the weekly Standard

APRIL 28, 2008

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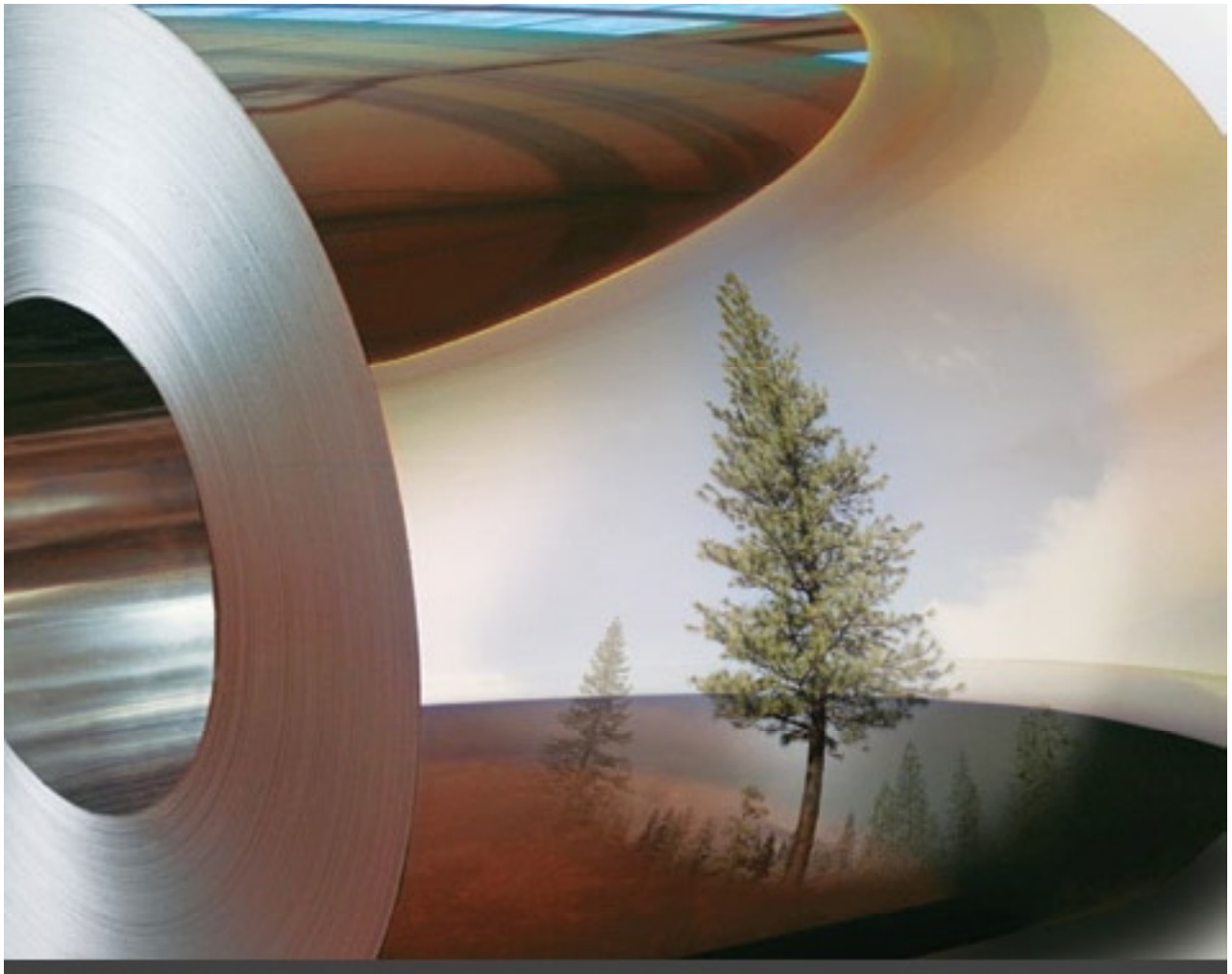

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In the new issue of *Policy Review*

Energy Independence Isn't Very Green

Conflicting priorities are confusing policy

[I]n pleading the case for lowered oil consumption, energy security advocates gratefully accepted a new rationale — concerns about climate change. In 1973, those concerns were barely a blip on the political radar screen, but they have grown steadily since about 1988. "Stop global warming" has become a remarkably effective rallying cry, even inspiring award-winning documentaries and TV specials. Commercial interests have also latched onto this movement. Automobile makers find it easier to market gas-electric hybrid cars in the interest of saving the planet from excessive warming rather than saving the country from Middle Eastern extremists. The ethanol lobby, too, identifies its raison d'être more with greening the planet than with energy security. Combating climate change somehow seems more inclusive and less confrontational than mere energy security. For all these reasons, advocates of the latter (let's call them the "oil independents") have eagerly accepted a strategic partnership with the climate change establishment (the "climate greens"). Unfortunately, however, the partnership rests on unstable ground.

—Steve Stein

Taxing Private Equity

Anomalies of a Byzantine tax code

The House bill is yet another reminder of the problem of having different tax rates for different types of income. Whenever capital gains are taxed at a different rate from so-called ordinary income (or corporate income, for that matter), economic resources will be devoted to reclassifying income. Fewer and similar rates of tax would reduce the resources wasted trying to game the system. In the case of capital gains tax, it is a moot point whether the rate should be lower or higher than ordinary income tax or indeed whether it should be taxed at all. Since its introduction in 1921, no other tax has attracted as much controversy or been changed as often by Congress. Carried interests may be the most economically efficient way to reward private equity managers, but the form of remuneration should be decided on its economic merits, not to satisfy some legal definition of income.

—Adam Creighton

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Putting more energy into energy security.

For perhaps the first time since the oil crisis of the 1970s, there is a growing awareness among Americans that the country is facing difficult decisions in addressing its long-term energy needs. Over just the last 25 years, world energy demand has increased about 60 percent and is projected to rise by a similar amount by 2030. Unlike the 1970s, however, today's emerging energy challenges are far more complex in almost every respect – from geopolitics and geology to environmental impact and costs.

At BP, we see no easy answers or magic bullets. Instead, progress in addressing this country's long-term energy needs will require a comprehensive and holistic approach that capitalizes on all sources of energy while addressing both economic and environmental concerns. In a special report prepared last summer for U.S. Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman, the National Petroleum Council wrote that "over the coming decades, the world will need better energy efficiency and all economic, environmentally responsible energy sources available to support and sustain future growth."

Oil and natural gas will remain indispensable parts of the U.S. energy mix, but according to the report, meeting the projected U.S. demand for energy by the year 2030 will require expansion of all economic energy sources, including coal, nuclear, renewables and unconventional sources of oil and natural gas.

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For more information about what BP is doing to address America's long-term energy needs, please visit bp.com/us. For a copy of the National Petroleum Council's report, please visit npc.org

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Cover: U.S. Navy photo / Michael D. Cole

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the weekly Standard

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A Letter to the Editor of the *Washington Post*

A couple of weeks ago, there was a snarky little anti-Bush piece in the *Washington Post* about a visit to the nation's capital by Kevin Rudd, the new Labor prime minister of Australia ("The Coalition of the Unwilling"). Fatuous and shallow, the article was written by Dana Milbank. But we repeat ourselves.

Ross Terrill, the eminent sinologist and an occasional contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, remembered that THE SCRAPBOOK used to open these pages to the frustrated authors of deserving but unpublished letters to the editor of the *New York Times*, and he copied us on a letter, provoked by Milbank's article, that he had written to the editor of the *Washington Post*. Terrill, a native of Melbourne, Australia, was gentler with the *Post* reporter than THE SCRAPBOOK would have been, but still the paper was unable to find space for his letter. We are delighted to print it here:

"Dana Milbank's notion that Kevin Rudd became prime minister because Australians wanted to prove Bush's admiration for John Howard misplaced is ethnocentric and false. But then Milbank's entire piece is an anti-Bush maneuver. He mentioned three 'Bush-friendly' foreign leaders 'voted out' recently. One of them, [Britain's Tony Blair], was not voted out. He omitted major pro-American leaders who were voted *in* recently, including the leaders of South Korea, France, and Germany. To suit his theme, Milbank unwisely drags in one of Rudd's predecessors as Labor leader in Australia, [Mark Latham].

"Latham is irresistible to Milbank because he called Bush incompetent and dangerous. But Howard thrashed Latham at the polls and the Labor party quickly had to replace him. Latham joined the 'retirement community' that Milbank falsely claims for pro-Bush foreign leaders only. Come to think of it, the *Post* never explained to its readers why Howard won four successive elections, going back to 1996—perhaps because he was a Bush friend?

"Milbank did not report that Rudd [in a speech at the Brookings Institution] commended Bush for his handling of U.S.-China relations or that Rudd did not criticize Howard throughout the speech. I happened to have lunch with Rudd afterwards and his conversation was thoughtful, centrist, and lacking any sign of the partisanship of Milbank and the chairman of Brookings who introduced the prime minister.

"It is disrespectful to a friendly foreign country—to any foreign country—to view the visit of its leader solely through the prism of anti-Bush politics."

Ross Terrill

One More Kennedy-water Link

THE SCRAPBOOK is a sucker for designer bottled water, particularly designer bottled water masquerading as social statement. There's the "Ethos Water" sold at Starbucks, which helps "children around the world get clean water" and raises "awareness of the World Water Crisis." And there's the new Deer Park in "eco-shape" bottles, which brag about using 30 percent less plastic because "less plastic, less impact." Of course, filling your own Nalgene bottle with tap water would have even less impact, but then passersby might not understand how deeply you care for our Mother Earth.

Our new favorite, though, is Keeper Springs, the bottle of which proudly proclaims it to be "an environmental project by Robert F. Kennedy Jr." In 1998, Kennedy teamed up with two other do-gooders, John Hoving and Chris Bartle, to launch the brand. Hoving came from the retail world while Bartle ran a company called the Evergreen Group, a business brokerage for "environmentally sustainable businesses."

Keeper Springs donates all of their after-tax profits to the Waterkeeper Alliance. As the bottle helpfully explains, "The first Keeper patrol boat was launched by fisherman [sic] and their friends who mobilized in 1966 to challenge polluters for control of the Hudson River. The Hudson's miraculous recovery has inspired the creation of dozens of Keepers on rivers, streams, lakes and bays across the country. Keepers patrol local waterways enforcing environmental laws, responding to citizens complaints and finding remedies. . . . Every American has the right to clean waterways. If you want pure water, fight for it!"

Nothing goes with vanity and self-satisfaction like an icy-cool bottle of Keeper Springs! ♦

(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of April 9, 2001)

The Man Who Shot Saint-Ex

Put away those old maps and magnifying glasses—the case of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry is closed. On July 31, 1944, the author of *The Little Prince* and aviator extraordinaire flew his P-38 Lightning from Corsica towards the French coast on an Allied reconnaissance mission. He never returned.

Was it an accident? Did someone shoot him down? Did he commit suicide? Theories abounded. But in 1998, fishermen off the coast of Marseille discovered in their nets a silver bracelet bearing the name of Saint-Exupéry and his publisher (Reynal & Hitchcock). A few years later, divers recovered the wreckage of Saint-Exupéry's plane. No body was ever found.

In 2006, one of the investigators, Lino von Gartzen, spoke to a Luftwaffe veteran who confessed to shooting down Saint-Exupéry. His identity was finally made public last month: 85-year-old Horst Rippert (who after the war became a German television sportscaster). According to the *New York Times*, "Rippert described in detail to Mr. von Gartzen how in the summer of 1944 German radar had alerted his fighter squadron at Marignane, near Marseille, to a group of Allied reconnaissance planes over the Mediterranean. Mr. Rippert, who was then 22, found a P-38 with French colors and shot it down.

"He described the odd, evasive loops flown by Saint-Exupéry, who at the time was 44, overweight and in pain from fractures sustained in numerous flying accidents. Several days later, when German radio intercepted American reports of a search for Saint-Exupéry, he suspected he might have shot down his idol." (In his youth, says the *Times*, Rippert "had idolized the aviator-turned-author and had devoured his books, beginning with *Southern Mail*, in 1929, an adventure tale written while Saint-Exupéry was flying the Casablanca to Dakar route" for the Aéropostale. He has regrets to this day and insists that had he known the identity of the pilot, he would not have fired on him.)

Other than the timing of the incident and Rippert's own account (which he kept secret except for his diary), hard evidence is still lacking and some critics in Germany are skeptical. Nevertheless, The Scrapbook is satisfied. Now, about Amelia Earhart. . . . ♦

Help Wanted

The Collegiate Network of Wilmington, Del., which supports 106 right-of-center publications at the nation's leading colleges and universities, seeks a professional development director to assist in the cultivation and expansion of its journalism internship and fellowship programs. The job will require periods of frequent travel. The ideal candidate will have some journalism experience. Please send résumés to Joe Lindsley, Executive Director, at jlindsley@isi.org. ♦

Casual

The Numbers Game

Every man, they say, has his price, and I believe I may now have established mine. In fact, I seem to be establishing and reestablishing my price almost daily.

A box seat ticket to a Chicago Cubs game played in midsummer has gone up to $80, and I found myself not ready to pay that sum, drawing another of those wobbly lines in imaginary sand. Last year the same ticket cost $65, which I thought sufficiently outrageous. The $15 jump means that, when I take someone to a game, after adding in parking, a couple of beers, peanuts, and hot dogs, we're talking about a $200 afternoon. For a baseball game! Something feels wrong about this. I usually buy twelve tickets, two each for six games. This year I have decided to buy just four tickets for two games.

The *Wall Street Journal* recently ran one of those articles—a less than hardy perennial—on the best hot dog in America. After surveying hot dogs across the country, the author concluded that the best hot dog in the country is available at a stand in a parking lot in Boston. The problem with his selection is that the cost of the hot dog sandwich he chose is $7. A hot dog shouldn't cost more than $2.50, maybe $3.50 with fries. It's not the principle of the thing; it's the price.

A month or so ago, I took my raincoat to the dry cleaner; just the coat, no detachable lining, no extra collars. When I picked it up, the charge was $18. "Eighteen dollars!" I exclaimed. I don't exclaim often—I prefer my conversation and my prose free of exclamation points—but in this case I genuinely exclaimed. The charge reminded me that, many years ago, my friend the biographer Albert Goldman, shocked at the price he was charged for having a suit cleaned in the Faubourg Saint-Germain in Paris, exclaimed (knowing Al, I'm sure he didn't merely expostulate): "What! I asked you to clean the suit, not reweave it!"

I was taken to dinner not long ago at a Park Avenue restaurant called Daniel. My hosts made a point of saying that they understood that I was opposed to expensive wines, which were served with the dinner, and very good they were, too. "Not at all," I replied. "I am only opposed to paying for expensive wines." I did not inquire about the price of the wine we were drinking, lest the number sour its subtle taste.

DARREN GYGI

My nearest supermarket is a Whole Foods, into which I pop almost daily, for reasons not of health but of convenience. And almost daily I am rocked by the size of my bill. Four or five items, not much heft in the bag, and my bill comes to some silly sum like $46.20 or $38.76. Incredulous, I check the receipt. Disappointed, I find it is never wrong.

On my local classical music station, I hear a haunting piece of music, "Seven Pastorales" by Lou Harrison, but when I go to buy it, on Amazon.com, I discover it costs $59.95. At that price, I can't bring myself to add it to my shopping cart. I purchase, with chagrin, a pathetically small chunk of Parmesan cheese for $9.96. A packet of razor blades sells for $11.95. What's going on here?

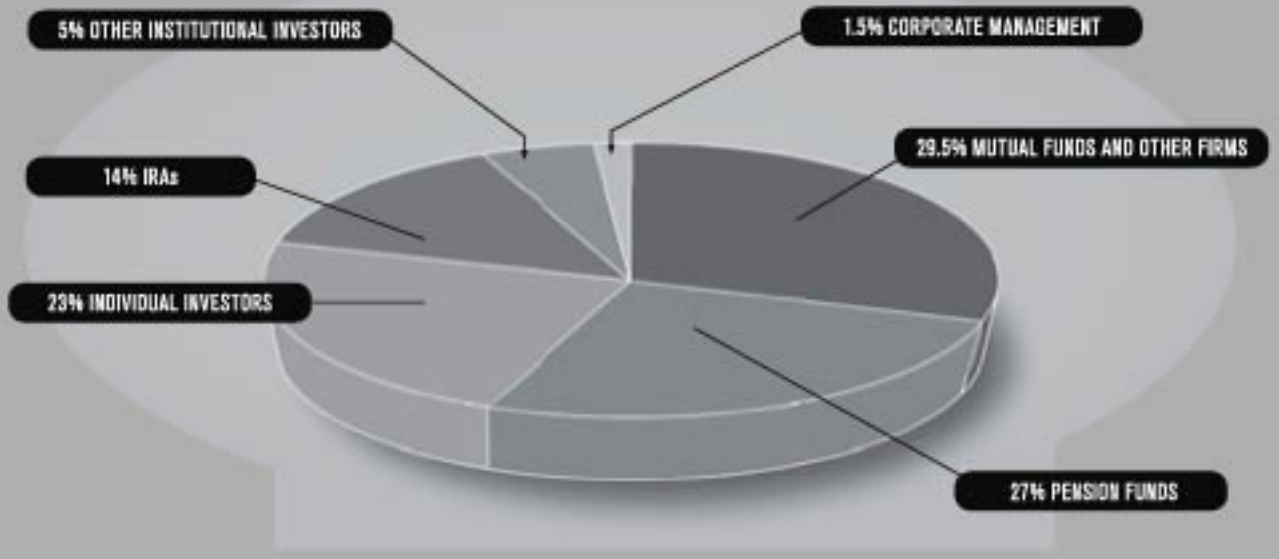
I have never considered myself other than generous: a picker-up of more than my share of checks, a handsome tipper, reasonably charitable, a fellow who gives his UPS deliveryman $40 at Christmas. But now I have to consider the possibility that age has rendered me a little near, tight, not to put too fine a point on it, a cheapskate.

