitless destiny, unfettered by scandal, undistracted by coping with bimbo eruptions, unencumbered by Bill and his escapades. And now we know.

Did she need Bill, after all, to be noticed? The answer is yes. She needed him to give her access to power, to make her a household word in the state house and White House; she needed him to make her a national figure, and then she needed his scandals to make her a star. Democrats want their narratives to be like movies on *Lifetime*: They found Madeleine Albright an inspiring figure less because she was the first female secretary of state than because she ended up with a much bigger job than the husband who left her years earlier. Hillary's rise had the same heart-warming essence, and played well to much the same audience. There was never a *Lifetime* movie quite like the 1998-2001 saga of *Hillary!*, the woman wronged who saved both her husband and party, who glowed on the cover of *Vogue* in Cartier jewels and in burgundy velvet; who lived it up on both coasts as a Miramax princess; and then, as the spunky survivor, went to start life all over in a new state of mind.

In the moment, she was a star and a princess, and a political juggernaut, but the moment was fleeting, and passed. Midnight came, the coach turned back into a pumpkin, and the princess turned into not quite a scullery maid, but surely no rock star, and merely a commonplace pol. Whether this pol will achieve her lifelong ambition is a whole other story, and one that is yet to be seen. Writers are working on three different endings: In the first, she loses and goes back to the Senate, where she makes peace with her limits and destiny; in the second, she loses, makes Bill's life hell, and rages on at him and the world for the rest of eternity; in the third, she wins, Bill pulls her over the finish line, and they go back to the White House for four or eight years of the same old dynamic, but this time with her owing him. However it ends, it will be quite a story. It will be must-see TV. ♦

The Army We Need

We can't fight The Long War with the forces we have

By Tom Donnelly

In wartime Washington there is but one point of bipartisan agreement: The land forces of the United States are too small. Hillary Clinton may be trying to make her fellow Democrats forget her vote to go to war in Iraq, but she insists that "it is past time to increase the end-strength of the Army and Marines." Sen. Barack Obama agrees, and even the *New York Times* has editorialized that "larger ground forces are an absolute necessity for the sort of battles that America is likely to fight during the coming decades."

On the Republican side, the leading candidates are straining to one-up each other on the issue. Rudy Giuliani wants to enlarge the Army by about 70,000 from its current strength of 510,000 active-duty soldiers. Mitt Romney thinks 100,000 is a better number. John McCain is working with his advisers to formulate his answer, but he might well trump his rivals.

And with Donald Rumsfeld at last departed from the Pentagon, even President Bush has opened his mind. Announcing the Iraq "surge," the president allowed as how he was "inclined to believe that we need to increase the permanent size of both the United States Army and United States Marines."

As a political matter and as a strategic impulse, this is long overdue. But it is only a starting point. In the near term, given the stresses of dual surges in Iraq and Afghanistan and the deleterious effects of more than a decade of neglect, almost any plan to expand U.S. land forces will help. But the larger project of rebuilding the Marines and, especially, the U.S. Army to sustain the demands of a new era will require as much thought as money. And it's a job that will fall mostly to our next president; the Bush administration can only begin the process. To properly size and shape American land forces—so that the Marine Corps and the Army complement each other—we must answer five questions.

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What is the mission?

During the Cold War, the classic question for defense planners was, How much is enough? The unstated assumption was that the strategic goal was to contain Soviet aggression. Since the death of our superpower doppelgänger, the question for the Pentagon has been, What do you want us to do? The attacks of 9/11 confused the picture: There may be a bipartisan consensus on the need to expand U.S. land forces, but there is almost no agreement on how to employ them. Without a broader understanding of the missions for U.S. ground forces, Pentagon planners won't know how much is enough or even what kind of forces are needed.

This is a question we have been reluctant to face. The attitude of the Clinton administration during the Balkan conflicts was, essentially, We don't do land wars. Even though the Kosovo air campaign by itself did not stop the Serbs' ethnic cleansing—it took British prime minister Tony Blair's threat to deploy ground forces, along with pressure from the Russians, to induce Slobodan Milosevic's change of heart—the "no-contact war" in Kosovo perversely bolstered the position of airpower enthusiasts in the Pentagon. Rumsfeld's vision of "defense transformation" was a pumped-up version of no-contact war.

But the experiences of the Bush years ought to have driven these fantasies from our minds. The idea that we can simply fight the way we would prefer to fight—rapidly, decisively, and from a distance—is no longer tenable. Moreover, we can see multiple missions for land forces, each crucial to the success of American strategy.

The first mission is the defense of the American homeland. The attacks of September 11 brought a new focus to this traditional mission; the possibility of ter-

rorist attack rightly remains a prime concern. But in fact there has long been a large role for U.S. ground forces at home. National forces have been employed in internal emergencies countless times: from enforcing desegregation to securing the streets of Los Angeles or Washington during riots. They have provided critical command and control capabilities and manpower during floods, forest fires, and storms; the front-line relief efforts following Hurricane Andrew in 1992 were a partnership between the state of Florida and the 10th Mountain Division from upstate New York. Hurricane Katrina, a larger, regional disaster, likewise precipitated a national military response by all the armed services. And there looms the sobering prospect of a still larger catastrophe, in the form of an attack on the United States employing weapons of mass destruction.

There is more: American strategists have for centuries understood the Caribbean Basin to be an integral part of our "homeland." The 1989 invasion of Panama was nothing if not a reaffirmation of the principles of the Monroe Doctrine, and there is no reason to believe that our security concerns in our own region will diminish. Even as we await the end of the Castro era in Cuba we know not what turmoil the dictator's passing will bring; Hugo Chàvez seems mostly a buffoon, but Venezuela supplies about one-sixth of our oil imports. And supposedly "transnational" phenomena—population flows and the international narcotics trade—keep significant U.S. Army units occupied on our borders.

Despite these widely varied assignments and the potential for catastrophe, the defense of the American homeland is a relative bargain. Many of these internal tasks are best done by the Army National Guard. And, Castro and Chàvez notwithstanding, the Americas remain generally peaceful and fairly well governed.

It is mostly the conduct of "The Long War"—a more useful and accurate term than "Global War on Terror"—that will determine the size and shape of U.S. ground forces.

In this case, too, the fundamental problem is to face up to the true nature and extent of the conflict. The Long War is nothing less than a struggle for political power across the Islamic world, though most particularly in the Arabian heartland. It is a conflict precipitated by the slow collapse of the *ancien régime*: the monarchs, autocrats, outright tyrants, and petty dictators whose legitimacy is gradually but inexorably being eroded. Islamist revolutionaries—initially Persian Shiites but now, and far more dangerously, radical Sunnis like Osama bin Laden—have laid claim to these weak and derelict states in the name of Allah. Regimes of faith are poised to sweep aside the brittle and all-too-earthly regimes of the old order. The alternative is a liberal and democratic revolution in the name of free people.

We cannot be indifferent to the outcome of this struggle; the world's industrial economies depend upon the region's energy resources, and the region's political troubles embroil the world's great powers, including the rising People's Republic of China. Nor can we confidently retreat to an "offshore" balancing of local potentates. This was supposedly the preferred U.S. posture—now an Excalibur-like ideal for those unhappy with the war in Iraq—but it has been overtaken by events. In the three decades since the creation of U.S. Central Command, our presence in the region has shifted from mostly maritime and transitory to an extended engagement on land.

The Arabian heartland—the region centered on Mecca and Medina but including Egypt, the Levant, and Iraq, which al Qaeda theorist Ayman al Zawahiri famously described in his directive to the late Abu Musab al Zarqawi as essential to the jihadists' project—is unquestionably the central front of The Long War. Strategically, al Qaeda in Iraq now matters more than al Qaeda in Waziristan; bin Laden and Zawahiri no longer direct the forces they helped set in motion. And the conflict in Iraq is redefining the jihadists' priorities: They see themselves as engaged in a struggle against the Shiite "apostates" and—according to extremist propaganda—their Iranian Shiite masters. This larger war is being fought with less and less regard for the Iraqis themselves; the Sunni sheikhs in Anbar province and now a collection of "nationalist" insurgent groups want to separate themselves from al Qaeda in Iraq.

Nor can there be a neat U.S. disengagement—or "redeployment," to use the term favored by House Democratic leaders—from this central front. Even were the Sunni insurgency defeated, there would remain the need to defend our ally, the government in Baghdad, from external dangers. Not the least of these is Iran, on the road to becoming a nuclear power. But equally, the al Qaeda revolutionaries will not soon give up the struggle. It is their strategy to spark a civil war within Islam, and their core tactic is the practice of terrorism on a global scale. For them not to trigger a nuclear-fueled wild fire, the United States must stay engaged in the region, "onshore," with sizable land forces.

But although the Arabian heartland is the central front, The Long War is already being waged on other fronts. The war in Afghanistan is a contest over a key "middle ground," where our goal is not simply to continue to suppress the Taliban and al Qaeda cells, but to stabilize and welcome a second ally—an ally eager to establish a long-term strategic partnership with the United States and the West. The geographic centrality of Afghanistan—it bor-

ders on Pakistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and even briefly China—makes it strategically essential. An American withdrawal from Afghanistan, already hinted at by the Bush administration's pass-the-buck-to-NATO policy, would not only relieve pressure on Osama bin Laden but also exacerbate all the worst habits and stoke the strategic fears of the Pakistani army and governing elites. Though it hasn't received the press attention of the Iraq surge, the current surge of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is likewise an expression of American strategic priorities. Future ground force planning should reflect this longterm effort.

If we accept the necessity for direct military engagement on at least these two fronts, there is also a need to synchronize an "indirect approach" to other parts of the Islamic world. Of particular concern are regions where religious practice, traditional culture, and political habits are inhospitable to the austere precepts of the Islamist revolutionaries. The faith of Muhammad was spread by trade as well as conquest, and from West Africa to Southeast Asia it has produced local manifestations that reflect indigenous society as well as the teachings of the Koran. As the report of the 9/11 Commission concluded, a primary task for American strategy is to prevent these regions from either providing sanctuary to terrorist groups or becoming their recruiting grounds. Moreover, many of these countries are important U.S. strategic interests quite on their own—Nigeria, for instance, now the source of roughly 11 percent of U.S. oil imports, or the Philippines, until recently the host of major U.S. military bases.

In these regions, the efforts of the Pentagon to solidify alliances and "build partnership capacity" have led to expanded military deployments. These range across all the armed services. Often they are simply brief exercises, but the trend is toward longer missions involving land forces. Perhaps the best example is "Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa," established in Djibouti in 2002, with an average strength of 1,500 land troops and a naval force about one-third that size. General John Abizaid, recently retired as chief of U.S. Central Command, often described JTF-HOA as a model for success in The Long War. A further indication of the Pentagon's rising interest in the Islamic rim countries is the carving of the new U.S. Africa Command—a full-blown, four-star theater command—out of U.S. European Command.

While the many commitments of The Long War will be the main preoccupation of the active-duty U.S. land forces, a number of additional dangers must be considered when determining the size and structure of the Army and Marine Corps. While primary responsibility for the land defense of South Korea has been assumed by the Korean army, with the U.S. garrison there trimmed to a minimum, any crisis or actual war—especially given North Korean nuclear capabilities—would call for a surge in U.S. land, air, and naval forces. Even more uncertain would be a postwar or even post-reunification scenario, whether the result of an unanticipated and peaceful development or a catastrophe. Either one could potentially call for an even larger and more extended American presence on the ground.

Beyond Korea, the prospects for unforeseen contingencies are undiminished. As the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review emphasized, these might occur in response to nuclear proliferation, either to preempt the use of nuclear weapons, to respond to their use, or to attempt to prevent their further spread in the event of the collapse of a nuclear state. Perhaps even scarier than a hostile government in Tehran armed with weapons of mass destruction is the prospect of the chaotic implosion of that government.

Finally, the United States has long performed a host of global "shaping" and "engagement" missions. These include a wide range of exercises, show-the-flag missions, and so on. Because the Army and Marine Corps are so consumed by the needs of Iraq and Afghanistan rotations—either deployed, recovering from deployment, or preparing for the next deployment—there is precious little land-force capacity immediately available for these day-to-day tasks. To paraphrase Rumsfeld, we are still at war with the land forces we began with, while the demands of the mission—the multiple missions—have risen sharply.

WHAT KIND OF WAR?

If the number and duration of operations since 9/11 has been far from our initial assumptions, the nature of these wars was also unanticipated. The Rumsfeld "transformation" project, premised on the assumption that victory would be secured by the precise application of firepower, has collapsed. War, it seems, is not the same as battle.

Irregular war in general and our Long War in particular go far toward eradicating the distinction between front line and home front, between the tactical and the political, for both our enemies and ourselves. The attacks of 9/11 created a new reality: The American homeland is directly at risk. This must be a factor not only in structuring the U.S. military, but also in planning operations abroad. Arguably, the principal deterrent to action against Iran is not the fear of missiles and warheads but the very real danger of terror attacks on Americans and our allies. The U.S. ability and willingness to project power abroad is filtered through a new, post-9/11 prism.

