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BY ROBERT KAGAN

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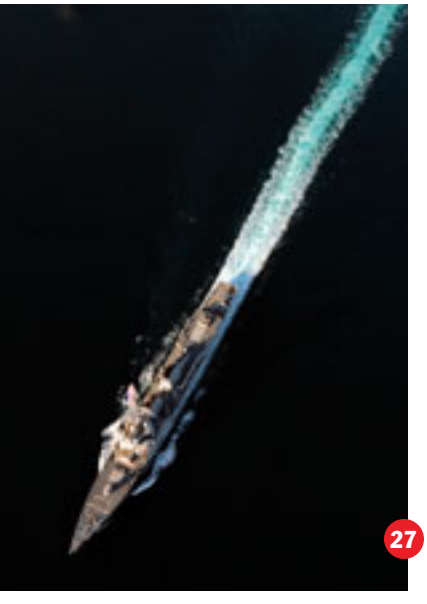

Feature

Books & Arts

COVER BY U.S. NAVY / CHIEF MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST ERIC S. POWELL

A Climate of Slander

Liberal pundits suffered a psychotic break last week, metaphorically speaking, of course. When a gunman opened fire on Representative Gabrielle Giffords and a crowd that had gathered to hear her speak in Tucson, they were certain that conservatives must, somehow, be to blame. So the liberal intelligentsia rushed to erect a gallows in the public square (metaphorically speaking, again) and lined up Sarah Palin, the Tea Party, talk radio hosts, and conservatives collectively for summary execution on grounds that they had created a climate of political hatred and rhetorical excess that had incited murder—not to mention conservatives' general lack of civility and poor manners in debate.

All of this might have been chalked up to hysterical overreaction at a moment of national trauma. But if that were the case, there should have been some sheepish backtracking and apologizing as the week went by. Because the more we learned about the shooter, the more clear it became that he was mentally deranged, with no recognizable ideological grievance, no affiliation with any political organization, and no history of being influenced by any faction except his own inner demons. Instead he had a schizophrenic's obsession with Giffords that dated back to 2007 (pre-Obama, pre-Palin, pre-Tea Party), when the congresswoman had been unable to answer to his satisfaction an incomprehensible question that he had put to her at a public forum.

Far from provoking second thoughts among the leftist let's-have-more-civility-dammit lynch mob, these facts on the ground simply caused their logic for blaming the right to become more tortured. Being a card-carrying member of the American right, The Scrapbook was irked and began doing what irked right-wingers do—compiling a list of offenders for purposes of public flogging and keel-hauling (figuratively speaking, it should be needless to add). But here's the thing. The list got unwieldy. It grew to the length of a Neal Stephenson novel. So we have whittled it down to a trio of award-winning demagogues, all intelligent enough to be held fully responsible for their own twisted prose.

The bronze medal goes to the *New Yorker*'s George Packer, who offers a variation on the "fake but accurate"

theme. ("Fake but accurate" was a *New York Times* headline describing CBS's phony 2004 memos about George W. Bush's service in the Texas National Guard.) Packer begins promisingly: "Judging from his Internet postings, Jared Lee Loughner is a delusional young man." Indeed, Packer continues, "It would be a kind of relief if Loughner operated not out of any coherent political context but just his own fevered brain."

"But"—and you knew there was a *but* coming—"even so, the tragedy wouldn't change this basic fact: for the past two years, many conservative leaders, activists, and media figures have made a habit of trying to delegitimize their political opponents. Not just arguing against their opponents, but doing everything possible to turn them into enemies of the country and cast them out beyond the pale. . . . The massacre in Tucson is, in a sense, irrelevant to the important point. Whatever drove Jared Lee Loughner, America's political frequencies are full of violent static."

There is a perverse honesty underlying Packer's argument, seen in his admission that the facts are irrelevant to the point he intends to pursue. For this concession to reality, he merits only the bronze.

Our silver medal goes to the *Atlantic*'s James Fallows, Mr. Civic Journalism himself, for his shameless analogizing of Sarah Palin to the JFK-haters of Dallas in 1963—as if 47 years of liberal fantasies about Texas conservatism causing a Castro-sympathizer to kill JFK justified today's unhinged liberal attacks on Palin!