Like the man in the old Jewish joke, I may not be comfortable but I make a nice living. So why are all these new prices suddenly getting to me, as they obviously are? Even after factoring in inflation, the problem, I believe, is in the numbers themselves. I remember too many of the old numbers: when a good dinner, a Brooks Brothers shirt, more than a full tank of gas could each be had for less than $10. I could reel off lots of other low prices from the good/bad old days, next to which today's prices seem staggeringly high, but why bother? The point is that paying more for a small piece of cheese than one formerly did for a well-made shirt leaves a small psychological lump in the throat.

They've changed all the numbers on me. Nothing for it but to pay the $2 for the cup of coffee, the $6 for the ballpark beer, the $13 for the greasy-spoon lunch. Live with it, Pops. Of course I can and shall live with it; I only wish I could shut up about it, which I seem unable to do.

Joseph Epstein

Do you own an oil company?



U.S. Oil and Natural Gas Company Ownership, 2007

If you own mutual funds or a retirement account, chances are you're among the tens of millions of Americans with a stake in the oil and natural gas industry. A recent study* by economist and former Clinton Administration official Robert Shapiro found the majority of oil and natural gas company shareholders are "middle-class U.S. households with mutual fund investments, pension accounts or other retirement accounts and small portfolios."

So when Congress starts talking about raising energy taxes or taking "excess profits" from U.S. oil companies, look at the facts and ask yourself, "who does that really hurt?" Read the full study at EnergyTomorrow.org.

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*SONECON: *The Distribution of Ownership of U.S. Oil and Natural Gas Companies*, September 2007

Saddam and Terrorism

We thank The Weekly Standard for reminding its readers of the criticisms we made of the Bush administration's linkage of Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda ("Not What They Supposed," April 14). It would have been nice if Stephen F. Hayes—in his indefatigable quest to prove that connection—hadn't distorted our arguments with such clear dishonesty and complete disregard of the written record. Much of his story is devoted to accusing us of maintaining that Saddam's regime was not implicated in terrorism. Yet in the July 20, 2003, *New York Times* op-ed that he cites in his opening paragraph, we wrote: "Don't misunderstand—we should all be glad to see the Iraqi people freed from Saddam Hussein's tyranny, and the defeat of Iraq did spell the demise of the world's No. 4 state sponsor of international terrorism." As officials who helped coordinate the U.S. government's annual listing of state sponsors of terror, we could hardly have thought otherwise, and we have written about Iraqi support for terror elsewhere, including in *The Age of Sacred Terror*, which your reviewer, Reuel Marc Gerecht, called "a near-masterpiece."

Later, Hayes complains that Clinton officials who once noted the links between Iraq and the al Shifa chemical plant in Sudan had "largely disowned these claims," yet Daniel Benjamin said plainly in the September 30, 2002, *New York Times* op-ed: "A Sudanese effort to procure chemical weapons, which Mr. bin Laden had invested in, seemed to rely on an Iraqi production method."

Then Hayes goes on to suggest that we scanted Iraq's ties with al Qaeda and used quotations from the Iraqi Perspectives Project to prove that there was a connection. He implies that we said there were no contacts between the two sides, yet as we wrote in our book *The Next Attack* (2005), even though the two sides' interests diverged, "that does not mean they had no contact or did not at times sniff around each other to see if they might become allies. The Middle Eastern tradition of keeping tabs on all groups, friendly or not, persists, and the U.S. intelligence community was aware of a few meetings between bin Laden's men and Saddam's." Moreover, not one of the quotations Hayes cites demonstrates a direct link to al Qaeda. Instead, several passages discuss connections with organizations that were not part of al Qaeda, such as the Islamic Group in Egypt (*al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya*), or to discussions of joint efforts of which there is no further proof. There is no acknowledgment anywhere of the delusory nature of Saddam's regime—a theme of the Iraqi Perspectives Project that Hayes could hardly have missed if he had done more than cherry-pick useful quotes—which suggests that the documents he cites may have been as

fictional as others that were circulating within the Iraqi bureaucracy. Even more important, Hayes is prepared to accept the word of Iraqi documents while ignoring the adamant denials of top al Qaeda operatives Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and Abu Zubaydah that there was any cooperation between al Qaeda and Iraq. (The only al Qaeda operative who said otherwise, Ibn Sheikh al-Libi, appears to have done so during a harsh interrogation, and he later recanted.)

In short, nothing in this or any of Hayes's numerous articles dents our conclusions or that of the 9/11 Commission that "we have seen no evidence that [the contacts] ever developed into a collaborative operational relationship. Nor have we seen evidence indicating that Iraq cooperated with al Qaeda in developing or carrying out any attacks against the United States." George W. Bush and Dick Cheney have long since given up on this connection. Yet Stephen F. Hayes and The Weekly Standard fight on, like the Japanese soldiers who emerged from the jungles of the Philippines decades after World War II ended. Someone should tell them their side has surrendered.

Daniel Benjamin &
Steven Simon
Washington, D.C.

Stephen F. Hayes responds: Before U.S. investigators had translated and analyzed the detritus of the former Iraqi regime, Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon assured us that this captured material would provide critical insights about Iraq and terrorism. To determine the truth about Iraq's relationship with al Qaeda, they wrote on July 20, 2003, "military and intelligence officials need only comb through the files of Iraq's intelligence agency and a handful of other government ministries."

Now they are chiefly concerned that these documents might be "fictional" and, judging from their determination to avoid engaging on the substance of these Iraqi files, seem interested only in what they might tell us about the "delusory" regime of Saddam Hussein.

It's not hard to understand why. Benjamin and Simon have argued for years that Iraq and al Qaeda were "natural enemies" and that secularists like Saddam Hussein would not support jihadists like Osama bin Laden. They were wrong. According to the authors of the Iraqi Perspectives Project, the captured Iraqi documents confirm that Iraq and al Qaeda were indeed willing to "work together" and that the Iraqi regime was, in fact, willing "to co-opt or support organizations it knew to be a part of al Qaeda."

In the opening of their July 2003 article—an argument claiming that Iraq was a distraction from the war on terror—Benjamin and Simon refer to "Iraq's supposed links to terrorists." So before they even offered their perfunctory acknowledgment of Iraq's involvement in global terrorism, they dismissed the significance of this fact and mocked those who took it seriously.

Thanks to the Iraqi regime's own files, we now know much more about these

The price at the pump

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* U.S. Department of Energy data for February 2008
** API calculation based on the *Oil Daily*

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very real links to terrorists. Benjamin and Simon are not interested.

Take Ayman al Zawahiri, the man who has served as Osama bin Laden's chief deputy for more than two decades. The authors of the study wrote: "Saddam supported groups that either associated directly with al Qaeda (such as the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, led at one time by bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al Zawahiri) or that generally shared al Qaeda's stated goals and objectives." Internal Iraqi documents indicate that Saddam Hussein supported Zawahiri's group for years. There is no indication he stopped. Multiple high-ranking Iraqi intelligence officials have corroborated these written records. And yet Benjamin and Simon ignore it.

Benjamin and Simon offer their only substantive complaint when they chide me for failing to include the one time either of them cited an Iraq-al Qaeda connection.

Well, in his article back in 2002, Benjamin interrupted his long list of reasons why Iraq and al Qaeda were not linked with this rather jarring non sequitur: "Later, an indirect link appeared. A Sudanese effort to procure chemical weapons, which Mr. bin Laden had invested in, seemed to rely on an Iraqi production method."

He left it at that. It turns out there is a lot more to that story than Benjamin suggests. (And Benjamin and Simon tell the entire story quite convincingly in their book, *The Age of Sacred Terror*.) On August 20, 1998, in response to al Qaeda attacks two weeks earlier on U.S. embassies in East Africa, Bill Clinton ordered airstrikes against the al Shifa pharmaceutical factory outside Khartoum. To justify the action, no fewer than six Clinton administration officials said the Iraqis had aided al Qaeda's efforts to produce chemical weapons. National Security Adviser Sandy Berger told CNN that the U.S. intelligence community had collected "information that Iraq has assisted chemical weapons activity in Sudan" and "information linking bin Laden to the Sudanese regime and to the al Shifa plant." To strengthen these claims, Clinton administration officials took the extraordinary step of discussing intercepted communications. Even on background, it's something government officials rarely do for fear of jeopardizing the sources and methods of obtaining such information. In this case, the intercepted calls revealed that Emad al Ani, the head of Iraq's VX nerve agent program, was working with an arm of the Sudanese military with close ties to bin Laden. William Cohen, Clinton's secretary of defense, told the 9/11 Commission that an executive from the al Shifa plant "traveled to Baghdad to meet with the father of the VX program."

I asked Benjamin about this in an email back in 2003. He explained:

> The Iraqi connection with al Shifa, given what we know about it, does not yet meet the test as proof of a substantive relationship because it isn't clear that one side knew the other side's involvement. That is, it is not clear that the Iraqis knew about bin Laden's well-concealed investment in the Sudanese Military Industrial Corporation. The Sudanese very likely had their own interest in VX development, and they would also have had good reasons to keep al Qaeda's involvement from the Iraqis. After all, Saddam was exactly the kind of secularist autocrat that al Qaeda despised. In the most extreme case, if the Iraqis suspected al Qaeda involvement, they might have had assurances from the Sudanese that bin Laden's people would never get the weapons. That may sound less than satisfying, but the Sudanese did show a talent for fleecing bin Laden. It is all somewhat speculative, and it would be helpful to know more.

What Benjamin neglected to mention was the relationship between the Sudanese military and intelligence officials and al Qaeda. According to court testimony from senior al Qaeda terrorist Jamal al Fadl and others, Sudanese intelligence provided security at al Qaeda training camps in Sudan and al Qaeda operatives worked hand-in-glove with Sudanese military and intelligence officials.

Benjamin's claim, then, boils down to this: The U.S. intelligence community knew that Iraq was helping al Qaeda with chemical weapons production but neither the Iraqis nor al Qaeda did. Although it's hard for me to understand why he would have wanted me to include this in my original piece, I'm happy to air his full views now.

Let's assume, against all logic, that Benjamin is correct. Isn't it still a problem that Iraq was unwittingly providing assistance to al Qaeda on WMD production? Benjamin and Simon still maintain that Iraq was a distraction from the global war on terror.

How does one qualify as a target in that effort if not by providing the technology for the world's most deadly weapons to the world's most deadly terrorist group?

Benjamin and Simon conclude their response to my piece with an amusing insult, a misleading claim, and a false one.

I laughed out loud the first time I read the Japanese-soldier put down—in another magazine, from another writer. Benjamin and Simon cite two lines from the 9/11 Commission report to support their case that there was no relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda. But they conveniently ignore the explanation of those lines given by 9/11 co-chairman Tom Kean at the press conference to introduce the report. He said, directly: "There was no question in our minds that there was a relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda." And contrary to their claims that Dick Cheney has "given up" connecting Iraq and al Qaeda, he did so quite emphatically at a press conference in Baghdad on March 17. So their insults are banal, their arguments are dishonest, and they are careless with facts.

It is true, as they point out, that they have not changed their conclusions about Saddam Hussein's support for al Qaeda. But that says much more about their refusal to accept evidence showing they are wrong than it does about the evidence itself.

• • •

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welcomes letters to the editor.
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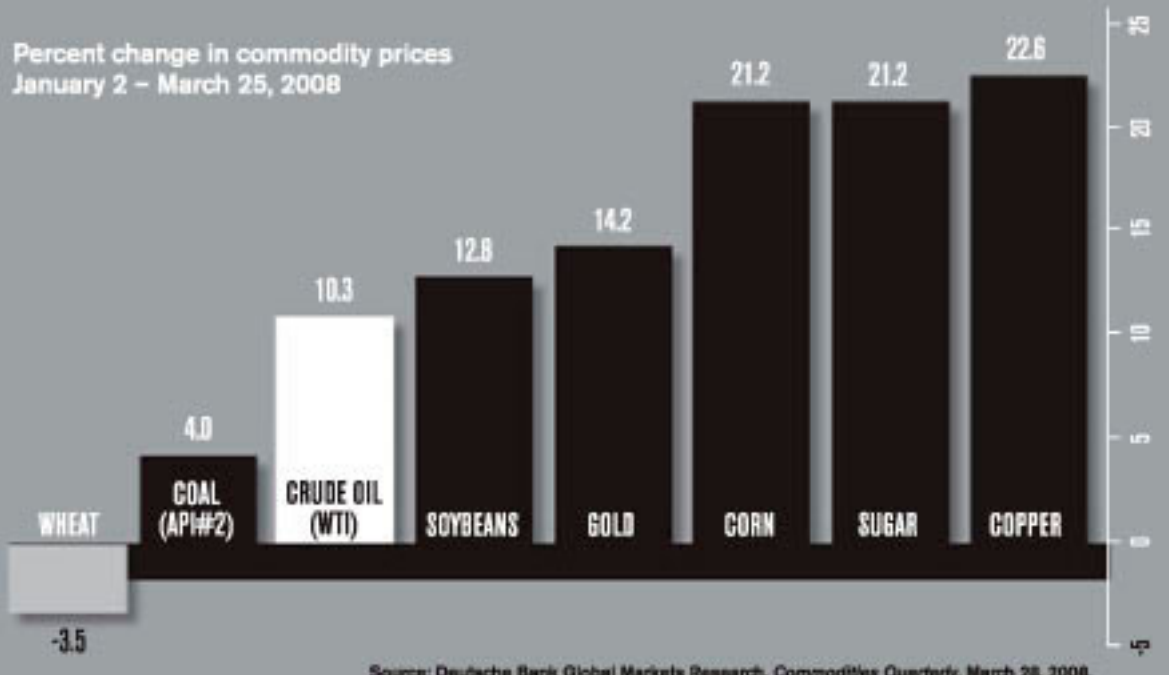
[Global demand, weak dollar have driven up oil prices]



Source: Deutsche Bank Global Markets Research, Commodities Quarterly, March 28, 2008.

Filling your gas tank hasn't been very pleasant lately, and Americans are understandably asking why. According to the Federal Trade Commission, one factor is more important than any other: the price of crude oil in the world market. That's the price oil refiners pay for the raw material to produce the fuels that make America mobile.

Today, the market price of crude oil accounts for nearly 70 percent of every dollar you pay at the pump, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. And federal, state and local taxes are on top of that.

A combination of global factors is driving world crude prices to record highs. Though the U.S. economy has softened, others – such as China's and India's – continue to grow strongly, driving crude oil demand higher. Political tensions in oil-producing nations introduce potential supply risks that create upward pressure on crude oil prices.

Importantly, the recent decline in the value of the U.S. dollar and the flight of investors into commodities has put pressure on prices, making commodities, including oil, more expensive for U.S. consumers than for consumers in countries with stronger currencies.

In these challenging times, it's more important than ever to know the facts, even if that doesn't make the reality of volatile energy costs any easier. Learn more about crude oil and gasoline prices at EnergyTomorrow.org.

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Nancy ♥ Hugo

A war-torn country with a democratically elected government, plagued by militias, terrorists, and drugs—but one that is steadily making progress against all these evils—wants to strengthen its ties to the United States. The Bush administration acts to help this ally. What does the Democratic Congress do? It changes the rules so that the Colombia Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), negotiated in good faith between the two governments and inked in 2006, can't come to a vote.

Memo to Venezuelan dictator Hugo Chávez: Send flowers to the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

It is Chávez who profits most from the CFTA's demise. For years now, he's been locked in a struggle with Colombian president Álvaro Uribe over the future of South America. Chávez wants that future to be socialist, authoritarian, friendly to other dictators, and belligerent toward the United States. Uribe wants it to be market-oriented, democratic, and integrated into an international system friendly to freedom and organized and led by the United States. The two visions could not be more different.

Venezuela and Colombia almost went to war in March, when Colombia struck a terrorist camp run by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) inside neighboring Ecuador. The FARC has terrorized Colombians for years, murdering, taking hostages, trafficking in drugs. But Uribe has forced it into retreat. The March strike was a success. It killed FARC number two Raúl Reyes and led to the capture of his laptop, which contained files suggesting cooperation between the FARC and Venezuelan military intelligence. Chávez's response? He massed troops on the Venezuelan-Colombia border and threatened war.

The crisis abated, but there will be another. Thus this moment of relative tranquility was the perfect time for the United States to demonstrate just which side we are on, with passage of the CFTA. Instead we have turned our back on Uribe and the Latin American future he represents, supporting Chávez's claims that the "hegemon" is untrustworthy. Free trade agreements are not simply about trade. They are also about geopolitics: helping friends, strengthening alliances, shaping the future of, in this case, our hemisphere.