We fight with new constraints abroad, as well. The defense transformation movement was premised on the idea that battlefields would be transparent, and that when enemy forces massed—or even were detected in small formations or in headquarters—they could be struck swiftly, devastatingly, and from half a world away. And this was actually quite true: We should recall how surprisingly successful the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan were. Pundits barely had a chance to explain that Afghanistan was the graveyard of empires before the Taliban and al Qaeda forces were decimated by the creative use of intelligence operatives, special operations forces, and airpower. But, alas, this was not the end of the story. The decisive battles are proving to be highly irregular, and the crucial battlefields—the minds as well as the cities, villages, and wastes of Iraq and Afghanistan—to be highly opaque. Useful or "actionable" intelligence is fleeting, more often the product of the persistent presence of soldiers and Marines in neighborhoods than of satellite sensors. The "small wars" of the 21st century are conducted with modern technologies, to be sure—employed by the enemy as well as by us—but our ability to exploit a "revolution in military affairs" is not as expected.

Further, even the ability to dominate more conventional battlefields should not be taken for granted. The Israeli experience in Lebanon in 2006 serves as a wake-up call. Again, airpower and strike warfare did not deliver the promised results. When a land campaign was hastily initiated to attack Hezbollah formations and positions in southern Lebanon, the Israeli army was poorly prepared, either for the level of resistance encountered or for the complexity of the terrain and the quality of the defenses.

Hezbollah leaders and Lebanese village militias proved far more committed to the fight than the Arab armies of 1967 or 1973: Revolutionary Islam is a motivator far more potent than old pan-Arab nationalism or Baath-style socialism. What's more, Hezbollah had newly effective weaponry and an unprecedented level of tactical sophistication in addition to surprising cohesion. And if their enemies were tougher, the Israelis were weaker precisely where in the past their advantages had been greatest. Hamstrung in recent years between irregular-warfare missions on the Palestinian front and the challenges of developing the means to strike at Iranian nuclear targets, the Israel Defense Forces had lost their edge in large-unit, conventional land warfare. In sum, a cautionary tale for U.S. ground forces: We should

expect that our enemies and potential adversaries will try to mimic or adapt Hezbollah's successes.

Yet an altogether more challenging battlefield environment will exist wherever operations are conducted under a nuclear shadow. The Pentagon, to its credit, highlighted this issue in the 2006 defense review, but only hinted at the immensity of the tactical, operational, and strategic challenges. Indeed, U.S. ground forces have been here before: In the 1950s, the Army developed what it called "the Pentomic division" structure. The basic concept was to disperse U.S. ground forces to reduce their vulnerability to the tactical nuclear weapons then being deployed in Soviet formations in Eastern Europe. But it soon became clear that, while sound in theory, the idea was unworkable in practice. Modern technologies might overcome a number of problems, but many of the difficulties of maneuvering and, particularly, massing forces would remain. The larger operational challenges—simply gaining access to the strongly protected North Korean, Iranian, or even Pakistani nuclear facilities—are more daunting still. Even in relatively benign scenarios, where some elements in the country or region of operations will allow or assist U.S. forces or where initial strikes have been successful, the tyrannies of time and distance present enormous hurdles. And so the strategic prospects for employing conventional forces of all kinds, including even the most elite and capable land forces, in a nuclear environment would present a U.S. president with less-than-appetizing options. It may be that, with effort and investment, new options can be created, but they must be regarded as a future goal rather than a present reality.

At the other end of the spectrum lies the changing nature of the traditional "shaping" or "engagement" mission. The effort to build more lasting partnerships or alliances with frontline states and their militaries as part of a Long War strategy asks more of the U.S. military than conventional theater security cooperation plans, which are often centered on episodic exercises rather than the day in, day out building of local capacity and institutions. To help the Nigerians or the Indonesians become a full-fledged partner in rolling back the influence of Islamic revolutionaries demands not simply tactical competence or interoperability, but the reorientation of their armies away from their internal missions, which often are one of the few tangible expressions of national sovereignty. The new partnerships resemble the military portions of the all-agency "country teams" in Southeast Asia during the Cold War more than they do, for example, the success-

ful-but-transitory combined campaign against the Abu Sayyaf terrorists in the Philippines. The Defense Department is wrestling with the force-planning implications of this longterm, partner-building concept, but initial assessments suggest that there are more than a dozen critical states where U.S. forces should be engaged in this fashion, denying sanctuary to terrorists and helping to buttress the legitimacy of governments, especially in struggling democracies.

Finally, the emerging nature of land warfare raises new questions about the efficacy of projecting land power from the sea. In a number of critical missions, the value of sea-based land forces is undeniable and arguably even greater than it has been for some time—in Southeast Asia and West Africa, for example. Likewise, in contingency operations, the flexibility and combined-arms punch of Marine expeditionary units cannot be matched by special operations forces or Army airborne units. At the same time, the counterinsurgency efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan—that is, the central fights on the central fronts—are nothing if not extended land campaigns. The real value the Marines have added in both cases is not their sea basing but their mental flexibility. That's a precious asset, but not a basis for force planning.

WHAT KIND OF FORCE?

Given the number and variety of missions and the emerging nature of land war, it is apparent that U.S. land forces need not only to be more numerous but also to reflect capabilities beyond simply the timely and devastating delivery of firepower. If the Pentagon's transformation model was geared for rapid, decisive operations, our post-9/11 experience tells us there will be no one-battle war. The conflicts we face are more like the frontier fighting of the 19th century—in the American West but also in the far-flung outposts of the British Empire—than the epic clashes of European armies in the 20th century.

And so the most valuable contribution of U.S. land forces will often be their mere presence. This is an undeniable lesson of our experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. If there is a single "metric" of progress in those irregular wars, it is this: Good things happen most often when U.S. forces are present, and bad things happen most often when they are not. Insurgents do not seek direct confrontations with U.S. forces; they avoid them, except in ambushes. Meanwhile, Iraqi government forces are exponentially more effective in partnership with American forces than on their own, and even the gung-ho Afghan National Army relies heavily on U.S. help. To again draw a contrast with the Pentagon's past "transformational" ideal of deploy-fight-recover, where U.S. forces would sally forth from and quickly return to their home bases, the future is not only one of forward-deployed forces but is becoming one where forces are forward-stationed. To win, we must be there.

Thus, the prime directive for U.S. land forces is neither deployability, nor mobility, nor lethality, but sustainability. And the key to sustainability is the quality of the people in the force: Now, more than ever, there is a need for an Army and Marine Corps built around a substantial core of long-service professionals. We do not need a draft, and indeed it would be criminal to send a hastily trained, short-service, conscript force to patrol the streets of Falluja or the hills of Helmand province. Yet even more profoundly, we must rebuild the institutional base of the services. In a war we are struggling to understand, war colleges are not overhead expenses.

To operate successfully on inherently opaque battlefields, field units must be robust. The transformational trend has been to maximize firepower while minimizing manpower, all on the presumption that the enemy would be transparent. Land force structures, in particular, have been relentlessly trimmed over the last decade. Some of this makes sense: The need for small-unit air defenses, for example, is not what it was when we confronted the Soviet hordes. On the other hand, the need for intelligence capacity and military policemen has grown rapidly. And these combat support specialists increasingly need to be tied closely and habitually to the maneuver units they serve; in Iraq and Afghanistan they need to be with the infantry in their combat outposts, not detached in the larger forward operating bases. Technology can boost the effectiveness of the individual soldier and Marine, even in counterinsurgency operations, but these remain manpower-intensive missions.

A robust force can be a more flexible force, but what transforms numbers into results is the quality of leadership. The performance of the U.S. Army and Marine Corps in the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan has been mixed, although the quality of tactical leadership has surpassed the quality of generalship. We have asked our military leaders not only to fight an unexpected kind of war, but also to make decisions far outside the scope of their training: to act as mayors of cities, to supervise public works projects, to reform local politics, even to conduct diplomacy. Even if other agencies of the U.S. government begin to assume some of these burdens, many will continue to devolve to men and women in uniform. And so our forces must be better educated as well as trained. Obviously, they must learn new languages and understand diverse cultures, but they must also acquire a more sophisticated strategic and political understanding:

The acts and decisions of junior officers and noncommissioned officers can quite easily have strategic consequences, especially when magnified by the world media. Improved training and real education mean time, people, and money.

At least three other qualities are essential for U.S. ground forces. The ambiguities of irregular warfare require a high level of small-unit discipline. The sporadic nature of the fighting demands that captains, lieutenants, and NCOs make correct judgments and maintain control of their units in chaotic circumstances; often, holding fire is the right, but agonizingly difficult, choice. At the same time, these small units must maintain the capability to respond, and respond rapidly, with devastating firepower. The new posture in Iraq creates small-unit outposts to better defend the populace and suppress the insurgents, but equally creates a greater number of targets for insurgent attacks. So far, and luckily, attempts to overrun these outposts have failed, but the enemy well understands the potential political value of exploiting our tactical exposure. In particular, the outsourcing of ground force fire support to aircraft is a "transformational" decision that should perhaps be reevaluated. And finally, the land forces need to be genuinely expansible. This quality has been almost lost by the decision-by-default to fight The Long War with too small a force. For five years, activated reservists and National Guardsmen have been providing 15 percent to 20 percent of U.S. Army strength; they are no longer a strategic reserve, a hedge against unforeseen contingencies, but an operational reserve, as consumed in their own fashion by the rotational demands of Iraq, Afghanistan, and other Long War efforts as the regular force is. And their equipment stocks have been looted in even greater measure.

In sum, the Bush administration's failure to expand, refit, and restructure U.S. land forces in a timely fashion after the 9/11 attacks has left the Army and Marine Corps dangerously brittle. The spirit of soldiers and Marines is undiminished, and their performance in battle has been superb. The force is not broken, but its institutional basis is cracking.

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

The experience of the past five years has at least taught us how much is *not* enough. Through the post-9/11 years, the number of soldiers in the active-duty Army—regulars plus activated reservists—has hovered between 600,000 and 625,000. Fully 40 percent of this force is deployed abroad. Active Marine strength is 180,000; the Marines rely less directly on their reserves. This "total land force" of about 800,000 has been strained to its limits to sustain the demands of ongoing operations. And, as the "surges" in Iraq and Afghanistan make clear, there has been a long-neglected need for larger deployments; we have fought our wars on the cheap.

The Bush administration's plans for expansion, outlined by Defense Secretary Robert Gates in January, do little to solve the basic problem. The Gates Plan would increase the size of the regular Army to 547,000; the best that can be said is that it might lighten the burden on the reserves, but the ability to sustain a surge level of effort would be very much in doubt. Also, the pace of the Gates Plan is slow: The expansion timetable stretches to 2012. Recently retired Army chief of staff Gen. Peter Schoomaker, in his final congressional testimony, told the Senate that he had recommended a larger increase and a faster schedule, but that Gates rebuffed him. And in late April new Army chief Gen. George Casey revealed that he, too, wanted a faster timetable, directing his staff to "tell me what it would take to get it done faster."

The Gates Plan is more generous to the Marines: an increase to 202,000. That's a good thing in and of itself, and actually would make the Corps larger than it was at the end of the Cold War. However, it continues and even exacerbates an imbalance in overall land forces structure in a way that makes sustained operations—those required by The Long War—more stressful. Simply put, the U.S. Marine Corps is built first and foremost around the concept of six-month rotations in amphibious units capable of independent operations for about 30 days; the Corps is structured around its ship cycle. Thus in Iraq, Marine rotations are seven months while Army rotations have been extended to 15 months. This does not at all mean that Marines are shirking their load, but it does reflect the fact that they are trained with a very different mission in mind. Here's a useful point of reference: At the end of the Cold War, one in five American ground forces was a Marine; as we go forward in The Long War, the ratio is one in four. As our war becomes longer, our force has become less sustainable, by design.

The right solution is not to deprive the Marines of the people—or the other resources—they need, but rather to restore the Army to sufficient strength to carry a larger load in the years to come. It is not only a wiser way to prosecute the long-duration missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, but it would release a larger portion of the Marine Corps to do those missions for which it is uniquely suited. The Gates Plan does not appear to reflect a fully considered, more holistic approach to sizing U.S. land forces. Paradoxically, this diminishes the value of unique formations like the Marines or Army airborne or air mobile units by treating them simply as more cogs in the force-generation machine. The Marines number of 202,000 is

not wrong, but the Army number of 547,000 is wrong in a way that will have consequences for the entire force.

Thus the most important step in fixing what's wrong with our land forces is to build a regular Army capable of conducting The Long War at a reasonable pace of deployments, without so completely engaging its own reserve components or the Marine Corps. A rough estimate would mean an active force of approximately 750,000 soldiers, still a smaller Army than at the end of the Cold War but an expansion roughly five times that envisioned by the Bush administration. Even at a faster pace of expansion such growth could well require the better part of a decade.