> The political tone of an era can have some bearing on violent events. The Jonestown/Ryan and Fromme/Ford shootings had no detectable source in deeper political disagreements of that era. But the anti-JFK hate-rhetoric in Dallas before his visit was so intense that for decades people debated whether the city was somehow "responsible" for the killing. (Even given that Lee Harvey Oswald was an outlier in all ways.)
>
> That's the further political ramification here. We don't know why the Tucson killer did what he did. . . . But we know that it has been a time of extreme, implicitly violent political rhetoric and imagery, including SarahPac's famous bulls-eye map of 20 Congressional targets to be removed—including Rep. Giffords. It is legitimate to discuss whether there is a connection between that tone and actual outbursts of violence, whatever the motivations of this killer turn out to be.

Thank you, Mr. Fallows, for that dispatch from the Slanderers 'R' Us wing of American liberalism.

The undisputed gold-medal win-

ner, however, as you may have guessed from the illustration on the previous page, is *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman. As you can tell by the cover art from the British edition of his book, Krugman is an authority of sorts on what he calls a "climate of hate." He thinks there was an "upsurge in political hatred after Bill Clinton's election" that "culminated in the Oklahoma City bombing." (Oddly, he skips in silence over the years covered by his 2003 book *The Great Unravelling*.) Then in 2008, he writes, "you could see, just by watching the crowds at McCain-Palin rallies, that it was ready to happen again." *It* meaning political murder.

Speaking of 2008, a *New Yorker* profile of Krugman last March described the party he threw on Election Night that fall for his Princeton colleagues:

> "The econ department, the finance department, the Woodrow Wilson school," [Krugman's wife Robin] Wells says. "They were all very nervous, so they were grateful we were having the party, because they didn't want to be alone. We had two or three TVs set up and we had a little portable outside fire pit and we let people throw in an effigy or whatever they wanted to get rid of for the past eight years. One of our Italian colleagues threw in an effigy of Berlusconi. I put out some coloring paper and markers so that people could write stuff on it and throw it into the fire. People really felt like there was stuff they wanted to shed!"

So maybe Krugman isn't delusional about a "climate of hate." As they used to say in the non-Princetonian precincts where The Scrapbook was reared, "a fox smells its own hole." ♦

The Weakest Linc

Rhode Island is a small state—indeed, it's the smallest in the nation—but when it comes to "colorful" public officials, it holds its own against the giants. There's ex-Providence mayor Vincent "Buddy" Cianci, fresh out of federal prison. And there's ex-Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy (D), Teddy's son, whose personal demons, comic malapropisms, well-publicized meltdowns, and all-purpose unfitness for public office lent him a certain renown until his recent retirement. The late Sen. Claiborne Pell (D) used to insert funding for extrasensory perception research into defense appropriations—he sought the advice of Uri Geller on Cold War strategy—and then-Senator Lincoln Chafee (R) was so estranged from his party that he wrote in the name of George H.W. Bush, instead of voting for George W. Bush, for president in 2004.

Alas, The Scrapbook notes with a pang of regret, Chafee—appointed to his seat on the death of his father, veteran senator John Chafee, in 1999—was defeated for reelection in 2006; and his successor, Sheldon Whitehouse (D), while a reliable partisan hack, is decidedly dull by comparison. But there's good news: Chafee was elected governor of Rhode Island this past fall, running as an independent, and by the

standards of historic eccentricity, he's off to a flying start.

This past week, for example, he announced a blanket ban on state employees and department heads appearing on radio talk shows, the first time any governor of any party in America had issued such a wide-ranging gag order on public officials.

Talk radio shows, Chafee complained through a spokesman, are "ratings-driven, for-profit" enterprises, and talking to them is a waste of state resources during economic hard times. But of course, what he failed to mention is that radio talk shows, even in Rhode Island, are predominantly (although not exclusively) conservative in tone, and that Chafee has a well-advertised contempt for them. Nor, for that matter, did he forbid state employees to talk to Rhode Island's dominant newspaper, the *Providence Journal*, which could accurately be described as a circulation-driven, for-profit enterprise.