The arguments against the CFTA are laughably weak. Congressional Democrats say the deal would hurt U.S. workers. But more than 90 percent of Colombian imports already enter this country duty-free. So the main economic effect of the agreement would be the elimination of tariffs on U.S. exports to Colombia—thus helping U.S. workers. The agreement would "level the playing field" to *our* advantage. One estimate says the U.S. farm sector alone would reap an additional $690 million per year. Hence the balance of trade isn't the issue. If trade were the issue, then the Democratic Congress wouldn't have ratified the Peru Free Trade Agreement in December 2007.

Democrats claim that the White House didn't go out of its way to cooperate with Congress on the CFTA. That's simply false. The administration reports it held "more than 400 consultations, meetings, and calls"; sponsored "trips to Colombia for more than 50 members of Congress"; and worked closely with congressional leaders from both parties. It even agreed to support a "trade adjustment assistance" package in exchange for votes on the trade deal. What more could the White House have done? Placed mints on the Democrats' pillows?

Democrats like California representative Howard Berman say that "Colombia's troubling history of labor activist assassinations and human-rights violations" requires that the deal be held up. Since 2002, however, the murder of trade unionists has fallen by close to 80 percent. Homicides, kidnappings, and terrorist attacks are down. Colombia's human rights record is improving. It used to be that Colombia was so dangerous mayors had to live outside the cities they governed. Not any more. Today all of them live and work in the cities they govern. This is called progress. The trade agreement rewarded progress.

Why did Pelosi move to let the Colombia deal die? Politics. It's an election year. The Democrats need union money, and the unions oppose free trade. Democratic presidential candidates go from coast to coast telling audiences that free trade has devastated our economy. This is nonsense. But it wouldn't look too good if the Democratic Congress belied this irresponsible, hostile-to-foreigners, belligerent—one might say, unilateralist—rhetoric.

There's another reason, too: President Bush. Congress has now rejected the White House's two legislative priorities in 2008: a reform in the eavesdropping law that includes immunity for telecommunications firms and the CFTA. Congress's top priority is to make sure voters perceive the Bush presidency as a failure. They may think they are well on their way to achieving this goal. That in both of these matters the Democrats' hatred of Bush will redound to the benefit of enemies of the United States seems not to concern them in the least.

—Matthew Continetti, for the Editors

Globaloney, Obama-Style

JASON SEILER

The candidate as worldwide celebrity

BY WALLER R. NEWELL

Barack Obama appears to be America's first homegrown global candidate. His core constituency is the New Age tribe of the Internet, which promotes the illusion that we can now start to live in "a world without borders." A posting by an African from Italy on the official Obama '08 website, featured under the headline "For a Cosmopolitan Humanism," reads: "In this Global Era, we need a new vision for a cosmopolitan humanism, that ingredient necessary for peace and justice: Barack Obama embodies this hope."

Similar sentiments abound in the blogosphere. Senator Obama received an A-plus rating from Citizens for Global Solutions, which "envisions a future in which nations work together to abolish war, protect our rights and freedoms, and solve the problems facing humanity that no nation can solve alone. This vision requires effective democratic global institutions." On Care2, a blog devoted to "green living, health, human rights [and] protecting the environment," a self-described Kiwi woman living on the Isle of Man writes: "It should be Barack Obama for the world, not just the USA. We are a global society now."

At his enormous rallies, the distinction between American politician and global celebrity comes close to breaking down. Obama merges the roles. As America's first global candidate, he has about him the aura of a millenarian figure, the leader of a mass movement. In its early stages, the Obama movement was heavily campus-driven, resembling student upheavals like the anti-nuclear movement of the 1980s and the anti-globalization movement of more recent years. Like them, Obama '08 wants to "heal this nation" and "remake this world as it should be."

To that end, Obama promises a "new kind of leadership," devoid of the grubby wheeling-dealing of ordinary politics. That is why his campaign rhetoric consists largely of abstract nouns like hope, peace, change, and dialogue, generalities that everyone is for. At times, he verges on fantasy, as in his belief that he can work out America's differences with Iran through direct talks with Iranian president Ahmadinejad without preconditions. By the same token, people all over the world with leftist leanings see in Obama just such a global savior, as if his mere election could alleviate poverty and injustice everywhere.

His closest predecessor in American politics is not the hawkish cold warrior John F. Kennedy, with

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whom he shares little beyond a youthful vigor and bodily grace, but Jimmy Carter, who also tended to believe that talking to America's foes would be enough to bring peace and that America itself was too often the chief source of the world's problems. Both men share a taste for Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, who believed that politics should be an act of penance for America's sins at home and abroad. Obama's willingness to abandon one ally overnight (Iraq) while invading another (Pakistan) also savors of Carter's tendency to think America's allies or beneficiaries were more deserving of reproach than its open enemies.

Social scientists and political activists are agog at what they hail as the "new global civil society," and Obama's core constituency is the American branch of this new International. His most fervent follower is the kind of Democrat, affluent and conventionally well educated, who sees himself as belonging less to his own country than to an emerging global community of the enlightened, believers in world peace, the environment, and "talking" to others, including lethal enemies, all in the conviction that the nation-state is an outmoded product of global capitalism, greed, and shabby compromise. In this view of things, America, as the world's most powerful nation-state, is the chief impediment to the flowering of a new world order.

Obama's penchant for cheerleading slogans reminiscent of a 12-step program ("Yes we can!") is in tune with his appeal to young people, who have little experience of life's ironies, who may not have noticed how often the sweep of history frustrates good intentions. They are, after all, the product of an educational system that has increasingly abandoned the teaching of narrative history and the distinction between democracy and tyranny in favor of a fuzzy globalism that casts us all as citizens of a coming world community of the ecologically conscious and antimaterialistic.

Many of Obama's followers know no better and are already awash in the sentimentality of "global solutions" that will end poverty and violence everywhere, so long as the world's worst offender, their own country, is finally shackled and defanged by "the international community." Obama's path has been smoothed by several decades of naive one-worldism, the kind that only affluent citizens of a democracy insulated from the horrors of the Mugabes and Assads who rule much of the world could entertain. His most authentic forebears are countercultural movements harking back to the Beatles' "All You Need Is Love" or John Lennon's assertion that the world can have peace right now "if you want it."

His most fervent followers see themselves as belonging less to a country than to an emerging global community of the enlightened, as believers in world peace, the environment, and "talking" to others, including lethal enemies, all in the conviction that the nation-state is an outmoded product of global capitalism.

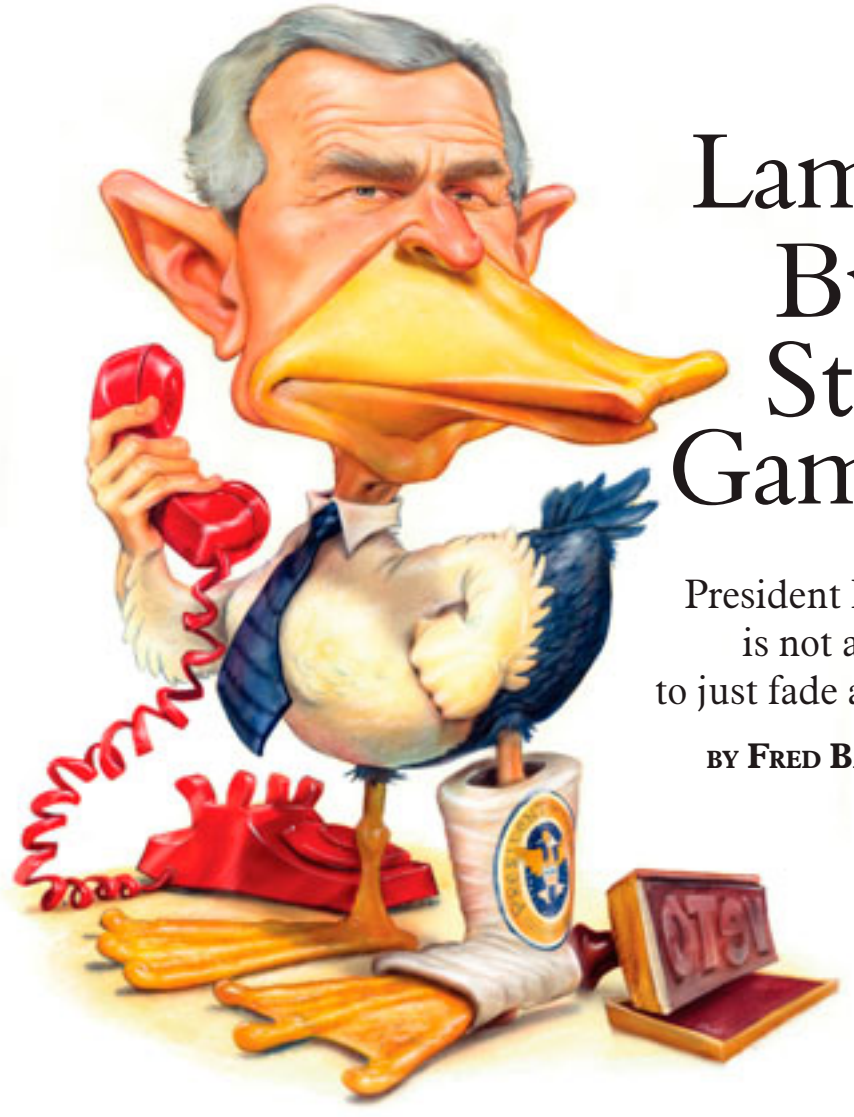
Seen in this light, Senator Obama's attachment to his pastor, Reverend Wright, resonates with a broad swath of Obama's supporters, not just a segment of African-American opinion. For, stripped of its bumptious rhetoric, Reverend Wright's view of America as a capitalistic oppressor at home and abroad is shared by American leftists of every ethnic hue. Millions of young people have watched the online documentary *Loose Change*, which debates whether the Bush administration carried out the 9/11 attacks itself or merely allowed them to happen in order to have an excuse to launch unjust wars. Reverend Wright's view that 9/11 was payback time for American imperialism merely echoes the contention of William Blum, author of *Rogue State*, that 9/11 was "direct retaliation for decades of American foreign policy in the Middle East." Such views are heard daily in lecture halls, not just in dorm rooms and cafés, on campuses across the country; they are corollaries of the tireless teaching of Noam Chomsky. And, to the extent (as yet unclear) that Obama shares them, he is not so much the candidate of the Louis Farrakhan wing of black opinion as he is the candidate of Michael Moore Nation.

When it comes to style, Obama is a princely candidate, the latest and most effective in a line going back to Carter and Bill Bradley who say, in effect: "I am making you the gift of my gracious person. Don't ask what I will do. Trust me." To follow him is the politics of "hope." To seek details or challenge his credentials is the politics of "cynicism." He has gone further than anyone else in merging the realms of politics, celebrity, and New Age tribalism through the elixir of his golden voice and supple presence.

Of course, it is possible that much of this is just a winning rhetorical formula for gaining the presidency. But that's the problem—we don't know.

If Obama were, upon election, to prove less than sincere about the rhetoric, many of us would find it reassuring. Our reassurance, however, would come at the cost of an enormous Monday morning hangover for followers who had thought he really would lift us all to a higher reality. After the soaring promises, such disillusionment could damage young people's faith in the democratic process.

On the other hand, if he is sincere and he becomes president, we are in for a very rocky ride. Obama's idealistic globalism clashes with the reality of a world containing forces whose hostility to the West is often a matter of deep conviction, and rarely the result of a simple failure to communicate. ♦



Lame But Still Game

President Bush is not about to just fade away.

BY FRED BARNES

On the eve of Prime Minister Gordon Brown's visit to Washington last week, a British pollster suggested Brown's meetings with presidential candidates Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and John McCain would be more important than his talks with President Bush. The president is "irrelevant," the pollster said, echoing what has become a view widely held in Washington. With only nine months left in his presidency and low approval ratings, Bush lacks political power. He's a lame duck.

In fact, he's not that lame. This is a common misperception about Bush (and a pet peeve of mine). In Washington, the political community and the press tend to dismiss presidents in their final year as powerless. They made this mistake in Bill Clinton's case, and they're making it again now. Bush lacks popularity, but he has plenty of power. And he's committed to using it.

Bush's power—indeed, any president's—comes from the Constitution, not from opinion polls or the number of months left in his White House tenure. He is commander in chief and architect of America's foreign policy. He can use his veto to shape or kill legislation. He can exploit the presidential megaphone to express his views and raise alarms, and his power to issue administrative decrees is significant as well.

Start with Iraq. As commander in chief, Bush defied the Democratic Congress, the political wisdom of Washington, and public opinion in ordering the surge of an additional 30,000 combat troops and a new counterinsurgency strategy. Democrats tried to limit his flexibility on Iraq, but failed.

Now they've given up. Instead of seeking to change Bush's Iraq policy, Democrats plan to tack domestic spending measures onto bills funding the war. When Bush recently announced a pause in troop withdrawals this summer, Democrats complained noisily but could do nothing about it.

Bush has two goals in Iraq. He wants to crush al Qaeda and the insurgency, corral the militias, and establish a reasonably stable elected government. That's his long-term aim. In the near term, he wants to leave Iraq in good enough condition that the next president won't be inclined to pull out of the country precipitously. He wants his successor to conclude, in other words, that Iraq is worth America's support.

During a TV debate last week, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama did nothing to encourage hope on this score. They insisted that, if elected, they'd begin withdrawing troops, whatever condition Iraq is in. Bush, however, believes they'd change their mind upon receiving their first intelligence briefing in the Oval Office about threats around the world. I'm not so sure. Still, for now anyway, Bush's power to direct the effort in Iraq is supreme.

Last week, he delivered a speech in the Rose Garden on global warming. He didn't mention a veto. He laid down principles that should be followed in combating climate change and said elected officials should determine the policy to follow, not unelected judges or bureaucrats.

Democrats scoffed. Nonetheless, they must take Bush's view seriously if they want to pass legislation. Bush didn't threaten to veto their favorite remedy of setting an arbitrary cap on carbon emissions and creating a system of trading emission rights. But because he strongly opposes that approach, a veto threat was implicit.

So Bush will play a major role in shaping, or blocking, global warming legislation, just as he did when an

GARY LOCKE

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economic "stimulus" package was enacted in February. Democrats wanted to spend billions more and extend unemployment benefits. They failed because they needed Bush's signature on the bill.

Though Bush is hardly renowned for his effective use of the bully pulpit, he intends to continue voicing dire concerns about Iran's nuclear weapons program. Economic sanctions have failed to deter Tehran. And Iranian officials have responded to the possibility of an Israeli attack on their nuclear sites by hardening and hiding the plants.

Bush's aim now is more modest: speak out loudly in hopes of influencing Europeans and others to back tougher measures to force Iran to give up its nuclear ambitions. We'll be hearing more of this from the president: "Iran was a threat. Iran is a threat. And Iran will continue to be a threat if they are allowed to learn how to enrich uranium." That's what he said in January.

At one time or another, every president figures out that executive orders are underrated as a tool of White House power. Certainly Bush has. (The media have yet to realize this.) Of course it's true that presidential orders can be revoked by subsequent presidents. But they usually aren't.

Earlier this year, Bush's budget office sent a letter to every federal department barring them from implementing any congressional earmarks not authorized in specific statutory language. These must get explicit White House approval.

The order covered the majority of the thousands of pork-barrel earmarks passed by Congress. Its aim is to stall the implementation of many earmarks, perhaps forever, and to kill many others. Will the next president lift this order, thus prompting more earmarks? Not likely.

For months now, the buzz in Washington has been about Bush's ability to go about his presidential business and remain upbeat and determined. The suspicion is he's simply pretending, since his power is gone. Wrong on both counts. ♦

Come Fly With Us

Delta-Northwest will be the biggest, but it probably won't be better. BY IRWIN M. STELZER

Travelers can be forgiven if their first reaction to the proposed Delta-Northwest merger is to wonder what additional atrocities will be inflicted on them. It can't be deterioration in the quality of the peanuts now offered in lieu of meals in most classes of service. Nor can it be a reduction in leg room: Knees-against-chest is already the posture of choice for most carriers. It might be a reduction in the value of frequent-flyer points, but since most are now good only at 3 A.M. on one Thursday each month, there isn't much to lose on that score.

So most passengers will probably just shrug, on the principle that things are so bad they can't get worse. But the frequent travelers who have learned to fight their way through airports, onto uncomfortable planes that might or might not take off with or without their baggage, in fact fear we might be living through the halcyon days of air travel: A majority (54 percent) expect the merger to result in deterioration in service.

History is on the side of the pessimists. In the period immediately following every airline merger, chaos is the order of the day—or year. Pilots find that the control panels on the merged carriers differ; baggage losses mount, as they did when Northwest acquired Republic Airlines in 1986; the merging of reservation systems causes kiosks and websites to malfunction, as U.S. Airways and America West discovered; strikes occur as disgruntled employees find the new pension package inferior to the old one. All of these are in the new Delta's future (the Northwest brand is to disappear), with a pilots' strike the largest looming obstacle to a peaceful integration of the two carriers. Dave Stevens of Northwest's Air Line Pilots Association is telling his members that the deal is not in their interests. In a letter to his fellow pilots, he writes, "No pilot group is going to put up with this. . . . This is a recipe for failure." Delta's pilots, on the other hand, seem likely to ratify a deal that hands them a 17 percent pay rise over four years, better pensions, equity in the new company, and guaranteed jobs for the next two years.