THE COSTS

It would also cost a lot of money. Just how much depends not only on the number of troops but the nature of their equipment—and that's an equally important question to ponder. The unfortunate fact is that much of the military transformation of the past decade has gone to purchase equipment of doubtful utility in The Long War. As a result, ground force modernization has lagged far behind, while the increased pace of operations and unexpected combat losses have depleted the fleet of vehicles, aircraft, and gear of all sorts. The sizable supplemental appropriations of the past two years are helping to reset the ground forces, but not nearly enough to restore the necessary technological edge. The Army's force management and comptroller staffs estimate that the Army has "skipped" about $100 billion in new gear over the past decade. The danger is, as Democratic senator Carl Levin has explained, that we will create "a larger version of a less-ready force." Any expansion needs to be balanced with equal equipment modernization.

Many of the current estimates of the cost of expansion exclude these equipment costs. For example, a recent Congressional Budget Office study of the administration's expansion plans puts the annual increase at $14 billion by the time the Gates Plan is complete. Perhaps a better methodology, if still crude, is to use the Army's estimate of the cost of the "doctrinal" current force—that is, the force as it would be if it had all the right equipment, staffing, and resources—and do a proportional calculation. So if the cost of sustaining a force with an active component of 510,000 is, as estimated by the Army, $138 billion per year in 2008 dollars, then an Army half again as large is likely to cost somewhere in the neighborhood of $200 billion per year. Again, the methodology is far from precise, but absent a better one, it serves as a benchmark. It's also a measure of the inadequacy of the current baseline budget: For 2007, before supplementals, the formal Army budget was $112 billion. I am not aware of a similar "doctrinal" cost estimate for the Marines, but it's a reasonable assumption that the gap between ends and means is similar.

And yet $200 billion is little more than one percent of America's annual gross domestic product. The question is not whether we can afford sufficient land forces, but whether we will choose to have them. In simple terms, the task is to restore the Army and Marine Corps to the manpower levels at the end of the Cold War. But the goal is not to recover the past so much as to adapt to the present; increased investments would be squandered absent accelerated equipment modernization. Again, the Army's dilemma is the most apparent. Chastised for clinging to Cold War heavy-weapons programs and resisting the program of transformation, the service suffered the two largest program cuts of the Rumsfeld years with the termination of the Crusader howitzer and Comanche helicopter.

Former Army chief of staff Gen. Eric Shinseki responded by proposing the Future Combat System project, an innovative attempt to synchronize all Army modernization over a period of decades while introducing information technologies to "network" the force. But no good deed goes unpunished: By breaking procurement paradigms, the Future Combat System has run afoul of the green-eyeshade crowd in the Pentagon, in the Office of Management and Budget, and in the Congressional Budget Office. Further, the Army has done a terrible job of explaining the value of this project in the current combat environment, while resisting the obvious need to move rapidly to adapt to a changing battlefield. Most notoriously, the Army has been slow to replace the Humvee—the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle—never meant to function as a combat vehicle and vulnerable to insurgent attacks and "improvised explosive devices." Now the service has confessed it needs about $20 billion worth of so-called Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, and an angry and confused House of Representatives has whacked $860 million out of the 2008 request for the Future Combat System project to help pay for them.

But these are not the budgetary follies of the late Cold War years. Now, the costs are more immediate, paid not in dollars but in the currency of lives and the danger of defeat. The strategic stakes are immense: The Long War is the central conflict of the 21st century. It cannot be won from a distance. The days when the United States could stand safely "over the horizon," empowering the local regimes in a quest for "stability," supplying naval and airpower as needed, have passed. We are embroiled in a Long War without an opt-out option, whether we like it or not. Out of this conflict will come a new political order, but that can't happen until the fighting is over. It is a fight we cannot afford to lose, and a fight that must be won on land. We began the fight with the land force we had, but now we must build the land force we need. ♦

A World Without Public Schools

If the consensus underlying American public education has disappeared, why shouldn't the institution?

By David Gelernter

Should America have public schools, or would we do better without them? Nothing is more important to this country than the transformation of children into educated American citizens. That's what public schools are for, and no institutions are better suited to the role—in principle. They used to fill it with distinction.

But there's no reason we *must* have public schools. Granted, the public has a strong interest in educating America's children, at a cost that's divided equitably among all taxpayers and not borne by the parents of school-age children alone. But these requirements don't imply any need for public schools. We need an Air Force, and the Air Force needs planes. Taxpayers pay for the force and the planes. But the pilots are supplied directly by the government, the airplanes by private companies (with government oversight and assistance). Schooling might be furnished on either model: mainly by public or mainly by private organizations. We know that private schools are perfectly capable of supplying first-class educations. So the question stands: Why have public schools? How should we decide whether to have them or not?

Vouchers have been a popular and promising (and controversial) idea for years. Under voucher plans, the public pays part or all of the bill when a child attends private school. But here I am talking about the whole hog, not just the tail and a couple of trotters. If sending *some* children to private school at public expense is worth discussing, why not sending *all* children to private school?

Why not liberate *all* the vast resources we spend on public schools to be re-channeled to private schools chosen by the nation's parents? Any public school offering an education that parents will actually *pay* for (of their own free will) would presumably be replaced by a private school offering essentially the same thing. But a vast array of new private schools would germinate also. And a vast number of failed public schools would disappear.

In the system I am picturing, education would continue to be free and accessible to every child, and all taxpayers would continue to pay for it. Parents would be guaranteed access to "reasonable" schools that cost them nothing beyond what they pay in taxes. It would all be just like today—except that public schools would have vanished.

Would private organizations be capable of providing enough new schools to replace our gigantic public schools establishment? Private enterprise is alleged to be smarter and more resourceful in America than anywhere else in the world. So let's suppose that private schools can indeed meet the needs of nearly all parents. Do we actually need and want our public schools, or do we keep them around out of fear of the teachers' unions—and habit, like a broken child's toy we are too sentimental to throw away?

The basic law of public schools

Many sources agree that, on the whole, American public schools are rotten. In 2000, a whopping 12 percent of graduating seniors were rated "proficient" in science, and international surveys rank our graduating seniors 19th overall out of 21 nations. In 2002, the *Washington Post* summarized a different survey: "Nearly six in 10 of the nation's high school seniors lack even a basic knowledge of U.S. history." And so on. Our public schools are widely agreed to be in bad shape. But these are only problems of incompetence. Others cut deeper.

The basic law of public schools is this: *Public schools are*

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first and foremost agents of the public. They exist to transform children into "educated citizens" *as the public understands this term*—in other words, as a public consensus defines it. Of course the United States is a large country; standards have always differed from state to state. So each state has its own public schools, charged with satisfying the consensus definition of "educated citizen" in that state.

In 1898, Nicholas Murray Butler (soon to be president of Columbia University) described universities in terms that make explicit this connection, one that is almost forgotten today. "In order to become great—indeed, in order to exist at all," he wrote,

> a university [or public school!] must represent the national life and minister to it. When the universities of any country cease to be in close touch with the social life and institutions of the people, and fail to yield to the efforts of those who would readjust them, their days of influence are numbered. The same is true of any system of educational organization.

Public schools even more than universities must "represent the national life and minister to it." They must "minister to" the consensus definition of an educated citizen. And what is a "consensus"? "Unanimity or general agreement on matters of opinion," according to *Webster's*; solid agreement by a large majority.

And in states where there *is* no public consensus or general agreement on the meaning of "educated citizen," public schools are in an impossible position. They can't act for the public if the public can't decide how they should act. This is true without regard to whether the schools are working well or badly.

Today there are few states or none where a public consensus or general agreement exists on what "educated citizen" means. Schools exist not only to teach skills but to mold character. (Although many object to this old-fashioned language, few Americans disagree that schools must teach an approach to life, a worldview, a moral framework.) The culture war that has been underway since the late '60s is precisely a war over approaches to life and worldviews and moral frameworks. Our politics mirror that divide. In the 2004 presidential election, Kerry and Bush differed on politics, but stood also for two different worldviews in the larger sense—Kerry the globalizing man-of-the-world with his European experience versus the plainspoken, ranch-living, Bible-quoting Bush. In simplest terms, Kerry stood for "globalism," Bush for "Americanism." As between these divergent visions, the country split down the middle.

It's pretty clear that no consensus or general agreement on the nature of education is likely to exist in a country that's so divided. Which suggests in turn that, for now, *the age of the American public school is over*. Obviously we shouldn't make such judgments on the basis of short-term disagreements or divisions. But America's culture war has been underway for a generation at least.

You might argue that the solution is to have two varieties of public school, roughly "moderate left" and "moderate right," each with its own curriculum, textbooks, and standards, and its own version of a worldview or moral framework to teach children. Every neighborhood or local region would vote on left versus right local schools. In many areas such elections would be extraordinarily hard-fought and bitter—yet the solution might work, except that the school establishment's bias is so consistently left (and not moderate left either) that it seems unlikely we could trust it to operate "moderate right" schools—or even "neutral" schools, if there were such a thing. (The public schools' bias often shows itself in exactly the form of "neutrality," as I'll discuss. If you declare yourself neutral as between America and her enemies, or normal sexuality and homosexuality, your neutrality in itself is bias.)

Of course this whole analysis might be wrong. Maybe I misunderstand the point of public schools. Was there *ever* a consensus in this country on what an educated citizen should be? Maybe we always have been content for the schools to speak for just one section of American society, never the whole.

But this view is wrong. Once upon a time there was indeed an Age of Consensus on public education, and it is worth remembering.

Age of consensus

The American public school enjoyed consensus for roughly a century and a half, from its beginnings in the 1820s through the 1970s. Obviously the existence of segregated schools meant that this Age of Consensus agreed only on *some* things. But the evidence suggests that black parents wanted basically the same things for their children as white parents did for theirs. Segregation (after all) was condemned not for neglecting black culture but for failing the test of equality, failing to supply black students with the same quality of education that white students got. Nor did newly arrived Jewish parents from Eastern Europe, for example, want their children studying Yiddish in public school; they wanted them to learn English and grab hold of American culture with both hands.

During these years there was broad agreement on skills-teaching *and* character-building (or the teaching of worldviews and moral frameworks). The two areas were intertwined. Since the 1970s, consensus in both departments has fallen apart. Both areas are important, but not equally. Disputes about the teaching of skills can be

patched up or compromised. Disputes about morality, worldviews, and character-building make public schools untenable.

Samuel Johnson (the great essayist and lexicographer) said virtually the same thing in a different way. "Knowledge of external nature," he wrote (in his *Life of Milton*, 1781), "and the sciences which that knowledge requires or includes, are not the great requirement or the frequent business of the human mind." He continues:

> Whether we provide for action or conversation, whether we wish to be useful or pleasing, the first requirement is the religious and moral knowledge of right and wrong; the next is an acquaintance with the history of mankind. . . . Prudence and justice are virtues and excellences of all times and of all places; we are perpetually moralists, but we are geometricians only by chance.

Which is still true in the 21st century. We remain perpetual moralists, and geometricians only by chance. First our children must learn right from wrong, and how to approach life; then they must learn history (assuming they have already learned how to read and write). If the public can't agree on how to teach these things, it has no business maintaining public schools. And nowadays it can't.

The eleventh edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1910) is a good guide to American attitudes of roughly a century ago, in the age of consensus. "The great mass of the American people," it reported, "are in entire agreement as to the principles which should control public education; and the points in which the policies of the several states are in agreement are greater, both in number and in importance, than those in which they differ. An American educational system exists, therefore, in spirit and in substance, even though not in form." Once, it was possible to argue that all America agreed on the educational basics.

It's fair to object that the Britannica spoke for Middle America, and no doubt overstated the actual degree of consensus. But there must have been some sort of consensus; the public was *not* bitterly divided, was *not* split in half as it is today. The *Encyclopedia* continues: "Formal instruction in manners and morals is not often found, but the discipline of the school offers the best possible training in the habits of truthfulness, honesty, obedience, regularity, punctuality and conformity to order." And by the way, "religious teaching is not permitted, although the exercises of the day are often opened with reading from the Bible, the repetition of the Lord's Prayer and the singing of a hymn."

In the Age of Consensus, public schools taught skills *and* built character in ways the public endorsed. In the 19th century, there was general agreement that "no teaching is worthy of the name if it does not have a moral and ethical end" (according to the eminent progressive educator Francis Parker, 1898). And there was broad agreement on *which* moral standards to uphold, and their rootedness in the nation's religious traditions. Butler quotes the president of Bowdoin College on the purpose of a liberal education—which again applies to schools and colleges. Such an education is "for combining sound scholarship with solid character; for making men both intellectually and spiritually free; for uniting the pursuit of truth with reverence for duty." (And by the way, a college faculty should consist of "professors who are men first and scholars afterward.")

