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# 2010 According to Katie Couric

The New Year is as good a time as any to evaluate the Old, and The Scrapbook has been interested to read the varying interpretations of 2010. Among the chattering classes, for example, there seems to be consensus that the past year was a horror—and from their point of view, with some reason. Not only did the guard change in Washington, with unprecedented Republican gains in Congress, but Barack Obama was unmasked as a mere politician, and a hamfisted one at that.

The Scrapbook's most revealing look back, however, came from the perspective of Katie Couric, the CBS news reader. In 2010 she was horrified, she declared, by objections to the Ground Zero mosque in Lower Manhattan, which revealed a "seething hatred" of Muslims in America.

To be sure, she didn't mention anything specific, nor explain that criticism of the Ground Zero mosque was seldom directed at Muslims or Islam in general—dozens of mosques thrive in greater New York—but at the painful symbolism of a mosque deliberately constructed beside the site where 3,000 people were murdered by Islamist fanatics. The problem for Katie Couric is not the notion of a bumptious development proposal but the "seething hatred" she ascribes to principled dissent.

Of course, there's no accounting for network anchors; and The Scrapbook can hardly begin to explain to Katie Couric that people in the news business, above all, should avoid simple epithets when explaining complex circumstances. But then again, this is Katie Couric we're talking about—and the best part of her year-end review is her solution to the problem of "seething hatred" for Islam: "Maybe we need a Muslim version of *The Cosby Show*," she says. "*The Cosby Show* did so much to change attitudes about African Americans in this country, and I think sometimes people are afraid of what they don't understand."

Well, when it comes to Islamists who consecrate their lives to killing as many innocent Americans as possible, people are afraid of things they understand all too well. But what can The Scrapbook say to someone who thinks America's problems are alleviated by sitcoms? Only that a lifetime spent in TV studios seems to affect the brain.

*The Cosby Show* (1984-92) was a pleasant depiction of an affluent obstetrician, his lawyer-wife, and their adorable kids in a comfortable Brooklyn brownstone. It is deeply insulting to suggest, as Katie Couric does, that "attitudes about African Americans in this country" were affected in any way by the Cosby sitcom, especially as late as the mid-1980s. It takes a genuinely provincial mind to believe that social attitudes in a country the size and complexity of the United States are influenced, in any demonstrable way, by mildly amusing TV shows intended to sell soap.

Unless, of course, you think that *I Love Lucy* taught tolerance for Cuban-American bandleaders, or that bigotry ended with *All in the Family*. Surely that would explain how *Gomer Pyle, USMC* made the Vietnam war wildly popular, and *I Dream of Jeannie* put a man on the moon. ♦

## Calling All Atheists of Color

Beliefnet.com—a religious website so ecumenical that it serves every community, from the Bahai to pagans to faithful nonbelievers—recently ran a sobering piece about the appalling lack of diversity in the atheist community.

Most atheists, it turns out, are white men. Says Beliefnet:

> From the smallest local meetings to the largest conferences, the vast majority of speakers and attendees are almost always white men. Leading figures of the atheist movement—Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens and Daniel Dennett—are all white men.

Alert the EEOC!

Atheists are working to put a more diverse public face on their movement. A new group, Black Atheists of America, drew about 25 attendees at its first national meeting in October. Also last year, the Institute for Humanist Studies was born in Washington, D.C., with a goal of helping atheism become more diverse.

But diversity remains elusive. As of late December, *American Atheist* magazine hadn't been able to find enough black atheist writers to fill a special Black History Month edition for February. In another telling sign, the Council for Secular Humanism tried in vain to present a diverse array of speakers at its four-day October conference in Los Angeles. Most of the 300 attendees were white men, as were 23 of the 26 speakers.

"Considering the changing demographics of our country, we need to consider why our message is not resonating with Latinos, why it's not res-

EARL KELENY

onating with people of color, and why it's not resonating with women in the way that it could be," said Debbie Goddard, director of African-Americans for Humanism.

Well, then. The atheist establishment types are saying all the right things about their diversity goals, but can we really take them at their word? After all, if they really cared about it, wouldn't they take the sort of radical measures that the diversity police routinely force on fire departments, government contractors, and the rest?

If atheists can't increase minority participation through recruitment, then it may be time for some selfless white atheists to suspend their nonbelief and start going to church, for the good of the cause.

Meanwhile, the folks over at the Stuff White People Like blog need to update their list. ♦

## Read, Learn, Enjoy

Upon returning from its holiday revels, The Scrapbook found not one but two excellent gifts of the season in the mailbox: sparkling new issues of two of our favorite quarterlies, the *Claremont Review of Books* (Fall 2010) and *National Affairs* (Winter 2011).

The *Claremont Review* features many writers familiar to readers of this magazine—Christopher Caldwell and Matthew Continetti, James Ceaser and Harvey Mansfield, Cheryl Miller and Jeremy Rabkin, to mention only some. They and their fellow contributors are all at the top of their form. Curious about Barack Obama or Somerset Maugham, the state of democracy or the strength of the West? There's an amazing amount of high-quality reflection and lively writing on these and other topics in this issue's 70 pages.

And when you're done with that, pick up *National Affairs*—a little less polemical, a little more policy-oriented, but equally thoughtful and stimulating—and consider James Capretta on the budget, John Hood on the states' fiscal crisis, Jeffrey Miron on redistribution, and, for a change of pace, Ralph Lerner's charming and penetrating reflections on Abraham Lincoln and the Declaration. And by the time you're done with *that* . . . you'll be just in time for next quarter's *Claremont Review* and *National Affairs*. ♦


## Barry Zorthian, 1920-2010

Not too many civilian officials emerged with distinction from the Vietnam war, but Barry Zorthian, who died in Washington last week at 90, was an honorable exception. Chief spokesman for the United States government in Saigon (or in formal terms, head of the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office) during 1964-68, he had the difficult, and deeply unenviable, task of explaining the American mission to the South Vietnamese—and to an increasingly contentious and adversarial American press corps. It is to his great credit that he served his country's cause with energy and success while retaining the admiration and respect of reporters.

After Vietnam, he became a senior executive at Time Inc., and up until the time of his death was a familiar, and much admired, figure in the Washington public relations and policymaking world. His life was also an interesting sidebar to the American dream: Born in Turkey to Armenian parents who fled for their lives in the early 1920s, Barry Zorthian was a Marine artillery officer in the Pacific during World War II, and a Yale graduate, Class of 1941, where he was tapped for Skull and Bones—not bad for an immigrant's son who had landed in America with nothing but hope. ♦

## The Fake-Tocqueville Virus Spreads

John J. Pitney Jr. of Claremont McKenna College's government department sends word that the celebrated "fake Tocqueville" quote—"America is great because she is good"—continues to proliferate. Pitney first chronicled this plague in our pages 15 years ago ("The Tocqueville Fraud," November 13, 1995). He notes at his blog, www.bessettepitney.net, that its most recent victim is TV host Glenn Beck, who cited it on January 4. "De Tocqueville said this," said Beck. Nope. Its earliest known appearance is in the 1940s. Eisenhower popularized it, and it has been suckering the speechwriters of great (and not-so-great) men ever since: Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, Colin Powell, Ross Perot, John Kerry, et al. As Pitney says, "It's the quotation that will not die." ♦

## Sentences We Didn't Finish

"If everyone in America was very, very pleased with his or her health insurance and had no complaints and had access to quality, affordable health care in our country, it still would have been necessary for us to pass the health care reform care bill . . . " (outgoing House speaker Nancy Pelosi at her January 4 press conference). ♦




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# Dr. Do and Mr. Hide

Robert Benchley said that the world is divided between those who divide the world into two kinds of people and those who don't. I am one of those who do, and would like to present a fresh such division. Here the little darling is: The world is divided between people who believe that what is most important about human beings is what they hide and those who believe that what is most important about people is what they do.

An old friend and I frequently have conversations that end up nowhere because we are on opposite sides of this divide. He is a Hide, and I a Do, man. As a Hide man, my friend is—no surprise here—a Freudian. Freud is of course the Hide man par excellence. For Freud nothing is as it appears, everything is in hiding: Ids are seething below stairs, in the attic Oedipus complexes remain unresolved, and though a cigar may sometimes be a cigar, it is more likely disguising something vastly more suggestive.

My friend is also a devotee of the sociologist Ervin Goffmann, who holds that life is a theater in which we are all playing parts, wearing masks, changing roles—in short, that we are, under social necessity, hiding our real selves. I have only myself to go on here, but my sense is that, if you pull away the mask I present to the public, you will see underneath it the selfsame mask; remove that second mask, and, lo, there I am again, playing the same role of a mildly sly, slightly skeptical, outwardly conformist creature.

Being a Do man doesn't mean that I don't believe people have hidden motives, which of course many people have. I am not so clever in fishing out motives as Prince Metternich, who, when the Russian ambassador died just before the convening of the Congress of Verona in 1822, is said to have asked, "I wonder why he did that?" But I try to be on the *qui vive* for hidden motives, and if I discover them in people, I weigh them in when I make judgments about them. And judgmental—not a good thing to be, I realize, in our empathy-approving culture—


ANDY RASH

I am, a relentless, resolute engine of judgment-making. We Do-people tend, I suspect, to be more judgmental than Hide people, if only because we have a firmer basis on which to make judgments: namely, actions.

Everyone from time to time has hidden motives; everyone has secrets, some of which are part of one's inviolable being and oughtn't to be prodded and searched out, even by therapists. But the real question is do these motives and secrets constitute one's deepest and truest self. I don't happen to think they do.

In his novel *The Walnut Trees of Altenburg*, André Malraux agrees. Therein a dialogue occurs between the narrator's father and an old family friend. "Fundamentally speaking," the friend posits, "man is what he hides . . . A wretched little pile of secrets."

"'Man is what he achieves,' my father answered, almost savagely."

If I were a marriage counselor, I would suggest that a Do and a Hide not marry, for the difference between the two speaks to profound differences about what is important in life. I'm not even certain that the two differing types can become truly close friends, for the Do is likely to think that the Hide is missing the great point in life, which is that, within limits, we all control our own destinies through our actions, while the Hide is likely to think that the Do, in his concentration on the surface of life, is himself merely covering up, and in his achievements compensating for, something he is hiding.

More people who have been infected by contemporary college education are likely to fall into the Hide camp than people who have been brought up free of higher education. But among those who have been to college further distinctions can be made. Business school and science graduates are likely to be Do's; those in the humanities and most of the social sciences Hides.

The Do camp has a moral grandeur wanting in the camp of Hides that comes from taking responsibility for one's actions. If one believes that we are what we hide, responsibility drops away because we are hostage to inner demons that, behind the scenes, are really calling the shots. Do-people have no such excuse.

Do, Hide, Do, Hide, Do—I begin to sound rather like Frank Sinatra humming Do Be, Do Be, Do. But the distinction, all apologies to Robert Benchley, seems to me crucial, and at some point in life everyone has to ask, Which am I? Hide or Do? And once one decides, lots of other things fall into place.

**Joseph Epstein**

the weekly Standard

# Debt Be Not Proud

As the 112th Congress begins its work this month, it must take up some unavoidable unfinished business left behind by its predecessor. In their frantic, sloppy struggle to advance big-ticket items on the liberal agenda, the Democratic leaders of the 111th Congress not only failed to produce a budget for the current fiscal year, they also failed to address the fact that the federal borrowing necessary to fund their spending binge was quickly nearing the legal debt limit.

That means the new Congress, with a Republican House and a narrowly Democratic Senate, must pass an appropriations measure for the rest of the fiscal year by early March, when the temporary continuing resolution now in effect runs out. And it means the new Congress must raise the debt ceiling—to allow for federal borrowing necessary to cover expenses already incurred by President Obama and the last Congress, regardless of what the new Congress does about spending.

On their face, these hardly seem like ideal conditions in which to begin reining in government. But if Republicans resist the urge to deny the reality of these circumstances, and instead seek ways to turn them into opportunities to advance their agenda, they might find that they have quite a strong hand after all.

If Republicans are not careful, both the budget and debt-limit debates threaten to devolve into games of chicken in which each side tries to blame the other for failing to avert a government shutdown (if not a default on America's debt). In such a confrontation, President Obama would have the advantage. He and his party have nothing to lose from a government shutdown. The public knows that the Democrats, as the party of big government, do not desire a shutdown, and so would blame the impasse on Republicans. Concern over absent government services and benefits, undoubtedly magnified by the press, would create pressure that, over time, would divide the Republicans but unite the Democrats. Obama could let such an impasse continue indefinitely, and would gain from every passing day, as Bill Clinton did in 1995.

Furthermore, if the debt ceiling, and not just the budget, is at the heart of the showdown, the costs will be not just political but economic. The Treasury could, for a time, move money around the various government trust funds to avoid actually hitting the debt limit—though such moves, especially if they involve Social Security or Medicare, would be politically unpopular. But within a few months at most, the government would be unable to repay existing debt and interest and would confront default.

The exact implications of this are hard to predict. But none of them are good. The Treasury probably would have to prioritize debt repayment and entitlement checks and arbitrarily slash other spending, all while turning away potential lenders, unnerving the bond markets, and sending interest rates upward—thereby increasing the cost of our debt even more.

None of this is what our ailing economy needs as it struggles to recover, and none of it is what the voting public wants to see. It would all inevitably end with Congress raising the debt ceiling (as Republican and Democratic Congresses have done ten times in just the last decade), but on terms far less friendly to Republicans, who will have used up a great deal of political momentum and capital for naught.

It is easy to understand the frustration of Republicans confronted with the task of cleaning up after the Democrats' orgy of spending. They want to get right into the work of restraining government excess and unleashing growth. A vote for raising the debt limit—however inescapable the necessity—feels too much like acquiescence in the binge they were elected to end.

But it need not be. Rather than revolt against the circumstances they have been handed, Republicans in Congress should turn these Democratic loose ends into opportunities to begin changing the spending culture of Washington, and to strengthen their position in the bigger fights to come this year.

The 2010 election has given Republicans a stronger bargaining position, but it has not made them supreme in Washington. They have the power to stand athwart any further lurches toward European-style social democracy, and they will surely do so. The hyperactive period of the Obama presidency is over. The question for Republicans is whether their situation—controlling the House but not the Senate or the White House—also allows them to advance a positive agenda of their own, while persuading the public to give them the power to do more in 2012. The answer is surely yes, if Republicans use their improved bargaining position wisely and reinforce rather than deflate the public mood that got them here.

That means picking fights they can win rather than forcing confrontations they are sure to lose. It means

offering serious reforms and spending reductions that the public will deem reasonable and the Democrats will find difficult to reject, and so creating the conditions for further improvement.

The Democrats' unfinished business offers Republicans the opportunity to do this early, if they act quickly to define the budget and debt-ceiling debates, and if they recognize that the decisive battle of this Congress will be the fight over the 2012 budget—which begins with the president's State of the Union address next month and the Republican budget resolution in March. The remnants of the previous Congress, therefore, should be dispatched quickly, and in a way that sets the stage for the main event.

Early in the winter, perhaps even before the president's State of the Union address, the House should pass a single measure that enacts the unavoidable increase in the debt limit (attaching to it strict spending discipline measures, as proposed below, to make sure that future increases can be avoided) and puts in place a continuing resolution for the remainder of the 2011 budget year. That resolution should disburse domestic discretionary spending for the rest of fiscal 2011 at 2008 levels, thereby reducing such spending by more than $50 billion over the rest of this year and paving the way for even more significant reductions in 2012.

The bill should also require that all unused stimulus money, unused prior-year earmark money, unobligated balances in agency budgets, and repayments of TARP and bailout funds be directed immediately and exclusively to debt reduction. And it should require every agency of the executive branch to report to Congress by May 1 on exactly how it will adjust its operations—line item by line item—to return to its full-year 2008 spending levels next year and to even lower levels over the rest of the decade.

President Obama and the Democrats would of course recoil from such cuts. But legislation like this would be difficult for them to oppose. It would represent a modest spending freeze at levels deemed adequate just three years ago, in the midst of the Great Recession, and it would only be a temporary measure as the 2012 budget debate begins. Obama and the Democrats would find it difficult to paint such a measure as reckless or unreasonable. For Republicans, this measure would offer many advantages beyond its sheer spending reductions. It would tie the increase in the debt limit made necessary by the reckless spending of the past few years to concrete efforts to reverse that spending and reduce the debt. It would send a clear message that spending is going down, not up. It would take the possibility of a government shutdown off the table.

It would, in other words, move the debate onto ground that favors Republicans rather than Democrats. Following the debt-ceiling/continuing resolution legislation, Republicans could introduce a series of rescission measures that make further cuts in 2011 spending—for instance, enacting a hiring freeze for the federal workforce and reducing or terminating funding for public broadcasting, various corporate subsidies, Amtrak subsidies, and the like. Some of these will make it through the Senate, others will not. Some will be vetoed, while some might be enacted. No matter the outcome, Republicans will be fighting on friendly turf—championing the sort of sensible spending restraint they were elected to advance even as the 2012 budget fight proceeds, and keeping the president and Senate Democrats on the defensive all year, rather than engaging in dramatic standoffs that favor the White House.