If indeed the merger is consummated. American Airlines might make a bid for Northwest, especially if United and Continental go through with rumored plans to wed, displacing Delta-Northwest as the world's largest carrier. Regulatory authorities might kill the deal, in response to pressure from such as Minnesota Democrat James Oberstar, chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, who in advance of his fact-finding hearings pronounced the merger "probably the worst development in aviation" since deregulation. Or antitrust enforcers might reject the deal on the grounds that it would trigger a wave of mergers that would unreasonably increase the market power of the surviving airlines.

Which brings us to two key questions. Will the merger result in efficiencies that strengthen the financial position of Delta, and end periodic trips to the bankruptcy courts? And when the initial trauma is over, will passengers be better off?

Delta and Northwest expect an initial run-up in costs due to "harmonizing wages and benefits"—read, a $400 million annual bribe to employees to get them to go along—and other up-

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front costs of consolidation. In the longer term, the new Delta expects to be able to wring better terms from some of its suppliers, and to save between $400 million and $600 million by using the combined fleets better to match supply to demand. Throw in an anticipated $400 million in additional revenue from passengers attracted by improved connections, reduced travel times, and the like, and you have about $1 billion in "network synergies."

Possible, but far from certain. The airline industry is not the only one in which mergers have failed to produce increased savings or revenues. Remember, the single largest cost component is jet fuel, and while a bigger Delta might wring concessions from its caterers, it is not likely to persuade OPEC to lower the price of oil. Nor will labor costs come down if management sticks to its plan to minimize layoffs.

What of increased revenues? The airlines' press releases are careful to pin their hopes on "more customers," especially big corporate accounts. Not a word about possible fare increases. Which is understandable, given the congressional and regulatory reviews. Those reviews will focus on whether the formation of the largest airline in the world in terms of traffic, with 75,000 employees worldwide, $35 billion in annual revenue, serving 390 destinations in 67 countries, would have what airlines have been seeking since the protective blanket of regulation was removed, leaving them shivering in the competitive market: pricing power.

From the evidence available, it just doesn't seem likely that mere size will convey the power to raise fares. Only 12 of the nonstop city pairs that both airlines serve overlap, and the carriers compete with each other for only 3 percent of the seats they fly, according to Doug Steenland, Northwest's CEO. So there isn't much competition to eliminate. Think of Northwest as serving the upper Midwest, West, and Asia, and Delta serving the East and Europe. To the extent that the new carrier does have increased pricing power, the fare increases it will be able to impose will be limited by the ability of newcomers to challenge it on most, but not all routes. About one-third of the industry's capacity is operated by low-cost, low-fare airlines, and these show no sign of reluctance in invading domestic routes if the incumbents get greedy.

Nor will Delta have a free hand on international routes, which Ed Bastian, Delta's president, predicts will provide "the majority of the growth we are seeing in this combined entity."

Some of the aging fleet may be replaced sooner.

Carriers plying Pacific routes are facing increased competition from low-cost, high-service Asian carriers, and the new "Open Skies" deal opens transatlantic routes to increased competition by allowing European and U.S. carriers to invade each other's markets free of regulatory restrictions. Delta will be free to fly anywhere in Europe from anywhere in the United States, but British Airways, Lufthansa, and other European carriers will be equally free to compete on any Atlantic routes.

Fairness also requires that we consider the possibility that higher fares might not be completely bad for passengers. Some of the Delta-Northwest airplanes are old—not unsafe, but not as comfortable as newer aircraft. Delta has about 120 MD-88s with an average age of 18 years, and Northwest's 90 DC-9s have an average age of close to 40 years. Replacing these geriatric aircraft will involve buying out long leases and investing something like $20 billion in new aircraft. It is not unreasonable to assume that a financially healthier carrier will phase out the old aircraft a bit more rapidly and "accelerate the upgrading of existing international aircraft with lie-flat seats and personal on-demand entertainment," as the new Delta claims it will. That might give travelers a price-quality combination not now available to them.

In the end, much will depend on whether we'll just glide starry-eyed and hear angels cheer when the new Delta gets us up there, where the air is rarefied. We will if the merger produces a financially stable carrier capable of upgrading equipment and service, at fare levels not far from those now prevailing. History suggests this is far from certain, which is why investors dumped shares when the merger was announced. United bought Pan Am's Latin America routes and proceeded to lose the business to competitors; American could not hold onto the West Coast business it thought it acquired when it bought Reno Air and AirCal; U.S. Airways abandoned the West Coast shortly after it acquired Pacific Southwest's routes in that part of the country. And anticipated cost savings have often failed to materialize.

This is an industry that has not netted a profit over the more than 100 years since the Wright Brothers proved that man can fly, that has seen periods of boom followed by devastating periods of bust. Both Delta and Northwest only recently emerged from bankruptcy, a condition into which four smaller airlines (Aloha, ATA, Frontier, and Skybus Airline) have descended in recent weeks, and in which most carriers have found themselves at one time or another. This tough environment hasn't gotten any easier, and there is reason to wonder whether an airline of this size can be managed efficiently by the same crew that has given us the service standards we have today. ♦

AFP PHOTO / KAREN BLEIER

Egypt Builds a Wall

And changes its tune on Israel's barrier.

BY DAVID SCHENKER

Much ado has been made of the Israeli security fence isolating the West Bank. When it is completed in 2010, the barrier—which runs roughly along the 1967 border between Israel and Palestinian territory—will span nearly 500 miles. Israelis say the purpose of the structure is to curtail terrorist attacks against the Jewish state. There's little reason to doubt them: Despite a March attack that killed eight students at a Jerusalem seminary, statistics suggest that the barrier and a corresponding one around Gaza are working.

West Bankers condemn the structure because it encroaches into pre-1967 Palestinian territory, limits mobility, and separates farmers from their fields. Hamas, which has controlled Gaza since June 2007, describes its territory as "a big prison." Until recently, Egypt too was a vociferous critic. In 2003, Egypt's foreign minister at the time, Ahmed Maher, described the structure as "defying international legitimacy and world public opinion."

Even as Israel moves expeditiously to seal off its West Bank threat, however, Palestinians face the prospect of another wall hemming them in. This latest wall is not being constructed by the Israelis, though, but by Egypt, which seeks more protection from its Palestinian neighbors in Gaza.

Cairo has every reason to be concerned. In January 2008, Hamas demolished the Gaza-Egypt border fence, allowing an estimated 700,000 Palestinians—nearly half of Gaza's population—to stream into the Sinai desert. Initially, Cairo viewed the Gaza breach as an opportunity to solidify its pro-Palestinian bona fides. Then reality set in. Egypt, it seems, was concerned that Palestinians entering the Sinai might exacerbate Egypt's own terrorism problem. In April 2006, 23 tourists were killed in a car-bomb attack in the Sinai resort town of Dahab; two days later, U.N. Multinational Force Observers, enforcing the Egypt-Israel peace treaty, were targeted by suicide attacks.

In view of its tensions with Gaza, Egypt has softened its position on Israel's West Bank barrier. In March, Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit said, 'Whoever wishes to build a security fence on his land is free to do that.'

For Cairo, the threat extends beyond Sinai. Islamists in Egypt—led by the Muslim Brotherhood—have been making significant political gains in recent years, winning an unprecedented 88 of 444 elected parliamentary seats in 2005. The prospect of Hamas's hooking up with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood terrifies the government of Egypt. As one Egyptian political analyst describes it, "Hamas is the Muslim Brotherhood on steroids."

Less than two weeks after the Gaza breach, Cairo took draconian measures to return the Palestinians to Gaza. It arrested dozens—including a group of armed Palestinians reportedly planning to attack Israeli tourists in the Sinai—and quickly resealed the border with miles of barbed wire. Hamas cried foul and pledged that it would not allow the border to remain sealed. In February, two Egyptian border guards were injured by Palestinian gunfire and several more were treated for broken bones after being hit by rocks thrown across the border.

With tensions along the border increasing, Egypt has softened its position on Israel's West Bank barrier. In March, Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit said, "Whoever wishes to build a security fence on his land is free to do that." Subsequently, it was announced that Egypt, with $23 million in U.S. assistance, would build its own fence along the border with Gaza. Teams from the Army Corps of Engineers are expected in Egypt shortly to advise the project.

At least in part, Cairo's change in attitude was driven by Washington. For more than a decade, weapons have moved freely into Gaza via ubiquitous smuggling tunnels linking Sinai to Palestinian areas and bypassing Israeli scrutiny. Since Hamas's Gaza takeover, though, the issue has increasingly garnered attention, as longer-range katyusha rockets—presumably transported via these tunnels—have started falling on Israeli cities with greater frequency. During the 2008 budget discussions, Congress was so concerned about perceived Egyptian inaction on the tunnels that a clause was inserted to condition nearly $100 million in U.S. aid on Cairo's countering these smuggling routes.

For Cairo, the U.S. pressure was a blessing in disguise. The Egyptian government gives a lot of lip service to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, while privately it is apprehensive about the militant nature of Hamas-ruled Gaza. These sentiments have only been heightened by recent political and social inroads made by Egypt's own Islamists.

At the end of the day, the Gaza border is above all else a matter of Egyptian national security. So despite the obvious comparisons that will be drawn between the Israeli and Egyptian barriers, Cairo had few alternatives other than to move ahead with a wall of its own. As Israel learned some time ago, good fences make good neighbors, especially when your neighbors are your enemies. ♦

David Schenker is senior fellow and director of the program in Arab politics at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

A Bush Success (not that he gets credit)

The Medicare drug benefit is working better than predicted. BY JAMES C. CAPRETTA & PETER WEHNER

The protracted political struggle over the future of American health care stems in large part from a fundamental disagreement over what should be done to address the seemingly inexorable rise in costs.

On one side of the debate are the governmentalists. They argue that the only reliable way to control costs is heavy regulation. They would use the government's power to set prices for services below market rates and to impose restrictions on total spending, both of which would effectively limit the number of willing suppliers of services (doctors, nurses, hospitals, clinics, and product manufacturers).

There is plenty of evidence from around the world to show what would happen in the United States if a federal agency were given this kind of power. In Europe and Canada, costs are unquestionably lower than here. Yet waiting lists, outright rationing of care, quality problems, and general patient dissatisfaction are widespread. Politicians in these countries are under just as much pressure from a restless public as are American politicians to deliver a better product at lower prices.

Is there a better way—one that would improve efficiency and slow cost escalation while encouraging higher quality care and medical breakthroughs?

Pro-market reformers have long contended that, with the right policies, health care could operate more like other sectors of the economy, with strong price and quality competition rewarding those market participants who improved productivity while also satisfying the consumer.

For years, governmentalists have been able to dismiss the arguments of market reformers as nothing more than theoretical dreaming, with insufficient real-world evidence to back up the claims. Of course, all the while, governmentalists opposed every effort to give market forces a chance to work.

Recent independent surveys show 85 percent are satisfied with their Medicare drug coverage. And little wonder: In 2008, the average beneficiary premium is just $25 per month, well below the original estimate of $41. The program's competitive design is holding down costs for the government as well.

But that all changed with enactment of the Medicare prescription drug benefit. While congressional governmentalists, led by Senator Hillary Clinton, fiercely opposed the bill's passage because it included the introduction of unprecedented levels of competition, the bill passed in December 2003.

The governmentalists were right about one thing: The new drug benefit is unquestionably designed to encourage market competition. But on everything else, they were mistaken.

The drug benefit's market-based tilt is not complicated. Medicare beneficiaries choose every year from among competing, privately run drug-coverage plans. The government's contribution toward this coverage is set at a fixed percentage of the average premium, and no more. If beneficiaries want to enroll in a plan that costs more than the average, they can do so—but they, not the government, must pay the additional premium.

This structure provides strong incentives for the drug coverage plans to secure discounts from manufacturers and encourage use of lower cost products over more expensive alternatives. Drug plans that fail to cut costs risk losing enrollment to cheaper competitors.

Still, the governmentalists found this design wanting and predicted failure. Their argument was that private insurers wouldn't offer coverage, so the price competition would be weak. Costs would soar without government-set price controls. Beneficiaries wouldn't sign up because the premiums would be too high. The program would collapse under the weight of a public yearning for government-run simplicity.

On all these points, the governmentalists were wrong.

Now in its third year, the drug benefit is working better than predicted. More than 1,800 private plans are competing for enrollment. More important, Medicare beneficiaries like the program. Recent independent surveys show 85 percent are satisfied with their coverage. And little wonder: In 2008, the average beneficiary premium is just $25 per month, well below the original estimate of $41.

The program's competitive design is holding down costs for the government as well. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced earlier this year the new drug benefit's costs will be 40 percent

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—or $244 billion—less over ten years than originally projected. This is an unprecedented achievement in health care policy.

There are important lessons to draw from this experience. For liberals it is that the greatest threat to public support for their ideology is reality. It's been said that you can prove the possible by the actual—and in this case, the "actual" is that sensible public policy can liberate markets to work in health care just as they work in every other area. Governmentalists have a deep interest in grounding policy debates on issues like health care in abstractions and appeals to fear of the unknown. Pro-market reformers, on the other hand, need only to test their propositions against reality.

For conservatives, there is a need to accept the reality of measured steps in health and entitlement reform. The public will always be uneasy with abrupt changes to arrangements upon which many are dependent. The best approach is to gradually introduce markets and individual choice and ownership without threatening the security of the known. To his credit, President Bush recognized early on that adding a new drug benefit to Medicare presented a rare opportunity to introduce competition into the program, and he seized it.

Many fiscal conservatives—including Senator John McCain—opposed the drug benefit because of its undeniably high cost—$49 billion last year. Those concerns were legitimate, and it remains true that the rest of Medicare needs significant reform. But conservatives should also see that broader Medicare change is now more plausible because the public has seen competition work in the drug plan.

We won't get to where we need to be in health care all at once. But a decade from now, the importance of the Medicare prescription drug benefit's groundbreaking success will be obvious to all, including conservatives. It will rank as one of George W. Bush's best domestic legacies. ♦

The Other Big Crime Drop

What happened to America's violent prisons?

BY BERT USEEM & ANNE MORRISON PIEHL

Crime rates peaked nationally in 1995 and have declined substantially over the last decade. In 1995, there were 684 violent crimes nationally per 100,000 residents; in 2006, there were 473. The much-publicized decline in New York City's violent crime rate saw it go from 2,384 per 100,000 residents in 1995 to 638 in 2006. Los Angeles's violent crime rate dropped from 2,405 to 787. Smaller cities show the same trend. Kansas City's violent crime rate fell from 1,930 to 857. Even Detroit (despite its economic woes and population losses) had a slightly lower rate of violent crime in 2006 than 1995, 2,419 down from 2,699.

One place has topped all of these impressive figures, yet it has received little publicity and no credit. This crime decline was quite unexpected even, indeed especially, by criminologists. The location we have in mind is U.S. prisons. Between 1973 and 2003,

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the homicide rate in state prisons declined a staggering 94 percent.

Modern record keeping in prisons begins in 1925, and for the 50 years thereafter the number of state and federal prisoners kept pace with the growth of the general population. The rate of imprisonment remained stable, at about 110 inmates per 100,000 people. Society would, like a thermostat, adjust its imprisonment decisions whenever the rate of imprisonment began to fall or rise too far. Then, in the mid-1970s, the number of prisoners began shooting upward and has continued in that direction ever since. In 2006 (the last year for which statistics are available), the number of people in state and federal prisons approached 1.6 million—a rate of 501 inmates per 100,000 people. If the inmates of American prisons were assembled in a single locality, it would be the fourth largest U.S. city—tied with Philadelphia.

Whatever the value the prison buildup would have in reducing crime on the streets, reputable criminologists feared that prisons on a mass scale would have internal troubles so severe that they would lead to an organizational collapse. They predicted that mass prisons would have all the features of failed states: Such prisons would be tense, dangerous, and too weakly governed to prevent high rates of individual and collective violence. The prison riots of the 1970s and 1980s (like the 1971 debacle at Attica, which left 43 dead, or the 1980 bloodbath in Santa Fe with 33 deaths) would multiply. The only question for many criminologists was when the buildup would pass the tipping point that would precipitate mass disorder: When would the line tracking violence shoot straight up?

But the tipping point never came. In fact, the opposite occurred, with prison violence trending downward for decades. Prison crime data are notoriously problematic, but statistics on some types of crime are more reliable than others. Homicides are the best-measured crimes; they are almost always reported and accurately counted in official statistics. In 1973, there were 63 homicides per 100,000 state inmates. In 1990, there were 8, and in 2003, the homicide rate dropped further to 4. The chances of being murdered behind bars plunged during the buildup of the prison population. Prison suicide rates also dropped sharply. In 1980, there were 34 inmate suicides per 100,000 inmates. This rate decreased to 16 suicides per 100,000 in 1990, and has remained stable.

And the predicted wave of prison riots never appeared. Both the absolute number of riots and the ratio of riots to inmates declined. By 2000, prison riots had become rare. They do happen from time to time—most recently, in a private prison in Indiana housing inmates transferred there to relieve overcrowding in Arizona (no deaths, a handful of injuries)—just not very often.