All in all, a curious gesture: an obvious double standard at play, and counterproductive as well. Chafee's predecessor appeared regularly on local talk shows to publicize his initiatives and answer questions from listeners, and the practice seems to have done him (and the state) no harm. No one would expect Lincoln Chafee to subject himself to everyone in the Ocean State with a microphone, or appear with talk show hosts (such as the aforementioned ex-Mayor Cianci) who are especially antagonistic. But by bumptiously expressing an all-purpose disdain for a popular segment of the media and restricting freedom of speech for thousands of his constituents, Governor Chafee's tenure shows promise of an entertainment value way out of proportion to Rhode Island's size. ♦

Anderson Cooper's Oil Spill

The National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling, established last May by President Obama, released its final report on January 11. The Scrapbook was pleased to see that towheaded CNN anchorperson Anderson Cooper, who spent hour after lachrymose hour broadcasting grim news from the Gulf Shore last summer, received special recognition for his efforts. According to the commission:

> Journalists encouraged state and local officials and residents to display their anger at the federal response, and offered coverage when they did. Anderson Cooper reportedly asked a Parish President to bring an angry, unemployed offshore oil worker on his show. When the Parish President could not promise the worker would be "angry," both were disinvited.

A Cooper spokesperson told the *New York Post*: The claim that journalists "were encouraging residents and state and local leaders to 'display their anger at the federal response' is offensive." Deeply, no doubt. ♦

The Budget's Too Much with You

With apologies to Wordsworth, a well-known conservative emailed the following sonnet to The Scrapbook "Expressing Concern with Republicans' Tendency to Revert to a Green-Eyeshade Obsession with Trivial Spending Cuts." Here's hoping this will stiffen congressional spines for going after larger game, like entitlement reform.

The budget's too much with you; late and soon,
Obsessed with spending, you lay waste your powers:
Little we see in ideas that are ours;
You risk squandering your broad mandate, a sordid boon!
Defense cuts that bare our bosom to the moon;
The bold reforms that should be pushed at all hours,
But are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
In this, it worries me, you may be out of tune;
This moves you not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A supply-sider suckled in a creed outworn;
Then might I, sipping my fresh-brewed tea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Jack Kemp rising from the sea;
Or hear old Reagan blow his wreathed horn. ♦

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Memento Mori

As last year morphed into this one, I, like so many others, held out hope that 2011 would be better than 2010, though not as good as 2007. Because why set yourself up for disappointment?

But when I signed onto my homepage early in the New Year, things got off to an unpromising start. Ordinarily, I welcome exposure to news stories I'd never see otherwise, helpful checklist pieces that tell me 5 ways to kill a man with my bare hands, or 10 ways to break up with Taylor Swift so that she'll write vengeful yet melodically accessible songs about me. But one story, republished from *MoneyTalksNews*, set my teeth on edge: "Things Babies Born in 2011 Will Never Know."

I don't usually mind some journalist marking a trend's demise. When informed, say, that stirrup pants are out, I'm grateful—they were never all that flattering on me anyway. But when the out-list trends comprise my very life as I've lived it, I get a little defensive. Among the many things today's babies supposedly won't recognize tomorrow are: video stores, travel agents, commercial radio, maps, watches, encyclopedias, yellow pages, catalogs, retirement plans, wires, the separation of work and home, books, and newspapers. Even "hiding" made the list, since "now your phone is not only in your pocket, it can potentially tell everyone—including advertisers—exactly where you are." Pity the children of tomorrow, whose games of "get-electronically-monitored-and-go-seek" will never hold quite the same romance as the original.

Magazines are on the list, meaning that according to Carnac the List-maker, I'm as good as writing this message from the past (handwritten letters are out, too, as is handwriting itself). I should note that middle-aged magazine writers are disposed to wax nostalgic over something as utilitarian as fax machines (on the list), so long as someone mails them a check to do so. Though nobody will be mailing any checks for long, since sending physical mail is on the list as well. It is always an embarrassing sign of aging to start shooting life through a sepia-toned prism, when everyone knows, thanks to Peter De Vries, that "nostalgia isn't what it used to be."