One of the best ways to *hear* the Age of Consensus over the intervening gap of many years is to listen to the "readers" that were so important to public elementary schools (or "common schools" as they were called) during most of the 19th century and into the 20th. They were graded collections of stories, poems, and maxims; McGuffey's beat all others in popularity and became an American legend. Readers came into use in the 1820s. Mark Sullivan discusses them in his classic multivolume cultural history, *Our Times* (1935). There are still thousands of copies circulating through the nation's old-book dealers. Modern public school teachers should take a look. They might learn something.

The Readers taught children the national consensus on ethics and morals as well as reading, writing, and literature. An 1879 version of McGuffey's Fifth and Sixth Readers gives a statement of purpose:

> To obtain as wide a range of leading authors as possible, to present the best specimens of style, to insure interest in the subjects, to impart valuable information, and to exert a decided and healthful moral influence.

They were designed first and foremost to instill the community's *ethical* principles. "Much as you may have studied the languages or the sciences," one pupil remembers, "that which most affected you was the moral lessons in the series of McGuffey." Sullivan believes that "McGuffey's was the source of that stock of points of view and tastes held in common, which constituted much of America's culture, its codes of morals and conduct, its standards of propriety, its homely aphorisms, its 'horse-sense' axioms. . . . At all times and in every respect, McGuffey's Readers had a strong flavor of religion."

"Great indeed were the old McGuffey's Readers," said one pupil. "This whole country is literally full of their ardent admirers. Nothing like them ever existed in any age, anywhere in the world." "I received more inspiration from McGuffey's Readers than from any other books in my experience," said another. Try eliciting admiration from your kids (or mine) about any textbook series in use today.

Public schools in the Age of Consensus were far from perfect. Often they taught science badly—as schools usually do. On the whole they weren't much interested in classical and foreign languages, or the arts. They taught American history in a mildly distorted way—patriotism is good, but the schools of that era tended to resolve disputes between patriotic impulses and the truth in favor of patriotism. (Today's schools tend to resolve such disagreements by rejecting patriotic impulses and the truth as well.)

And American education in that era was often served with a twist of anti-intellectualism, for flavor. The celebrated author Elbert Hubbard believed that "it is not book learning young men need, nor instruction about this and that, but a stiffening of their vertebrae which will cause them to be loyal to a trust, to act promptly, concentrate their energies"—so he says in his immensely popular essay in sort-of journalism, "A Message to Garcia," 1899. (Not a bad thought, if you disregard the anti-book slur.)

Many urban schools were overcrowded, especially as more and more immigrants piled in. Segregated schools for blacks were often miserable. Yet throughout America—rich and poor, black and white, urban and rural—schools in general and teachers in particular were regarded with respect. And America's various creeds and colors agreed on the fundamental skills and principles with which a child should be equipped.

You can see what it all looked like in Winslow Homer's remarkable paintings of teachers, pupils, and schoolhouses in the late 19th century, full of sunshine and grave, reticent dignity. A teacher (for example) reads to a scattering of casually attentive, remarkably comfortable-looking pupils in the quiet sunlight of a country school (1872). Several generations later, America's rural schools still seemed like pleasant but formidable institutions, and teachers were heroines. E.B. White, 1939: "I have an increasing admiration for the teacher in the country school where we have a third-grade scholar in attendance. She not only undertakes to instruct her charges in all the subjects of the first three grades, but she manages to function quietly and effectively as a guardian of their health, their clothes, their habits, their mothers, and their snowball engagements. . . . My boy already regards his teacher as his great friend, and I think tells her a great deal more than he tells us."

Where the schools stand today

There's reason to believe that when it comes to the all-important issue of teaching worldviews and moral frameworks, American public schools are so sharply and consistently biased, they disqualify themselves for the core task of educating citizens. There are many ways to see the school establishment's bias. One is to look at the SATs—the standard tests that virtually all college-bound high school students take, that deeply influence high school teaching. Reading *The Official SAT Study Guide* ("#1 Best Seller," "The *only* book with SAT practice tests created by the maker") is one way to get some idea of the state of mind in the education world.

Here's a sentence from a passage that students are quizzed on. "The First World War is a classic case of the dissonance between official, male-centered history and unofficial female history." You might object that the idea of "official history" is a sham and a crock, unless you refer specifically to accounts commissioned by the combatant governments themselves. But this silly assertion is presented as if it were fact.

Or: "The reluctance in accepting this obvious fact comes from the Eurocentric conviction that the West holds a monopoly on science, logic, and clear thinking. To admit that other, culturally divergent viewpoints are equally plausible is to cast doubt on the monolithic center of Judeo-Christian belief: that there is but one of everything—God, right way, truth—and Europeans alone knew what it was." Breathtakingly absurd, breathtakingly offensive. "Europeans alone" were sufficiently interested in foreign cultures to find out what they were about. Europeans have been subject to periodic bouts of obsession with non-European cultures, from medieval fascination with Muslim philosophy and architecture through Picasso and his colleagues' 20th-century fixation on African art and onward to the present. Does Christianity hold that there is one Testament, one virtue, one sin, one Gospel, one martyr, one saint, one great man, one art, one science, one planet? Are Rousseau and Shelley part of "European culture," and all the aggressive radicals who came after? And what will Jewish, Christian, and Muslim parents think of an exam that describes monotheism as a "Eurocentric" conceit? What kind of imbecile could write such a passage?—and offer it to unwitting high school students as *fact*?

Naturally there are countless passages about downtrodden women and minorities, and famous women and members of minorities. One set of questions mentions these names: Duke Ellington, Margaret Atwood, one "Lois" (a student), Maya Angelou, and Rilke (who doesn't rate having his first name mentioned). It often seems as if white men just barely exist. Psychoanalysis, for example, is apparently mentioned once in this big book, in this question: "Anna Freud's impact on psychoanalysis was———, coming not from one brilliant discovery but from a lifetime of first-rate work." Her father might have

Francis G. Mayer / Corbis

"The Country School," Winslow Homer, 1871

had some "impact" on psychoanalysis too, but evidently it isn't worth speaking of.

Manifestations of this aggressive left tilt aren't restricted to SAT preparation books. In a memorable article in these pages, Pamela Winnick described the bizarre distortions wrought by political correctness in science textbooks. A Houghton Mifflin fifth-grade text devotes half a page to the Navajo physicist Fred Begay but doesn't mention Albert Einstein. Kay Hymowitz (also in these pages) has described the depredations of the National Council for Social Studies (NCSS), which wants students to see themselves as citizens of the world, not of any such old-fashioned, irrelevant entity as the United States of America. A keynote speaker at an NCSS conference "warned against patriotic displays like the singing of 'God Bless America.' 'The Swedes,' he noted, 'the Kenyans don't think God blesses America over all other countries.'"

And this isn't mere irrelevant theorizing. "Many states," Hymowitz reports, "have embraced the NCSS's idea that you don't need to know any American history to be an effective citizen. . . . Those in our schools who are shaping the civic imagination of the next generation discourage not just a love of America and its guiding principles, but any interest in the fortunes of our nation in particular."

Thus the irrelevance of suggesting that the schools ought to be ideologically "neutral." They can't produce American citizens who love and care for and plan to protect this country if they teach "neutrality" instead of patriotism.

A notorious 2005 dispute in the schools of Lexington, Mass., is highly revealing. The participants behaved and spoke with memorable directness; a student's father went to jail to make a point. It suggests that our disagreements over education go right down to the ground.

David Parker and his wife Tonia had a 5-year-old son in kindergarten. They got wind of the topics on the kindergarten agenda—and asked to be notified and allowed to remove their son from class when same-sex marriage and similar topics were on the day's syllabus. Mr. Parker went to school to insist. He refused to leave until administrators granted his request. They did not grant it. Instead, after two hours of arguing, they called the police and had him arrested. He spent the night in jail.

Few parents have the courage and persistence of the Parkers. But many are deeply angry at the schools for teaching ideas that specifically contradict their child's moral and religious upbringing. The *Boston Globe* quoted Mrs. Parker: "We're not giving unfettered access to the psyche of our son when he enters the school." Orthodox Jews and many Christians believe that homosexuality is a sin. (Which doesn't mean they are "homophobes" or "hate homosexuals," any more than they hate sinners in general. This ridiculous, mean-spirited libel turns religious doctrine upside down. Both religions teach that the sin is hateful, not the sinner. They also teach that male and female are equally essential in the rearing of

children. If Jews or Christians who call homosexuality a sin are "homophobes," supporters of same-sex marriage are misogynists or misanthropes, as the case may be. But none of these ad hominem accusations is helpful.)

For the schools to take it on themselves to contradict and "correct" the religious and moral instruction parents give their children represents (for many Americans) the height of statist arrogance; and exactly what they have come to expect from today's public schools.

Of course you might reply that if the public *is* deeply divided, public schools ought to step forward and offer a compromise. Ought to help lead the nation to common ground; help close the wound and stop the bleeding. Maybe the schism in public thinking means that we need our public schools now more than ever.

But the schools are not acting as if they want to bridge the great divide. Once more the Parker case is illuminating. Lexington School Committee chairman Thomas Griffiths said: "We don't view telling a child that there is a family out there with two mommies as teaching about homosexuality, heterosexuality, or any kind of sexuality. We are teaching about the realities of where different children come from."

A profoundly ideological statement masquerading as sweet reason. The syllogism "if a thing exists 'out there,' the nation's 5-year-olds must be notified at once" will strike many Americans as cracked. But of course others will applaud Griffiths's statement. We are a divided nation. In America today, *there is no consensus for our public schools to embody*.

(A related dispute arises when schools insist on teaching young children about the Holocaust in all its revolting evil. Sensitive children get nightmares, are scared of going to bed—I've seen this happen in my own family. Yes, American children must be taught about the Holocaust—but *intelligently*, dammit, with some regard for the child's *own* well-being. Children are not mere adults in miniature. We are supposed to have outgrown that primitive idiocy sometime in the 19th century. But it has returned to plague us in America's dim-witted schools establishment. Evidently common sense is another divisive issue in modern America.)

What happened?

How on earth did we reach this pass? It's an oft-told tale, but worth repeating. Two simultaneous processes combined (like drugs and booze) to create America's culture war.

In the generation following World War II, intellectuals took over America's universities. The transformation was dramatic. Before World War II, elite schools like Princeton or Yale were social institutions first and foremost. They harbored *some* intellectuals on their faculties and among their students, like raisins in a sparsely populated oatmeal cookie. But on the whole, they were run by the social elite for the social elite.

When Woodrow Wilson became president of Princeton in 1902, he denounced it for (social, not intellectual) *exclusiveness*—"The American college must become saturated in the same sympathies as the common people," he demanded. "The colleges of this country must be reconstructed from the top to the bottom. The American people will tolerate nothing that savors of exclusiveness." His demands went unsatisfied. Scott Fitzgerald summed things up in his 1920 *Bildungsroman*, *This Side of Paradise*: "Amory [the hero] had definitely decided on Princeton. Yale had a romance and glamour . . . but Princeton drew him most, with its atmosphere of bright colors and its alluring reputation as the pleasantest country club in America."

In the decades after World War II, things changed: student admissions, faculty hiring, standards for tenure; eventually even university presidents were chosen from among the academic intelligentsia. Today America's elite universities are run by intellectuals, for intellectuals.

Another related transformation was underway during these same years (although it had begun earlier): the professionalization of American life, and consequent huge increase in the university's influence. Business, journalism, and education schools became immensely more important than ever before. The importance and prestige of law and medical schools continued to expand.

Combined, these two processes made a revolution.

Once, intellectuals had been peripheral to American life. Now the American university had been placed in their hands—and American culture in the university's hands. The university was the power chord, and henceforth the electric buzz of U.S. intellectual life would drive American culture—which was plugged right into it. So intellectuals inherited the kingdom—and came to control American culture, which (naturally) veered sharply left as soon as they took charge.

American public schools were especially susceptible to the leftward swing. Public school teachers were educated at education schools, which turned even harder left than many other graduate and professional schools. (The less substance to a school or degree program, the more lightweight its courses, the more apt it is to be affected by the ideological climate. A magnet is more apt to cause lightweight objects than heavy ones to skitter towards it.) Moreover, the public schools had always admired and imitated the prestige universities.

As for private schools, they felt the leftward pull

too—but were less likely than public schools to require their teachers to hold ed school degrees; and in some cases had enough religious, spiritual, or intellectual heft to resist the seductive attraction of the leftwing magnet.

The religion of the Left

Today's left-liberal faith despises the Bible, Judaism and Christianity, family life, and "the patriarchy." It believes in a "globalism" that holds divisions within nations (race and class divisions) to be terribly important and divisions among nations to be trivial. It believes in multinational government and (naturally) hates patriotism on principle, just as it does Christianity, with all the fervent hatred that new faiths reserve for older ones. Its fundamental principle is that men and women are not just equal but interchangeable.

This left-liberalism is no mere political ideology. It is beyond doubt a *religion*, and has been since the 1930s. (There is no God in the left-liberal religion, but the same holds for other accepted and acknowledged religions.) Religious beliefs are ones that you take on faith, that you cannot be talked out of, that show you a broad, comprehensive, high-level picture of the world. They are doctrines you believe for internal spiritual reasons, not external factual ones.