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Some criminologists have concluded that the rate of violence has declined so precipitously because nonviolent offenders are being increasingly imprisoned. Filling so many new prison beds, the criminal justice system must have reached deeper into the pool of offenders, grabbing less serious ones as the more serious offenders would have already been locked up. There is, however, no evidence to back up the assertion. While prisons have indeed become increasingly populated with drug and property offenders, the largest component of state inmates remains violent offenders. Even in 2004 (the most recent year for which data are available), more than half (52 percent) of the sentenced state prisoners had been convicted of a violent offense, down from 59 percent in 1980. While 7 percentage points is not a trivial decline, it cannot account for the very large drop in prison violence. More definitively, the absolute number of prison riots has declined dramatically, not just the ratio of riots to prisoners.

The better explanation of the decline in violent crime in prisons is improved leadership and management. Prison wardens rejected the conventional wisdom that inmates—in the majority in any prison—could disrupt prison life at will, and they determined to counter whatever inmates threw at them (whether gang dominance on the yards, riots in the blocks, or individual predation in the cells). The exact manifestation of this leadership vision varied from one jurisdiction to the next, but at the center of the transformation was a hands-on management that focused on collecting "key indicators" to track all in-house trends over time.

Training was increased for correctional officers, promoting their professionalism and commitment. Inmates who committed new crimes (against both staff and inmates) were, instead of being punished with administrative sanctions, increasingly prosecuted, with new sentences tacked onto their existing ones. (Whatever else inmates want, they want to go home.) Gang membership was disrupted by frequent moves to break up cliques. The transformation was ultimately achieved by new administrators attacking the root causes of disorder.

Our safer prisons are unheralded, but they are a great achievement. If prisons had fallen apart as predicted, it would have signaled that, even when under direct and continual supervision, those who violate the societal norms we consider most important can continue to do so even when detained by the state. That this did not happen reflects the professionalism in a sector that is largely invisible unless things go badly. ♦

24 Hours on the 'Big Stick'

U.S. NAVY PHOTO / KRISTOPHER WILSON

What you can learn about America on the deck of the USS 'Theodore Roosevelt'

By P.J. O'Rourke

Landing on an aircraft carrier is. . . . To begin with, you travel out to the carrier on a powerful, compact, and chunky aircraft—a weight-lifter version of a regional airline turboprop. This is a C-2 Greyhound, named after the wrong dog. C-2 Flying Pit Bull is more like it. In fact what everyone calls the C-2 is the "COD." This is an acronym for "Curling the hair Of Dumb reporters," although they tell you it stands for "Carrier Onboard Delivery."

There is only one window in the freight/passenger compartment, and you're nowhere near it. Your seat faces aft. Cabin lighting and noise insulation are absent. The heater is from the parts bin at the Plymouth factory in 1950. You sit reversed in cold, dark cacophony while the airplane maneuvers for what euphemistically is called a "landing." The nearest land is 150 miles away. And the plane doesn't land; its tailhook snags a cable on the carrier deck. The effect is of being strapped to an armchair and dropped backwards off a balcony onto a patio. There is a fleeting moment of unconsciousness. This is a good thing, as is being far from the window, because what happens next is that the COD reels the hooked cable out the entire length of the carrier deck until a big, fat nothing is between you and a plunge in the ocean, should the hook, cable, or pilot's judgment snap. Then, miraculously, you're still alive.

Landing on an aircraft carrier was the most fun I'd ever had with my trousers on. And the 24 hours that I spent aboard the USS *Theodore Roosevelt*—the "Big Stick"—were an equally unalloyed pleasure. I love big, moving machinery. And machinery doesn't get any big-

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ger, or more moving, than a U.S.-flagged nuclear-powered aircraft carrier that's longer than the Empire State Building is tall and possesses four acres of flight deck. This four acres, if it were a nation, would have the fifth or sixth largest airforce in the world—86 fixed wing aircraft plus helicopters.

The *Theodore Roosevelt* and its accompanying cruisers, destroyers, and submarines can blow up most of the military of most of the countries on earth. God has given America a special mission. Russia can barely blow up Chechnya. China can blow up Tibet, maybe, and possibly Taiwan. And the EU can't blow up Liechtenstein. But the USA can blow up . . . gosh, where to start?

But I didn't visit the *Theodore Roosevelt* just to gush patriotically—although some patriotic gushing is called for in America at the moment. And while I'm at it let me heap praise upon the people who arranged and guided my Big Stick tour. I was invited on the "embark" thanks to the kindness of the Honorable William J. (Jim) Haynes II, former Department of Defense general counsel. The trip was arranged by Colonel Kelly Wheaton, senior military assistant to acting Department of Defense general counsel Daniel Dell'Orto, and by Lt. Commander Philip Rosi, public affairs officer of the *Theodore Roosevelt* Carrier Strike Group.

Some say John McCain's character was formed in a North Vietnamese prison. I say those people should take a gander at what he chose to do—voluntarily. Being a carrier pilot requires aptitude, intelligence, skill, knowledge, discernment, and courage of a kind rarely found anywhere but in a poem of Homer's or a half gallon of Dewar's.

I traveled with the Honorable Mr. Dell'Orto and a group of ten Distinguished Visitors (minus me). Onboard we met people more distinguished yet, including Captain C.L. Wheeler, commanding officer of the *Theodore Roosevelt*, Rear Admiral Frank C. Pandolfe, commander of the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group, and Command Master Chief Petty Officer Chris Engles, who—as anyone with experience in or of the Navy knows (my dad was a chief petty officer)—actually runs everything.

I could go on about the *TR* and its crew at epic length. And one day, if they'll invite me back, I'll do so. But, being a reporter, I wasn't there to report on things. I was there to get a journalistic hook—a tailhook, as it were—for a preconceived idea. I wanted to say something about Senator John McCain. And as soon as our distinguished visitor group donned "float coats" and ear protection and went to the flight deck and saw F-18s take off and land, I had something to say.

Carrier launches are astonishing events. The plane is moved to within what seems like a bowling alley's length of the bow. A blast shield larger than any government building driveway Khomeini-flipper rises behind the fighter jet, and the jet's twin engines are cranked to maximum thrust. A slot-car slot runs down the middle of the bowling alley. The powered-up jet is held at the end of its slot by a steel shear pin smaller than a V-8 can. When the shear pin shears the jet is unleashed and so is a steam catapult that hurls the plane down the slot, from 0 to 130 miles per hour in two seconds. And—if all goes well—the airplane is airborne. This is not a pilot taking off. This is a pilot as cat's eye marble pinched between boundless thumb and infinite forefinger of Heaven's own Wham-O slingshot.

Carrier landings are more astonishing. We were in heavy seas. Spray was coming over the bow onto the flight deck, 60 feet above the waterline. As the ship was pitching, 18 tons of F-18 with a wingspan of 40-odd feet approached at the speed of celebrity sex rumor. Four acres of flight deck has never looked so small. Had it been lawn you'd swear you could do it in 15 minutes with a push mower.

Four arresting cables are stretched across the stern, each thick as a pepperoni. The cables are held slightly above the runway by metal hoops. The pilot can't really see these cables and isn't really looking at that runway, which is rising at him like a slap in the face or falling away like the slope of a playground slide when you're four. The pilot has his eye on the "meatball," a device, portside midship, with a glowing dot that does—or doesn't—line up between two lighted dashes. This indicates that the pilot is . . . no, isn't . . . yes, is . . . isn't . . . is . . . on course to land. Meanwhile there are sailors in charge of the landing hunched at a control panel portside aft. They are on the radio telling the pilot what he's doing or better had do or hadn't better. They are also waving colored paddles at him meaning this or that. (I don't pretend to know what I'm talking about here.) Plus there are other pilots on the radio along with an officer in the control tower. The pilot is very well trained because at this point his head doesn't explode.

The pilot drops his tailhook. This is not an impressive-looking piece of equipment—no smirks about the 1991 Tailhook Association brouhaha, please. The hook doesn't appear sturdy enough to yank Al Franken offstage when Al is smirking about the presidential candidate who belonged to the Tailhook Association. The hook

When the shear pin shears the jet is unleashed, and so is a steam catapult that hurls the plane, from 0 to 130 miles per hour in two seconds.

U.S. NAVY PHOTO / SEAMAN KEVIN T. MURRAY JR.

is supposed to—and somehow usually does—strike the deck between the second and third arresting cables. The cable then does not jerk the F-18 back to the stern the way it would in a cartoon. Although watching these events is so unreal that you expect cartoon logic to apply.

Now imagine all concerned doing all of the above with their eyes closed. That is a night operation. We went back on deck to see—wrong verb—to feel and hear the night flights. The only things we could see were the flaming twin suns of the F-18 afterburners at the end of the catapult slot.

Some say John McCain's character was formed in a North Vietnamese prison. I say those people should take a gander at what John chose to do—voluntarily. Being a carrier pilot requires aptitude, intelligence, skill, knowledge, discernment, and courage of a kind rarely found anywhere but in a poem of Homer's or a half gallon of Dewar's. I look from John McCain to what the opposition has to offer. There's Ms. Smarty-Pantsuit, the Bosnia-Under-Sniper-Fire poster gal, former prominent Washington hostess, and now the JV senator from the state that brought you Eliot Spitzer and Bear Stearns. And there's the happy-talk boy wonder, the plaster Balthazar in the Cook County political crèche, whose policy pronouncements sound like a walk through Greenwich Village in 1968: "Change, man? Got any spare change? Change?"

Some people say John McCain isn't conservative enough. But there's more to conservatism than low taxes, Jesus, and waterboarding at Gitmo. Conservatism is also a matter of honor, duty, valor, patriotism, self-discipline, responsibility, good order, respect for our national institutions, reverence for the traditions of civilization, and adherence to the political honesty upon which all principles of democracy are based. Given what screw-ups we humans are in these respects, conservatism is also a matter of sense of humor. Heard any good quips lately from Hillary or Barack?

A one-day visit to an aircraft carrier is a lifelong lesson in conservatism. The ship is immense, going seven decks down from the flight deck and ten levels up in the tower. But it's full, with some 5,500 people aboard. Living space is as cramped as steerage on the way to Ellis Island. Even

the pilots live in three-bunk cabins as small and windowless as hall closets. A warship is a sort of giant Sherman tank upon the water. Once below deck you're sealed inside. There are no cheery portholes to wave from.

McCain could hardly escape understanding the limits of something huge but hermetic, like a government is, and packed with a madding crowd. It requires organization, needs hierarchies, demands meritocracy, insists upon delegation of authority. An intricate, time-tested system replete with checks and balances is not a plaything to be moved around in a doll house of ideology. It is not a toy bunny serving imaginary sweets at a make-believe political tea party. The captain commands, but his whims do not. He answers to the nation.

John McCain (front right) with members of his squadron in 1965

And yet an aircraft carrier is more an example of what people can do than what government can't. Scores of people are all over the flight deck during takeoffs and landings. They wear color-coded T-shirts—yellow for flight-directing, purple for fueling, blue for chocking and tying-down, red for weapon-loading, brown for I-know-not-what, and so on. These people can't hear each other. They use hand signals. And, come night ops, they can't do that. Really, they communicate by "training telepathy." They have absorbed their responsibilities to the point that each knows exactly where to be and when and doing what.

These are supremely dangerous jobs. And most of the flight deck crew members are only 19 or 20. Indeed the whole ship is run by youngsters. The average age, officers and all, is about 24. "These are the same kids," a chief petty officer said, "who, back on land, have their hats bumped to one side and their pants around their knees, hanging out on corners. And here they're in charge of $35 million airplanes."

The crew is in more danger than the pilots. If an arresting cable breaks—and they do—half a dozen young men and women could be sliced in half. When a plane crashes, a weapon malfunctions, or a fire breaks out, there's no ejection seat for the flight deck crew. While we were on the *Theodore Roosevelt* a memorial service was held for a crew member who had been swept overboard. Would there have been an admiral and a captain of an aircraft carrier and hundreds of the bravest Americans at a memorial service for you when you were 20?

Supposedly the "youth vote" is all for Obama. But it's John McCain who actually has put his life in the hands of adolescents on a carrier deck. Supposedly the "women's vote" is . . . well, let's not go too far with this. I can speak to John's honor, duty, valor, patriotism, etc., but I'm not sure how well his self-discipline would have fared if he'd been on an aircraft carrier with more than 500 beautiful women sailors the way I was. At least John likes women, which is more than we can say about Hillary's attitude toward, for instance, the women in Bill's life, who at this point may constitute nearly the majority of the "women's vote."

These would have been interesting subjects to discuss with the *Theodore Roosevelt* shipmates, but time was up.

Back on the COD you're buckled in and told to brace as if for a crash. Whereupon there is a crash. The catapult sends you squashed against your flight harness. And just when you think that everything inside your body is going to blow out your nose and navel, it's over. You're in steady, level flight.

A strange flight it is—from the hard and fast reality of a floating island to the fantasy world of American solid ground. In this never-never land a couple of tinhorn Second City shysters—who, put together, don't have the life experience of the lowest ranking gob-with-a-swab cleaning a head on the Big Stick—presume to run for president of the United States. They're not just running against the hero John McCain, they're running against heroism itself and against almost everything about America that ought to be conserved. ♦

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Food Riots Made in the USA

There's a better solution to our energy problems than ethanol. It's called nuclear energy.

By William Tucker

In order to understand the steep rise in world food prices that set off food riots in Haiti last week and toppled the government, you need to travel to Iowa. Right now, we're trying to run our cars on corn ethanol instead of gasoline. As a result, we suddenly find ourselves taking food out of the mouths of children in developing nations. That may sound harsh, but it also happens to be true.

Environmentalists and farm state senators—the great biofuels coalition—of course object. After U.N. officials called for a biofuels moratorium last week, Senator Charles E. Grassley, Iowa Republican, called the whole thing "a big joke." "You make ethanol out of corn," he told the *New York Times*. "I bet if I set a bushel of corn in front of any of those [U.N.] delegates, not one of them would eat it." In a position paper released only a few weeks ago, the Natural Resources Defense Council, one of the many environmental organizations that has preached biofuels for decades, continued to insist that, "done right," ethanol can not only replace all our oil by 2050 but also "mitigate dangerous climate change."

Men arrested for looting following food riots, Port-au-Prince

AP PHOTO / ARIANA CUBILLOS

Nice try, folks. Maybe U.N. officials don't eat raw corn, but livestock do, and that land could easily be used to grow crops for human consumption. As for the notion that homegrown ethanol can replace more than a tiny fraction of our oil consumption—let alone do anything to ameliorate world carbon emissions—that is an environmental hallucination.

The conceit of biofuels has always been that agricultural resources in this country were unlimited. Haven't we been paying farmers since the 1930s to *not* grow crops? Why not employ some of that land to help us gain energy independence? If we run out of room, we can always move on to the tropics, right? Let's import ethanol from Brazil.

The Midwest has embraced this vision with a passion. One-third of the American corn crop will be converted to ethanol this year. Farmers are planting corn fencepost to fencepost and bringing new land under cultivation to cash in. The 51-cents-a-gallon federal tax credit assures a market. Ethanol distilleries are sprouting everywhere. Farm towns are revitalizing. The price of farmland is soaring. Presidential nominations turn on who supports ethanol in Iowa. Getting rid of this web of government intervention would now be just about as difficult as repealing farm subsidies in general.

So let's assess the damage. First, although biofuels have been anointed as clean, renewable, and sustainable,

William Tucker's book, Terrestrial Energy, *which will be published in August by Bartleby Press, can be previewed at www.terrestrialenergy.org.*

The result of political pandering to the American ethanol industry: a market in the Haitian capital destroyed in riots over rising food prices

REUTERS / EDUARDO MUNOZ

there has never been much evidence that they are producing *any* new energy. Growing crops consumes energy, and since only a small part of the plant—the seed—is distilled into alcohol, there's no guarantee of an energy gain. The most optimistic studies claim only a 25 percent energy profit, and some critics—David Pimentel of Cornell in particular—claim there is actually an energy *loss*. Suffice it to say, distilling one-third of our corn crop is replacing only 3 percent of our oil consumption.

When the energy independence theory started to falter, environmentalists settled on the notion that at least ethanol would reduce carbon emissions. President George W. Bush reiterated this last week in his address on climate change. If we burn this year's corn crop, so the logic went, we are only putting back atmospheric carbon that was taken out last year. But if we burn coal or oil, we're putting back carbon that has been underground for eons. Therefore biofuels are "carbon neutral."

There is just one question this line of reasoning doesn't answer. What was growing on that acreage *before* it was turned over to biofuels? If it was another field crop, then the carbon would have remained in the soil or the food supply or any other of the many "carbon sinks" for a long, long time. If it were a forest—particularly a tropical forest, a great natural sink for carbon—then the net addition of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere could be extraordinary.

This year somebody finally asked the question. In February, *Science* published an article by a team headed by Joseph Fargione of the Nature Conservancy showing that converting virgin land into ethanol cultivation multiplies carbon emissions by a factor of 93. "So for the next 93 years, you're making climate change worse," said Fargione. Another study in the same issue by environmental economist Timothy Searchinger of Princeton found that growing biofuels almost anywhere in the world will result in land being cleared somewhere else for food or fuel.

The *Science* articles have caused a biofuels meltdown. *Time*, which only two months ago was celebrating Richard Branson's conversion of one of his Virgin Atlantic jets to biofuels, ran an April cover story, "The Clean Energy

Myth." It called biofuels "catastrophic" and "environmentally disastrous."