If Republicans resist getting caught up in the heat of the moment, if they understand that the 2012 budget fight must be the real focus of their energies, they have a chance to make a virtue of necessity, and to begin the new Congress by scoring some serious gains and building momentum for more.

*—Yuval Levin and William Kristol*

# We the People

Whether House Republicans will succeed in limiting the national government is a question raised by a simple rule adopted on their first day in the majority. Under the rule, every bill when introduced must be accompanied by a statement citing the specific authority granted to Congress by the Constitution under which it may pass the proposed law. Lacking such a statement, the bill will be returned to its sponsor.

The new rule was promised last September in the Republicans' Pledge to America. Its appeal is evident. Americans extol the virtues of self-government, by which we mean *constitutional* self-government. That is, we govern ourselves under our Constitution, the "supreme law of the land." Because members of Congress, like the president and members of the Supreme Court, take an oath to uphold the Constitution, it is fair to ask whether congressmen are living up to their oath if they pass a law without considering their constitutional authority to enact it in the first place.

Congressional Democrats (and some Republicans, too) have often been dismissive of the obligation to consider constitutional questions of legislative authority, thinking such questions should be left to the courts. The debate over the mandate included in Obamacare—that every American buy health insurance or face a penalty—is illustrative in both respects.

When House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was asked by a

reporter "where specifically . . . the Constitution grant[s] Congress the authority to enact an individual health insurance mandate," she seemed shocked by the question, and asked the reporter whether he was "serious." In the Senate, meanwhile, Democrat Claire McCaskill responded to a question about the mandate's constitutionality with the observation that, "if anything in this bill is unconstitutional, the Supreme Court will weigh in." (The courts must be too slow for McCaskill, who faces reelection in 2012, as she recently voiced opposition to the mandate.)

Odd as it may seem to put this way, the Republicans' new rule makes it okay for the House to take the Constitution into account in its deliberations. Of course, the mere citation of constitutional authority will not make a law constitutional. Nor will it oblige courts, exercising the power of judicial review, to declare a law constitutional. What advocates of the new rule hope is that it will lead to more discussion among members about the congressional authority to legislate, and that the House will take a more restrained understanding of its capacity, one more consistent with the Constitution's original meaning.

It is useful to put this issue of legislative authority in larger perspective. What might be called the unlimiting of the national government began to take place during the New Deal, when the Supreme Court understood congressional authority to be so capacious as to leave little that Washington could not regulate. Congress largely accepted the Court's jurisprudence and extended its legislative reach, losing sight of the core purposes of government and building our big and costly welfare state.

Against this development, the Court under Chief Justice Rehnquist eventually pushed back, though with only modest success. In 1995, in *United States* v. *Lopez*, the Court found that congressional power had become virtually limitless when President Clinton's solicitor general was unable to identify any principle that might confine congressional regulation under the commerce clause. In *Lopez*, the Court struck down the Gun-Free School Zones Act on grounds that it exceeded congressional authority under the clause. Because of *Lopez* and a few other cases, there are some limits to what Congress constitutionally may legislate. If the individual mandate is upheld, there will be fewer.

The unlimiting of government, never so well understood until now, is what House Republicans are responding to. They have the numbers to defeat any bill that they believe Congress lacks the authority to enact, and by requiring bills to be accompanied by a constitutional authority statement, they are indicating their interest in doing precisely that. That the House may be willing to give up authority established by case law and historical practice is startling, indeed a development without precedent in our politics. But it is nonetheless an encouraging development, one that House Republicans will be pushed by the Tea Party to follow through on. As they should.

*—Terry Eastland*

# A Farewell to Arms

In 1991, at the end of the Cold War, there were 710,821 active-duty soldiers in the U.S. Army. By 2001, that figure was down to 478,918. That 32 percent decline in active-duty strength severely limited our options for a military response to 9/11, practically dictating that the forces sent to Afghanistan and Iraq would be too small to pacify two countries with a combined population of nearly 60 million. The result was years of protracted conflict that put a severe strain on an undersized force.

Eventually even Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was compelled to admit that the force was too small. Today the Army is up to 566,045 active-duty soldiers, an 18 percent increase since 2001. That is still too small—a force that size has too little "dwell time" at home and places too much stress on soldiers. It also imposes constraints, helping to curtail the size of the force we send to Afghanistan even though more troops could get the job done with less risk.

But now we learn from Secretary of Defense Robert Gates that the force is going to shrink again. Last week he announced that, starting in 2015, the Army is going to lose 27,000 soldiers on top of an already planned cut of 22,000. That will bring the Army's active duty strength down to 517,000—still larger than it was in 2001 but far smaller than it was in 1991, and not big enough to meet all of the contingencies for which it must prepare. The Marine Corps will lose 15,000 to 20,000 personnel. So our ground combat forces—the most heavily deployed forces since the end of the Cold War—will be deprived of 70,000 troopers or almost 10 percent of their strength.

We wish that President Obama, who forced these cuts on Gates and the Defense Department, would explain what in the international situation gives him confidence that we can meet all of our security commitments with so many fewer grunts. The president thinks that most of our troops will be gone from Afghanistan by 2015, but how certain is he that the drawdown will occur as envisioned? How certain is he that Pakistan, Yemen, or Somalia won't be the staging ground for another 9/11, thereby requiring another massive commitment of U.S. troops? How certain is he that we won't face a war on the Korean Peninsula or in Iran or in some other land where we cannot currently envision sending American forces—any more than anyone could have envisioned on September 10, 2001, that America would eventually have 100,000 troops in Afghanistan?

The reality is that neither the president nor anyone else

can offer such assurances. In fact, at practically the same time that these overall cuts were being unveiled, Secretary Gates was also announcing that 1,400 more Marines are headed to Afghanistan—a deployment that was made in response to events on the ground in order to build on prior success. The fewer troops we have, the less capability to respond to such eventualities or emergencies.

It is not just troop strength that is being reduced, either, although those are the most worrisome cutbacks. Weapons programs have already been eliminated—e.g., the best-in-the-world F-22 stealth fighter. Now the Marines' Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle is due to suffer a similar fate. Individually you can make the case for any of these cuts; it is hard to argue that we cannot defend the United States without the F-22 or the EFV. But collectively they set a worrisome pattern, especially when our biggest foreign competitor, China, is in the midst of a rapid arms build-up that includes fielding a stealth fighter much faster than previously predicted and a new ballistic missile dubbed a "carrier killer" for its ability to target American aircraft carriers.

U.S. defense spending remains far higher than China's and our defense capabilities remain far greater than China's or anyone else's. But our commitments are also much greater. We have to worry about Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, China, Russia, North Korea, Yemen, Somalia, al Qaeda, and myriad other current or potential threats, whereas China can devote all of its might to the western Pacific. We will be hard pressed to resist Chinese designs for regional dominance when our Navy has only 287 ships (down 45 percent from 1991 when it had 529 ships) and is still shrinking.

**At least in the past we waited until a war was actually over to spend the 'peace dividend.'**

In defense of these cuts, Secretary Gates cited the need to address our "extreme fiscal duress." The duress is real, but it won't be solved by cutting a defense budget that accounts for less than 20 percent of all federal spending. Demobilization after previous wars has cost us severely. We experienced that problem as recently as 2001. But at least in the past we waited until a war was actually over to spend the "peace dividend." Now we are announcing cutbacks while the fighting is still going on. That's indefensible. Luckily, there are Republicans in Congress—and, dare we say, some Democrats—who understand these cuts are dangerous. They should reject them, and the other reckless cuts in a military budget that's already stretched awfully thin.

*—Max Boot*

# Economic Growth Must Drive the Agenda

**By Thomas J. Donohue**
President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

During the past two years, Congress and the administration have tried just about everything to reignite the nation's economic engine. But little of what was undertaken—not the misguided overhaul of our health care system, not sweeping financial markets reform, and not a flood of new regulations—yielded positive results. It wasn't until just a few weeks ago that Congress began to change direction. The two-year extension of existing tax rates—along with a changing business cycle—seems to have injected some life into the economy.

What must be done to ensure that this recovery takes hold, creates jobs, and expands the economy? It starts by recognizing that economic growth must be policymakers' top priority. While not a silver bullet, economic growth is still the best option for solving the country's many challenges. Robust growth creates jobs and opportunities, encourages innovation, and improves our standard of living.

In some cases, realizing our growth potential will require a financial commitment. While the U.S. Chamber has long believed that the reach of government should be limited, there are legitimate reasons to invest public funds. The trick is to distinguish investments—which offer a positive return—from wasteful spending.

Take infrastructure, for example. Research conducted for the Chamber found a direct link between infrastructure investment and economic growth. By allocating the resources needed to modernize our crumbling infrastructure system, we can create jobs and facilitate commerce. But we must also be smart. This means eliminating "Bridges to Nowhere" and focusing on projects of national or regional importance. Roadblocks to private infrastructure investment must also be removed so that taxpayers alone are not left to foot the bill.

What enabled the United States to become the world's dominant economy in the 20th century was a willingness to invest in assets that produced long-term returns and set the stage for economic growth—things like infrastructure, education, and basic research.

At the same time, we must not lose sight of the nation's growing fiscal crisis—or the growing regulatory state. To preserve the free enterprise system that has served us so well, spending and regulations must be pruned. Everything must be on the table, including the modernization of our social welfare programs. It's plain business sense—you can't spend more than you take in for long.

It's time that lawmakers put ideology aside and focus on a common agenda that will stimulate economic growth. By doing so, we can preserve America as a land of hope and opportunity.

**U.S. Chamber of Commerce Comment at www.chamberpost.com.**

# A Majority—If You Can Keep It

## Lessons for John Boehner from Congresses past.

BY JAY COST

The 112th House of Representatives, which convened for the first time last week, is in many respects a historic one. The Republican majority of 242 representatives is larger than any the party enjoyed from 1994 to 2006. Of course, the Republican Revolution of 1994 broke 40 years of Democratic control of the House, but even the GOP's brief majority of 1952-54, built on Dwight Eisenhower's coattails, reached just 221 seats. One has to go all the way back to 1946 to find a Republican House majority larger than the current one. In that famed 80th Congress, the GOP held 245 House seats.

Given how closely matched they are in terms of partisan strength, one might even be inclined to compare the new House with that of 1946. Upon closer examination, however, one will notice many important distinctions between the Republican majority of 1946 and that of 2010. Appreciating these differences can help illuminate the nature of the Republican party in the 21st century, and clarify the goals for the GOP in this new Congress.

Prior to the Great Depression, party loyalties in the United States were largely sectional. Sixty years after the end of the Civil War, Americans still basically voted the way they'd shot—the North backing Republicans, the South backing Democrats, and the West usually toggling between the two great parties. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal transformed northern party alignments into a class-based divide, which left the Republicans at a distinct disadvantage, as working class northerners bolted the Grand Old Party. FDR's successful coalition reduced Republicans to the party of the Yankee middle class in the Northeast and the small towns of the Midwest—far short of a majority.

Roosevelt's death in 1945, combined with the difficulties of converting from a wartime to a peacetime economy, finally gave the GOP an opening. The results in the 1946 midterms looked like a reversion to the pre-Depression balance of power: Republicans won nearly 75 percent of congressional districts outside the old Confederacy, including many working class enclaves in the big cities. The entire House delegation from Philadelphia, for instance, went Republican, which it had not done since the 1930s.

Unfortunately for the GOP, the New Deal political alignment would not be so easily undone, and the Republican majority of 1946 proved short-lived. Harry Truman's political advisers astutely urged him to run a campaign in 1948 that would exploit the class cleavages of the New Deal,

GARY LOCKE

*Jay Cost is a* Weekly Standard *staff writer.*

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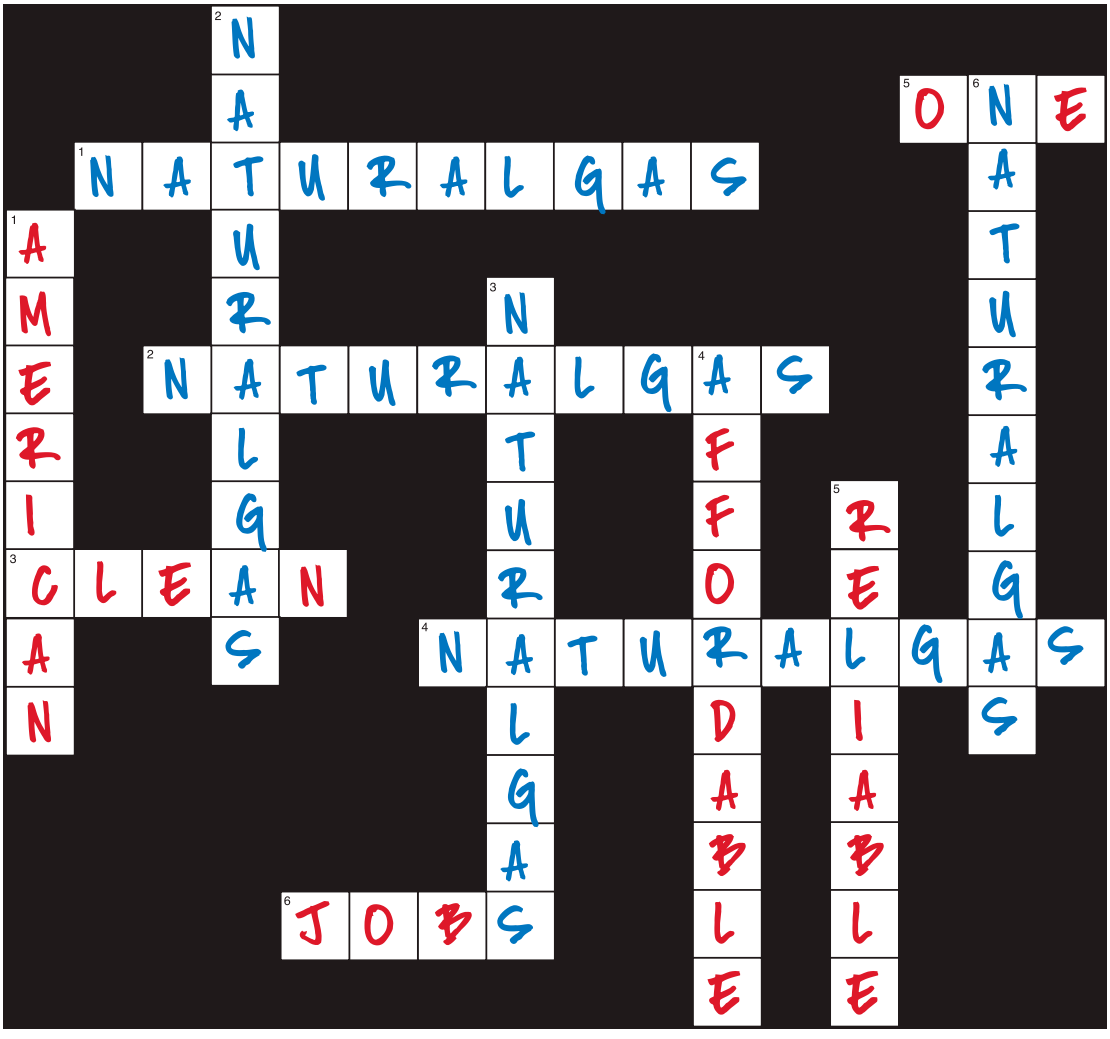


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and thus remind old FDR voters why they had backed the Democrats for so long. The Democrats won 263 House seats, a stunning reversal.

The Republican gains in 2010 do not appear to be nearly as flukish. The GOP surge depended on the consolidation of the Bush vote; districts that had been splitting their ballots—voting for Republican presidents and Democratic congressmen—stopped doing so in 2010. Thus, most Republican gains last year came in areas where the party has been strong for some time. In the 66 districts the GOP won from the Democrats, George W. Bush carried on average 55 percent of the presidential vote in 2004. Even John McCain carried an average of 51 percent of the vote in those same districts in 2008. This suggests that, unlike in 1946, the GOP sweep in 2010 will have staying power, even if President Obama should be reelected. To hold their majority in 2012, House Republicans will basically have to defend their home turf.

Another crucial difference between the majorities of 1946 and 2010 is the kind of electorate the latter is built on, a distinction that becomes evident when we consider the new speaker of the House, John Boehner. At first blush, one might be inclined to see him as a throwback to the old Republican party. After all, here is a conservative who hails from the Cincinnati area and who has mastered the legislative process. That description conjures up the memory of the great Republican leader of the 1930s and 1940s, Ohio senator Robert Taft, "Mr. Republican," as he was known.