Listen to the eminent critic Alfred Kazin on the 1930s: "I was a socialist as so many Americans were Christians." "The condemned Communists in [André Malraux's] *Man's Fate*—Russian, German, Chinese—embodied the fundamental element of a new religion."

Listen to Mary McCarthy, whose stories (according to the author herself) are thinly disguised nonfictions: Most '30s converts to socialism "resembled the original twelve apostles in the New Testament. . . . But Jim was like the Roman centurion or Saint Paul."

To these and dozens of other writers, it came naturally to speak of left-liberalism in religious terms. Jonah Goldberg wrote that "modern liberalism has taken on the trappings of a religion" a few years ago (2005, in *National Review*). He's certainly correct, and his thesis is important; but the development is not new.

So we reach another disqualifying problem with America's public schools. They are teaching our children religion. The apostles and propagandists of American left-liberalism speak of their new faith as blatantly and aggressively as public schools of bygone ages ever spoke about biblical religion or Americanism. And thus our public schools blatantly, aggressively violate the Constitution.

Americanism (to be fair) can be a religion too—a biblical religion; the application of Judeo-Christian principles to the problem of the modern state. In general terms modern Americanism is the exact inverse of left-liberal globalism. It holds that divisions within the nation (race and class divisions) are unimportant as compared with divisions among nations. It distrusts multinational government and (naturally) believes in patriotism on principle. Good left-liberals are apt to ask themselves, What do France and Germany think of us? Americanists are more apt to ask themselves, What would my ancestors and the nation's founders think of us?

Americanism and its creed (liberty, equality, and democracy for all mankind), *and* its devout belief in the United States as the shining city on the hill, *and* its faith in the teachings of its greatest prophet ("with malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right") was once the consensus religion of the United States. The revolution of the intellectuals during the post-World War II generation created a successful secession movement. Today a substantial minority of this country has renounced Americanism in favor of left-liberalism, or "globalism," or (as Milton Himmelfarb memorably put it) "soft-boiled paganism."

The future

What would the nation look like without public schools? Nearly all existing public school buildings would be leased to private schools. All the private schools in any town or district would discuss programs and fees among themselves (which would not count as illegal price-fixing), and with the public too, via local government or town meetings. Any public school whose staff believes in it would be allowed to keep its building and reorganize on a new basis. Some large public schools, especially high schools, would reorganize as confederacies of separate schools sharing one building: a science and math school, humanities school, arts school, sports school. Many students could attend more than one simultaneously. The Internet's most important role might be to help coordinate such complicated arrangements. (Though it's also true that a well-designed Internet school might attract students from all over the country.)

One final question: Is there any chance that Abolition will be acted on, or even discussed? Don't hold your breath. Yet it would take just one prominent (even *medium*-prominent) politician or public figure to get America talking. We desperately need this national discussion. And what could be healthier for America's public schools than to learn that they might not be immortal after all? ♦

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Stranger in His Own Land

The mystery of Aaron Burr

BY JAMES M. BANNER JR.

Bettmann / Corbis

Burr on trial for treason, 1807

All historical subjects, like styles in art or fashions in clothes, have their day and then subside—sometimes from decadence, sometimes from excess, and sometimes from plain exhaustion. You know that fuel is running low once we have three (or is it four?) recent biographies of Gouverneur Morris—a not insignificant man (inasmuch as he gave us the profoundly significant preamble to the Constitution and the words of much of the rest of it) but not exactly in Washington's league. So if Nancy Isenberg's lively and engaged biography of the nation's third vice president is any indication, we're now approaching the end of two decades of enchantment with the nation's Founders and doing so because historians are running out of subjects and things to say. After all, we'd expect those least appealing to come last in the queue. And thus it is with this very first modern biography of Aaron Burr. That it arrives after so many studies of Burr's contemporaries, and that its subject is the most controversial figure of them all, suggests that what's sustained the momentum behind these books is at last giving out.

Fallen Founder
The Life of Aaron Burr
by Nancy Isenberg
Viking, 544 pp., $29.95

Isenberg knows what she's up against: a large, collective hagiography of the Founders, especially of the Big Six—Franklin, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton, and Madison. So how is she to deal with a subject as distinctive and vexatious as Burr? We sense that, despite her protestations to the contrary, she knows that Burr can't quite measure up to the others; but she's also tired, as well she might be, of Burr's serving as the foil to most of them. Like almost every biographer, she's sympathetic to her subject and wants to redeem him from the condescension and contempt to which he's been subjected since the early 19th century. But how to rehabilitate him? Her solution is a somewhat novel approach: a full-bore defense brief for the accused.

Up to a point, it's a sound strategy. You poke holes in every plaintiff's case;

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you find good in all your client's deeds, intentions, and words; you remind your readers of each injustice he's faced; and you relent not at all. The result can be effective and, as it is here, the most muscular case that's ever been mounted on Burr's behalf. But while historical understanding can, in some instances, emerge from adversarial proceedings, those proceedings themselves sow the seeds of skepticism. We know enough about courtroom set-to's to realize that, while decisions emerge from them, the full truth rarely does and that mistakes (like faulty convictions without DNA evidence) are often the result. We come away unsatisfied, dazzled by the attorneys' skills, but not confident that justice has been done.

And so it is here. Right from the start, to make her case, Isenberg depreciates everyone else. Burr's Federalist opponents are sniffily dismissed as "pedantic" and "as always quick to find fault with their opponents"—as if, say, Thomas Jefferson or John Adams were never given to such naysaying. A partisan of Alexander Hamilton is a "snoop," a "crony," or a "toady." Hamilton himself can do nothing right; Jefferson not much more; and the other political figures in Burr's New York are, unlike Burr, always calculating and on the wrong side of history. Burr himself? He's consistently the "voice of reason" or "a French gallant" in romance and sex. His mind is scintillating, his political skills beyond comparison, his judgment usually impeccable. If this strains credulity, so be it: Isenberg wants to arm future historians with the best explanations of Burr's often inexplicable acts she can.

In many respects, she doesn't have to stretch to do so. There's much to admire in Burr and strong grounds for trying to rescue him from the disdain of history. He had a fertile and facile intelligence and was, without doubt, one of the best attorneys of his day. It would be difficult to identify anyone more skilled than he at operating in the north's most politically complex urban setting, polyglot New York City. His campaign to put New York State into Jefferson's column in the presidential election of 1800 was unprecedented in its political brilliance, and he deserved selection as Jefferson's vice presidential running mate. After that, however, he slowly became unmoored.

Burr was born into the colonial gentry which, in the Middle Atlantic states, as often as not took the form of professional status, not landed wealth. His father, Aaron Burr Sr., was a Yale-educated Presbyterian minister and president of the College of New Jersey, today's Princeton. His mother was the daughter of the great Jonathan Edwards, himself briefly president of that same college before his premature death. Young Aaron attended Nassau Hall, gave up study of the ministry in favor of the law, then joined Washington's army, where he served with distinction—although, a telltale sign of what was to come, increasingly at odds with Washington himself—at Valley Forge and elsewhere. He then began his immersion in New York politics that would see him navigate himself to commanding leadership, amid defeat as well as victory, through the Sargasso of that state's politics and become, as Isenberg calls him, "the only genuine democratic leader in the Empire State."

It's here that Isenberg's skills are most in evidence, as she guides her readers flawlessly through some of the most tangled factional politics in the nation's history.

But her historical skills can't save her subject. There was something in Burr's disposition that put him beyond permanent association, except for his immediate family. Burr claimed always to be standing independently on principle; but there was much about his maneuvering toward power, which sometimes even put him in league with his normal opponents in the Federalist party, that was unusual and eventually left him without support anywhere along the political spectrum.

The most celebrated, and costly, manifestation of his independence occurred in 1801 when, with the same number of electoral votes as Jefferson, without question the head of his party's ticket, Burr refused to state unequivocally that he would not serve as president. This seemingly self-serving coyness opened the door to Federalist attempts to deny Jefferson the presidency, and resulted in the greatest constitutional crisis between 1787 and 1861. When, on the 36th ballot in the House of Representatives, Jefferson finally emerged as president, Burr no longer had friends in either party, especially among the Virginia slaveholding plantation grandees who controlled the Democratic Republicans and were always suspicious of anyone who represented the urban artisans of the north.

As if putting himself at odds with southern Republicans wasn't enough, he engaged in the fateful duel in 1804 with his fellow New Yorker, Federalist Alexander Hamilton. When Hamilton died of wounds sustained in that "interview" at Weehawken, Burr lost any chance of finding a new political home among the Federalists. From then on, he was a man without a natural political home or secure place in his own country.

Here is where the plot of Burr's story thickens—and where Isenberg is at her inventive best. It has always puzzled historians why, after Hamilton's death, Burr began to involve himself in schemes, usually with the least dependable characters in the land, that have ever since been seen as unprincipled, even treasonous. In fact, after leaving the vice presidency, in which he served with distinction, he was brought up on trial for treason before none other than Chief Justice John Marshall sitting on circuit in Richmond—and acquitted, at least before the law, if not history.

What was he up to? It has never been entirely clear. But it seems that he was trying to involve the United States in a war with Spain so that his nation could grab more land to itself—even after the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. Isenberg puts Burr's actions into the context of western "filibustering," a kind of extralegal (then acceptable) activity, not unlike seagoing privateering, in which private citizens, with a kind of "pass" from constituted authorities, took up arms against other powers.

In putting Burr's still-somewhat-inexplicable actions into this filibustering context, Isenberg makes her great-

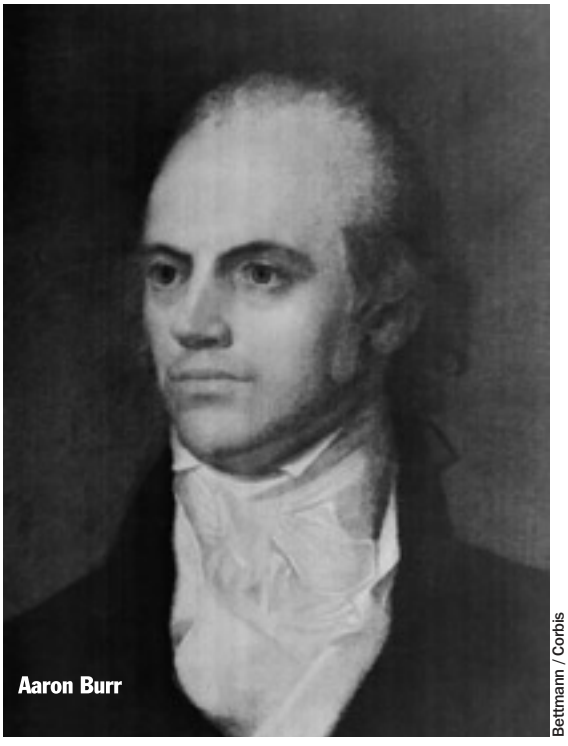
est fresh contribution to understanding. The trouble is, if Burr's efforts to peel off Spanish territory in Florida and Mexico for American benefit fit well within the tradition of filibustering (one that would continue throughout the century), they did nothing for his contemporary or historical reputation. We are still left with a man who always missed cues as to where he stood in others' estimation.

After these misadventures, Burr floated about Europe, returned to the United States to resume his law practice, philandered his way through society, remarried (long after his beloved wife Theodosia and his daughter of the same name had died), and then himself died on the very day a divorce from his second wife took effect. One of the great adventure tales of American history thus ended, as it began, in a kind of puzzling confusion. It was an adventure tale that most historians would say might have been avoided had Aaron Burr been another man.

But of course, he wasn't. All of his deeds marked Burr as one of the most distinctive figures of the early 19th century. But what are we to make of them—and of him? Isenberg's muscular defense of the man takes us about as far as we can go in evaluating his positive qualities. He was unsurpassed in his political skills, at least until they deserted him. He was an early opponent of slavery—a stance that scarcely ingratiated him with the Southern base of his party, or most other Americans. He was a champion of the cities' "middling sort" and pushed for legal reform, free speech, fair elections, liberal citizenship requirements, and broadened banking and stock ownership.

He recommends himself to us today for his genuine, before-his-times feminism—as a man who saw women as men's equals, who educated his daughter to be the intellectual equal of the men around her, and who apparently reveled socially, intellectually, and sexually in women's company. And unlike all but a very few of his countrymen, he was a philosophical utilitarian, unexpected in the heir of distinguished divines as well as in a member of the nation's professional elite.

And yet there was something about Burr, even these distinctive traits, that made him a stranger in his own land. He rarely had a straight-on relationship to his day's events. A man of the educated gentry, he stood outside it, and effectually criticized it as an urban democrat, even if a high-born one.



Aaron Burr

Bettmann / Corbis

A leader of New York's Democratic Republican party, he could not get along with its other leaders (although in this he was scarcely distinctive). He might have speeded the resolution of the critical presidential election of 1800-01, but he remained adamant (as Isenberg makes clear in one of the most authoritative sections of her book) about his own principles and clarity of purpose at the cost of sowing deep distrust inside and outside Jefferson's administration.