In fact, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization has been screaming the same thing for years, to no avail. World food prices have almost doubled since 2005. There have been "tortilla riots" in Mexico and identical disturbances in Morocco, Egypt, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mauritania, Cameroon, Senegal, Uzbekistan, and Yemen. True, the rising cost of energy and the perennial defects of Third World food markets are partly to blame. But the International Food Policy Research Institute in Washington says biofuel conversion accounts for at least a fourth of this increase. Even in the United States, milk prices have jumped 50 percent because so much corn is being diverted from cows to gas tanks. C. Ford Runge and Benjamin Senauer, two agricultural experts at the University of Minnesota, predict that by 2025 biofuels will be responsible for 600 million more chronically hungry people. Jean Ziegler, a U.N. food expert, labeled biofuels a "crime against humanity" and called for a five-year moratorium. The great ethanol boom is a classic case of putting First World luxuries ahead of Third World necessities.

So how did we get into this mess? It's a matter of energy storage. The world is awash with energy. It is everywhere around us, mostly in the form of that dread word *radiation*. Radiation is the way energy travels in the universe. The radiation from the sun warms the earth and lights the day in quantities that make people say, "If only we could capture a small portion of that . . ." It has been almost the sole source of energy throughout the planet's history (remember that "almost").

The problem is capturing and storing it. Although solar energy is ubiquitous and almost incalculably vast, it is also very dilute. The world, after all, is a very big place. The amount of sunlight landing on a card table that can be converted to electricity is roughly enough to power four 100-watt light bulbs. This means that, if we could capture all the usable solar energy on every rooftop in the country, we would probably have about enough to provide our indoor lighting—except at night, of course, when it's most needed. Still, there's something to be had there, and it is being pursued by the technology of photovoltaics—turning sunlight into electricity.

A better strategy, however, is to find or create *stores* of solar energy that can be concentrated and used at will. Wind is solar energy nestled in the atmosphere. The sun heats air and sets it in motion, producing kinetic energy that can be transformed into work. Windmills can run mechanical machinery or turn electric turbines—which is why whole mountain ranges are now being decorated with 30-story, propeller-driven structures that look as if they were left there by a race of giants. Hydroelectric dams also store solar energy. The sun evaporates water, which falls and runs downhill. If we back this water up behind a dam, we can access the stored energy at will.

Wood and biofuels are also vaults of stored solar energy. Photosynthetic cells use sunlight to transform carbon dioxide from the atmosphere into long organic molecules. When we burn wood or biofuels, we break these carbon chains and release their "chemical" energy. The same holds true for fossil fuels, which are the highly distilled remains of ancient organisms.

The problem is that, except in the more concentrated form of fossil fuels, stored solar energy remains extremely dilute. Wind, hydro, and all the "alternate" sources of energy have been dubbed "green" because they are supposedly clean, renewable, and sustainable. In fact, what being "green" really means is that *they all require vast amounts of land*. In the beginning, when "alternate" efforts were still fairly modest, none of this much mattered. As they move up to industrial scale, however, the land requirements become staggering. And land, after all, is also a limited resource.

In a 2007 paper—well on its way to becoming a classic—Jesse Ausubel, director of the program for the human environment at Rockefeller University, calculated the amount of wood it would take to run one standard 1,000-megawatt electrical plant, the kind that can power a city the size of Cincinnati. Feeding the furnace year-round would require a forest of one thousand square miles. We have 600 such coal plants around the country now—to burn wood instead would require a forest the size of Alaska.

Other forms of stored solar energy make comparable demands. Glen Canyon Dam, which can produce 1,000 megawatts of electricity, is backed up by a reservoir 250 miles square (Lake Powell, in Arizona and Utah). That's why we stopped building dams in the 1960s—because they were drowning scenic canyons and displacing populations. (The 16,000-megawatt Three Gorges in China, probably the last major dam that will ever be built in the world, uprooted more than a million people.)

So it is with all forms of solar energy. Those 30-story windmills produce 1.5 megawatts apiece—about 1/750th the power of a conventional generating station. Getting 1,000 megawatts would require a wind farm 75 miles square. In a January cover story for *Scientific American*, three leading solar researchers proposed meeting our electrical needs in 2050 by covering southwestern desert with solar collectors. The amount of land required would be 34,000 square miles, about one-quarter of New Mexico.

And that's where biofuels went awry. Nobody ever bothered to calculate how much land they would require.

Like many other "alternate" efforts, biofuels can be traced to soft-energy guru Amory Lovins's famous 1976 essay in *Foreign Affairs*, "Energy Strategy: The Road Not Taken?" (It is still the most reprinted article in the journal's history, surpassing even George Kennan's 1947 "Mr. X" article proposing the "containment" strategy of the Cold War.) In "The Road Not Taken?" Lovins offered the domestic beer and wine industries as models of how displacing gasoline with homegrown fuels might be practical. Noting that the beer and wine industries already produced 5 percent the liquid of the oil industry, Lovins concluded:

> Thus a conversion industry roughly ten to fourteen times the physical scale . . . of U.S. cellars and breweries, . . . would produce roughly one-third of the present gasohol requirements of the United States. . . . The scale of effort required does not seem unreasonable.

Lovins's article and his subsequent book *Soft Energy Paths* were enormously influential. When he visited the Oval Office in 1978 to advise Jimmy Carter on energy, Lovins found *Soft Energy Paths* sitting on the president's desk. Carter pushed an ethanol subsidy through Congress in the midst of the 1979 gas shortage, and we were on our way. Ethanol soon became a virtual franchise of Archer Daniels Midland, the powerful agricultural conglomerate, whose scores of distilleries around the Midwest now produce half our supply.

But notice that Lovins never bothered to calculate the amount of land that would be required. That's easy enough to estimate. Using Lovins's own figures, it comes to three times the land area of the United States, including Alaska, to produce one-third of our transportation energy needs in 1976.

Those numbers have barely changed. Writing in the *Washington Post* in 2006, two former enthusiasts of biofuels, James Jordan and James Powell of Brooklyn's Polytechnic University, noted:

> It's difficult to understand how advocates of biofuels can believe they are a real solution to kicking our oil addition. . . . [T]he entire U.S. corn crop would supply only 3.7 percent of our auto and truck transport demands. Using the entire 300 million acres of U.S. cropland for corn-based ethanol production would meet about 15 percent of demand. . . . And the effects on land and agriculture would be devastating.

The extremely dilute nature of solar energy ensures that vast amounts of land will be necessary to capture and store it. Fossil fuels, on the other hand, may be bumping up against supply constraints and are creating environmental effects that will alter the earth's climate in unpredictable ways. So what other possibilities remain?

Some early enthusiasts of photovoltaics thought solar technology would be like computer technology with efficiencies and power doubling every 18 months—in a replay of the exponential growth in computing power first described by Intel founder Gordon Moore and now known as Moore's Law. After all, computer chips and photovoltaic cells are both made of silicon. But it doesn't work that way. Electrons have almost unlimited potential for storing information, but their ability to store energy is limited.

But electrons constitute only 0.001 percent of the mass of an atom. The remaining 99.999 percent is in the nucleus. *The nucleus of the atom is the greatest storehouse of energy in the universe.* The amount of energy released in the Hiroshima bomb was equivalent to 15,000 tons of TNT. Yet the amount of *matter* transformed into energy at Hiroshima was about 3 grams. If we are ever going to access enough energy to run our industrial economy without overwhelming the environment in the process, we are going to have to find it in the nucleus of the atom.

The energy holding together the nucleus of an atom is called "binding energy." When an atom splits in two—which happens occasionally in nature and can be induced in a nuclear reactor—some binding energy is liberated. This energy release is *two million times greater* than any "chemical" releases that come in, say, an internal combustion engine or a coal-fired electrical generating plant. This 2-million differential explains why a 1,000-megawatt coal plant must be fed by a 110-car train loaded with 16,000 tons of coal arriving *every day*. Meanwhile a nuclear reactor of the same size is fed by a single flatbed truck that arrives with a new set of fuel rods once every 18 months. The energy stored in the nucleus of the atom is almost incomprehensibly larger than the energy stored in fossil fuels or the kinetic activity of wind, wave, or water.

Atomic energy occurs naturally in the earth with the breakdown of uranium and thorium atoms. It is enough to heat the core of the planet to 7,000 degrees Fahrenheit and is the only form of energy that does not come from the sun. We could call it "terrestrial energy," to differentiate it from solar energy.

Terrestrial energy is the answer to all the unpleasant questions raised by solar energy, which is why the nuclear industry in this country is poised for a comeback. Safety elements have been vastly improved, revamped plants are making enormous amounts of money, and the nuclear industry is chafing to start new construction. Although nuclear power cannot directly replace oil, it could become the basis of an expanded electrical grid that would support vehicles running on either electricity or hydrogen. It could end our energy odyssey. In light of last week's food riots and soaring world prices, it can't happen soon enough. ♦

Indonesian students outside the U.S. embassy, Jakarta, October 2000

AFP PHOTO / OKA BUDHI

The Third Jihad

When radical Muslims distort Islam BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

The German historian Matthias Küntzel's *Jihad and Jew-Hatred* is an important contribution to the analysis of radical Islam. Like Paul Berman's *Terror and Liberalism* (2003), but with greater attention to historical detail, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred* argues that present-day Islamist extremism is, in great part, directly imitative of Nazism and other European fascist movements. Also like Berman, Küntzel appears to have crafted his discourse to appeal to Western liberals and leftists for whom fascism was anathema.

Stephen Schwartz's latest book, The Other Islam: Sufism and the Road to Global Harmony, *will be published by Doubleday this summer.*

Jihad and Jew-Hatred
Islamism, Nazism, and the Roots of 9/11
by Matthias Küntzel
Telos, 180 pp., $29.95

Army of Shadows
Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917-1948
by Hillel Cohen
California, 352 pp., $29.95

Hitler's New Disorder
The Second World War in Yugoslavia
by Stevan K. Pavlowitch
Columbia, 256 pp., $34.50

Further, as with *Terror and Liberalism*, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred* is concerned with the political aspects of Muslim radicalism rather than its theological background, or alleged justifications, in Wahhabism and other fundamentalist interpretations of Islam. Küntzel, echoing Berman, correctly assumes that, in the longer scheme of Islamic history, radical interpretations are newer rather than older, and modern rather than ancient. Islamist extremism is also utopian rather than conservative, and reformist or "purificationist," rather than traditional. All these insights should be implicit in any serious discussion of Islamofascism.

Unlike Berman, however, Küntzel concentrates on that aspect of radical Islamist ideology with the highest profile in the West: Muslim Jew-baiting. Not all Muslim radicals have selected the Jews or Israel as a single or even main enemy. Extremists claiming the legacy of Muhammad find the greatest number of their victims among

Muslims who do not accept their interpretation—only then followed by the believers in other faiths, including Christians, Buddhists, and Hindus, as well as Jews and the nonreligious.

Still, Küntzel finds a rationale for his own focus on the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, or *Ikhwan*—as Berman did before him. Founded in 1928 by a then-obscure figure called Hassan al-Banna, the Muslim Brotherhood proclaimed the revival of an imaginary original purity in religion, asserting that a diluted and distorted Muslim devotion had undermined Islamic resistance to European imperialism. Yet the Muslim Brotherhood was modernistic in its reaction against modernity, adopting the characteristics of competing leftist and rightist militias in Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany. It flourished as an aggressive, paramilitary formation, and established a network in the Arab East, India, Turkey, and Indonesia. While some of these branches were no more than fantasies typical of radical conspiracies, the Muslim Brotherhood *did* become an open ally of Hitler in seeking enhanced German influence in the Islamic world. Decades later, its Palestinian wing gave birth to Hamas, one of its most successful offshoots, and it has grown very powerful in many Muslim countries.

The Muslim Brotherhood introduced an innovation to the concept of jihad in which civil/political organization assumed priority over military action. While it has been common in Islam to distinguish between a "lesser jihad" of armed combat and a "greater jihad" of spiritual discipline, the Brotherhood looked toward an entirely novel "third jihad." This entry into the world of ordinary politics was a predictable development in an Egypt governed within the British Empire. (The failure of the 1857 Indian mutiny against the British similarly gave rise to the fundamentalist Deoband school of Islam, which eventually produced the Taliban in Afghanistan.) The Muslim Brotherhood's third jihad also found imitators in Iran.

Unfortunately, the political jihad of the Muslim Brotherhood, replacing military means, has fooled some Western commentators into support for the jihad of the ballot over the bullet, with arguments for Western accommodation of the Brotherhood as well as the disastrous welcome granted Hamas in the 2006 Palestinian general election. The principle of a third, political jihad is also visible in radical Islamist agitation in some Western countries, including the demand for introduction of *sharia* law in Britain. While there are differences in tactics between the Muslim Brotherhood, al Qaeda, and Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, their aim—a purificationist Islamic state—remains identical.

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Still, distinctions persist in the universe of radical Islam, and should be neither ignored nor exaggerated. While the Muslim Brotherhood doubtless embodies a nearly undiluted political Islam, Saudi Wahhabism and Pakistani-Afghan Deobandism (mainly seeking influence in the religious life of Muslims) also have recourse to politics through the Saudi monarchy, the "emirate" of the Taliban, and in its most virulent form, the terrorism of al Qaeda. In addition, the Khomeini regime in Iran has long provided the quintessential realization of this third jihad.

Küntzel has performed an exhaustive search through German sources to establish the links between the Third Reich and the Muslim Brotherhood, and the various forms of propaganda employed by each. He has emphasized the appeal of Nazism to Arab subjects of the British, and the general spread of political radicalism in the Middle East as seen in the secularist Baath movement in Syria and Iraq. Finally, he has given considerable attention to a prominent figure, Haj Amin al-Husseini (1895-1974), who was appointed the grand mufti of Jerusalem by the British but became a notorious German agent and anti-Jewish figure in the Middle East.

Much of this material has been previously worked over by historians, but Küntzel has rendered a service in presenting this fresh summary. You have to wonder whether the liberals/leftists to whom his work is addressed have not become too compromised to pay serious attention to him, through their alliance with isolationists, neofascists, and Islamists, and their opposition to the global democratization of the Bush administration—and, especially, the Iraq war. But Küntzel makes several important points that will be unfamiliar to many Western readers. One is that the Muslim Brotherhood's hostility to Jews was novel in Egypt, which had a history of good relations among Jews, Muslims, and Christians. Another point is that, notwithstanding broad Palestinian Arab opposition to Zionism, many village sheikhs in today's West Bank opposed anti-Jewish campaigns in the 1920s and signed petitions favoring increasing Jewish immigration.

In dealing with this issue Küntzel cites the important work of Hillel Cohen in *Army of Shadows: Palestinian Collaboration with Zionism, 1917-1948*, which has just appeared in English. Cohen's book is a treasury of data suggesting new approaches to the history of Arab-Jewish relations. His work is epitomized by one stunning disclosure: In 1947-48, while the Grand Mufti al-Husseini and others called for Arab war against the new state of Israel, Palestinian "Arabs were in no hurry"

to join the battle: "Only a minority of Arabs were involved in offensive activities," writes Cohen. "This unwillingness to fight was frequently buttressed by agreements with Jews in nearby settlements." The main Arab leader in Baqa al-Gharbiya, for example, offered a peace agreement to the Jewish settlements in his district—and Baqa today is home to the Al-Qasemi Academy, a Muslim school and college organized on the spiritual principles of Sufism.

Drawing, like Küntzel, on official sources, Cohen reveals a substantial Muslim record of cooperation with Jewish immigrants to Palestine. And his style is more precise, as well as less polemical, than that of Küntzel's, who occasionally falls into minor factual or interpretative errors. (Küntzel recycles a commonly accepted canard that Amin al-Husseini was a significant figure in recruitment of a Waffen SS unit in Axis-occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina during World War II.)

Stevan K. Pavlowitch, a leading historian of the Balkans, has never been accused of understating the crimes of the Germans and their collaborators in Yugoslavia. *Hitler's New Disorder*, like Küntzel and Cohen, benefits from new access to archives. Pavlowitch notes that Bosnians were exhorted by al-Husseini to volunteer for the German armed forces, but those who did were sent for training to southern France, where they mutinied, and their distaste for Nazi mobilization was backed up by a series of declarations by Bosnian Muslim clerics protesting German atrocities.

The practical lesson of all three of these volumes is that recent archival work will redefine many historical presumptions. (In this way they join Robert Satloff's useful *Among the Righteous*, which touches on opposition to Nazi anti-Jewish crimes among Arab Muslims in North Africa during the Holocaust, and which was reviewed by Roger Kaplan in the Jan. 1, 2007 Weekly Standard.) But the important consequence of this new historiography is a recognition that Islam is neither monolithic nor uniformly radical, providing hope that the "clash of civilizations" may be avoided, and the "long war" against terror shortened—and won. ♦

VIA NEWSCOM

BCA

Caution, Children

Freedom for adults can mean misery for children.

By Ryan T. Anderson

"Won't somebody *please* think of the children?!" That the writers on *The Simpsons* chose this exclamation as the representative "family values" battle cry reminds us that, when child welfare advocates open their mouths, many hear the hysterical plea of Reverend Lovejoy's wife. But what happens when a whole society operates on the assumption that Helen Lovejoy is a crank—that kids will be fine no matter what adults do?