Yet Boehner's home is actually in Butler County—just north of Cincinnati. The city itself was long a Republican bastion, but neighboring Butler had a decidedly Democratic tilt until the 1950s. Population growth driven by the rise of the postwar suburbs swung it to the GOP, which it has consistently supported for president since 1968. For much of the rest of the GOP House leadership, the story of their home districts is the same. Eric Cantor, Jeb Hensarling, Pete Sessions, Tom Price, and John Carter all come from the South, a region where congressional Democrats dominated until the 1994 midterms, while Vice Conference Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers comes from Speaker Tom Foley's old district in Washington. Of the GOP leadership team, just two members—Peter Roskam of Illinois and Kevin McCarthy of California—have electorates with long memories of supporting Republicans.

*The end of the Pelosi era*

The leadership is indicative of the entire caucus. Over the last 60 years, Republican strength has moved southward and westward into territory once controlled by the Democrats. A comparison between the Republican majorities in the 112th and 80th Houses illustrates this point quite succinctly. In the states of the old Confederacy, the GOP holds 94 seats in the 112th House; it held just 2 seats in the 80th House. Meanwhile, in New England the GOP holds just 2 seats in the 112th House; it held 21 in the 80th. And in New York, once a Republican bastion, the GOP holds just 8 seats in the 112th House; it held a whopping 28 seats in the 80th House.

This shift in the Republican coalition, out of the Northeast and into areas once dominated by the Democrats, has its origins in two major trends. The first is the rise of the suburbs, particularly in the Sun Belt cities of the South and West. The growing white collar classes found these places appealing because of air conditioning, interstate highways that made commuting to work a cinch, and the urban unrest and high taxes of the cities. The pro-growth policies of the Republican party made new suburbs a natural home for these voters.

The second trend is the leftward drift of the Democratic party. After the reforms of the Great Society, northern liberals acquired control of the party and pushed it away from the political center, alienating scores of old New Deal voters like culturally conservative Catholics. Once a mainstay of the New Deal coalition, white Catholics actually handed the Republican party a 20-point victory in the 2010 midterm elections.

These trends are fascinating to those of us who love political history, but they are also of relevance for anybody concerned about the future of the Republican party, for they help us understand what the GOP needs to do with this outsized House majority it's been handed.

For a generation after the FDR presidency, the Democrats credibly claimed to be the party of equitable prosperity—that is, they promised to deliver economic growth while implementing popular social welfare programs like Social Security and Medicare. It's clear from the last two years that today's Democratic party is no longer capable of accomplishing both goals at the same time.

In the face of a mounting deficit crisis facilitated by an out-of-control entitlement system, the Democratic party of Barack Obama and Nancy Pelosi proceeded to create yet another entitlement. Their farcical claims that it would reduce the deficit depended entirely upon the age-old Washington tradition of gaming the congressional

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budget process. The reality is that Obamacare will make an already bad fiscal situation much worse. When the time comes finally to deal with the deficit, the Democrats can be expected to offer but one solution: onerous taxes that will surely strangle our fragile economic recovery.

This is a big part of why the Democrats have lost so much of the old New Deal coalition. Once upon a time, the Democrats promised a reasonable social safety net that would not impede growth. Social Security and Medicare were perfectly consistent, they argued, with 3 percent or better increases in annual GDP. Yet those days are long gone. Today's Democrats might talk a good game about prosperity, fiscal responsibility, and a vibrant and secure middle class, but the proof is in the pudding: The last significant action of the 111th House saw a majority of all House Democrats vote to keep taxes low. But of the Democrats who are returning to the new Congress, a majority of them voted to raise taxes just as the economy is limping out of recession.

What the Republican party—supported as it is today by so many former Democrats—must do is what the Democrats used to claim to be able to do. The Republicans must find a way to sustain the entitlements that Americans have come to depend on—most notably Social Security and Medicare—without crippling the economy with increased levels of taxation. Liberal Democrats who demagogue about secret Republican schemes to destroy Social Security and Medicare have it exactly backwards. In truth, the Republican party—and *only* the Republican party—can save these entitlements without destroying the prospects for economic growth. The Democratic party can no longer be counted on to do this, which is why the GOP consists of so many old Democratic constituencies. This is the great mandate of the GOP: not to destroy the New Deal and Great Society, but to save their best elements from the ruinous ambitions of today's liberal Democrats. ♦

# The Martyrdom of Bradley Manning

## The left has a new hero.

**BY JONATHAN V. LAST**

An intriguing aspect of the WikiLeaks saga is the story behind the arrest and public unmasking of Private Bradley Manning.

In late May of last year, Manning was arrested by the Army's Criminal Investigation Division. At the time, he was stationed in Iraq at Forward Operating Base Hammer, 40 miles east of Baghdad. Just 22 years old, Manning was an intelligence analyst, and while he wasn't immediately charged with any crime, the Army had reason to believe that he was involved in leaking classified information to Julian Assange and WikiLeaks. Just one month earlier, WikiLeaks had posted the gun-sight video of a 2007 U.S. helicopter attack in Iraq which the site titled "Collateral Murder." It was the first high-profile leak in what would become a sustained campaign by WikiLeaks against the American government.

With Manning in custody, the Army was trying to figure out the scope of his offenses when, in July, WikiLeaks released a compendium of 77,000 American military documents relating to the war in Afghanistan. The Army believed that Manning was behind these leaks, too. In the course of their investigation, they discovered that Manning had downloaded 260,000 State Department cables from the Net-Centric Diplomacy database on SIPRnet. When WikiLeaks published these documents in December, Manning was suspected of having handed them over as well.

*Jonathan V. Last is a senior writer at* THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

The public first learned about Manning's arrest not from the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* but from Wired.com, the sister website to the magazine *Wired*. The scoop came from reporters Kevin Poulsen and Kim Zetter. And here's where the story gets interesting.

In the late 1980s, Poulsen was a computer hacker. Under the nom de guerre "Dark Dante," Poulsen accomplished a number of inventive, if not strictly legal, feats. As a 17-year-old he allegedly hacked his way into the Defense Department's ARPANET. He later hacked private corporations, such as Pacific Bell, and various federal systems, where he uncovered information about ongoing FBI investigations. This was enough to get the feds after him; he was indicted in 1989. At the time, the Department of Justice's cybercrime unit, which rode herd on Poulsen's case, was headed by a fellow named Mark Rasch.

With the FBI at his heels, Poulsen went on the lam for 17 months. During his run, he hacked into the phone system of a Los Angeles radio station, 102.7 KIIS-FM. He took control of their phone bank and used it to win various contests by arranging things so that he could always be the 102nd caller. His fabulous prizes included a Porsche 944 S2, a vacation to Hawaii, and $20,000 in cash. When Poulsen was featured on the true-crime TV program *Unsolved Mysteries*, the show's 1-800 tip line was mysteriously disabled.

The fun ended in April 1991 when Poulsen was arrested at a supermarket in Sherman Oaks, at 10 o'clock at night. In 1994 he pled guilty to an

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array of charges, including wire and computer fraud. He served a total of five years in jail.

Upon his release, Poulsen became a journalist. He wrote first for SecurityFocus, a website dedicated to information and cybersecurity. Oddly enough, one of SecurityFocus's other contributors was Mark Rasch, who by that time had left the Justice Department and gone into the private sector.

Poulsen has become an enterprising—and quite excellent—reporter. He occupies an unusual position in journalism, possessing not only an enormous amount of technical expertise, but also contacts in both the reformed and unreformed hacker worlds. In 2000, Poulsen was working on a piece about security issues at AOL when he interviewed a hacker named Adrian Lamo.

As Poulsen later explained, "Lamo was nearly unique among hackers of that period, in that he had no evident fear of discussing his unlawful access, regardless of the inevitable legal consequences. He cracked everyone from Microsoft to Yahoo, and from MCI to Excite@Home. And he freely discussed how he did it, and sometimes helped the victim companies close their security holes afterward." Over the years, Poulsen and Lamo became friendly, with Poulsen frequently using Lamo as a source.

In May 2010, Poulsen wrote a story for Wired.com about Lamo's having been institutionalized for Asperger's syndrome. The piece was read by Private Manning in Iraq and it struck a chord; he immediately reached out to Lamo and initiated a series of online chats and emails. It was during the course of these conversations that Manning confessed to Lamo that he had given a mountain of classified material—including the "Collateral Murder" video—to WikiLeaks.

Lamo was a hacker who operated on the fringes of the law, but he knew the difference between computer crime and offenses like Manning's that could get people killed. He was troubled by what Manning had told him and consulted some people in cybersecurity. One of them was Chet Uber, the head of a rag-tag volunteer group, Project Vigilant, which attempts to (legally) compile evidence of cybercrime and forward it to the authorities. Uber asked Lamo to talk with Rasch, who is listed as Project Vigilant's general counsel. (There is some dispute as to how serious Project Vigilant is; Rasch demurely describes the group as mostly "aspirational.") Both Uber and Rasch urged Lamo to give his chat logs to the FBI. On May 25, he met with FBI agents at a Starbucks near his house in Carmichael, California.

The entire affair lasted barely a week: Manning reached out to Lamo on May 21 and was arrested within days. Lamo told Poulsen about his contact with Manning, and Poulsen, after Manning was taken into custody, convinced Lamo to give Wired.com a copy

of the chat logs and to go on the record.

Yet somehow in all of this, the character who's emerged as a folk-hero isn't Kevin Poulsen, with his only-in-America journey from computer prodigy, to dashing hacker, to jailbird, to stud journalist. It's Private Bradley Manning, who sits in the brig at Quantico facing eight federal criminal counts related to the mishandling of classified information. The left, both here and abroad, has turned young Manning into a cause célèbre.

Like some latter-day Mumia Abu-Jamal (or Julius and Ethel Rosenberg), Manning is being held up as a brave voice of morality and defiance, victimized by corrupt forces of "digital McCarthyism." In December, the city of Berkeley took up a resolution to have him declared a "hero." Michael Moore regularly posts information about pro-Manning rallies on his website. The *Nation*'s blog recently urged readers to remember that "without Bradley Manning and many others like him, Julian Assange and WikiLeaks and all our new-found public information would be as in the dark as Manning is right now." The Bradley Manning Support Network has sprung up to collect followers and money for his defense fund. Through their website, BradleyManning.org, you can donate cash or buy "Free Bradley Manning" T-shirts, buttons, and whistles or watch Julian Assange, on Al Jazeera, call Manning an American political prisoner.

Other lefties, such as Salon.com's Glenn Greenwald, have actually attacked Poulsen and Wired.com for bias, journalistic malpractice, and assorted conspiratorial evildoing. That's crazy, of course. But for these people, all reality is filtered through the lens of politics. For them, Manning and WikiLeaks are players in a grand opera about the moral depravity of America, so they must be defended and their antagonists must be attacked.

The funny thing is, Poulsen isn't particularly an antagonist. He's just a good reporter working a great story. ♦

# Capital Markets

## Walmart, D.C. community organizer.

**BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL**

Just as he was due to take power over New Year's weekend, Vincent Gray, the new mayor of Washington, D.C., declared surrender in what voters had anticipated would be a knock-down, drag-out fight. Last November Walmart announced plans to open its first stores in the District. The low-cost retailer operates in all 50 states, but the nation's capital has until now been a bad fit. Walmart has a reputation, in many cases well-earned, of pricing local shops out of business, and Washington has a lot of cherished local shops, particularly in the leafy neighborhoods where its elites live.

Gray doesn't poll well in those neighborhoods. His campaign was built around asserting—with a strong racial subtext—that his predecessor, Adrian Fenty, had spent too much time courting their favor. Gray won thanks to heavy support from organized labor. Walmart doesn't tolerate unions in any of its American stores. So the local head of the UFCW grocery workers' union, Thomas McNutt, greeted Walmart's promise of 1,200 new jobs by warning that the company was a "wolf in sheep's clothing." Between the muscle of pro-Gray unions and the influence of anti-Gray yuppie aesthetes, Washington, D.C., seemed to have a ready-made, broad-based anti-Walmart coalition that could impose its will.

It didn't. Days before his swearing-in, Gray told listeners to WTOP that he would insist Walmart pay "competitive wages . . . $12 and up with benefits is fair." Gray did not mention unions. Neither did the city councilman Harry Thomas, another organized-labor stalwart, who asked last fall only for "full-time jobs and labor-based pay rates." That means Walmart's four D.C. stores will probably see the light of day.

In the Washington drama, something has broken down in the familiar little-guy-versus-big-corporation narrative about Walmart. The main theme of decades' worth of press stories—that Walmart destroys communities—is making less and less sense. It is not that Walmart is blameless. No one who has been to a small, tight-knit city like, for instance, Hillsboro, Texas, will be able to shake the sense that the Walmart three miles away on Interstate 35 has something to do with the dozens of vacant shops around the courthouse square.

But there is a problem for those who would defend small shops and tight-knit neighborhoods against the transition to a more corporate kind of retail. It is that the transition is over. The communities that activists profess to defend against the encroachment of Walmart are today weakened or nonexistent. They are Potemkin communities, and this is true of both the elite wing of Walmart opponents and the demotic wing.

In one of the boutiques near the D.C-Maryland line, I spoke to a small shop owner who heads a local trade association. He is not a big fan of Walmart, but he worries as a citizen rather than a competitor: He dislikes the public-works concessions (new roads, building of utility lines, etc.) that he says Walmart is able to wring out of local governments. Moreover, the stories of Walmart wiping out mom-and-pop shops are true—but they are, he says, about ten years out of date. Any small business that is old enough to count as a "cherished community institution" has, over the past ten years, been subjected to unprecedented price competition that owes more to the Internet than it does to Walmart. Most small shops still standing in this environment are still standing because of some identifiable advantage in service or charm. They will be fine.

In the poorer parts of town, the case against Walmart was never strong to begin with. There, Walmart's foes tend not to be genuine grassroots movements, but rather government-connected activists and agitators who require buying off. The price is usually referred to as "investing in the community." Councilman Thomas had a meeting with Walmart executives to that end. The only awkward moment at the public meeting Thomas scheduled came when a member of the public demanded that Walmart put its promises in writing. Another city council member, Yvette Alexander, told the *Washington Post* that a Walmart "could be a great thing, but what have they done in the community?"

The answer, as it turns out, is plenty. When Walmart opened a store in nearby Landover Hills, Maryland, in 2007, it agreed to limit its sales of groceries and (a bizarre demand) pay for advertising for local businesses. One of the first press releases the firm issued after announcing its D.C. plans stressed that:

> Last year alone, Walmart and the Walmart Foundation contributed more than $2.2 million in cash and in-kind gifts to D.C.-based non-profit organizations including the D.C. Central Kitchen, Rachael's Women's Center, Latino Economic Development Corporation, Capital Area Food Bank, Center for Inspired Teaching and many others.

It subsequently announced plans to develop other "charitable partnerships."

Walmart bills its D.C. launch as a chance for "job opportunities and affordable groceries." This last may sound like an empty boast to a suburbanite, but it is not for an urban community organizer. The poor neighborhoods in the eastern part of the city are well supplied with liquor stores that sell lotto tickets, but they are desperately short of places that sell food. In the parlance of D.C. activists, these

*Christopher Caldwell is a senior editor at* The Weekly Standard.

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# RedChip's *NEXT* Top Performer

## (OTC BB: CBLY) China Bilingual Technology & Education Group Inc.

**(CBLY) Financial Highlights**

- **$24.2M Revenue (ttm)**
- **$12.5M Net Income (ttm)**
- **$0.42 EPS trading at $3.60***

**Stock price and data as of 12/29/2010*

Over the past several years China has experienced rapid industrialization coupled with a rising standard of living. Education spending has taken off and is expected to represent 4% of China's GDP by 2012. **China Bilingual Technology and Education Grp. (OTC BB: CBLY)** has benefited significantly from China's socioeconomic shift; growing revenues and earnings approximately 25% annually. **CBLY** has recently applied for a NASDAQ listing and if it traded in line with its peers, which trade in the 25-30 P/E range on average, **the stock could offer a potential return on investment of roughly 200%.**

# 2010 RedChip Top Performers

Longwei Petroleum Investment Holding Ltd.
NYSE Amex: LPH
$0.20 - $3.95
**1875%** gain
ALL TIME HIGH Nov 8, 2010*

L & L Energy, Inc.
NasdaqGM: LLEN
$1.01 - $14.91
**1375%** gain
ALL TIME HIGH Apr 7, 2010*

South American Silver Corp.
OTC: SOHAF
TSX: SAC. TO
$0.32 - $2.59
**709%** gain
Dec 3, 2010*

China Gengsheng Minerals, Inc.
NYSE Amex: CHGS
$0.80 - $4.35
**440%** gain
ALL TIME HIGH Mar 8, 2010*

*The companiesabove achieved the listed percentage gains while RedChip clients.*
**Stocks reached their highest percentage gain on the date listed.*

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are "food deserts." People who live in such neighborhoods do not worry about the competition faced by their local shops because they don't really have local shops.