When he fatally shot Hamilton, he put himself beyond the pale of politics. And then when he engaged in the filibustering that Isenberg so energetically explains as having been well within the tradition of 19th-century nationalism, he joined the company of often-seedy adventurers, and took himself forever out of the governing elite.

Burr seems always to have been caught between the ethos of gentleman and that of democrat. Or perhaps his disposition was to combine both in an uneasy alliance. Take, for instance, his outrage over plundering by American troops during the Revolution. His anger can be read as both gentlemanly (roughnecks are contemptible) and as egalitarian: Soldiers must show respect for all people, whatever their station, who sacrifice for the war effort. But if this were moderation of a sort, Burr's moderation had a bit of priggishness about it and a kind of naiveté about the realities of politics and war. He would have made a distinguished college professor or man of the cloth.

Isenberg concludes that Burr was "no better, no worse, than those with whom his name is most commonly linked." That his life and achievements are usually dismissed for being abnormal she considers "ridiculous." He was, she says, "at least equal to the 'standard' among the founding elite" of his country. He was the "odd man out" among his contemporaries for his feminism, his intellectual curiosity, his easy sexual mores, his democracy, his refusal to be as partisan as the others of his day, and his urbanism—indeed, his urbanity.

Much of this is so. And because of Isenberg's heavy work, we can now see better than ever before the positive qualities that made Burr one of the great men of his day. But the fact remains that he is the curiosity that establishes the boundaries of the conventional, the one who shows us what could *not* work in the early 19th century, and the man who always went a bit too far in everything he undertook. A "fallen founder" he was; and in the end, contrary to Isenberg's view, his falls were nobody's fault more than his own. ♦

A Woman's Place

'At the very bottom rung of criminal society [are] the women.' **BY CHARLOTTE ALLEN**

Before I began to write for a living, I practiced law, mostly criminal law. During the three years I spent loitering in rundown courtrooms and filthy jail visiting rooms, where I often had to clear my chair of gum, discarded half-candy bars, and hairs from the comb of the previous occupant before I could sit down, I learned a great deal about criminal society. My clients lived in a world that exactly mirrored the law-abiding world in its clearly marked social hierarchies and firm punishments for transgressions. Except that the criminals' world was stripped of all the civility, generosity, kindness, honesty, fairness, affection, and pity that characterize the lives of the rest of us, even if only intermittently.

A World Apart
Women, Prison, and Life Behind Bars
by Cristina Rathbone
Random House, 304 pp., $14.95

Other people existed to be exploited; the weak to be consumed by the strong.

At the very bottom rung of criminal society were the women. Their purpose was to be used—for sex, of course, but also for laundry, paycheck and welfare-check cash, stashing weapons, hauling drugs, prostitution proceeds, and whatever other advantage could be taken of their looks and their seemingly bottomless capacity for fantasizing that the men in their lives loved and would take care of them. There were no feminist fictions about the equality or supposed similarity of the sexes. When women got caught and convicted, their boyfriends typically disappeared. It was not unusual for a female prison inmate to have absolutely no visitors, ever.

Charlotte Allen is the author, most recently, of The Human Christ.

One of the virtues of Cristina Rathbone's book, the fruit of a series of interviews over four years with several women at two Massachusetts prisons, is that she understands very well, if for the wrong reasons, that women lawbreakers are "startlingly unlike" their aggressive male counterparts (hence her title, *A World Apart*). Rathbone writes: "Predominantly incarcerated for nonviolent, drug-related offenses, they are frequently mere accessories to their crimes: girlfriends, wives, or lovers of drug dealers. . . . Almost all have serious drug problems themselves, and about half are victims of domestic abuse."

This strikes me as true enough. The problem is that Rathbone seems not to understand why any of these women might be in prison, much less why they might belong there. In her view, those who commit "nonviolent" crimes like the women she interviews should be somewhere else (where, exactly, she does not specify). But what counts as nonviolent? Driving the getaway car for your boyfriend's robberies? Helping your boyfriend commit a cold-blooded murder of an old man? Standing by while your husband beats your son black and blue, starting at age three, because you are too high on crack cocaine to notice or care? Dealing the crack whose use will inevitably lead to more battered children—and battered women as well? These are all incidents from the lives of the women whom Rathbone interviews.

Rathbone represents a certain kind of highly educated romantic who imagines, *à la* Michel Foucault, that prisons exist not so much to punish wrongdoing or deter crime as to define social boundaries. It's "locking up society's most marginal citizens," punishing prostitutes and drug mules for "having sex and getting high."

Rathbone hesitates to take a standard prison tour at one of the institutions she writes about, the maximum security facility at Framingham, because that might amount to conceding the "legitimacy" of the state penal system. She informs the reader that she disbelieves in "respecting authority" and admires the "glee of self-assertion and inner swagger" that one of the inmates, 22-year-old "Julie" (the names are invented), in for armed robbery after a series of heroin-soaked heists with her boyfriend, feels about breaking prison rules, especially prohibitions against having sex with male guards.

(Thanks to sex-discrimination lawsuits, correctional officers of the opposite gender, monitoring even one's most intimate activities, are nowadays commonplace in U.S. prisons for both men and women.)

Indeed, Rathbone does not seem to understand why prisons have rules—such as bans on possessing silverware in your cell or corresponding with inmates at other institutions—and she deems all of them equally arbitrary. One of the women she interviews, Charlene, agreed to smuggle cocaine in her clothes in return for $10,000 and a weekend at a fancy beach hotel in Jamaica. That was something I "would have considered doing myself when I was in my teens," Rathbone writes. Good thing she didn't. Charlene got caught at the airport and sent up for 15 years under Massachusetts's tough mandatory-sentencing laws for drug crimes.

For all Rathbone's empathy with her subjects, which undoubtedly encouraged them to open up to her, she has nonetheless produced a meagerly reported book. Unlike Ted Conover, author of the widely acclaimed *Newjack*, who took a job as a prison guard so that he could observe penal institutions and their occupants from the inside, Rathbone decided to sue the state, claiming a right to inter-

view inmates as a member of the media.

As a writer myself, I sympathize with a fellow writer denied access to sources, but I see no reason journalists should have greater privileges than the rest of the public. For obvious security reasons, most prisons are wary of admitting strangers; and even as a lawyer, I rarely got past visiting rooms. That is about as far as Rathbone got, too, despite court orders in her favor. So the book, as she admits, lacks concrete, observed details of the specifics of prison life: what was on the menu in the dining hall, for example, or what her interviewees' cells looked like.

Miramax / Courtesy Everett Collection

Queen Latifah, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Renée Zellweger in Chicago *(2002)*

Furthermore, she succeeds in talking to only a handful of inmates—some of them, it is clear, only once—so she resorts to padding her narrative with snippets of Massachusetts prison history, a visit to a "corrections fair" (the latest in chains and stun guns), and an engrossing account of *www.Jailbabes.com*, a now-defunct Internet "dating service" in which men with a taste for that sort of thing mailed money to female inmates in return for whatever favors they could snatch during visiting hours. (Julie, as might be expected, is a Jail Babe.)

Rathbone's central character is Denise, 32 at the book's beginning and sentenced to a mandatory five years for selling cocaine to an undercover agent. Denise is mother to Patrick, an innocent boy of nine at the beginning of her term, and a hardened, angry juvenile-court prisoner himself at age 13 when she gets out. Patrick's plight is heartbreaking, but one would feel more sympathy for Denise had she not spent her son's childhood years smoking crack and going into denial while her husband, an alcoholic and chronically unemployed carpet-installer named Alan, regularly beat Patrick to a pulp, even as a toddler. Denise finally leaves Alan—to go to work as a stripper, even though she has college credits and middle-class parents. (That sort of job seems standard among Rathbone's interviewees: Julie's profession on the outside was dominatrix.)

In prison, Denise enjoys frequent visits from her mother and college correspondence courses paid for by her father, yet the aimlessness that characterized her life on the outside continues. She alternates between despondency over Patrick and, when transferred to a now-closed co-ed minimum-security facility in Lancaster, nurturing a crush on (and arranging trysts with) a male prisoner named Chuck. Chuck's profession on the outside: armed robber.

Denise also indulges an intense, intimate, and jealousy-marked friendship with the much younger Julie. Julie is openly bisexual, but whether her relationship with Denise is lesbian Rathbone does not say. Rathbone complains that Denise leaves prison "with no more demonstrable skills than she had when she entered." Yet she never questions whether Denise herself might be responsible for this, and responsible, at least in part, for her series of choices that tore apart the life of her son.

Rathbone does identify genuine problems with the women's penal system. Some mandatory-sentencing schemes for drug violations are undoubtedly too harsh on first-time offenders (although, unlike Rathbone, I can't summon much sympathy for the dealers themselves). Prisons ought to provide more opportunities for inmates to learn trades and rehabilitate themselves (although the Massachusetts system that Rathbone describes seems no worse than most others).

The widespread and flagrant incidence of guard-inmate sex in women's prisons, much of it less than voluntary, is unconscionable. It is part of a distressing trend over the past two decades of turning women's prisons into facsimiles of men's prisons, stripping them of the curtains, amenities, scope for modesty, and tokens of gentility that recognized that women inmates, while as morally culpable as men, were less overtly aggressive and possibly more amenable to reform.

Women lawbreakers are, indeed, a "world apart." The men in their lives know it and take advantage of it. While I don't agree with Rathbone that this excuses their crimes, I do agree that they deserve a kind of attention that the current system does not give them. ♦

Among the Lions

Writers don't necessarily make the best stories.

BY EDWIN M. YODER JR.

Some books, as Bacon might have put it, are to be nibbled. This is one of them, the third gathering of literary anecdotes to bear the Oxford imprint—an excess, one might fear, except that the editor explains that the overlap with the last is only just over 20 percent.

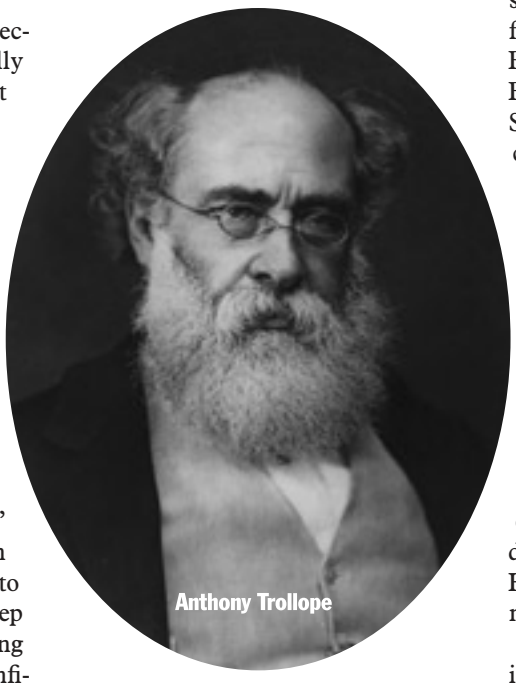
In any case, this, like all collections of the sort, suggests that really good stories about really important writers are less plentiful than one might hope. Writing is solitary work; and while one can count on the usual plenitude concerning such sociable souls as Dr. Johnson, Henry James, and Oscar Wilde, the vein is not so rich as it ought to be.

In fact, the impression after a week's snacking is that it is personalities, not the events, that make for savor. With striking exceptions, of course. What happened to Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," for instance, shouldn't happen to an Eddie Guest rhymelet. According to the poet, he fell into a drugged sleep after reading an exotic book "during which he has the most vivid confidence that he could not have composed less than two or three hundred lines." But when he awoke and began to transcribe the dream visions, a meddlesome visitor from Porlock took an hour of his time, after which, "to his no small surprise and mortification," he could recall only eight or ten lines. Has there ever been a greater literary vandal than that (unidentified) visitor from Porlock?

Edwin M. Yoder Jr., a former editor and columnist in Washington, has invented a number of literary anecdotes in his forthcoming novel about Freud and Henry James.

Gross arranges his gathering chronologically, by birth dates, and doesn't otherwise categorize. The reviewer must proceed accordingly, for the most part in space-saving snippets. Here are some highlights, at random:

The imprisoned Marie Antoinette shed tears over Burke's noble lament for her fate, but the writer of those words so feared that his remains would be desecrated if the French revolutionists conquered England that he arranged their transfer from wooden to lead coffin and the latter's concealment. The philosopher-historian Hume believed there could be no afterlife because it would be so crowded with spirits as to require the creation of new worlds. He said this to Boswell, who protested that spirits take up no space. But was Hume ribbing his perhaps-gullible fellow young Scot? Gibbon's plump cheek was mistaken by a French lady for a baby's bottom. George III gave his mixed review of Shakespeare to Fanny Burney, then laughed and said: "One should be stoned for saying so."