Of course, most Americans do not, in fact, believe this. But it appears that much of elite America does. And according to David Tubbs, our courts and universities fail to adequately take the needs of children into account. In championing vast personal liberty for adults, he contends, postwar political theorists and jurists have left children to fend for themselves. And this new volume delivers a scorching criticism of modern political and legal theory and practice.

Freedom's Orphans
Contemporary Liberalism and the Fate of American Children
by David L. Tubbs
Princeton, 248 pp., $60

Tubbs differs from the Lovejoys in two crucial respects. First, as he notes, his "book contains no religious 'agenda'" and makes no theological arguments. In fact, Tubbs was inspired to write it by his entirely secular government job as a child-support investigator. It was there that he realized that "contemporary liberal thinkers were minimizing or denying the importance of what were previously considered essential elements of children's welfare." In graduate school at Princeton—a doctorate in political

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theory being the second difference from either Lovejoy—Tubbs then developed a penetrating response to modern liberalism. Now he is a fellow of the Witherspoon Institute and professor at King's College, Cambridge, and *Freedom's Orphans* is the first fruits of his labors.

We all know that children differ from adults in many crucial ways. Besides their evident physical immaturity, Tubbs reminds us, children are "mentally, morally, and emotionally" underdeveloped. Unlike the autonomous, self-sufficient adults at the focus of modern political and legal theory, children are highly impressionable and depend on others for everything—and not just material goods. Their central need is a proper upbringing so that they can become self-reliant adults.

Liberals used to recognize this, urging special care for those whom Hubert Humphrey described as being at the dawn of life. But over time—especially in the wake of the upheavals of the 1960s and the rise of "Me Generation" ideology—liberal thinkers made adults' personal freedom central. Well-intentioned and initially subtle, this shift ultimately produced contemporary liberalism's marriage to lifestyle liberation, "a preoccupation with rights for adults" and disregard of "competing social interests, including some fundamental to children's welfare."

Tubbs traces this development to Isaiah Berlin's famous 1958 essay, "Two Concepts of Liberty," which advanced the idea that "negative" freedom was (in Tubbs's words) "more humane and more likely to further human dignity." Tubbs describes "negative" freedom as "unhindered choice," the result of "moral reticence," the reluctance to "distinguish between the good and the bad use of legally protected freedoms."

In the face of Soviet impositions of "the good life," Berlin's fears were understandable. Less explicable, however, is why current theorists such as Amy Gutmann think it impossible to "specify objectively the good life" or why George Kateb argues that "there is no good life." All of this is in stark contrast to the traditional conception of liberty, so-called "positive" freedom, which Tubbs describes as "self-governance or self-direction," the freedom to resist temptations, irrational desires, and external pressures in order to guide one's own actions toward authentic fulfillment. Surely, Tubbs insists, we can distinguish "better lives from worse lives."

"Negative" freedom seems to have won the day, however, and what Berlin started in political theory Ronald Dworkin has championed in legal theory. Arguing for a "moral" reading of the Constitution that seeks to treat all people *and their choices* with "equal concern and respect," Dworkin claims that paternalistic laws (against prostitution, for example) and content censoring (of pornography, for example) are unjust. Since freedom should be understood in a "negative" sense without any reference to good or bad, the state can make no law that shows preference or disdain for citizens' choices.

One problem here is that these theories recognize no one but the self-sufficient, autonomous adult. As Tubbs notes, there is an inexcusable failure among "jurists and political theorists to consider the interests of children in even a perfunctory way." Dworkin's major work, *Freedom's Laws*, makes almost no mention of children. So if Dworkin is to show all citizens "equal concern and respect," what about children's unique needs? Might the free choices of adults to broadcast pornographic images diminish children's ability to develop the self-control necessary for healthy adult relationships? And doesn't this show that some conception of human flourishing ("the good life") is required?

But emphasis on personal liberty isn't the only culprit. Another strand of late 20th-century thought—feminist political theory—has contributed significantly to the plight of America's children. Tubbs considers the work of one prominent feminist scholar, Susan Moller Okin, who argues that the archetypical figure in political thought is the adult *man*—women and children are ignored. To remedy this, she has developed some Rawlsian themes that just political regimes order inequalities to serve the least well off and keep positions of power and wealth open to everyone, and argues that the traditional family is unjust for limiting the role of women. She advocates a genderless society where women will be able to succeed on the same exact terms as men.

While some of Okin's goals may be admirable, she forgets that her feminist critique is supposed to be advanced on behalf of women *and children*. Her advocacy of equal respect for all family forms (including same-sex parenting and single motherhood "by choice") flies in the face of social science that shows children do best when reared by their married mother and father. Some aspects of "gender," at least when it comes to parenting, appear built-in. Moreover, Okin argues that single women have a right to bear children outside of marriage and then deserve vast governmental assistance. But Tubbs persuasively argues against "the idea that a benign and omnicompetent welfare state can assume the role of an absent parent in many thousands of households." He exposes Okin's failure to apply consistently her own principles of justice to meet children's needs.

Even more devastating is his scathing criticism of recent jurisprudence that assumes there is a constitutional right to nonmarried sex. He begins by discussing the "right to privacy" in connection to contraception. Though the rationale may seem foreign to most people today, states actually made laws against contraception in order to promote stable marriages and reduce fornication, adultery, and illegitimacy. Without contraception, people were less likely to sleep around. But in a series of cases beginning in 1965, the Supreme Court denied any legitimate public purpose in contraception laws, and manufactured rights—for married couples, then nonmarried adults, and finally minors—to sexual privacy and reproductive liberty that somehow excluded regulating the sale of contraceptives.

Tubbs observes a disturbing trend: The justices focused solely on the adults having sex and not at all on the children sex produces. Furthermore, little attention has been paid to the crucial distinction between the desir-

ability and constitutionality of any particular law.

Tubbs also identifies a perplexing inconsistency in the Supreme Court's rulings: When it comes to First Amendment cases dealing with the rights of adults to "expression" (often in the realm of "indecency"), the Court regards children as psychologically and morally resolute, resistant to the raunchiest material, capable of simply "averting their eyes." But when it comes to First Amendment cases dealing with prayer in schools and other religious matters, the Court proclaims the same children to be impressionable infants defenseless against the peer pressure of praying classmates.

The Supreme Court gets the risks and benefits of sex and religion exactly backwards: Sexually explicit material has immediate sensual appeal, arouses without consent, and leads to a host of negative consequences when acted upon by teenagers. Meanwhile, religious activity normally requires a supportive community and significant prodding ("Say your prayers!" "Go to church!"), and social science reveals the great societal goods that religion serves. The only explanation for the Court's discrepancy is ideology—a sheer preference for the liberty of adults, when it comes to pornography, coupled with hostility toward religion in the public square.

In the end, Tubbs suggests that the negative effects suffered by children could be reduced if we realized that lifestyle liberty is not the only good at stake. While Tubbs does not suggest that children's needs should always come before adult interests, he urges political and legal theorists to embrace a pluralistic conception of value that includes adult *and* child welfare. Sacrifices and tradeoffs will have to be made, but adults cannot always come first.

At times dry and unnecessarily detailed, *Freedom's Orphans* is nonetheless a critically important book that should spark debate within the academy, the courts, and our legislative chambers. It makes it clear that sexual liberation and secularist impulses carry a high price to be paid by the nation's children. Perhaps there is more to Helen Lovejoy's plea than we thought. ♦

China by Design

On a clear day you can see the People's Architecture.

BY ARTHUR COTTON MOORE

Despite the widespread impression that there are gobs of dirt and barrels of toxic waste flying all over the People's Republic of China, its government clearly sees hosting this year's Olympics as crucial validation of the country and its regime, and is entrusting the Art of Architecture to distract our attention from its horrific environmental—not to mention human-rights—problems.

The main distractions for its debut are several fabulous and fabulously expensive architectural wonderments that only an authoritarian government could accomplish—it being important to keep in mind that projects like the Pyramids or the Palace at Versailles would not have come about by popular demand. Three new works in Beijing stand out—*almost* at that redefining level of achievement.

The National Theater is a giant sideways egg, big enough to envelop two Kennedy Centers. The French architect Paul Andreu designed the simple ovoid form to float illusionistically in a large square pond of water. The scale, minimalism, structural daring, and perfection of detail are jaw-dropping. So as not to disturb the visual serenity of this perfect image, mere humans enter the structure by descending into a funnel-shaped tunnel running under the pond, unfortunately somewhat like a large feeding slot. The size, simplicity, geometry, and hidden entrance call to mind the Pyramids.

In the Chinese anthropomorphic naming custom, the theater is called "the egg that ate Beijing" because, from some angles, it looks like the head of a not-particularly-friendly gargantuan whale rising from the water. It only recently opened so I have not experienced the acoustics in the curved, echo-creating envelope.

Shanghai skyline

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

Located a block from the massive Tiananmen Square and the extensive Forbidden City, it more than holds its own as a giant place of gravitas in the city.

The major venue for the Olympics is the new stadium, popularly known as "the bird's nest." In stadium design, structure is usually the prime expressive element and it is almost a cardinal rule that clarity and economy of structure lead to the best results. But the Swiss architects Herzog and de Meuron did what always leads to a breakthrough: They shattered that rule of structural economy championed by all the great engineers in the past and made so much redundant structure that it became an overall surface texture.

The composition is not unlike a huge stainless steel basket where every straw is a large bent steel beam. Steel beams and girders weave every which way. The result is a fresh, hugely creative take on an often conventionally rendered program. Compared to this thoroughly novel iconic design, most stadiums anywhere (particularly the new Nationals stadium in Washington) are last century. The "bird's nest" has not only reconstrued stadium design; it is the kind of unique formal branding, like the Sydney Opera House, that guarantees worldwide recognition.

The National Aquatics Centre ('the Water Cube'), Beijing

A few miles away is a building that has exceeded heretofore unimaginable engineering ambitions: It's the CCTV Tower and is locally called "the dangerous building." Before it signed on the for the job, Arup, the famous engineering firm, studied the project for months to determine whether it could even be built. The design, by the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, is a daring defiance of gravity, a deconstructivist design that looks like it is, indeed, going to deconstruct.

Structurally speaking: If you put a pole in the ground vertically there is no problem with it; but if you put the pole in at an angle, it wants to tip over. Now, if you put two poles in at different angles, and those poles have horizontal branches at their tops which shoot out and join in space, you have a potentially mischievous structure. At the CCTV Tower, those poles and branches are massive steel office structures containing multiple floors and weighing more than 100,000 tons.

When I visited the project, the angled towers were framed out and the shooting out into space had begun.

So precise were the calculations that the final welds joining the two horizontal branches at the farthest-out corner of the massive, unsupported building area could only occur at five in the morning, when the thermal conditions in the countless beams, columns, plates, and welds would be almost perfectly equal. The "dangerous building" is already a landmark in Beijing.

From the rooftop bar at the venerable Grand Hotel Beijing, overlooking the Forbidden City, visible in the distance was a gigantic dirt cloud, looking like a fixed cardboard cutout on a cheap theater set, behind which the setting sun would slip, like an old copper penny dropping in a slot. The Chinese government has tried to attack the choking air pollution of its capital city by planting millions of trees, which (on a clear day) make Beijing look like a huge park from the air. When that didn't work, it began telling half the population it could only drive on alternate days. It also tried closing whole factories for periods of time. (The next step could be that nobody can drive, which is essentially what happens on the gridlocked streets and roads.)

Meanwhile, in Shanghai 20 years ago, I looked out from the Peace Hotel across the Huangpu River to Pudong and didn't see a single light at night among the farms and small bungalows. Now, Pudong looks like a World's Fair built for a race of giants. The fair imagery comes mostly from the Oriental Pearl TV Tower, which suggests a radioactively enlarged offspring of the Atomium, the theme building of the 1958 Brussels World's Fair. Swoopy shapes are everywhere and parts of buildings here and there replicate the forms of large spheres similar to the United States pavilion at Expo 67 in Montreal.

Among all that pulsing architectural frivolity in Manhattan-sized Pudong sits a more serious effort, the 88-story Jin Mao Tower, completed in 1999, a many-layered stainless steel pagoda by the American architects SOM. This being a hotbed of height hubris, there was a brief shining moment in Jin Mao's life when it was incorrectly touted as the tallest building in the world, surpassing the Petro-

GETTY IMAGES

nas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, a much more successful design. (Now, making it seem like a peanut, the Shanghai World Financial Center, right next to it, will be 101 stories when completed, but in the game of heights, it will be surpassed by Dubai's Burj tower.)

Chinese practicality and money sense show in the square floor plate of the new look-at-me skyscrapers, all of which curiously have such dissonantly wild tops that one has to wonder why. (Perhaps these upper accretions actually make some perverse sense, since the spread and low-lying pollution of Shanghai means the tops are mostly what is visible.) So, we have normal straight-up-and-down buildings, but with an incongruously ridiculous range of carnival tops: hula hoop tops; spinning tops; revolving lunchroom tops; pineapple-inspired tops; or just tops next to rocket shapes with what look like deployable multiple-reentry cones.

The aerospace reference is particularly powerful in the wrapping of an intrusive freeway over the Wu Jiao Plaza by artist Zhong Song in the Yangpu district. Picture it: a long oval structure which, lit at night, looks exactly like the interplanetary spacecraft from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*—forever landing right in the middle of town. And in the muddle of the architectural zoo that is Pudong is a rare nod to urban design: a grand double-tree-lined boulevard called Century Avenue, a very welcome gesture to organize a portion of the new metropolis. There is also a sophisticated example of another Western quirk, historic preservation. In the Xintiandi district the American firm Wood + Zapata has restored a series of 1920s low-rise brick buildings into a popular commercial area of restaurants serving delicious mystery meat specialties and offering a compelling contrast to the screwball-topped high rises.

Improbably, the phantasmagorical architectural skyline that is Shanghai, and the architectural applause that is swelling internationally for Beijing, manage to come together as a balanced visual seesaw—and a seesaw worth seeing, or going to experience. ♦

BCA

Knight to Remember

The importance of Hobey Baker, gentleman-athlete. BY JEFFREY HART

Jeb Runcible, the narrator in Mark Goodman's 1985 novel *Hurrah for the Next Man Who Dies*, remembers Hobey Baker at St. Paul's School, practicing alone at night on a frozen pond with a hockey stick. He was perfecting his ability to control the puck without looking at it:

> So I took to walking late at night along the lower ponds, the fabled 'black ice' of St. Paul's. . . . It was on such a night that I came upon a lone figure scraping swiftly, hockey stick in hand, across the furthermost pond. I stopped to watch. If he saw me, he took no notice. Looking neither left, right nor down, he sped smoothly across the ice, his stick expertly tock-ticking the puck before him. Back and forth he flew, his blond hair forming an opalescent halo in the chill moonlight.

Hobey Baker, "golden youth of autumn fields and winter ice. . . . " That is the way Baker lives in Runcible's memory. After St. Paul's, and now at Princeton, Runcible remembers Baker, always playing without a helmet, returning a kick on the football field:

> THUMP! The Harvard punt soars upfield toward our line where Hobey waits alone, his black jersey emblazoned with grime, his blond hair shining in the pellucid sunlight. He flexes on the soles of his cleats, hands fixed on his hips, as he gauges the ball's trajectory. He is perfectly still in the penultimate moment when the ball crests and begins to descend. Suddenly he back pedals three, four, five steps, plants, then dashes forward, his timing marvelous to watch, to catch the punt on the fly.

Jeffrey Hart, professor emeritus of English at Dartmouth, is the author, most recently, of The Making of the American Conservative Mind: National Review and Its Times.

When Baker played football at Princeton, the ball was larger and rounder, more like a rugby ball, eliminating the forward pass; and the rules insisted upon in 1909 by Theodore Roosevelt sought to reduce injuries and, perhaps, eliminate fatalities, also greatly favored the defense. Though much of the scoring came from three-point drop kicks, Baker also was a spectacular broken-field runner. His 180-point scoring record at Princeton waited 50 years before being broken in 1964 by Cosmo Iacavazzi, playing in a much more open and offensive kind of football. Baker, at five-foot-nine and 160 pounds but wonderfully athletic, is now in the hockey and football Hall of Fame.

In his introduction to *The Legend of Hobey Baker* (1966) by John Davies, Arthur Mizener tells us why Hobey Baker, Princeton 1914, matters to us: "With his almost incredible skill and grace, his perfect manners, his dedicated seriousness, Hobey Baker was the nearly faultless realization of the ideal of his age"—that is, the period that ended with World War I. Yet Baker, a Philadelphia aristocrat, embodied gentlemanly ideals as they continued to inform the very different 1920s that followed the war.

The gentlemanly ideal went back through the Renaissance to medieval chivalry and, in Baker's time, was so firmly established in the upper classes of Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston that (as Mizener says) it took Nick Carraway an astonishing jolt away from conventional attitudes to understand that Jay Gatsby, a bogus gentleman, nevertheless was far superior because of his imagination to the Yale football player and fellow clubman Tom Buchanan.