One crucial thing Walmart did when it announced its push into Washington was to release a poll. Taken by Lester & Associates (Mayor Gray's pollster), it showed that 73 percent of Washingtonians want a Walmart. Then it broke the numbers down by ward, showing that 95 percent of the residents of Ward 8—the poor area that former mayor Marion Barry represents—favored getting the stores. Walmart, which always enters new markets formidably armed with economic and public opinion data, has set up a Washington website to explain to local shoppers "how they can be an advocate for the company." Far from thwarting the agenda of progressive interest groups, Walmart increasingly sells itself as *embodying* that agenda.

Walmart's problem used to be this: It had a winning argument to make to consumers, but people are not solely consumers. They are also small-business owners and citizens who treasure their familiar institutions. And when people considered themselves something other than consumers, the Walmart argument did not always win. Now it always wins. That is a sign that Americans *are* just a bunch of consumers, or at least that the area of the American brain occupied by matters other than shopping continues to shrink. ♦

# A T-Paw Party?

## Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty has a better chance than you think. BY JOHN MCCORMACK

Two-term Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty says he won't decide on a 2012 presidential bid until March or April, but for over a year he's been giving every indication that he's running for the Republican nomination. Since announcing in the summer of 2009 that he would not seek a third term, he's traveled to Iowa seven times and New Hampshire five times and scooped up staffers from Washington to work on his political action committee. The week of January 10, shortly after leaving office, Pawlenty begins a media blitz for his new autobiography with appearances on *Nightline*, *Hannity*, *The View*, CNN, the *Daily Show*, and all the morning shows.

Because Pawlenty has been less coy than other likely presidential contenders about whether he'll run, he's generated less interest while the press is concentrating on who's in and who's out. And because he sparked little enthusiasm when John McCain considered him as a vice presidential nominee in 2008, he's perceived by some as unlikely to be a finalist this time. But as he steps out into the national spotlight, Pawlenty hopes his record will attract notice. He may, in fact, be the most underestimated Republican presidential candidate—one who could appeal to the Tea Party and the Republican establishment.

Low-key and likeable, Pawlenty may not have the YouTube videos of a Chris Christie, pugnacious New Jersey governor, to prove it, but he has governed his left-leaning state as a fiscal conservative. Pawlenty was one of just four governors to earn an "A" on the libertarian Cato Institute's most recent biennial fiscal report card. (Indiana governor Mitch Daniels, beau ideal of the budget hawks, got a "B.") "I actually went into doing this report card sort of thinking [Pawlenty] was mediocre on fiscal policy," says Chris Edwards, who wrote the report. "I think he's been superb about the last five years or so."

"He's been a veto king," says Edwards. Indeed, Pawlenty issued 299 vetos during his tenure. He blocked the Democratic legislature's tax hikes on everything from income and gasoline to beer and wine. His first order of business after he took office in 2003 was to close a $4 billion budget deficit without raising taxes. But two years later, after a nine-day partial government shutdown, he agreed to a compromise with the legislature that included a 75-cent per-pack cigarette tax, which Pawlenty calls "a health impact fee" and "one of the regrets I have." In hindsight, he says he could have avoided the "fee" by letting the shutdown run on longer.

But in general Pawlenty was tight-fisted. During his first six years in office he significantly restrained the growth of the state budget, which had ballooned under his predecessors of both parties. When the recession hit and revenues dropped, Pawlenty vetoed the legislature's tax hikes and forced it to accept a biennial budget down 10 percent from the previous two years.

Pawlenty says his fiscal conservatism is consistent with the principles of a self-described "Sam's Club Republican" who can appeal to Reagan Democrats with his conservative-populist message and up-by-the-bootstraps biography.

The youngest of five children in a Polish-German family, Pawlenty grew up in the meatpacking town of South St. Paul, a community of 20,000 next to the Twin Cities. His father was a truck driver and his mother was a homemaker; she died of cancer when Pawlenty was just 16. On her deathbed she told Pawlenty's siblings it was her wish that he would be the first in their family to go to college.

He ended up attending the University of Minnesota for both his undergraduate and law degrees. At law school, he met his future wife, Mary, with whom he has two teenage daughters. Though raised a Catholic, Pawlenty was married in and now attends an evangelical church with his wife. "She's helped out [in my career] with great advice and encouragement,"

*John McCormack is online editor of* THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

says the former governor. "She stays out of policy—at least publicly."

Pawlenty's interest in current events began in high school, when he subscribed to *U.S. News and World Report* and argued with his father about politics at the kitchen table. He got involved in the College Republicans, went on to work on the campaign of Senator David Durenberger in 1982, and took a break from his law practice to serve as Durenberger's political director in 1988. Four years later, Pawlenty won a seat in the state house of representatives, where he rose to majority leader. He won his first term as governor in 2002 by eight points and his second term in 2006, a terrible year for Republicans, by one point.

While Pawlenty's background, executive experience in a state that borders Iowa, and record as both a fiscal and social conservative—he's strongly pro-life—could prove to be a winning combination, he has some challenges to overcome. With his somewhat boyish looks and regular-guy demeanor, Pawlenty doesn't seem the most likely person to command the role of chief executive. He also runs the risk of overplaying the working class shtick after his nearly 25 years as a lawyer and politician. He isn't known to be an electrifying speaker, although he's welcome and cheered at local Tea Parties.

Pawlenty will also have to account for some heterodox positions he took as governor. In a 2008 *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, conservative Minnesota talk radio host Jason Lewis urged John McCain to pick someone other than Pawlenty if he wanted to appeal to conservatives. Among the heresies Lewis highlighted were Pawlenty's environmentalism, his signing a statewide ban on smoking in bars and restaurants, and his 2006 statement that "the era of small government is over."

While Pawlenty stands by the smoking ban and says it's a non-issue for most conservatives in the state, he has tacked to the right on green issues: After signing a bill to develop a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2007, he wrote a letter opposing cap and trade in 2009. "I definitely have altered my view of that," he acknowledges. "I looked at it carefully, thought it might be worth exploring, but have determined it's a bad idea."

Asked about "the era of small government is over," Pawlenty calls it "a big misunderstanding." He explains, "David Brooks wrote a column for the *New York Times* Sunday magazine, the subtitle of which was 'The era of small government is over,' and I quoted him in the paper." He got the local paper to issue a clarification, insisting, "We have fought to make government smaller in a really liberal place." Even conservative talker Jason Lewis now concedes, "It's hard to argue with his conservatism. . . . I think presidential ambitions changed Pawlenty."

While Pawlenty leaves office with a record that's about as conservative as could be for a Minnesota governor, he has yet to present a detailed national agenda. He talks about the need to cap Medicaid spending and block-grant it to the states. He points to modest reforms in his state as a model for making Medicare more efficient. When asked about voucherizing Medicare for younger workers, he speaks favorably but in generalizations: "We need to switch these systems, whether it's Medicare, Medicaid, education, almost anything else, to a cash bar model, not an open bar model."

For Pawlenty, though, some of the details can wait. Right now, he's just trying to get Republican voters to remember his name. ♦

# Knowledge Is Power

*Paul Ryan and Bob Corker are unusual members of Congress. They know a lot.*

**By Fred Barnes**

Paul Ryan was 28 when he arrived in the House of Representatives in 1999 as a Republican freshman from Wisconsin. Eager for advice, he sought the counsel of dozens of veteran House members on how to be an effective congressman. The most consequential advice came from an unexpected source, Democrat Barney Frank of Massachusetts. It was guidance for a committed conservative from one of Washington's leading liberals.

And it was quite simple: Be a specialist, not a generalist. As they talked over breakfast in the members' dining room, Frank went into considerable detail. "Pick two or three issues and really focus on them rather than being a yard wide and an inch deep," Ryan says Frank told him. Do your homework. Concentrate on committee work. Study. If you do, you'll be in the room when bills are written.

Ryan has followed that advice rigorously. His motto is, "Inquire, inquire, inquire, read, read, read." He has made himself an expert on the budget, taxes, and health care. Ryan knows more about the federal budget than anyone else on Capitol Hill and talks about it more fluently. Because of this, he was a shoo-in for chairman of the House Budget Committee last week, elevated over colleagues with more seniority. He will draft the House version of the 2012 budget, a document the Democrat-controlled Senate and the White House will have to take as seriously as the budget proposal of the executive branch, which the Obama administration is set to release early next month.

There's an old Washington adage that Ryan personifies almost perfectly: Knowledge is power. He's become enormously influential because he knows so much more than his colleagues on a few issues. And they happen to be the most critical issues in 2011—spending, the deficit, the national debt, taxes, Obama's health care plan, the size and reach of government.

In the Senate, Bob Corker, the only new Republican elected in 2006, figured out on his own that knowledge creates leverage in Congress. By 2008, he was a major player on the auto industry rescue and reform of financial market regulations, though he wound up voting against both of them. Over the past year, he started from scratch to learn about America's decaying missile force and grabbed a significant role in passage of the arms control treaty with Russia last month. And in his bid to cut government spending and reduce debt, he's found an ally outside the Senate—Ryan.

Even with the addition of Corker and Ryan, the roll call of members of Congress, past and present, whose mastery of complex issues brought power and prominence is remarkably short. Republican Jon Kyl of Arizona is Senate minority whip in good measure because he knows more about more subjects, understands them more thoroughly, and discusses them more and with more clarity than any other senator.

Like Ryan today, a young congressman from Michigan, David Stockman, emerged as an authority on the budget and spending in the late 1970s and was appointed White House budget director by President Reagan. For four decades until his death in 1971, Democratic senator Richard Russell of Georgia gained power from knowledge of issues, especially military defense.

Corker and Ryan, while both self-made congressional powerhouses, are quite different in their approach to legislative politics. Corker, 58, is primarily an inside dealmaker who, according to Nina Easton of *Fortune*, "has built his professional and political career on negotiating with people who don't always share his views." Ryan, now 40, is the Republican party's premier public thinker on domestic policy. He's also happy, as a legislator, to work with Democrats.

Corker is short and intense. Ryan is tall and easygoing. Corker likes to negotiate in private, as he did for 30 days last winter with Democratic senator Chris Dodd of Connecticut on regulating Wall Street. He excels at the inside game. Ryan usually plays an outside game, crusading for his Roadmap for America's Future, a comprehensive plan for shrinking government and reviving private initiative.

Ryan is a voracious reader of books and articles. In Washington, he lives in his office in the Longworth House Office Building, sleeping on a rollaway bed. He normally spends one to two hours a night reading. He handed out copies of the free market classic *Economics in One Lesson* by Henry Hazlitt to Republican freshmen. "Most of

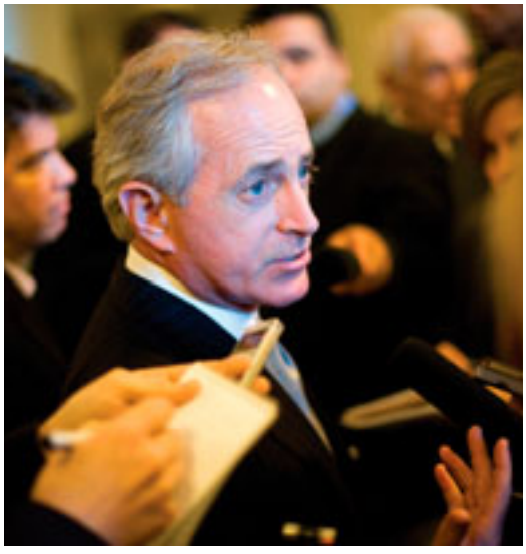
*Fred Barnes is executive editor of* The Weekly Standard.

them have already read *The Road to Serfdom*," Ryan says.

"I hate to say it," Corker says, "but I don't read many books." He's disciplined himself to read four newspapers—the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Financial Times*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*—on his Kindle "every single morning and doing that first. That, plus boring white papers." He had six of them with him when he flew back to Washington last week.

But for Corker and Ryan an important tool in gaining knowledge is talking to experts. As a member of Congress, Ryan says, "you can call any expert in the country and absorb their knowledge. That's the fun part of the job." Corker says "the most pleasant surprise [to being a senator] is you have such an opportunity to have access to information. There's almost no one who won't take your call. You can delve and delve and delve."

Both are averse to alienating congressional Democrats with personal attacks. But Corker has bruised some Republican egos with his rapid ascent. "People respect Corker's ability, but he needs to know his place," a senior senator told me. Corker believes he does. It's engaging in negotiations over big issues.



*Senator Bob Corker: 'You focus on a few things.'*

When Bob Corker, successful as a real estate developer, then as mayor of Chattanooga, arrived in Washington, he found that the fallout from a controversial campaign ad had preceded him. The TV spot featured a white woman who said she had met Harold Ford Jr., Corker's Democratic opponent, at "the Playboy party." Its tag line: "Harold, call me."

Since Ford is African American, the ad was denounced as racist. It had been aired without Corker's consent by the Republican National Committee and probably did more damage than good to his campaign. In any event, the controversy faded as Corker delved into Senate business.

After five weeks as a senator, Corker had an epiphany. "The whole five weeks were pretty miserable," he says. He was going to "26, 27, 28 meetings a day, accomplishing nothing. This isn't what I came here to do." He needed a "timeout," Corker says.

Corker decided to go back to his habits as a CEO and mayor. "You focus on a few things that you really drive home. You do this in the mayor's office. This is what a CEO does, focuses on three or four things and really makes a difference. . . . Somehow or other, we've ended up being in the middle of things of interest and import."

Last February 10, Corker got a call from Dodd, whose talks with Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama, the ranking Republican on the banking committee, had ended without a compromise on the sweeping expansion of financial regulations. Dodd wanted to negotiate with Corker, though he was a junior member of the committee.

Their daily talks progressed so well the White House and Senate Democrats feared Dodd was conceding too much. When Dodd and Corker went to Central America on a congressional trip—the financial bill wasn't on their agenda—the alarm grew to the point that Treasury Secretary Tim Geithner was dispatched to join the trip and make sure Dodd and Corker didn't come to an agreement.

On March 10, Dodd informed Corker their talks were over. The White House, figuring Republican votes weren't needed, pulled the plug. Dodd fell in line. The bill took "a very big veer to the left," Corker says. He and all but three Republicans voted against it.

There's an epilogue—two really. Last May, two days after the *Washington Post* reported on White House efforts to spurn a compromise with Republicans, Obama invited himself to the weekly Senate Republican policy lunch and lectured the group on the need for bipartisanship. Corker was furious. "I just want to know when you get up in the morning and come over here for a lunch meeting like this, how do you reconcile that duplicity?" he said, according to accounts of the meeting.

The president bristled and pushed back from the lectern as Corker spoke. Obama's answer was long but not responsive. He shook hands with senators as he left. "Your actions and your words don't line up," Corker told him, according to accounts. (Corker and the president have talked amicably several times since.)

At the financial overhaul hearings, Corker advanced the novel idea of skipping opening statements by senators. "You'd have Chuck Schumer show up" to deliver an opening speech, Corker cites as an example. "He wouldn't stay to listen to the witnesses." Dodd called the no-statement idea "the Corker rule" and embraced it for one hearing. But Dodd has retired, and the rule is likely to be retired too.

Corker's first serious media notice came during the

NEWSCOM

hearings on bailing out the auto companies. He has a vested interest in the auto industry, having played a part (as mayor and senator) in lobbying Volkswagen to build a plant in Chattanooga. "The most moving and meaningful thing that's happened to me in my public life was the phone call from Volkswagen" in July 2008 informing him the Chattanooga site had been picked. "I couldn't even talk," Corker says. "I was overcome. I told them I'd call them back."

Following the testimony by auto company CEOs from Detroit in November 2008, Corker made a strenuous effort to learn all he could about the auto industry and its financial woes. He opposed a bailout of General Motors. But, as he put it later, "I determined that if taxpayer monies were going to be used, it would be worth pursuing an approach where the automakers could return to profitability and the American people could be made whole to the greatest extent possible."

He spent the Thanksgiving holiday with his family in New York, devoting several days to consultations with bond traders, analysts, and experts on the auto business. He talked to company officials and later, once Obama took office, he became friends with the president's auto czar, Steve Rattner.

*Representative Paul Ryan: 'I meet with actuaries. I love those meetings.'*

From all this, Corker produced a series of recommendations that the White House referred to as the "Corker criteria"—a planned bankruptcy, opening union contracts, turning union health and welfare funds into equity. To sell its plan to keep auto companies in Detroit alive, "the administration had no choice but to make those things happen." Without them, he says, GM wouldn't have survived.

Corker dominated the second hearing with auto CEOs, getting Dodd to grant him extra time for his questions. This annoyed other senators. "I was so junior in seniority I was sitting in the cameraman's lap" at the far edge of the dais.