Anthony Trollope

Hulton-Deutsch Collection / Corbis

The New Oxford Book of Literary Anecdotes
Edited by John Gross
Oxford, 400 pp., $29.95

Whistler wanted to paint Disraeli, but Disraeli refused to sit for fear that he would look like the famous picture of Whistler's mother. Poe regarded his "Raven" as "the greatest poem" ever written. Seriously! Swinburne, who seems to have been tone-deaf, was fooled into believing that the "Three Blind Mice" tune was "a very ancient Florentine retournelle." The great Scribner's editor Maxwell Perkins could not bring himself to use the word "cocksucker."

The understanding of some stories demands some historical context. For instance, no two contemporaneous poets were ever more distinct in subject or style than Tennyson and Browning. Tennyson was once asked whether Browning's "writing at large [his dramatic monologues?] is poetry or no." He asked for a week to consider. Walking with the same companion a week later he suddenly declared, "I have thought and it is." He did not identify the reference to his mystified companion.

Dyed-in-the-wool Trollopeans relish, in Trollope's otherwise dry and businesslike autobiography, the story of how he killed off Mrs. Proudie, the officious evangelical bishop's wife in *The Last Chronicle of Barset.* While writing one day at the Athenaeum Club, he heard two clergymen complaining of some of his characters, especially Mrs. Proudie. He approached and "acknowledged myself to be the culprit. 'As to Mrs. Proudie,' I said, 'I will go home and kill her before the week is over.' And so I did." The story is plausible, since Mrs. Proudie's exit (of a stroke) does seem abrupt and unforeshadowed. But we who love the story tend to forget Trollope's ensuing confession that

he still lives "much in company with her ghost."

No Oxford anthology would be complete without a Spooner story. Spooner, of the reversed consonants and other verbal mixups, and warden of New College, was "walking with a friend in North Oxford and meeting a lady dressed in black, to whom he lifted his hat. . . . 'Poor soul,' he said, 'very sad; her late husband, you know, a very sad death—eaten by missionaries.'"

And there is the matter of Conrad's eye. He who said in one of his prefaces that his aim was "above all, to make you see," was sitting one evening in a London café with his friend Edward Garnett: "I asked him after a painted lady had brushed haughtily past our table, what he had specially noticed about her. 'The dirt in her nostril,' he replied instantly."

These are among the exceptional anecdotes, for not even the literary immortals can render a mere humdrum event interesting. Does anyone care, for instance, that Dickens once lost his balance and fell, fully clothed, into a tub of water? Or that Gray of the churchyard elegy was afraid of fire? Moreover, one's distinct impression is that interest fades as one nears the present. Perhaps a dozen or so of the recent figures represented here (it would be rude to name them) would be unremarkable if they walked on water. Perhaps the trouble is that they are not dead—or dead enough.

Finally, an alert reader may find to his pleasant surprise, as this reviewer did, that he can improve upon authorized recollection. "A group went to the Old Cheshire Cheese," writes William Van O'Connor in his biography of Ezra Pound, "where Yeats held forth . . . on the ways of bringing music and poetry together. Pound sought attention by eating two red tulips." I was at a seminar table in the English Department in Chapel Hill fifty years ago when Robert Frost, who seems to have been present at Pound's unusual salad dish, told the same story more vividly: "Ezra ate the tulips leaf by leaf," said Frost in his inimitable Down East growl, adding: "Ezra always was a kind of pretty boy."

Small world! ♦

Land for Peace

Stolypin's reforms might *have prevented the Bolshevik cataclysm.* **BY DAVID SATTER**

Of all the questions that plagued czarist Russia, none was more cursed than the land question.

In a vast, rural country, the peasants appeared passive and inert, but appearances were misleading. They did not accept the established order and, particularly, not the privileges of the gentry. Among themselves, they dreamed of a "black partition" in which all the land would be divided equally and distributed among households on the basis of the number of mouths to feed.

Liberal Reform in an Illiberal Regime
The Creation of Private Property in Russia, 1906-1915
by Stephen F. Williams
Hoover, 320 pp., $15

When revolution broke out in 1905, peasants seized grain and land and burned manor houses. Rural uprisings proved harder to suppress than uprisings in the cities. In the wake of the revolution, Russia convened its first parliament and a large group of peasants were elected as deputies. Many demanded that Russia's gentry estates be broken up. The czar and his ministers began to fear that if a solution was not found to the agrarian question, the peasants would give their support to the revolution being prepared by radicals in the cities.

It was against this background that Pyotr Stolypin, a former provincial governor, became prime minister of Russia. Stolypin was also a landowner, and his experience led him to believe that the key both to improving conditions in the countryside and heading off revolution was to give Russian peasants reliable rights in property.

Russia's peasants were no longer serfs, but under the emancipation rules, land taken from the gentry was held by communes that were obliged to pay the state a "redemption fee." If, formerly, the peasant's labor had been an asset of his owner, it was now, *de facto*, an asset of the commune and security for the commune's redemption obligation. The communes took two forms: hereditary, with ownership passed down in the family; and repartitional, in which the land was subject to periodic repartition. Each peasant household also held its land in many scattered plots.

Stolypin's plan was to break the hold of the commune and transform the peasants into small farmers with their own land and a stake in the existing order. Through a series of decrees, he made it possible for an individual to gain title to land previously held in common by the commune and then to consolidate those strips into separate, self-contained farms. In words that were to become famous, he said that his reforms were a wager "not on the poor and drunk but on the sturdy and strong."

In *Liberal Reform in an Illiberal Regime*, Stephen F. Williams, a U.S. appellate court judge, provides a detailed analysis of the Stolypin reforms and poses the question of whether it is possible for an illiberal regime, using antidemocratic and arguably unconstitutional methods, to lay the basis for a secure property

David Satter, a Russian scholar at the Hudson Institute, the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and the Hoover Institution, is the author, most recently, of Darkness at Dawn: The Rise of the Russian Criminal State.

Getty Images / Keystone / Stringer

Assassination attempt on Pyotr Stolypin, St. Petersburg, 1906

regime. The answer he offers is a qualified yes. The reformers, as depicted by Williams, were constrained to circumvent the elected Duma and tolerate some inequalities in the distribution of land, but he argues that, given the peasants' lack of understanding of property rights and the enormity of the task, they had little choice.

Regardless of the character of the reforms, they began to produce results. By the end of 1915, the amount of land in repartitional tenure had been reduced by 16.4 million desiatinas (44.3 million acres) or 14 percent; and by 1917 the land authorities had consolidated about 12.7 million desiatinas (34.3 million acres), a little more than nine percent of all allotment land. Had the authorities completed work on the applications for consolidation, the area consolidated would have been considerably higher.

Russian agricultural production surged. Some of this was due to an expansion of the area under cultivation and the increased use of farm machinery and fertilizer. But a significant contribution was made by improved farming. A 1913 study cited by Williams showed that consolidated tracts, on average, outdid the communes in output from 5 percent for rye to 30 percent for winter wheat. Stolypin's program was so promising that Lenin complained in 1908, "If this should continue for very long periods of time . . . it might force us [the Bolsheviks] to renounce any agrarian program at all."

Unfortunately, Stolypin's efforts to save his country were in vain. Williams argues that the decision to implement the reforms by decree, bypassing the Duma, may have undermined the constitutionalism that, in the long run, it was hoped the reforms would strengthen. But in fact, it is more likely that Russia's experiment in peaceful social evolution was doomed by a combination of historical events, and the extraordinary potential for violence engendered over the centuries by the Russian slave system.

In 1906, Stolypin said, "Give the state 20 years of peace, internally and externally, and you will not recognize Russia." But Stolypin was assassinated in 1911 and World War I broke out three years later. The war led to a rapid deterioration of the situation in the countryside. The abrupt end to agricultural loans and land reallocation, the mobilization of millions of peasants into the army, and the requisition and destruction of trade networks brought the process of agrarian transformation to a halt.

The 1917 Bolshevik coup led to a land grab that dwarfed all others. Peasants still in communes helped themselves not only to the gentry's land but also to former commune land that had been consolidated in the hands of individual peasants. The Bolsheviks went along with the peasants' actions because it facilitated their own seizure of power; but 12 years later they, in turn, seized the land of the peasants and herded them onto collective farms. Collectivization was thus the final expression of the failure in Russia to establish a reliable notion of private property.

Judge Williams presents a comprehensive analysis of the reforms and their implementation. His careful scholarship is almost certainly the last word on this subject. Nonetheless, he may put too much stress on the issue of top-down liberalization. The Russian Revolution was an explosion of nihilism in which the peasantry was happy to participate. In this sense, the failure of the reforms was not a matter of the reforms or the political intentions of the reformers. The problem was spiritual. ♦

The Heart of Japan

From the past to the present in the stories of Higuchi Ichiyô. **BY JANINE BEICHMAN**

Higuchi Ichiyô (1872-1896) is one of a number of Meiji period writers who died of tuberculosis at a young age. In those closing days of the 19th century, anyone with literary ambition headed like a moth for the bright cultural lights of Tokyo, where tuberculosis, the AIDS of its time, was an urban scourge. This is not to say that country people did not contract the disease, because they did, but it probably spread even more easily in closely populated urban areas.

The Uses of Memory
The Critique of Modernity in the Fiction of Higuchi Ichiyô
by Timothy J. Van Compernolle
Harvard, 215 pp., $39.95

Masaoka Shiki, father of the modern haiku and a great diarist, died of tuberculosis at 35 after suffering terribly for several years. Ishikawa Takuboku, another great diarist as well as a marvelous poet, died of it, too, in his twenties, as did the talented woman poet Yamakawa Tomiko, and many others.

Transitional epochs like the Meiji period make unique demands, both physically and psychologically. Great resilience, and the ability to maintain one's equilibrium in the face of the tremendous fissures that open up, are necessary for survival in all senses of the word—economic, physical, psychological. No one is spared. Many young writers had the necessary courage, creativity, and intellectual brilliance to make their way; but their bodies faltered.

Such was the case with Higuchi Ichiyô. A supremely talented writer with a mostly self-taught classical education, she lived in poverty from early adolescence on, enduring habitual malnutrition of a kind that is no more than a second-hand memory, if that, for almost everyone in developed countries today. An ambitious writer from her teens, she achieved fame in the last few years of her life, writing in the space of 14 months all the works for which she is now best known. Then she was diagnosed with tuberculosis at 24 and died within a space of months, mourned in Japan by the literary world and by many readers. Her reputation has never faltered since.

Higuchi Ichiyô is the only canonical female fiction writer of the Meiji period and, quite understandably, *The Uses of Memory* is not the first book about her in English. The earliest distinguished translation of her work—Edward G. Seidensticker's almost complete translation of her masterpiece, the novella *Growing Up* (*Takekurabe*), which he made for Donald Keene's *Modern Japanese Literature*—is now a half-century old and still reads as beautifully as the day it was born. After Seidensticker, we had to wait another 25 years for the late Robert Danly's masterful biography, *In the Shade of Spring Leaves: The Life and Writings of Higuchi Ichiyô, a Woman of Letters in Meiji Japan*. This included fine translations of nine of her stories (including a retranslation of *Takekurabe*, which Danly titled "Child's Play"), the bulk of her fiction oeuvre.

Here, the reader skids to a stop, exclaiming: only nine short stories, and a canonical writer! Think of "our" canonical 19th-century fiction writers: Melville, James, Eliot, Dickens, Hugo, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy. Did any of them earn canonical status for their short stories or, if you insist on *Growing Up*/"Child's Play" being a little too long for a short story, their novellas? But then, trying hard not to impose "our" values on other cultures, perhaps our imaginary reader remembers the haiku, that brief 17-syllable form, and the fact that its most famous practitioner, Matsuo Bashô, is also accorded canonical status, and concludes that Japanese writers write in such brief forms that nine really good short stories—or, straining the point, eight and a novella—may be really all that is needed to achieve canonical status.

But no, a cultural penchant for brevity is not the answer. There are plenty of full-length Japanese novels, even some multivolume ones, both within and without the canon. The most famous, of course, is Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji*, but Meiji period writers wrote novels just as long as any of their European and American counterparts were writing.

So the question remains: How could just nine stories make a writer so beloved—because Ichiyô is not just respected, she is also loved—that her portrait now graces the 5,000 yen note, a denomination small enough (about $30 at current rates) that most people encounter it at least once a week in the course of daily shopping? (For that matter, unlike some other Meiji writers, most people cannot even read her stories in the original anymore, largely because Ichiyô, so conversant with the medieval Japanese classics, adopted her style from them and the Tokugawa period writer Ihara Saikaku.)

So why is a writer of such small output, all of it now so difficult to read that there are numerous translations into contemporary Japanese, so revered, so persistent in the national memory?