For Baker, the epitome of the gentleman ideal and an athletic perfectionist, the game itself was the point. How the game was played was what mattered: sportsmanship, modesty, good manners. Even when he had been hammered bloody on the hockey rink or the gridiron, and if the opposing team had played fairly, he always went to their locker room and congratulated them on a game well played. If fouled, he sometimes wept, not because he had been hurt but because the game itself had been betrayed. In *The Legend of Hobey Baker* John Davies writes that

> Red Louden, Dartmouth's All-American end, for many years carried a newspaper clipping in his wallet about the time he tried to tackle Hobey and was knocked cold; not until he read the newspaper did he learn that Hobey had carried him off the field.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, who makes a cameo undergraduate appearance in Mark Goodman's novel, evoked Baker as Allenby, the Princeton football captain, in a famous passage early in *This Side of Paradise* (1920):

> Now, far down the shadowy line of University Place a white-clad phalanx broke the gloom, and marching figures, white-shirted, white-trousered, swung rhythmically up the street, with linked arms and heads held back:
>
> *Going back—going back,*
>
> *Going—back—to—Nas—sau—Hall* . . .
>
> There at the head of the white platoon marched Allenby, the football captain, slim and defiant, as if aware that this year the hopes of the college rested on him, that his hundred and sixty pounds were expected to dodge to victory through the heavy blue and crimson lines.

John Davies reminds us that when Baker played football the game amounted to a civil religion, with the Ivy League contests at the center of national attention. Special trains carried crowds to New Haven, Cambridge, and Princeton. "There is not a vacant seat in the fur-lined stadium," wrote Francis Russell. "Any hushed moment is apt to be shattered by the crash of a hip flask, inadvertently dropped on the concrete." Ivy League games were written up in articles several thousand words long in the major newspapers, old players returned to practice with their teams and demonstrate favorite trick plays. Yale's great coach Walter Camp annually named the all-star team, and on the day he was elected president in 1912, Woodrow Wilson

Hobey Baker, ca. 1914

showed up at a Princeton football practice—no doubt seeing Hobey Baker on the field with the team.

The gentlemanly ideals that Hobart Amory Hare Baker embodied remained an ideal of behavior throughout Fitzgerald's fiction. Indeed, the name of Fitzgerald's surrogate, Amory Blaine in *This Side of Paradise*, connects him with Baker, and it is the loss of the old ideal of character and honor that destroys Dick Diver in *Tender is the Night* (1934). In tennis, at least, those ideals live today, if somewhat fitfully, and after a bad spell in the era of Jimmy Connors and John McEnroe in the demeanor of Roger Federer and his obvious respect for the tradition of the game.

Depending on abundant material in the Baker Archive at Princeton, Davies provided an invaluable account of Baker's life, along with photographs of Baker at various stages of his short life. Using the resources of a novelist in *Hurrah for the Next Man Who Dies* (the title that of a stoic and ironic song sung by pilots on the Western Front), Mark Goodman evoked him though his first-person narrator, Jeb Runcible from Texas, a Princeton football player and friend of Baker. As in *Gatsby*, the reliable narrator brings us close to the remarkable character at the center of the story.

> It rained over most of northern France the day we buried Hobey Baker. The weather bore in from the North Sea well before dawn, silent and thick with mist, enshrouding the now still battlefields like a gray benediction. The squadron—or what was left of it, more than a month after the Armistice—began to fall out for burial parade shortly after mess.

Baker, like Jay Gatsby, another idealist, is buried in the mud. That Mr. Goodman begins with this parallel surely was calculated.

After graduation from Princeton in 1914, Hobey Baker worked in the J.P. Morgan Bank on Wall Street, bored with the conventional career he was launching but finding relief in top-flight hockey games at the St. Nick's Arena. After some automobile racing with Eddie Rickenbacker, then volunteer flight training at Mineola on Long Island, he enlisted in the Lafayette Escadrille, and before leaving for France performed acrobatic tricks with his squadron during halftime at a football game over Princeton's new Palmer Stadium. As described by Goodman,

> It was an extraordinary sight, Hobey flying point for a V formation of mechanized geese, flying south to Princeton for November. They came over high, stretched out against the darkening autumn sky, then banked and swooped in low over the stadium. As the bobbing planes receded upward, Hobey broke off from the formation and passed over the Stadium one more time, dipping his wings as the crowd rose and cheered.

In France, after more training, Baker is assigned to a squadron near Toul and goes into combat flying Spads. Jeb Runcible soon follows him to France, sometimes annoyed that Hobey regards aerial warfare as another football game.

> Hobey gave himself over to the war absolutely. Now, I saw a lot of men do that in France. . . . What happened to Hobey was more disturbing. He reached far back to those playing fields—the lost world of our youth—and tried to superimpose their innocent glory upon the fields of Flanders. It was no longer merely a matter of conversational analogies; mild affectation had become obsession. When the 141st [its name after America entered the war] got its new Spads, Hobey had them painted the orange-and-black of Princeton with a tiger standing astride a German helmet.

When the squadron hears that Georges Guynemer, the great French ace, has been shot down and killed, they toast him and sing the fatalistic "Hurrah for the Next Man Who Dies." But Runcible is made uneasy by the sense that Hobey is treating Guynemer as if he "had been sidelined with a broken ankle."

Aloft with the squadron, and until he becomes its commander, Baker is so skillful that he is allowed to fly independently, looking for targets of opportunity—in effect, playing "rover" as he had in hockey. (Again, he is disgusted by his publicity, but "French waiters were almost polite to us.") At length, Jeb Runcible is shot down, crashing and escaping across no-man's-land amid furious infantry battles, on the way shooting a German soldier who looks about 16, the pistol shot blowing his face off.

Back at the squadron, Runcible loses his temper with Hobey: "I vaguely pointed eastward. Do you understand this, Hobey? *That's not the bloody f—ing Yale game out there.*" Yet to Baker, the deadly contest in those cloud fields was, in fact, an extension of the playing fields, but now a game ending in life or death, skill, risk, matchless excitement, the pursuit of perfection. Like Yeats's Major Gregory, his "Irish Airman" and modern Sir Philip Sydney, Hobey Baker pursued a "lonely impulse of delight [that] drove to this tumult in the clouds."

John Davies's historical account and Mark Goodman's novel agree on the circumstances of Hobey Baker's death on December 21, 1918, soon after the Armistice on November 11, the now-legendary eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month when an eerie silence descended on the Western Front—but only after the American artillery, at the last moment, fired off everything it had at the defeated Germans.

Baker had known that the advent of peace would be a letdown, even feared it as offering no challenges that would test his extraordinary abilities. They agree that he volunteered to test-fly a repaired Spad with a carburetor known to be unreliable, that the plane stalled and crashed as Baker tried to land it on the squadron's airstrip. Baker died instantly of head injuries. Baker, an expert pilot, knew how to crash-land a Spad, which could safely be deposited amid trenches, on rooftops, even in a tree. But he apparently decided to land the plane intact, and failed.

What we cannot know is exactly what was in Baker's mind during his last flight. Some think that, perhaps half-consciously, he committed a kind of suicide, motivated by the depressing prospect of peace and boredom. I think it more likely that Baker, always a perfectionist, self-confident after years of exceptional skill and success against the odds, believed he could get the faltering Spad back undamaged to the airstrip. He pushed the stick forward to gather air speed—a fact suggesting that he intended to succeed. If he had had another hundred feet he could have leveled off and landed intact; trying not to crash-land, he slammed the nose of the plane into the ground and wrecked the plane and himself.

His body finally came home to a cemetery in his native Bala Cynwyd, just outside Philadelphia. ♦

BCA

The Classicist

Robert Fagles (1933-2008) gave life to the language of Greece and Rome. **BY TRACY LEE SIMMONS**

Robert Fagles, the quietly competent scholar-poet and oracular channel of ancient voices, died of cancer at the end of March, and of the man and his work we must now sing.

I met Fagles only once, and though the conversation was neither long nor broad, I recall the confidential warmth of a tall, courtly man with the steady gaze and eagerness to speak avidly with a young fellow traveler in (as he might have put it with a glint in his eye and a bow to John Keats) the realms of gold. Meeting Fagles was akin to touching greatness itself, though not so much because of his own manner, which was disarmingly modest, but because of the link one sensed to greatness. He had kept company with great men; they simply happened to be dead. Yet one felt their pulse in his presence. He wore the past like a cloak.

The obituaries have duly pointed up the honors Fagles accrued over a long career, including the National Humanities Medal, the Academy Award bestowed upon him by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the PEN/Ralph Manheim prize for lifetime achievement—not to mention worldwide sales of his books running at a cool four million copies.

Yet somehow the facts have failed to reveal the man in all his stout kindness and placid curiosity. While Fagles served ably as professor of literature at Princeton for well over 40 years, and for a period headed its Department of Comparative Literature—his doctorate was in English, not classics—he became best known to the world as

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Robert Fagles, 1996

translator and, in a sense, spiritual midwife and latter-day mouthpiece for Homer and Virgil, the two most august poets of classical Greece and Rome. His rendition of *The Iliad* came out auspiciously in 1990, in time to be written about for well over a year in the looming shadow of Operation Desert Storm; and he published his version of *The Odyssey* to equal acclaim in 1996. Their long gestation and birthing, each taking roughly a decade, amply demonstrated the truth behind the claim of T.E. Lawrence that, in Homer, in all his breadth and earthiness and *élan*, we find more an aspiration than a person.

Then just two years ago Fagles released his edition of *The Aeneid.* This was a surprise, as Fagles had made his intellectual home with Greek, and translating Virgil's masterwork, he said, required him to reimmerse himself in Latin, a language with which he'd had little commerce since high school—a fact that made this final *tour de force* all the more remarkable.

Not that Fagles's achievements in rejuvenating the palpitating phrases of ancient times came without practice or preparation. He took up ancient Greek as a junior at Amherst—a launch rather late, some might say, but as he proved, not too late—before going on to Yale where he wrote his dissertation on Alexander Pope's translation of *The Iliad*. As long ago as 1961 he published a respectable translation of the Greek lyric poet Bacchylides. And later, before his fame ripened with the release of his Homeric translations, he took successful stabs at *The Oresteia* of Aeschylus and Sophocles' three Theban plays.

Still, Fagles viewed these early efforts with an amused diffidence. "I was younger then, younger and more foolish," he said of the presumption required to give voice to the dead. But he was too humble: Those translations still enlighten and amaze.

By sway of academic credentials alone, many have been far more qualified to make these renderings, as Fagles never failed to remind anybody who would listen. But he also brought an expertise to the task of revitalizing the greatest classical works not easily matched by (and never to be assumed of) those armed solely with scholarly skills. Fagles was himself a poet, one clue to the mystery of his capacity to make the old bones live and speak again.

During the 10 long years spent on his translation of *The Aeneid*, Fagles sat at his desk for four or five hours every day with two piles of books before him: On the one side were his Latin text, commentaries, and lexicons; on the other were editions of modern poets such as Robert Lowell, William Merwin, Derek Walcott, C.K. Williams, and Paul Muldoon. Together—along with the incisive hunches native to a man of such broad literary sympathies—they helped him to dip deeply into what he called the "great reservoirs of memory."

Fagles always went for the direct touch; he never wished to sound literary, which is one reason he mastered idiom so thoroughly. His translations didn't strive for the literal; he sought to recreate the momentum of the original, and all tools sat ready to hand on his workbench. He could lapse into slang and he freely played with tenses—anything to make the words hit the reader (or listener) with all their primitive power and brawn. All passages he would read aloud until, he said, "I [began] to feel or find some English lurking" between the lines and, arresting the fugitive words in flight, commit them to paper.

John Dryden's translation of *The Aeneid* begins with the famous line, "Of Arms and the Man I Sing." Fagles sailed a little closer to the wind: "Wars and a man I sing—an exile driven on by fate," a touch not only more modern, but also more sad and sober. When asked once to identify a line that had driven him to the outer limits of his poetic imagination to translate, he thought hard and pulled from the air one line—*Forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit*—and then laid out his idea of what the line means within its setting: "A joy it will be one day, perhaps, to remember even this."

"It's about loss," he said, "about overcoming the worst." But, he added, "the word 'perhaps' is important. It may not be a joy to remember. It may be a bloody misery." And with this we know that, while he sat in his study, Robert Fagles never left the larger world, the one where we live, feel joy, suffer greatly, and die. ♦

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Campus Shooting

An academic comedy featuring Prof. Dennis Quaid.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Beware any movie with a professor in it. From time immemorial, the cinema has tripped itself up in its efforts to offer a minimally believable portrait of an academic. In the golden age of cinema, an on-screen professor was usually a bearded wise man who informed a skeptical cop or detective that, yes, it was actually *quite* possible for a mummy to be reanimated.

"But Doc," our academic would be asked, "isn't that just superstitious mumbo jumbo?" Whereupon the sage would draw upon his pipe and, exhaling smoke, reply, "Ah, detective, most superstitions have their basis in actual fact!"

It was even worse on those occasions when Hollywood would attempt a sophisticated portrait of a college campus—like *The Bad and the Beautiful*, a ridiculous movie that was highly regarded upon its release in 1952. Dick Powell plays Professor Bartlow, who has written a historical novel that becomes a surprise bestseller. At Bartlow's college, boys walk around in raccoon coats, everybody puffs on a Meerschaum, and people say things like, "So I hope to see you later to discuss that Shakespeare sonnet." In *A Change of Seasons* (1980), Anthony Hopkins is a professor at Williams having a fling with a student played by Bo Derek. They make love in a hot tub, a device known only to Californians at the time; I expect the number of Jacuzzis in use in northwestern Massachusetts in 1980 was zero.

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Smart People
Directed by Noam Murro

The only time a movie about a professor is any good is when the academic in question is portrayed either as a fool or charlatan or lunatic. In 1930's *The Blue Angel*, a sheltered teacher in Weimar Germany becomes obsessed, humiliated, and finally unmanned by a cabaret chanteuse—marking it as, perhaps, the best film ever made about a sadomasochistic German academician. In *National Lampoon's Animal House* (1978), an all-too-groovy literature prof smokes pot with his students, steals the girlfriend of one of them, and reports with a devilish smile that his own novel is a "piece of s—."

In *Back to School* (1986), a history professor played by the incendiary comic Sam Kinison asks his students to summarize one of "the easiest conflicts to understand," the Vietnam war, and screeches like a banshee at one of them who gives a well-informed answer. The scene is implausible, largely because Kinison plays the professor as a right-wing Vietnam veteran, of whom there are perhaps three in all of real-world academia. But as an example of what can happen in a classroom when an innocent kid comes face-to-face with a tenured psychotic, it is all too real.

Finally, there is the movie that properly portrays an academic as a fool, charlatan, and lunatic all at once—which is to say, *Horse Feathers* (1932), with Groucho Marx as Professor Wagstaff, who declares in the midst of his investiture as president of Huxley College, "Whatever it is, I'm against it. No matter what it is or who commenced it, I'm against it!"

You can't blame moviemakers, really. It is very difficult for a defiantly anti-intellectual medium like the cinema to capture what is interesting about someone who spends much of his life living inside his own head. The latest casualty is *Smart People*, a movie in which Dennis Quaid plays a fearsomely highbrow English professor. Yes, you read that right: Dennis Quaid plays a fearsomely highbrow English professor. This is on a par with Jessica Simpson playing Madame Curie.

Word by word and scene by scene, the character played by Quaid—Professor Wetherhold of Carnegie Mellon—is a well-etched version of every student's worst nightmare. But the interesting and literate screenplay by Mark Jude Poirier is undone by its central performance. Quaid can be a vibrant actor, but his signal quality is his commanding physical presence. Playing someone who holds the world to impossible standards of intellectual attainment, Quaid is lost.

Smart People is about how intelligence is no substitute for good manners, common sense, and a sunny disposition. We know Wetherhold is a troubled man because his bitter and clever daughter (Ellen Page) is a Young Republican with a photograph of Ronald Reagan on her wall. "You're a monster," she is informed by Wetherhold's deadpan, ne'er-do-well brother Chuck, and every word this man of the people speaks is the unvarnished truth in *Smart People*. (Chuck reads the *New York Review of Books* for pleasure, and he smokes pot, so he's a saint.)

In contrast to the delightful Chuck, Professor Wetherhold is supposed to come across as a "pompous windbag," in the words of his girlfriend, a shockingly unpleasant emergency-room doctor played by Sarah Jessica Parker (who is, literally, 15 years too old for the part). But Quaid just doesn't have windbaggery in him; he is too amiable and borderline dopey for it. *Smart People* is the rare movie about a professor that gets the details of campus life right, and for that it deserves some credit. But it's just no use, this occasional effort by earnest filmmakers to offer a portrait of the life of an intellectual on celluloid. Unless that intellectual is Groucho Marx. ♦

Parody

The April 13, 2008, issue of the* New York Times Magazine *features an 8,000-word profile of Chris Matthews, host of* Hardball*, possessor of 19 honorary degrees (soon to be 22), admirer of beautiful guests, fan of Senator Obama (who gave a speech that Matthews described as "this thrill going up my leg"), critic of Senator Clinton, and proud quoter of F. Scott Fitzgerald ("The Aria of Chris Matthews"). According to author Mark Leibovich, Matthews looks up to his NBC colleague Tim Russert but is wary of Keith Olbermann and David Gregory. The profile featured a photo (below) without a caption.

ky. Stylistically, Olbermann is scripted and disciplined while Mat- cried when he lost. "We weren't a huggy family — we had our fi
is free-form. While Olbermann is a natural anchor, Matthews but we basically got along," Jim Matthews, now the Republica
of the board of commissioners in Mont

the weekly Standard
April 28, 2008