In December 2009, Corker was summoned by Kyl for a chat in the Senate dining room about missile modernization, which had been neglected for years. "I needed his help," Kyl told me. "He's a serious guy when he digs into an issue."

He visited research facilities at Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico and Y-12 in Tennessee. He consulted military, CIA, and defense intelligence officials. He discovered, Corker says, that "we're the only nuclear country in the world that's not modernizing," and some of the missile technology is ancient.

With Corker's assistance, Kyl forced the White House to promise more than $80 billion to upgrade missile forces. The promise was made reluctantly to gain ratification of the new arms control treaty with Russia last month. Kyl says Corker was an important ally. Corker voted for the treaty, Kyl against.

Unlike Corker, who arrived fresh from east Tennessee when elected to the Senate, Paul Ryan is a creature of Washington. It's as if a smart young academic at the Heritage Foundation or the American Enterprise Institute had returned to his home state, won a House seat, and became powerful. Ryan, in fact, acts like a think tank expert, hungry for more information and amenable to never-ending study.

There's but one way to become an expert on the budget, Ryan says. "You read it. You literally just read it. Having a knowledge of economic policy and having an economic doctrine is one thing. But understanding the federal budget and its components is another. Not many people do that. It's fairly laborious. I'm a self-taught person."

Jack Kemp, another "self-taught guy" according to Ryan, urged him to pursue knowledge and ideas. "Kemp encouraged reading and learning yourself. I also learned a passion for ideas and how they matter." Ryan worked for Kemp and Bill Bennett, the former drug czar and education secretary, at Empower America, a now defunct think tank, in the 1990s.

Ryan came to Washington after graduating from Miami of Ohio in 1992 to work for Republican senator Robert Kasten of Wisconsin. When Kasten lost later that year, he recommended Ryan to Kemp. As Kemp's assistant, Ryan met the intellectual leaders of supply-side economics, including Larry Kudlow, Art Laffer, Alan Reynolds, and Jude Wanniski. He sounds starstruck in talking about them today.

Bennett says Ryan hasn't changed. "He was the exact same person then, only younger." Bennett remembers Ryan asking him, "Dr. Bennett, I'm thinking about running for

REUTERS / JONATHAN ERNST

Congress. Does this pass the laugh test?" Bennett thought it did. Ryan, elected in 1998, still addresses Bennett as "Dr. Bennett."

Ryan had many mentors, and he's quite self-effacing in discussing them. His college economics professor, Richard Hart, urged him to read "the Austrians," Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises. "We did the Laffer Curve in college and we modeled it," Ryan says. "Keynesianism never sat right with me. It never made sense."

After Empower America, Ryan worked for Republican senator Sam Brownback of Kansas, who taught him "how to be kind to people and how to do well in politics." Brownback is now governor of Kansas.

From John Kasich, he learned how "to withstand all the pressure surrounding the budget process [and] to dare to be bold in writing a budget." Kasich, elected governor of Ohio in November, was chairman of the House Budget Committee from 1995 to 2000.

Ryan was on the House Ways and Means Committee while Republican Bill Thomas of California was chairman from 2001 through 2006. Thomas's advice, according to Ryan: "Bring in as many experts as you can and talk to them for an hour each," one after the other.

Ryan's breakthrough as author of the Roadmap was a direct result of his becoming the ranking Republican member on the budget committee in 2007. This gave him a staff of professionals and access to actuaries at the Congressional Budget Office, Treasury Department, and Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

"Only after I became a ranking member could I get the actuaries to do all this scoring for me," Ryan says. "They don't just do this for everybody in Congress." The Roadmap would reform Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, the tax code, and the health care system. Without credible numbers on its fiscal effects and its cost, Ryan's plan for restraining spending and wiping out the national debt would be purely abstract and easy to ignore. Now it's front and center, the most important Republican policy document in decades.

Ryan relishes the company of actuaries. "I've gotten to know them," he says. "It's actually the highlight of my day when I meet with actuaries. I love those meetings. That's the most interesting way I spend my time up here."

The Roadmap was released in May 2008, attracting minimal attention. Its biggest boost, oddly enough, came from Obama a year ago. Speaking to a House Republican issues conference in Baltimore, the president had kind words for the Roadmap, in effect putting it on the political map.

Ryan "has looked at the budget and has made a serious proposal," the president said. "I've read it. I can tell you what's in it. And there are some ideas in there that I would agree with, but there are some ideas that we should have a healthy debate about because I don't agree with them."

When the president said Ryan would give vouchers to current Medicare recipients, Ryan spoke up from the audience. "No," he said. "No?" Obama said. "People 55 and above . . . " Ryan responded. He corrected Obama once more, prompting the president to say, "No, I understand, right, right . . . "

Intentionally or not, Obama's mention of the Roadmap was a set up. Within days, the plan was attacked by Peter Orszag, then Obama's budget chief, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, and a handful of senior Democratic House members.

A month later, Ryan had a second public encounter with Obama, this time during the seven-hour White House health care summit emceed by the president. With Obama staring at him, Ryan unleashed a devastating critique of the president's health care proposal. It was riveting. Obama responded on a narrow point that Ryan hadn't raised, a wise decision on his part. Ryan, in all likelihood, understands the impact of Obamacare better than Obama does.

Just as Obama spoke to Republicans, Ryan crusades in the president's backyard. (A Wisconsin magazine called him "rebel without a pause.") As a member of the president's deficit commission, Ryan was cochair of the working group on health care with Alice Rivlin, President Clinton's budget chief and an Obama appointee to the commission. She had earlier invited Ryan to speak at the liberal Brookings Institution about the Roadmap.

"It became clear to me our minds weren't too far apart," Ryan told me. Their talks led to a highly publicized agreement on a Medicare and Medicaid reform plan lifted largely from the Roadmap (vouchers and block grants). "I see her as a very serious left-of-center policymaker," Ryan says. They differed on the commission's report. She voted for it. He didn't.

An alliance between Ryan and Corker was probably inevitable. Ryan is the more conservative, but both favor smaller government and less spending. In 2010, Corker gave more than 40 presentations, with a slide show, about the nation's fiscal mess. His so-called CAP Act would bring federal spending down to 20.6 percent of GDP over 10 years. Under the Roadmap, tax revenues would be held to 19 percent of GDP, though spending would vary from year to year.

Ryan and Corker met several years ago as members of a congressional delegation to Colombia. At Corker's instigation, they met again in November to discuss what both see as America's fiscal and debt crisis. This is an alliance with a future. Ryan and Corker learn before they speak. And it makes all the difference, even in Washington. ♦

# Our Broken China Policy

*Beijing plays chess; America plays tiddlywinks.*

**By Irwin M. Stelzer**

China's president, Hu Jintao, is about to make a state visit to Washington, hard on the heels of a statement by Liang Guanglie, his defense minister, that "in the next five years our military will push forward preparations for military conflicts in every strategic direction." Not quite Nikita Khrushchev's "We will bury you," but close enough to give President Obama good reason to reset our overall policy towards the Chinese regime, including abandoning the outdated notion that trade is only about economics. President Hu knows better: Trade, overseas investment, currency manipulation—all, war by other means; all, about the place of nations in the world, a key part of the "strategic direction" in which he is taking his country.

The United States, meanwhile, continues its historic policies. Free trade. Reliance on the World Trade Organization to settle disputes. Occasional public complaints about China's persistent undervaluation of the renminbi, but refusal to declare the regime a currency manipulator. And conferences, conferences, conferences. All very 20th century.

China is doing something altogether different. The Communist regime sees trade policy as merely one strategic weapon in a war aimed at overtaking the United States as the world's preeminent economic and military power. Undervaluation of the renminbi is necessary to keep China's export machine running at full tilt to create jobs for the millions who are moving from the country to the nation's cities. Lacking democratic legitimacy, the regime claims the loyalty, or at least the submission, of its people principally through its ability to provide jobs and a rising standard of living, especially important now since at the end of this year Hu, the paramount leader and general secretary of the Communist party, retires in favor of Xi Jinping. The last thing Hu wants is a transition marred by social unrest.

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The Chinese know that at some point they will have to allow the renminbi to appreciate by more than the token amount of recent months if inflation is to be avoided and its people allowed some of the benefits of the greater purchasing power of a more valuable currency. But by then they will have accomplished two longstanding objectives. First, their vaults will be stuffed with an even larger hoard of American IOUs, enough to give them an important influence over U.S. foreign policy. "How do you deal toughly with your banker?" asked Hillary Clinton of then-prime minister of Australia Kevin Rudd at a luncheon last year. His answer is not recorded.

Secretary Clinton, of course, was expressing the widely held fear in policy circles that China might decide to dump U.S. Treasuries and dollars on the market, driving their value down and interest rates up. That would bring our economic recovery to a screeching halt—or worse. Yes, the value of China's dollar-denominated assets would decline, but if a broader geopolitical objective were served, that would merely be a cost to include in the military budget.

Second, by the time they are forced to allow the renminbi to appreciate significantly, the Chinese will have copied enough American and Western technology to be less in need of an undervalued currency—they will have made-in-China products, subsidized if necessary, that can dominate world markets even if their currency more closely approximates its market value.

China's leaders know that the exports that have been filling Walmart's shelves are becoming cheaper to make in other countries. So the idea is to replace them with more technologically sophisticated products. Every deal to allow a foreign company to tap China's vast market comes with a requirement that it turn over technology. The initial orders satisfy American executives, their eyes focused on the next quarterly or analyst's report. The Chinese, their eyes focused on 2020 and beyond, know that, the technology in hand, they can continue duplicating the factories and techniques and dispense with the American capitalists.

Chinese policy towards the energy industries provides perhaps the best but far from the only example. Westinghouse Electric recently completed a technology transfer as part of a deal to sell four nuclear plants

to China. So, too, with the green energy business. The Chinese agree with President Obama: Solar panels are an increasingly important product and source of jobs. The main raw material is polysilicon, and when its price soared the Chinese poured cash into domestic plants and short-circuited the permitting process so that plants could go from groundbreaking to full production in a bit over a year; in the West that is a multiyear process. Result: China controls half the world market for solar-power equipment.

Move on to wind turbines. GE acceded to a Chinese government demand that it build a wind turbine factory in China if it wanted to tap its market. Now, subsidized state-owned contractors direct all their business to domestic manufacturers, who are also eating steadily into GE's U.S. market. The Obama administration has filed a complaint at the WTO—with no help from GE. Like all other companies that still see the Chinese market as one they must cultivate in order to grow their earnings, GE has backed off the public criticism of China in which it and others were temporarily emboldened to indulge when Google drew the line at accepting censorship and pulled out of China.

The camels that trod the old Silk Road laden with spices and porcelain are being replaced by air and sea freighters hauling solar panels and all sorts of goods based on copied technologies and purloined intellectual property. Nothing seems to have changed since Lenin observed, "The capitalists will sell us the rope with which we will hang them."

There is worse. While Barack Obama and American supporters of free trade are congratulating themselves on a WTO finding that China is subsidizing the export of cheap tires, and negotiating a trade deal that might enable American carmakers to sell a few more vehicles to South Korea, the Chinese are establishing themselves in Africa, South America, and the Middle East to lock up supplies of minerals, oil, and food. This is about more than money and trade balances, or the pursuit of an economically efficient use of the world's resources obtained through an Adam Smith-like international specialization of labor. It is about the use of state resources not only to satisfy the legitimate needs of a growing economy, but also to obtain the power to influence the policies of other nations.

Thus, when Japan detained the captain of a Chinese fishing boat that collided with a Japanese patrol vessel, China's rulers banned the export to Japan of rare earth minerals crucial to the manufacture of many industrial —including defense—products. Their more recent decision to cut exports of those minerals by over 70 percent is seen as an effort to force companies needing the stuff to relocate in China, which controls over 95 percent of the world's supply. The regime deems the nontrivial environmental costs of processing these minerals a small price to pay for the power their control confers. American liberals and greens prefer a more pristine environment.

Still another problem is the difference in attitudes towards foreign investment. The Obama administration's treatment and threatened treatment of earnings on foreign investments discourages companies from investing abroad. China, knowing that influence follows foreign investment, encourages it, even to the extent of offering to buy the bonds of broke European countries. Having already invested massively in resource-rich African countries such as Sudan, China is turning its attention to Latin America. In Argentina alone China's state-owned and subsidized companies have invested in a wide range of natural resource developments and in ports to facilitate the large-scale shipment of these resources to China.

Then, of course, there is India, a giant, fast-growing, democratic country that is now the prize in the 21st-century version of the Great Game. Barack Obama visited India and trumpeted his success in nailing down trade deals worth $10 billion. The next month Wen Jiabao, China's premier, played one-upmanship and booked $16 billion in deals, financed by China's banks, and announced he would open China's markets to Indian goods and double trade between the countries to $100 billion annually by 2015. Lest there be any doubt that China expects India to adjust its foreign policy to its new dependence on the Chinese market, it warned India that criticism of the Chinese leadership could threaten "fragile" bilateral ties that would be "difficult to repair."

Even more important are two additional factors, one economic, the other military. Beijing has its eye on the dollar: not the jiggles in its value but its position as the world's currency of choice. Countries can already invoice and settle trade deals in renminbi, which more will do as China gradually makes its currency more easily convertible. No need for dollars.

Then there is the military consequence of this engineered shift of wealth to China. The regime is becoming increasingly aggressive in asserting its claims to disputed territories, and backing those claims with a massively expanded military. Major General Jiang Luming, head of China's Institute for Defence Economics, has called for China to double to 2.8 percent the portion of GDP spent on the military, still below America's 4.5 percent, but rising much more rapidly. Most important, the Dong Feng 21D missile with a range of hundreds of miles and capable of taking out an aircraft carrier is no longer merely "aspirational," according to Andrew Erickson, a

Chinese naval expert at the Naval War College. Defense analysts call this "a game changer" that will force the United States to withdraw carriers from areas in which they are now based and operate. China is also building a formidable nuclear submarine fleet that experts say will soon outnumber ours; has plans for several aircraft carriers; and is upgrading its already significant cyberwarfare capability and its anti-satellite weaponry. "If the United States can light a fire in China's backyard, we can also light a fire in their backyard," announced Colonel Dai Xu of the People's Liberation Army.

This combination of economic success and military prowess has world leaders wondering whether the Chinese version of what has come to be called state capitalism is more likely to be the model for the future than the U.S. market-based version of capitalism. After all, China avoided many of the problems that afflicted America when its financial system almost collapsed, and is growing at multiples of the rate the U.S. economy is eking out.

"A 'Beijing consensus' has been gaining ground, extolling the virtues of decisive authoritarianism over shilly-shallying democratic debate," reports the *Economist*. Tony Tan, deputy chairman of the Government of Singapore Investment Corporation, one of the oldest and largest sovereign wealth funds with over $100 billion under management, told a recent gathering of financial and government leaders in Davos that emerging countries are reappraising whether they should use a "system of free markets . . . and minimum interference by the state. . . . State capitalism, interference by the state, has served [some countries] well."

Of course, the recent financial crisis is not the sole reason that the American model is less revered than it once was. The increasing affluence of state capitalist countries such as China, the reliance of the United States on supplies of oil from state-owned companies, and the trek of capital-short banks and other investors to the offices of sovereign wealth funds all contribute to the notion that the road to prosperity might lie through nations' capitals and with government officials rather than through Wall Street and with financial houses.

But there is good news, news that trumps all of these problems. Democratic governments are intrinsically more flexible than despotic ones. China's rulers are not infallible, any more than are ours. But they are less likely to hear, much less respond to, criticism and therefore more likely to overreach and less likely to change even a mistaken course of action in the absence of serious external pressure. Tiananmen Square is not the ideal place for a Tea Party demonstration. Thus, China's increasingly aggressive foreign policy has spurred its neighbors to action, hastened by the increasing sense in the region that America is furling its security umbrella. Japan, Australia, and India are shoring up their military capabilities, that last to counter what its prime minister, Manmohan Singh, calls China's "new assertiveness" and the regime's attempt to secure "a foothold in South Asia."

The possibility of such policy blunders by rulers shielded from criticism is not restricted to foreign affairs. On the domestic front, the inherent contradictions of China's centrally managed economy are more than trivial. A system that does not rely on prices to allocate resources is having trouble containing inflation: Food prices are rising at a rapid rate despite a nervous regime's effort to control them by raising interest rates, and inflationary expectations are rising even faster. Not all of the American dollars flowing in can be removed from circulation by the usual process of sterilization by the central bank; some are adding to inflationary pressures that have forced the regime to raise the minimum wage repeatedly, most recently by 21 percent. Inefficient state enterprises continue to sop up resources, the emphasis on job-creating production is causing environmental problems, and competition from lower-cost suppliers in Asia and Latin America is cutting into the profit margins of China's manufacturers. Most of the initial public offerings (IPOs) by Chinese firms have flamed out after an initial blaze of glory on stock markets. Meanwhile, the pressures of mandated growth that takes no account of pollution and other costs (estimated by a Chinese think tank to have risen by 75 percent in the past five years to a minimum of 4 percent of GDP) are reaching a point where Beijing is from time to time uninhabitable —think the Olympics.