The reason is that Higuchi Ichiyô is a writer who helps to tell the narrative of modern Japanese history, the history of the heart as it made its way from the premodern to the modern. Like Natsume Sôseki, author of the equally canonical *Kokoro*, she is a national writer, someone whose stories seem to express the experience of the Japa-

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Reuters / Kimimasa Mayama

Ichiyô on the 5,000 yen note

nese in the 19th century and yet at the same time touch on universal human experience. Her protagonists are marginalized people, left behind by modernization. Prostitutes, seamstresses, concubines, maids, they are almost all women, almost all poor, but their male friends and lovers—wastrels, rickshaw drivers, small-time crooks—are just as fully depicted. Often, as Timothy Van Compernolle remarks, the landscape is awash in tears, and yet the bedrock of the stories is reality.

"Child's Play" tells the story of Midori, a young prostitute in the licensed quarter—prostitution was legal but government-controlled in the Meiji period—as she moves from the freedom of childhood to the beginning of selling her body. Ichiyô, who lived outside the licensed quarters for some time, tells the story in a way that captures the sadness of all children as they put on the yoke of adulthood, and yet also evokes the particular tragedy of Midori's own fate. Such characters had been depicted in earlier fiction, but not in a way that was so realistic and yet made the reader sympathize with their aspirations and affections. Your heart often breaks for Ichiyô's characters, but at the same time they inspire love and admiration.

With Van Compernolle's theoretically sophisticated study, we can now add to Seidensticker and Danly a third fine contribution to Ichiyô studies in English. Van Compernolle is very aware of his predecessors, particularly Danly, to whom he dedicates his own book.

Relying on readers to familiarize themselves with the biography and stories through Danly, Van Compernolle devotes his entire book to examining Ichiyô through the lens of literary theory.

His thesis is that Ichiyô used "memory"—by which he means primarily the conventions of traditional poetry and fiction, but not in a simple, imitative way. Rather, she employed traditional language to critique modernity, in particular such new ideals as worldly success, or *shusse*, as seen from the viewpoint of marginal people who were unequivocal failures according to modern values.

His basic aim is to "situate a literary text" in "the historically specific." He is trying to reproduce the zeitgeist, the intellectual and spiritual atmosphere of the time, so that we can read as if we were part of Ichiyô's contemporary audience, while remaining readers in our own time.

My eyes were opened to the excellence of Ichiyô's "On the Last Day of the Year" by Van Compernolle's treatment. This is the story of Omine, a young maid still in her teens, who wants to borrow the paltry sum of two yen so that her family can pay off the interest on a loan and be saved from financial ruin. She approaches her employer, a woman notorious for her stinginess, and is rejected; and then, in desperation, steals the money. But just as her native honesty has made her decide that she must confess, the employer calls for the money box and it turns out to be totally empty except for a scrap of paper on which is scrawled a note from the family heir, the wastrel Ishinosuke, saying that he has "borrowed" the contents.

Omine is saved, and we can conclude that Ishinosuke, who she thought was dozing by the fire while she stole the money, had actually seen her and decided to cover for her. But the narrator allows no easy conclusions, leaving us with this teasing sentence: "Would that we could know what happened next."

In his analysis, Van Compernolle touches on the changes in maid-employer relations, Ichiyô's borrowings from the 17th-century author Ihara Saikaku and the medieval poetic tradition, and then the resonance between Omine's savior, Ishinosuke, and Japanese folk tales about the mysterious stranger who brings salvation. Although some of his historical description of maid-employer relations is confusing, taken all together, these intertextual readings illuminate parts of the story that we would otherwise ignore or be puzzled by. Van Compernolle has found the hidden threads that sew the story together, and which a reading based only on what is evident to readers in the 21st century would inevitably miss.

The other chapters offer interpretations of the stories "Troubled Waters," about the prostitute Oriki; "The Thirteenth Night," about Oseki, a girl of an impoverished family who tries, unsuccessfully, to run away from a rich but cruel husband; "Child's Play" and "Separate Ways," about a poor seamstress who decides to escape her poverty by becoming a kept woman.

I have probably missed some of the nuances of the theoretical scaffolding that grounds *The Uses of Memory*, but these insightful readings are the brick and mortar, and they alone make the book a success, a worthy addition to the growing corpus of work in English on one of Japan's best writers. ♦

Boy Gets Girl Pregnant

Obscenely funny, and maybe disturbing.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Ben is an ambitionless man-boy with no job, $114 in his bank account, and a serious commitment to his bong. Alison is a gorgeous, polished entertainment journalist. They meet drunk at a club, hook up, say goodbye in the morning — and eight weeks later reunite when she discovers she is pregnant. The movie about them is called *Knocked Up*.

Knocked Up
Directed by Judd Apatow

Alison decides to keep the baby and to try and see whether she and Ben can forge a relationship. Ben has nothing else going on—and besides, Alison is hot, so he's game. In furtherance of her goal, Alison asks Ben what he usually expects to do on a second date. He responds that he generally expects oral sex (the actual dialogue is far more explicit). And he doesn't seem to be kidding, since he tells her that's what he told his buddies he thought he'd get out of the evening.

And here we have the problem with *Knocked Up*. How you react to this movie depends on how you react to this scene. The plot of *Knocked Up* hinges on Alison finding Ben cute and cuddly, a human teddy bear, lovable despite all his surface flaws. The audience must feel the same way about Ben if the movie is going to work its magic on us.

But on what planet would an irresistibly cute teddy bear basically beg for oral sex from a vulnerable woman who is trying to determine whether said teddy bear, a man she barely knows, could be someone with whom she might be able to raise a child? If that is the planet you live on, or a planet you can imagine visiting, or a planet you think exists, then you might be knocked over by *Knocked Up*.

It's undeniably funny, and there are moments when it is flat-out hilarious. Writer-director Judd Apatow has stuffed it full of amazing comic performers who do amazing things with 15-second bits, and he lets the movie run long (two hours and 9 minutes) to allow its leading characters a real opportunity to strut their stuff. In particular, there's a scene in which Alison's sister Debbie (played by Apatow's wife, Leslie Mann, who is onscreen ambrosia) berates the bouncer at a club so violently that he begins to cry and acknowledges that he didn't let her in because she's too old and should be at a yoga class. It's unnecessary, it does nothing to advance the plot, and it's pure gold—a classic piece of American comedy.

Apatow has the power to make a 129-minute comedy because his first movie as writer-director, *The 40 Year Old Virgin*, was a singular sensation: An inexpensive R-rated raunchfest loved by people of all ages. Apatow found a miraculous balance between wild lasciviousness and soulful sweetness in *Virgin*, the story of an unassuming guy who becomes the target of a campaign by his coworkers to end a lifetime of unwanted chastity. With *Knocked Up*, Apatow is trying to make the same miracle happen twice. But while the plot of *Knocked Up* is far less smutty than the storyline of *The 40 Year Old Virgin*, the new movie is oddly disturbing.

Ben lives with a quartet of fellow stoners who lie around a house in suburban Los Angeles talking idly about launching a website filled with clips of naked movie stars. None of them works, and it's questionable whether any of them bathes. When Alison is seven months pregnant, a midnight earthquake shakes Ben's house to its foundations and he runs into the street carrying his bong—forgetting entirely that Alison is alone in the bedroom.

Funny? Maybe. But it seems beyond belief that the sensible and good-hearted Alison would spend another minute with Ben after that. And yet she does. Maybe that's because, in the universe of *Knocked Up*, everybody is foul-mouthed and foul-tempered. It's not just the slacker stoners who abuse each other verbally from morning to night. Alison's beautiful and well-to-do sister, the mother of two young children, hurls curses at her good-guy husband (the great Paul Rudd) with Nolan Ryan velocity.

But brilliant though Apatow's trash talk is, it has a bitter and angry undertone to it. After a while the wordplay seems to sting rather than amuse. It's like *The Sopranos* without the gunshots. Poor Alison seems lost in a world of unpleasant people who don't really mean her well.

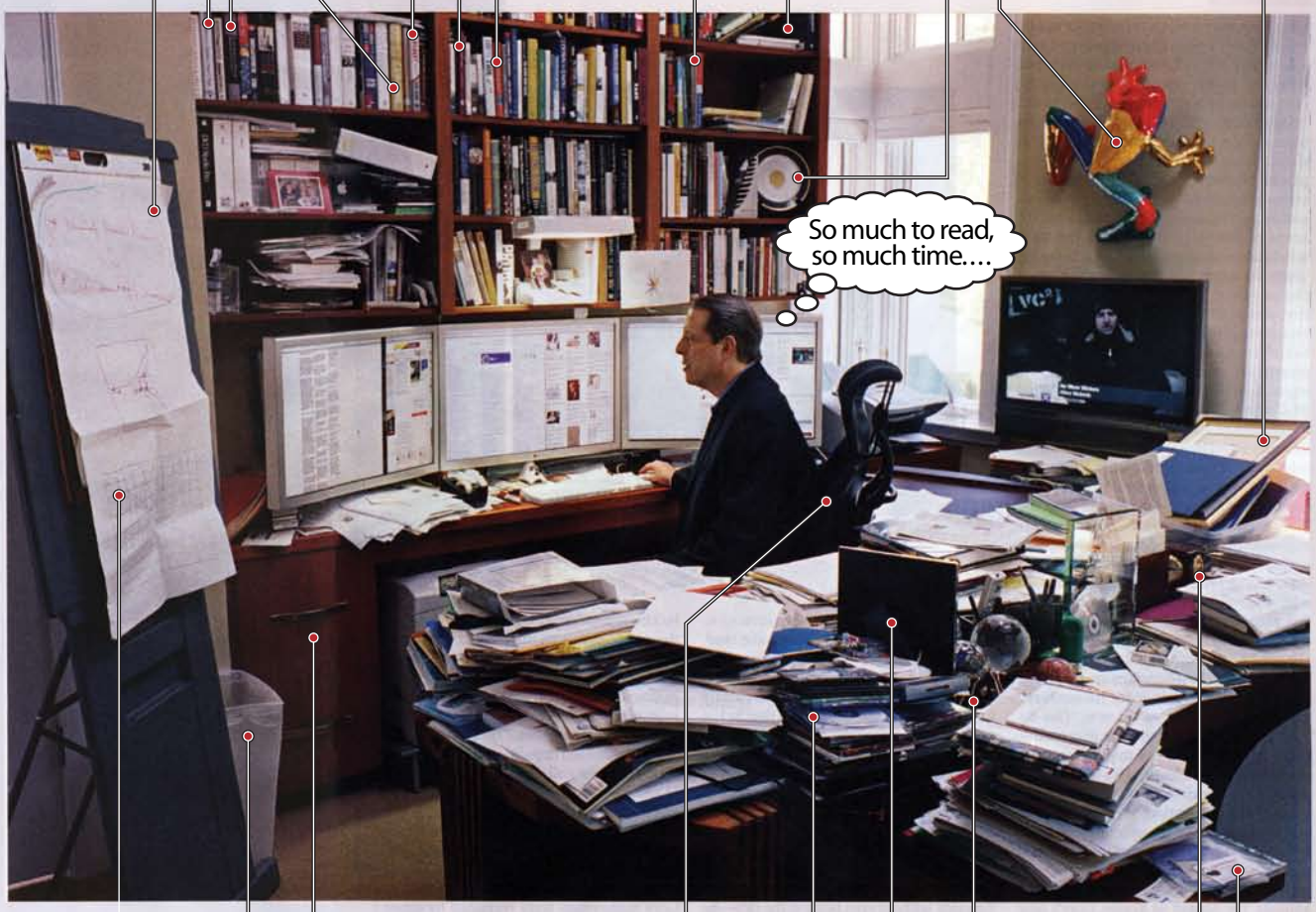
The primary failure here may be attributable to Seth Rogen, who plays Ben. Rogen played one of the buddies in *The 40 Year Old Virgin*, and he's an interesting screen presence: He has a gravelly basso voice and a quick tongue that belie his cherubic, even dopey, visage. But Rogen isn't really an actor, and he isn't able to convey the kind of essential nobility Ben needs if we are to root for him. Ben is clearly smart—maybe even as smart as Seth Rogen himself, who had a job as a staff writer on a television show before his 18th birthday. But he doesn't seem in the least noble. He doesn't even seem moderately nice.

Of course, Ben is saved from a life of slackerdom by the impending arrival of his baby. He straightens up, flies right, and gets the girl. The credits roll, and you see dozens of pictures of the actual babies born to the cast and crew of *Knocked Up*. It's a very sweet way to end a picture. But later, after a few minutes' reflection, even a sincere pro-lifer might wonder whether Alison should just have gotten an abortion. ♦

John Podhoretz, columnist for the New York Post, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

Parody

"Climate central: Gore in his Nashville home office, where he wrote his new book. Mind-map software and huge Post-it notes help him order his thoughts." **—Time *magazine, May 28, 2007***



The day that poll was published, in April, I spent some time with Gore, 59, in his hotel room in Buffalo, N.Y., during a

an evening show for 6,000. I congratulated him on the poll and mentioned the dozen or so states that

Climate central *Gore in his Nashville home office, where he wrote his new book. Mind-map software help him order his thoughts*

Gore is sometimes accused of profiting from the climate crisis, it's worth noting that he

the weekly Standard
June 4, 2007