These weaknesses in the Chinese system, less well reported than our own, are only one reason why the parlor game of forecasting the date on which China's GDP will overtake America's is not a particularly useful policy guide: It was this mindless projection of trends in the mid-1980s that led some analysts to predict that Japan's would now be the world's largest economy, just as it entered a decade of stagnation. There are two other reasons.

The first is that total GDP does not measure even material success. At about the time that China catches up to the United States in total GDP, its per capita GDP will still be one-fourth that of America, its per capita consumption even less.

Second, the new Great Game is about international clout, the ability to project power, not the ability to subsidize the production of sneakers, T-shirts, or even solar panels. In that game, only some of the points go to the owner of the largest GDP; most go to the country that

most intelligently allocates resources between its military and its domestic needs, between groups within its country, between the demands of the young and the needs of the elderly. There is no reason to believe that the system that brought starvation to millions when a wrongheaded leader was in charge, that has a stake in refusing to admit error, and that can survive only by denying its best and brightest access to all the information the world has to offer is slated inevitably to replace the United States as the world's most powerful nation—any more than there is reason to believe that it is inevitable that the dollar will be replaced as the world's reserve currency, or that America's military will be reduced to impotence, or that our economy will remain mired in financial difficulties and low growth. In the Sino-U.S. jockeying for supremacy America has enormous advantages.

Start with the rule of law. Investors in American assets need not fear waking up one morning to find that Vladimir Putin's *siloviki* own their company and that an arrest warrant has been issued for them. Or that their intellectual property has been stolen and turned over to a state-owned company.

Because property rights are secure, and intellectual property protected—overprotected, some critics contend—America remains the source of most of the world's innovations and the home of most of its great entrepreneurs.

Then there is demography. Unlike Europe with its shrinking, aging, and increasingly ethnically fractured population, or China, aging rapidly because of its one-child policy, with no safety net in place to protect the elderly, America is blessed with a relatively young population, with native-born Americans augmented by immigrants, many of them Chinese, coming in response to the lure of the American Dream (ever heard of the Chinese dream or the German dream?), a tribute to our still-excellent (in some areas) institutions of higher learning.

The American military, meanwhile, remains the most potent in the world, and we are blessed with an abundance of natural resources which, with sensible policies, can be augmented by acquisition of the overseas resources that China is now securing for its future use.

There is time to fix things: "The Chinese currency is still a long way from replacing the U.S. dollar as the world's reserve currency," writes Chi Lo, CEO of HFT Investment Management in Hong Kong. "China's navy is still a dwarf compared with the U.S.," an Asian defense attaché in Beijing tells the *Financial Times*. All we need are sensible policies.

■ Stop apologizing. It is absurd for an America that can accommodate Nancy Pelosi and Sarah Palin, assimilate millions of immigrants, and otherwise allow freedoms that the Chinese regime would not tolerate to bend a knee to that regime. Or to allow some low-level official to wag a finger in the face of the leader of the free world, as one Chinese bureaucrat did in Copenhagen, without his bosses fearing a response. The world noticed.

■ Open our doors to the talented Indians, Chinese, and others clamoring for visas so they can study here and contribute to our ability to maintain world leadership in innovation.

■ Recast trade and tax policy so that the incentives facing the private sector coincide more closely with the broader public interest. Recognize that private corporations, charged with maximizing shareholder value, cannot factor into their operations all of the externalities, most especially national security considerations, that China's state-managed companies are required to consider.

■ Re-do trade policy to end the continued advantage provided to China by its currency manipulation and theft of intellectual property and to offset the pressure on American companies to be accessories to that theft.

■ Expand the definition of technology transfers barred because they might threaten national security. GE claims its joint venture in avionics, the brains of military jet aircraft, transfers only nonmilitary technology, but the recipient is a Chinese company that, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, "makes fighter jets and helicopters in addition to civilian products."

■ Forget about adopting a military strategy that concentrates solely on wars of the sort in which we are now engaged. They may prove to be the "last wars" for which the military is notoriously prone to plan, rather than the next wars, which seem to be what Liang has in mind. Do whatever is needed to maintain superiority in the Asia-Pacific region, as our allies and potential allies are urging us to do.

■ Get our economic house in order and reduce dependence on our creditor in chief. If that means some tax increases, well, the Tea Party will just have to live with it. If that means some reductions in entitlements and other programs, well, the liberals will just have to live with it. And if that means an end to—let's be realistic, a reduction in—corporate welfare, well the corpocracy will just have to live with it.

In the end, it's the policy, stupid. Lawrence of Arabia, at least according to David Lean's film version, countered Arab belief in inevitability, that "It is written," with the retort, "Nothing is written." It truly is not written that we must continue to pursue the self-destructive policies of recent years. Tocqueville noticed that the greatness of America "lies . . . in her ability to repair her faults," and Churchill observed that Americans "can always be counted on to do the right thing . . . after they have exhausted all other possibilities." We have. ♦

'The Avenue at Middelharnis' (1689)

BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY / GETTY IMAGES

# Dutch Master

## *In search of Meindert Hobbema*

BY JOE QUEENAN

No painter in history is more taken for granted than Meindert Hobbema.

Every great museum has at least one of Hobbema's austere landscapes, often hanging in a place of great prominence, but just about nobody realizes this. This is because most people looking at a Meindert Hobbema canvas think that they are looking at a Jacob van Ruisdael. There are Hobbemas in the Louvre, the National Gallery in Washington, the National Gallery in London, and the Metropolitan Museum. But there are also Hobbemas in Indianapolis, Brooklyn, St. Louis, and Detroit. At the Frick Collection, the jewel-like Manhattan museum that probably boasts more masterpieces per square foot than any institution in the world, Hobbema's *Village with Water Mill Among Trees* is positioned directly between two Vermeers. Another gorgeous Hobbema sits in the main gallery, flanked by two Franz Hals portraits.

Yet not once in my life have I heard anyone talk about Hobbema or say how much they enjoyed his work. Not once. This is bizarre, since the pride of place accorded the artist by the Frick tells us one thing: Museumgoers may not know who Hobbema is, but curators certainly do.

I fell in love with Meindert Hobbema in my late thirties when I would take my son to the Frick, hoping to plant an interest in the visual arts that never quite took root. My son was not interested in the Turners or the Rembrandts, and he was certainly not interested in the Gainsboroughs, where the human figures look like well-heeled cadavers. The one painting he did take a fancy to was Hobbema's *Village Among Trees*, a typically bittersweet landscape that fuses a love of the outdoors with a sense of isolation, and perhaps even loneliness. My son liked the painting because it was sort of a puzzle, where if you gazed deep into the swirling trees of the forest you could make out human figures that were not apparent on first glance. We never went to the museum

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without playing our little game in front of the painting, trying to spot the hidden figures.

Like everyone else, I started out thinking the work was by Ruisdael, Hobbema's uncle and teacher, and only later realized that it was not. After that I started to notice Hobbemas everywhere, because once you get to know him he no more resembles Ruisdael than Pissarro resembles Monet. (Hobbema's paintings are less dramatic than Ruisdael's, with less color, and he does not draw human figures as well.) I immersed myself in the painter's life story, and would make special trips to museums in cities I had no other reason to visit just so I could see his work.

A certain point would always arrive at a dinner party where I would begin inveighing against those who denied Hobbema the renown he so richly deserved, both in his own lifetime and in mine. I would go on and on about how unfair it was that a master like Hobbema was hiding in plain sight, condemned to be eternally confused with another painter, while clowns like John Currin, whose only selling point is the distinctive quality of his crummy work, got huge shows at the Whitney. Friends would look at each other with expressions that said, "Don't get him started on Meindert Hobbema. The next thing you know, he'll be railing about the underappreciated Rockwell Kent."

The facts of Hobbema's life are hopelessly muddled. He was probably born in 1638 and probably died in 1709. He may have been born in Haarlem; he may have been born in Amsterdam; he may have been born in Koeverdam. There is some evidence that he died in poverty on the same street where Rembrandt, 32 years his elder, died in poverty; but even that is not certain. Most of his great paintings were completed by 1667; after that he seems to have given up art, taking a civil service position as a wine gauger, though he did come out of retirement in 1689 long enough to paint his wistful *Avenue at Middelharnis*, which hangs in the National Gallery in London. (His contemporary Albert Cuyp also gave up painting after marrying a woman who was pretty well fixed financially.)

Hobbema is thought to have been a student of Ruisdael, but even this is not definite, as Jacob van Ruisdael had a cousin named Jacob van Ruisdael, who was also a painter who died penniless. About Hobbema, almost nothing can be said for sure.

Most of Hobbema's paintings hang outside of his native Holland, because Dutch landscapes became insanely popular with the English in the 18th century and they had the scratch to buy them. They were also prized by Americans of the Gilded Age, men like Henry Clay Frick. At least one of the Hobbemas in Holland today had to be repatriated by the Rembrandt Association, a group that came into existence in 1883 with the express purpose of reacquiring Dutch art that had left the country. This Hobbema, *Wooded Landscape with Cottages*, was given to the Canadian government after the Second World War in gratitude for the Canadians' role in liberating Holland from the Nazis. The Dutch bought it back in 1994. My suspicion is that if the Dutch were really grateful to the Canadians, they would have sent them a Rembrandt; and if they had shipped a Rembrandt to Ottawa, I doubt that the Canadians would have shipped it back, no matter what the price.

*'Wooded Landscape with Cottages' (ca. 1665)*

That's just the way it goes with Meindert Hobbema.

The most remarkable thing about Hobbema's career is that almost all of his great paintings were done when he was in his mid-twenties. Matisse, by contrast, did not produce a great painting until he was in his thirties. Gauguin was almost 40 before he produced anything of note. The Hobbema painting that hangs between the two Vermeers at the Frick was completed by the artist at the ripe old age of 27. Thus, Hobbema was not only brilliant; he was precocious. But only a few people know it. Basically, me and a couple of art historians. That's about it.

A few snooty critics have dismissed Hobbema's work as "pedestrian," particularly when compared with the darker, more dramatic canvases of Ruisdael. This is like dismissing Ravel because he resembles, without being quite as good as, Debussy. Others say that Hobbema became widely collected only because Dutch landscapes were hard to come by in the 1800s, that all the Ruisdaels were gone, that his relative ubiquity is the result of market forces. But you need only look at Hobbema's contemporaries (other than Ruisdael) to see that this is nonsense. By comparison with him, they are slight and unambitious, and generic. If we think of a museum collection as an orchestra, Ruisdael is the first-chair violin and Hobbema is the first-chair viola. Ruisdael may be the more gifted, more prolific, more glamorous painter, but if there were no Hobbema paintings in the collection, you would eventually sense that something important was missing. Or at least I would: Just because you're not Michael Jordan doesn't mean that there's anything wrong with being Scottie Pippen.

For me, Hobbema, like Guardi and Greuze, constitutes the acid test when I visit a museum for the first time. Anyone can hang a Bellini, but it's the Pontormos that provide the spice. If a collection does not have a Hobbema, I do not consider it to be a great museum. It's fine and dandy to array all those Picassos and Raphaels and Titians—there are seven Rembrandts, two Hals, and two Vermeers in the tiny room at the Met where Hobbema's *Entrance to a Village* is housed—but it's the Louis Le Nains and the Sisleys and the Hobbemas that give a museum

sinew. These are the slightly-less-than-immortal painters of yesteryear who are, without question, far superior to just about any painter working today.

They are the artistic equivalents of Gabriel Fauré and Paul Hindemith and Francis Poulenc: brilliant artists who are not quite as brilliant as the titans. But without them, our lives would be greatly diminished.

I have spent the past 20 years or so talking up Hobbema among my friends, to no great effect. Two years ago, I actually flew all the way to Amsterdam—a city I had never visited and did not enjoy once I got there—with only one objective: to see the Hobbemas. Arriving at the Rijksmuseum I found that 90 percent of the building was closed off, the result of a massive structural overhaul. Not a single Hobbema was on display that day; I had to go next door to the basement of the Van Gogh Museum to see one.

Lamenting the situation to a woman working at the front desk of the Rijksmuseum, I asked why there weren't more Hobbemas on offer. "Who's Hobbema?" she asked.

The Rijksmuseum sits right around the corner from a street called Hobbemakade. Perhaps the woman at the front desk thought it was named after Dieter von Hobbema, or Ralph Hobbema, or Posh Hobbema.

This guy don't get no respect. ♦

B&A

# Fatal Intersection

*The marriage of Islamic fundamentalism and European anti-Semitism.* **BY REUEL MARC GERECHT**

Although many Americans and Europeans would like to believe that contemporary Islamic fundamentalism is an exclusive subsidiary of the Koran, the *sharia*, and other things tribal and Islamic, the truth is more Western. Jeffrey Herf's *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* and Ian Johnson's *A Mosque in Munich* are two indispensable books for helping laymen and scholars to understand better how we got to a world where Islamic fundamentalism, a wickedly anti-Semitic movement, is the dominant intellectual force in the Middle East and among devout Muslim elites in the West. They are well-written books—in the case of Johnson's, sublimely so—that distill detailed histories into compelling narratives.

**Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World**
by Jeffrey Herf
Yale, 352 pp., $30

**A Mosque in Munich**
*Nazis, the CIA, and the Rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in the West*
by Ian Johnson
Houghton Mifflin, 336 pp., $27

Professor Herf, an authority on the Third Reich at the University of Maryland, has written the first book-length investigation in English about the influence of Nazi propaganda on the Arabs. Academic literature is rich in looking at the impact of socialism and communism on Muslims; it has been less expansive in examining how the right-wing side of the Western brain left an imprint on Arab nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism.

In part, this is understandable. German National Socialists had a short run. Nazi shortwave Arabic broadcasts started in October 1939 and ended in the winter of 1945. (Fascist Italy broadcast Arabic programs from 1934 to 1943.) But as Herf points out, the Germans tried hard with around-the-clock radio broadcasts that were designed to overcome the Middle East's high illiteracy rates. As is well known, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem, who ended up in Berlin during the war, enthusiastically embraced the Nazis' genocidal cause against the Jews and became one of the primary players in German propaganda and in organizing Muslim SS units for use in Eastern Europe. Husseini became the spear point of Arab Muslim resistance to Jewish settlement in Britain's Palestine Mandate, the founding father of Palestinian nationalism. Opposition to Jews in Palestine, and later to Israel, became an essential ingredient in the pan-Arab identity and, more important, in modern Islamic fundamentalism. Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, the mother ship of Sunni fundamentalism, loved Husseini.

Herf excels at showing how the Nazi propaganda masters, utilizing German scholars of Islamic history, chose a strategy underscoring traditional Islamic anti-Jewish attitudes and texts in an effort to create a more lethal modern anti-Semitism. Centuries-old religious antagonism morphed, courtesy of the Germans, into racial hatred. Herf juxtaposes the views of famous Arabs and Muslim fundamentalists with those propagated tirelessly by the Nazi Arabic broadcasters, and the effect is to produce disturbing questions. Consider the comments of the Saudi King Abdul Aziz al-Saud in 1944, given at a dinner party where Nils Lind, an attaché of the American Legation in Jidda, is one of the honored guests:

> And now let me tell you the truth: It is the Jews who have always stirred up the religious differences between us. Where there was no difference the Jews created one. They are a dangerous and hostile race, making trouble wherever they exist. Why do you British and Americans love them and always take their side? . . . we Moslems are aware of their machinations and we hate them from the depths of our being. Our hatred of this sinful and evil race is growing day by day until our one ambition is

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*Police raid at the Munich mosque, 2005*

JOHANNES SIMON / AFP / GETTY IMAGES / NEWSCOM

> to slay them all. Where we see them encroaching on us we Moslems will fight them and butcher them until we have driven them from our lands. Allah be praised we have no Jews in our kingdom and never shall we allow one Jew to enter it.

The king's sentiments are similar to those of Osama bin Laden, the Ayatollah Khomeini, his successor Ali Khamenei, Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of the Lebanese Hezbollah and one of the most admired men today in the Arab world, and the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), perhaps the most influential Arab Sunni militant of the 20th century, whose well-read books are everywhere in Muslim bookstores and mosques in Europe. Parroting classical European anti-Semitic themes, Qutb declared that behind "the doctrine of atheistic materialism was a Jew [Karl Marx]; behind the doctrine of animalistic sexuality was a Jew [Sigmund Freud]; and behind the destruction of the family and the shattering of sacred relationships in society . . . was a Jew [Emile Durkheim]."

It is possible that left-wing anti-Semitism, which the Soviet Union pumped out vigorously in the early 1950s, also could have had a profound impact on Muslim thought, given the enormous penetration of Marxist ideas in the Middle East, even among clerics. But Herf's argument—that "one chapter of [Islamism's] history was written in Nazi-dominated Europe and in particular in wartime Berlin"—seems more persuasive than seeing thick Communist roots underneath modern Muslim anti-Semitism. The Nazis, unlike Communists who must damn religion and false prophets, easily wove the Koran and the Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad [the *Hadith*] into Arab anti-Semitism. As Herf writes:

> The diffusion of Nazi ideology and in particular of radical anti-Semitism struck a nerve because it expressed ideas that connected to the indigenous traditions being selectively received and accentuated by Arab and Islamist ideologues.

Now, what Herf cannot show, because he's not an Arabist, Persianist, or Turkologist, is the extent to which these anti-Semitic views have been mainstreamed into Muslim societies. He has used a wide array of translated documents, but he's well aware that further research is blocked by his lack of Islamic languages. Alas, an enormous body of infected literature awaits scholarly assessment in Arabic and Persian, and increasingly in Turkish. Anti-Semitism has become so common in Arabic and Persian that one almost doesn't notice it or, out of good manners, one ignores it, believing it an echo of the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation.

Herf's work can elicit dismissive hisses and silence from Arabist scholars and diplomats who are concerned about wounding the Palestinian national cause, or just making Muslims appear in a bad light. The wisdom of Vatican II—that it's healthy and essential to turn a spotlight on systemic problems—isn't seen as applicable with Muslims since they are not similarly guilty of the ghastly crimes that flowed from Christian Europe's embrace of "Christ-killer" demonology. But European-style anti-Semitism is sinking deeper into Muslim communities. Muslim charges against the Jews now have a historical depth and religious/racial dimension that seem unlikely to be cured by a Palestinian flag rising over East Jerusalem. It might even make the hatred worse.

Like Herf, the Pulitzer Prize-winning former *Wall Street Journal* reporter Ian Johnson knows German well. And he uses it, sleuthing out the truth behind the construction of the first mosque in Munich. Johnson's curiosity about the Islamic Center of Munich began in 2003 in an Islamist bookstore in London where he espied a global map that displayed the center's mosque, which was founded in 1958, as one of the most important mosques in the world. "That seemed odd," Johnson tells us.

> I had been writing on religion in Europe . . . for half a dozen years, and had lived in Germany even longer. I had heard of the mosque as the headquarters of one of Germany's smaller Islamic organizations. . . . Munich was no center of Islam . . . [yet] it was immortalized in someone's pantheon.

Johnson thus began a five-year voyage, which took him to prewar Berlin and one Gerhard von Mende, a promising, linguistically talented scholar of Central Asia who embraced the Nazi regime. Von Mende and others in the *Ostministerium* (Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories) developed a plan to turn the Muslims of the Soviet Union against Stalin. The plan failed, but as Johnson reveals, a cadre of pro-Nazi, anti-Soviet Central Asian Muslims survived to be aimed by the West Germans and Americans, with von Mende still guiding the effort, against

the Soviet Union. A somewhat tense competition developed between the West Germans and the Americans for Muslim radio broadcasters and covert-action agents, which eventually became a competition between German-supported/alcohol-friendly Central Asians (they meet in Bavarian beer halls) and American-supported devout Arabs connected to the Muslim Brotherhood.

The construction and control of the Munich mosque became center stage in this tug-of-war between two different types of anti-Soviet Muslim activists, who also launched themselves, with covert aid and varying degrees of failure, in a global propaganda campaign against the Soviets. In the end, and with CIA support (my favorite character in the story is a womanizing, nudist-loving, energetic covert-action officer), the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe won the battle. Johnson compiles much evidence to suggest that Said Ramadan, the founder of the World Muslim League (now a major Saudi Wahhabi missionary organization) and the Islamic Center in Geneva (the intellectual headquarters for the Muslim Brotherhood in Europe), was a CIA covert-action agent. The son-in-law of Hassan al-Banna and father of Tariq Ramadan, the chic "moderate" European Islamist gadfly, Said Ramadan was a dedicated anti-Communist; he was also a virulent anti-Zionist and anti-Semite, a jet-setting intellectual who established a beachhead for Islamic militancy in Europe.

As Johnson points out, the major Muslim organizations within Europe are all much more militant than ordinary Muslim denizens. (A similar situation exists here.) Most of them were born through the missionary activity of the Muslim Brotherhood, combined with cash coming from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states. Present at the creation of this now-extensive network of like-minded Muslims was Said Ramadan and the struggle to build the Munich mosque. Johnson could not get the CIA, or retired officers, to confirm Ramadan's salaried relationship with the agency, but he compiles a convincing circumstantial case. It boggles the mind (and should excite some Hollywood screenwriter) to imagine that a heavy-drinking, sex-obsessed CIA nudist, who didn't know anything about Islam, or particularly care for the company of Muslims, enlisted the services of one of the most celebrated Islamists of the last century.

Johnson overplays a bit the centripetal importance of the Munich mosque: Islamic fundamentalism has been the dominant intellectual force in the Middle East since the 1960s. Said Ramadan and his kind were not strategic geniuses, bringing militancy to a religious community that would have known only moderation if not for American aid. They were just the edge of a coming storm: an intellectual revolution among Muslims who were having difficulty absorbing modernity. Trouble in the Muslim heartlands would soon spill over into the Arab expatriate populations living in an unfriendly, culturally seductive and shocking, and prosperous Europe. The militant beachhead in Europe became a place of refuge for fundamentalists hounded by security services back home.

Always alert to irony, Johnson is wry in his parallels: A know-nothing CIA nudist pushed Ramadan to center stage in the 1950s; after 9/11, Republican and Democratic administrations actually reached out to American and European Muslim associations inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood and funded by Saudi cash to spread a message of interfaith fraternity. Johnson hits upon the biggest ironic twist since September 11, 2001.

In some ways, the 9/11 attacks were the best thing that happened to the Brotherhood. Yes, there was a crackdown (in Europe and America), and for a while the Brotherhood suffered. But the attacks caused most Westerners to judge Islamists by one criterion: Was this person a terrorist? If so, then the full weight of government power was brought to bear; if not, then the person was okay. Such people weren't blowing things up, and they were not only tolerated but valued. Far from problematic, their extremist, undemocratic views were a sign of credibility. They could talk to the Muslim Street. They became one of democracy's most highly valued commodities: a dialogue partner.

Ian Johnson understands that the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt could be viewed as a reform movement at home, given the despotism of President Mubarak. But "what seems moderate in Egypt can be radical in Paris or Munich." He doesn't mince words about the dangers posed by the Brotherhood and its many offshoots in the West: "Although the Brotherhood says it supports terrorism only in certain cases—usually against Israel—it does more than target Jews. It creates a mental preconditioning for terrorism."

Johnson takes aim at the European Council for Fatwa and Research, which is probably the most influential body involved in shaping Islamic religious opinion in Europe. This outfit is enormously deferential to the views of Mahdi Akef, the former head of the Egyptian Brotherhood and a Holocaust denier, and Youssef Qaradawi, the most influential television preacher in the Muslim world. Qaradawi, who is constantly on the Al Jazeera satellite channel, is a big fan of suicide bombings against Israeli civilians, the stoning of homosexuals, and the physical intimidation of Muslims who don't hold holy what he does. In Qatar, I once witnessed the late Richard Holbrooke attempt to debate Qaradawi, who has railed against al Qaeda. Holbrooke simply gave up in stuttering disgust as the two men lived in different moral universes. As Holbrooke discovered with Qaradawi, and as the CIA *didn't* discover years earlier with Said Ramadan, making common cause with such men is perilous.

President Obama appears determined to reach out to Muslims, to ally America with the anti-al Qaeda faithful against the holy warriors. But in doing so he would do well to remember the mistakes of the past. Obama boldly asserted in Cairo that he knows "what Islam is" and "what it isn't." Having spent five years investigating well-intentioned Americans similarly committed to engagement, Ian Johnson might politely answer: "Perhaps not." ♦

B&A

# The Beats Go On

*And on and on until the reader wants to howl.*

BY ALEC SOLOMITA

*Gore Vidal, William S. Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, 1964*

The small group of drug addicts, thieves, pedophiles, and murderers that constituted the core of the Beat Generation has received more than its share of coverage since September 5, 1957, when Gilbert Millstein enshrined Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* in the *New York Times*. But the numberless critical works, biographies, and revivals—recent publications by and about Kerouac marking the 50th anniversary of his most famous work—are not enough for Bill Morgan.

**The Typewriter Is Holy**
*The Complete, Uncensored History of the Beat Generation*
by Bill Morgan
Free Press, 320 pp., $28

In his introduction, Morgan points to the vacuum *The Typewriter Is Holy* means to fill:

> I've studied dozens of biographies of individual Beat authors such as Kerouac, Burroughs, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, and the rest, but stories that focus on a single writer sometimes obscure the overall Beat chronology and make it difficult to see exactly how their lives intersected. For example, when Burroughs was experimenting with his cut-up method, what was Kerouac doing? Or where was Ginsberg when Ferlinghetti was standing trial for the publication of "Howl"? Or what were they all doing while Cassady was locked in a San Quentin prison cell?

Morgan diligently answers these questions, and hundreds more, in this short, interminable volume. Now, presenting the intertwining lives of members of a literary or intellectual movement is a perfectly respectable venture: The Romantics (Daisy Hay), the American Transcendentalists (Susan Cheever), the Pragmatists (Louis Menand), Britain's Angry Young Men (Humphrey Carpenter), and the Bloomsbury Group (everyone else) have all received this treatment. In the case of the dangerously influential, overexposed Beats, however, it's an otiose exercise. It is tawdry enough to read a biography of William Burroughs or Allen Ginsberg (or a sample of their correspondence) without learning what every other member of the "family" was up to when Ginsberg first slept with the killer Lucien Carr or when Burroughs shot his wife. Most of the lives that intersect on these pages are sordid, selfish, indulgent, and destructive. There are some exceptions: Ginsberg's great "enabler," William Carlos Williams, the earnest poet Gary Snyder, the San Francisco poet and publisher Lawrence Ferlinghetti, the radical *éminence grise* Kenneth Rexroth, and the critic, poet, and novelist Randall Jarrell. (It is both painful and humorous to see the last two become quickly unenamored of the wild boys after Robert Creeley and Kerouac steal Rexroth's wife, and Gregory Corso and Kerouac trash Jarrell's house.)

In his subtitle, Morgan calls his book a "history" when it is really a chronicle, and brags that it is uncensored when, it fact, it appears to be unedited. He dives into his multibiography with nary a word about the times, and with little background information about his protagonists. His few moments of psychological or political "interpretation" are, when not inaccurate, vapid, baffling —or both. Allen Ginsberg meets Carl Solomon in the New York State Psychiatric Institute:

> The two found that they shared a love of literature and immediately compared themselves to the heroes of their favorite Russian novels. They identified easily with those poor souls who were most helpless to defend themselves against a cruel and callous society.

What novels? What heroes? What poor souls? This withholding of the telling detail is as negligent as Morgan's analyses, as we see in his gesturing toward a "cruel and callous," materialistic and conformist, American society: "At a time when the average American was content and wanted to enjoy postwar prosperity quietly, the Beats sensed that an essential spiritual element was missing." Burroughs sought the "spiritual element" in Tangier by buying boys

FRED W. MCDARRAH / GETTY IMAGES

*Alec Solomita is a writer living in Somerville, Massachusetts.*

and shooting heroin. Ginsberg sought it in a relentless hucksterism for himself and his friends, an endless quest for exotic hallucinogens, and a personal and literary exhibitionism. Morgan's moments of literary criticism are as unnuanced as his cultural commentary: Gregory Corso is a "great poet," as is Bob Dylan. Leroi Jones's ritualistic play *Dutchman* "was a powerful story that illustrated what might happen if a mild-mannered black man ever found himself in an emotionally charged situation with a flirtatious white woman on a New York City subway." More generally, the Beats "followed a long tradition of writers from Homer to Blake to Keats and Shelley, who wanted poetry to bring about social, political, and cultural change," and "it was through their efforts that freedom of speech was once again restored to America." Case closed.

Morgan thanks no less than five editors in his acknowledgments, yet there are numerous editorial infelicities, including repetitions of whole passages (just slightly altered) and references to events that hadn't been reported earlier. The editors are also derelict in neglecting to lend Morgan a thesaurus. His physical descriptions are remarkably consistent: Lucien Carr is "one of the most handsome students in the incoming class at Columbia that year," Kerouac was "even more handsome" than another Beat, and when Ginsberg meets Kerouac, "Ginsberg found himself face to face with one of the most handsome men he had ever met." Peter Orlovsky beats Kerouac by a hair—"Allen later recalled that he was the most handsome man he had ever seen"—and Haldon Chase "was a handsome young Columbia student." Morgan describes Neal Cassady's "astonishing good looks" in more detail: "He exuded a strong sexual aura and with an IQ of 120, he was as intelligent as he was charming and personable." Only poor Ginsberg "was not an attractive boy."

Morgan does manage to show that, as he writes in his preface, Allen Ginsberg was, indeed, the "locomotive that pulled the others along like so many boxcars." An indefatigable self-promoter, the author of "Howl" was also unfailingly loyal to his friends and colleagues and was the impetus behind the publication of *On the Road* and *Naked Lunch*. It's fair to say that the Beat Generation as we know it would not exist without Allen Ginsberg. But *The Typewriter Is Holy* fails to convince that we are anything but poorer as a result of the Beats' influence. Kerouac remains a bad boy's adventure writer, bursting with grandiosity, dull and humorless. Burroughs produced incoherent genre salads with an occasionally successful satirical routine amid thousands of pages of impenetrable prose.

Ginsberg himself continues to be breathtakingly overrated. A few of his many poems are amusing, particularly some in his first collection; but they are, for the most part, prolonged tantrums and exhibitionist confessions. He has often been compared, and was happy to compare himself, to Walt Whitman; but he had neither Whitman's wonderfully controlled long line nor his appreciation for the world's majesty. Ginsberg's lines are long, to be sure, but he unwittingly installs speed bumps even in his happy detours into fluency. ♦

B&A

# One Man's Mirth

## *Will you or will you not LOL?*

**BY LIAM JULIAN**

When Judd Apatow was a boy, he took a summer trip to Los Angeles to visit his grandparents and begged them to drive by the home of his hero, Steve Martin. They did. And as luck would have it, as they passed Martin's house, Apatow spotted the comedian in the driveway. The youngster bolted from the car and asked for an autograph. "Sorry," Martin said, but he didn't give autographs at home. No exceptions. So Apatow returned east, penned an angry letter, and mailed it off to his idol. A few weeks later a package arrived. In it was a copy of Martin's book *Cruel Shoes* and a note: "I'm sorry. I didn't realize I was speaking to *the* Judd Apatow."

**I Found This Funny**
*My Favorite Pieces of Humor and Some That May Not Be Funny at All*
edited by Judd Apatow
McSweeney's, 480 pp., $25

After decades spent working in all-purpose anonymity—doing stand-up, staying up nights to craft jokes, booking comedy clubs, fashioning scripts, and producing shows—*the* Judd Apatow is now widely known. His credits include writing and directing the hit comedies *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* and *Knocked Up*, and work on movies like *Superbad*, *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, and *Funny People*. Apatow has formulated a distinct style of comedy—explicit and raunchy, yet also family-values-heavy. His characters are misguided, but have good hearts, and they usually end up doing the right thing. He is prolific; it can seem as if every few months another film with which he was involved is released.

And now, a book, a collection of Apatow-assembled pieces from authors such as Raymond Carver, Nora Ephron, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Conan O'Brien. (All proceeds will go to a nonprofit organization that tutors children and helps them learn to write.) Apatow "made a point of including writing from all disciplines," he notes, and here are short stories, poetry, essays, scripts, and drawings. *I Found This Funny* "mainly focuses on what I am most interested in—humor. But several of the pieces are not at all funny, but I could not resist putting them in because they mean so much to me."

For example, a story by Dan Chaon examines a woman's feelings about (and unsettling attachment to) her

*Liam Julian, a Hoover Institution fellow, is managing editor of* Policy Review.

brother-in-law, who has been convicted of rape and imprisoned. Not so funny. But lots else is. In "Coyote v. Acme" by Ian Frazier, Mr. Wile E. Coyote brings suit against the Acme Company, seeking compensation for "personal injuries, loss of business income, and mental suffering" caused by Acme's "actions and/or gross negligence." Readers learn, "Such injuries sustained by Mr. Coyote have temporarily restricted his ability to make a living in his profession as predator." A *New Yorker* profile of the late comedian Bill Hicks illuminates; a never-picked-up television pilot by Robert Smigel and Conan O'Brien amuses (the opening line: "I'm here to audition for 'Happy Days: The Next Generation.'"). Jack Handey is in the book, too, writing about his first day in Hell.

Apatow is a recent convert to reading. Upon emerging from an adolescent obsession with Stephen King, he mostly avoided books until one day several years ago, when he decided to take time off from work, stay home, and read: "So the question was—where to start?" Apatow's friends suggested authors to him, and he tracked down their works. Then he found out which authors had influenced the authors he had just read, and he tracked down their works, too. One book or story led to another, and *I Found This Funny* is Apatow's own advice for those who, like him, are arriving late to the literary party. Here, he says: Give this stuff a try. ♦

B&A

# The Right Thing

*A philosopher misunderstands humanity's code.*

**BY JAMES BOWMAN**

When President Obama excused his failure to help the abortive Iranian revolution in 2009 by saying that the protestors were "on the right side of history," or when Harry Reid (himself "always on the right side of history," according to the president) attempted to stigmatize Republicans as being like slaveowners for opposing the president's health care bill because they were not (like the Democrats) "on the right side of history," or when the late Edward Kennedy used to fulminate about "reactionary" Republicans—all were implicitly appealing to historicist assumptions inherited by the progressive left from Marxism.

So far, at least, if no farther, those on the right who identify Obamaism with socialism are right: "History" to Marx was a god-substitute whose will not only *should* be done but *would* be done, since we were all helpless to resist its predetermined course. As the name they have chosen for themselves suggests, American progressives, even when they have not been seduced into actual Marxism as many were in the 1920s and '30s and then again in the 1960s, have always had something of a fascination with such historically determinist thinking. That's why, I take it, they continue to use the language which presupposes it. They may not look forward anymore to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, but they still find it easy to assume that history has a "side"—and that they themselves must be on it.

**The Honor Code**
*How Moral Revolutions Happen*
by Kwame Anthony Appiah
Norton, 264 pp., $25.95

Though he is Ghanaian by birth, Kwame Anthony Appiah, professor of philosophy at Princeton, has presumably been part of American academe long enough to have picked up the habit, and in his new book, it has led him seriously astray. For "honor" to Professor Appiah remains a vague concept and, though taxonomized, it is never properly defined. As he uses the term, it almost always refers simply to the sum of the things that, in different times and places, honor required of people who, for some reason he doesn't feel it necessary to go into, considered themselves to be bound by its requirements—until they didn't anymore. Most of the time, that is, "honor" is a near-synonym for public opinion, and public opinion, as we all know, changes. As with morality, moreover, everybody nowadays assumes he has a right to make up his own honor.

It should not be necessary to point out that this has not always been the case. I think that what Appiah is really writing about is decency. Honor and decency have this in common: that they are not, primarily, absolute values but socially contingent ones. This makes it particularly important to study them in their social and historical context and not in the abstract. But where almost anything can be decent, depending on the society, honor also has an absolute dimension. Historically, in every actually existing honor system we know of, honor is inseparable from shame, is fundamentally and inevitably different for men and women (for men it involves strength and fighting prowess, for women it involves sexual continence), and it routinely inspires acts of violence.

Yet these elements, so Appiah assumes, can be silently subtracted from the honor formula without changing anything important about it. Honor, he writes, "especially when purged of its prejudices of caste and gender and the like, is peculiarly well suited to turn private moral sentiments into public norms" and so "can help us make a better world." But what if honor, "purged of its prejudices of caste and gender and the like," isn't honor anymore? What if the utopian effort to "make a better world" requires that we first get rid of honor—always assuming this is possible? For honor and utopianism are antithetical. Honor, when it was important to us, was important not because it was a

*James Bowman, the author of* Honor: A History *and* Media Madness*, is a resident scholar at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.*

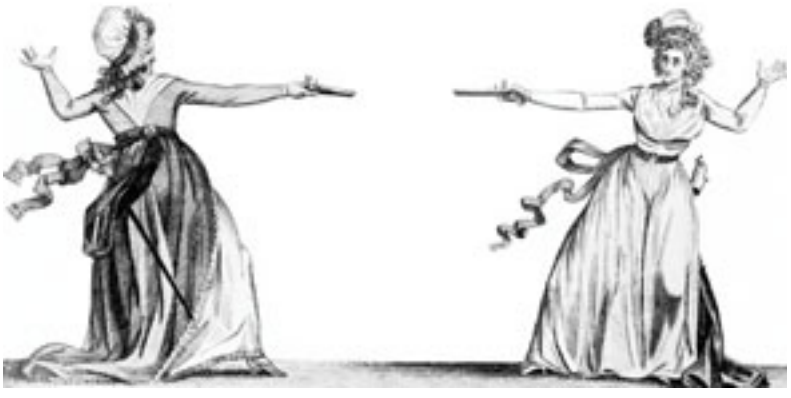
way to make a better world but because it guided us in our interactions with the world as it is, and especially in regard to its two most salient and dangerous features of sex and violence.

Honor, Appiah notices, used to uphold the custom of dueling in Britain, female footbinding in China, and the slave trade pretty much everywhere. Then it didn't anymore. These changes in public opinion took place mostly in the 19th century, and Appiah has lots of ideas about why they happened, most of them to do with social snobbery in highly class-based societies. But when he attempts to lump these all together under the concept of "honor" he is handicapped by having little or no historical understanding of what the term honor meant to the people who believed in it and why they considered themselves bound by it—and no sense, even, that it would matter if he did. It's enough for him to describe what honor once demanded of these benighted souls—in, for example, the duel fought between the Duke of Wellington and the Earl of Winchelsea in 1829—and then to show how those demands continued to weaken until duels became as unfashionable as they had once been fashionable.

Likewise with slavery and footbinding. His view turns out to be that the special form of public opinion he chooses to call "honor" eventually put a stop to dueling, foot-binding, and slavery because public opinion turned against these things. To call this process honor is to add no explanatory element but simply to put a label on it, and an inaccurate label at that.

Honor was the thing that was changing (and degrading), not the agent of change. That was something else: namely, a widening of the moral sense as a result of Enlightenment thinking, and of the individual's obligation to abstract principle instead of to his family, tribe, nation, or other honor group. The triumph of morality over honor may or may not be something to celebrate—most people today would probably say that it is, whether they believed it or not—but to suppose that morality *became* honor, or honorable, is to be guilty of a basic confusion of thought.

If so, however, it has become a common one. As someone who has himself written a book about honor, I don't mind saying that what puzzles me about Appiah, as about so many others who are eager to pronounce on the subject, is his assumption that what honor ought to be (in his view) is of more interest to the reader than what it actually *is*—or, for the most part, *was*, since in all but a lingering reflexive sense it has gone badly out of fashion. It is as if he were writing a book about insects or sailing ships or gardening that described these things in ideal and even fantastical terms with only incidental reference to existing insects, sailing ships, or gardening practices.



*'Petticoat Duellists' (1792)*

HULTON ARCHIVE / GETTY IMAGES

Like most people who use the term at all these days, Appiah uses "honor" to mean nothing more than some mode of behavior of which he (and others of the progressive persuasion) approves. As a result, the philosopher's attempt to dabble in history is essentially an extended tautology: To say that changes in "honor" resulted in changes in certain common social practices is, in the absence of any very clear idea of what honor is apart from those changes, simply to say that change produced change.

What, then, is the point of making this argument? Why drag "honor" into it at all? The answer is that it amounts to an apologia for our old friend history, busily converting darkness into light, ignorance into knowledge, bad into good, without our having to do anything but keep the reactionaries from standing in its way. After his chapters on the duel, foot-binding, and slavery, Appiah's fourth chapter on "Wars Against Women"—a politically tendentious title that betrays his lack of understanding of the concept—is an account of the (mainly South Asian) phenomenon of honor killing, and his fifth, "Lessons and Legacies," sketches in what he thinks honor ought to be. Not surprisingly, you couldn't slide the sharp end of the blade of a dueling sword between that and the most advanced progressive opinion.

What I take to be the impulse behind this curious sort of scholarship is, in some ways, a laudable one. It is an attempt to rescue what is supposed to be something useful and desirable in itself, namely the concept of honor, from its own shocking political incorrectness. *Real* honor, its new advocates want desperately to believe, is not violent or misogynistic—even though every kind of actually existing honor known to history is (in contemporary terms) both violent and misogynistic. They devoutly believe in an ideal of reformed honor that lives up to contemporary ideas of proper politics and morals and then, reading backwards, find that existing codes of honor must be merely corrupted and unpurified versions of this ideal.

The idea is absurd and absurdly unhistorical, but it does suggest how much of contemporary scholarship is devoted to advocacy of one sort or another of utopian fantasy under the color of social science. If honor really does have its uses—and many would argue that it doesn't—we shall remain blind to them so long as we study it not as it was, and is, but as we wish it to be. ♦

B&A

# True Hit

*A classic gets the Coen Brothers treatment.*

**BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

The writer-directors Ethan and Joel Coen, whose new movie is the remake of the 1969 John Wayne western *True Grit*, may be the most controlled and controlling moviemakers in America. So in command of their craft are they, and so literate and knowing about their intentions, that one can generally presume what we experience when we watch a Coen movie is pretty much what they want us to experience.

For whatever reason, the Coens have spent much of their careers actively working to frustrate their audience and its expectations. In their Oscar-winning *No Country for Old Men*, for example, they have us follow the meticulous efforts of a clever fellow to get away with a briefcase full of cash for more than an hour only to have him killed offscreen. In their lighter films, such as *Raising Arizona* and *The Big Lebowski*, they often intentionally overdo and repeat certain comic/slapstick tropes as if what they actually want to do is annoy us—the way a precocious child will do something funny, and then do it again and again until it becomes the opposite of funny.

The Coens do not like the false sentimentality or easy satisfaction of conventional moviemaking tropes, and their work constitutes a nearly ideological statement against them. The problem is that those tropes developed over the course of a century for a reason. When they are violated, even in an effort to get to a deeper truth, their violation generates an unsettling anxiety, as though we're following a roadmap that is actually causing us to get lost.

The anxiety provoked by *True Grit*, however, is unique in the annals of the 15 Coen films. For once, these extraordinarily controlled filmmakers lost control over an important part of their movie, and for an entirely unlikely reason. It's not their desire to create narrative frustrations. Nor is it the source material or the story: Mattie (the remarkable Hailee Steinfeld), a whip-smart 14-year-old in 1870s Arkansas, engages a drunk and violent federal marshal named Rooster Cogburn (Jeff Bridges) to help her find her father's killer. They are joined by LaBoeuf (Matt Damon), a Texas Ranger who is also hunting for the bad guy. The three must cross into the lawless Choctaw Nation, where nothing goes as planned.

**True Grit**
Directed by Ethan and Joel Coen

*Jeff Bridges*

The glory of *True Grit* is not in the tale, though it's a perfectly good one, but in the telling. *True Grit* is a beautifully written film—in part because much of the dialogue is taken directly from the gloriously singular 1968 novel by Charles Portis. Despite the great care they have taken with the screenplay, they have allowed the movie's star, Jeff Bridges, to deliver his lines in a growling basso that makes at least half of the words he speaks almost entirely incomprehensible.

Bridges, for whom I have great respect, has never before been guilty of this kind of actorly malfeasance. And the Coens have never before allowed a performer the ruinous latitude they give Bridges here. Consider this key moment, after a failed effort to capture the killer and his gang. Cogburn delivers an enraged speech that, on paper, knocks you out:

> We have barked, and the birds have flown! Gone, gone, gone! Lucky Ned and his cohort, gone! Your $50, gone! Gone, the whiskey seized in evidence! The trail is cold, if ever there was one! I am a foolish old man who has been drawn into a wild goose chase by a harpy in trousers, and a nincompoop! Well, Mr. LaBoeuf can wander the Choctaw Nation for as long as he likes; perhaps the local Indians will take him in and honor his gibberings by making him chief! You, sister, may go where *you* like! I return home! Our engagement is terminated! I bow out!

On screen, it's gibberish. I made out maybe every third word.

Throughout, Bridges sounds like an old stick shift that is having trouble going from second to third gear. Meanwhile, Matt Damon, the criminally underrated actor who plays LaBoeuf, blows Bridges off the screen; he finds a voice and accent and style for his character that make him all but unrecognizable. That's what Bridges was trying for—that and seeming different from John Wayne—and it's amazing how poorly he managed it in comparison to Damon.

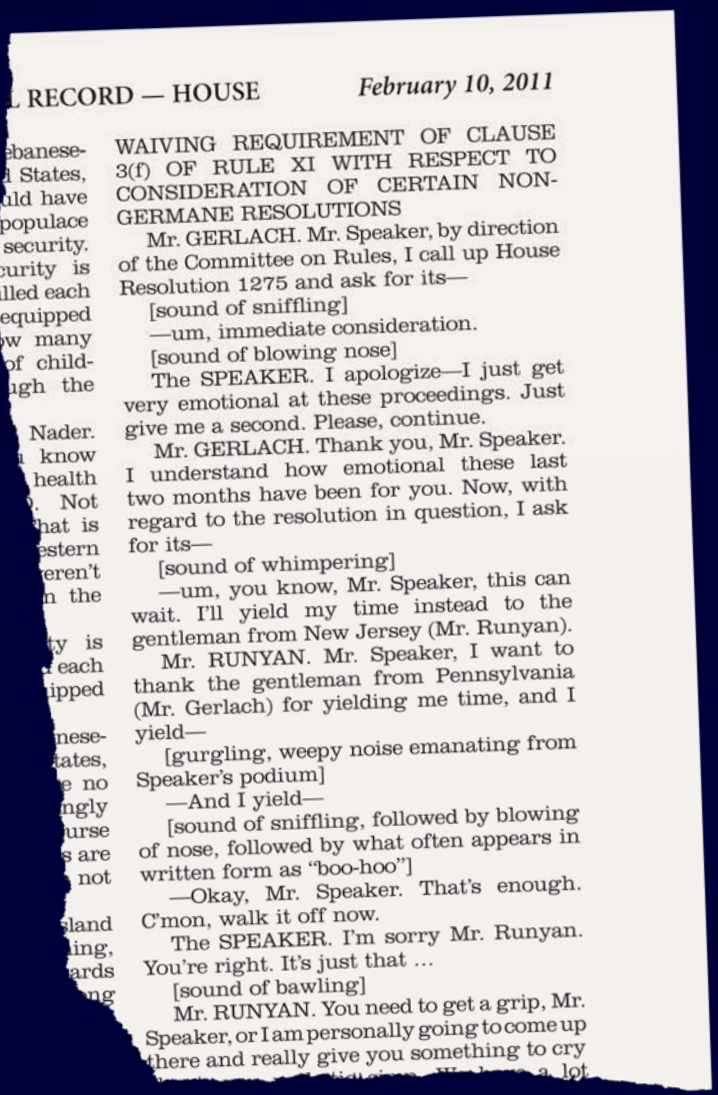
*True Grit* almost fails because of Bridges. But it doesn't fail. In the end, it's a knockout because the Coens decided (as they did with *Fargo* back in 1996 and *A Serious Man* in 2009) not to subvert the impact of the story they are telling. This is a story about bravery and cruelty and loss, and they do not interfere with that. In embracing convention, the Coens actually get to the emotional truth in *True Grit*, and for that accomplishment, they are being deservedly embraced by the mass moviegoing audience for the first time. ♦

PARAMOUNT PICTURES

*John Podhoretz, editor of* Commentary, *is* The Weekly Standard*'s movie critic.*

***"Once the tally was announced, the Republican from Ohio emerged, now officially speaker of the House. He looked up at his wife, two daughters and 10 of his 11 siblings in the gallery above. They were crying, and so was he."*** **—Washington Post, *January 5, 2011***

**PARODY**



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WAIVING REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 3(f) OF RULE XI WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN NON-GERMANE RESOLUTIONS

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1275 and ask for its—

[sound of sniffling]

—um, immediate consideration.

[sound of blowing nose]

The SPEAKER. I apologize—I just get very emotional at these proceedings. Just give me a second. Please, continue.

Mr. GERLACH. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand how emotional these last two months have been for you. Now, with regard to the resolution in question, I ask for its—

[sound of whimpering]

—um, you know, Mr. Speaker, this can wait. I'll yield my time instead to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Runyan).

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Gerlach) for yielding me time, and I yield—

[gurgling, weepy noise emanating from Speaker's podium]

—And I yield—

[sound of sniffling, followed by blowing of nose, followed by what often appears in written form as "boo-hoo"]

—Okay, Mr. Speaker. That's enough. C'mon, walk it off now.

The SPEAKER. I'm sorry Mr. Runyan. You're right. It's just that ...

[sound of bawling]

Mr. RUNYAN. You need to get a grip, Mr. Speaker, or I am personally going to come up there and really give you something to cry

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