DAVID GOTHARD

Still, even if we can't stop progress—God knows I try—do we have to be so smug about the passing of our familiar ways? I've spent plenty of time whining about my neighborhood Blockbuster, which long ago chased out the mom 'n' pop video-store versions of itself. Less so, however, since two Blockbusters have closed in my neck of the woods in the last year—victims of the recession and Netflix and those awful Redbox vending machines that now deliver the magic of cinema as though it were a Diet Squirt.

And while I still have DVDs delivered, and will probably soon have movies streamed, I miss going to the video store, not only to get out of the house and away from the computer, but to let serendipity and discovery take their course. I miss the human contact with video clerk Brandon, even if that only amounted to, "It's due back next Thursday." I miss seeing Brandon's employee favorites shelf. Not that I'd ever rent from it. He had horrible taste in films—*Titanic*, *Meatballs Part II*, *Jaws 3-D*. But it allowed me to feel superior in a way that I can't against a computer that anticipates what I'll want to rent next. That was Brandon's little gift to me.

Among the most offensive items on the extinction list is "talking to one person at a time." Anyone who's had lunch in the last five years, getting ignored by their tablemate who is thumb-clacking away, already knows the future is now. Recently, my college-age niece mocked my wife for having her phone set on ring instead of vibrate. Since the former spends 90 percent of her life texting, her phone is never out of her hand. ("Who needs a ring?" she scoffed.) And when another niece's boyfriend recently joined the workforce, his job required him to email in place of subliterate texting. I asked him how it was going.

"Tough," he confessed. "Writing in sentences and paragraphs—it's like Old English or something."

It's useful to remember that in the not so distant future, we will all be the past. That the people we work with and converse with and make love to are headed for fax machine status. But that doesn't mean we have to rush it. So since we'll all go eventually, here's hoping that these list-makers, who fetishize technological triumphalism at the expense of human experience, go sooner than the rest of us. And may the babies of 2011 never know that they're missing.

Matt Labash

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'It Did Not'

President Barack Obama takes his seat after finishing his speech at a memorial service in Tucson, Arizona.

AP IMAGES

After a depressing week—a horrible shooting that killed 6 people and wounded 14 others, followed by days of demagoguery and idiocy surpassing even the normal standards of our power-without-responsibility punditocracy—recent days have brought encouraging news. The medical prognosis for Rep. Gabrielle Giffords seems more hopeful than had been thought likely. And the American people have once again demonstrated their good sense in the face of efforts by the media to stampede them toward foolishness.

Consider, for example, this January 14, 2011, story: "Few U.S. Voters Blame Guns, Rhetoric For Ariz. Shooting, Quinnipiac University National Poll Finds":

> Saturday's shooting of Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, in which six people were killed, could not have been prevented, 40 percent of American voters say in a Quinnipiac University national poll released today. Another 23 percent blame the mental health system, while 15 percent say it was due to heated political rhetoric and 9 percent attribute the tragedy to lax gun control.

So a plurality of Americans thinks the tragedy couldn't have been prevented. And of those who do believe something could have been done, more Americans focus on mental health than on political rhetoric. This fits with the findings of another survey from earlier in the week:

> Most Americans reject the idea that inflammatory political language by conservatives should be part of the debate about the forces behind the Arizona shooting that left six people dead and a congresswoman in critical condition, a *USA Today*/Gallup Poll finds. A 53 percent majority of those surveyed call that analysis mostly an attempt to use the tragedy to make conservatives look bad. About a third, 35 percent, say it is a legitimate point about how dangerous language can be.

Indeed, the good sense of the American people is

further suggested by this fact: They are able to hold two complementary ideas in their heads at once. Americans are concerned about heated rhetoric—not an unreasonable concern—and a slight majority say political rhetoric might drive unstable people to violence, as it very well might. But Americans also refuse to ascribe responsibility for an act of violence to political rhetoric when in fact the two are unrelated, as was the case in Tucson. And they are fair minded in judging who is most guilty of such speech. In the Quinnipiac poll, Americans by 36 to 32 percent said liberals rather than conservatives are more responsible for overly heated rhetoric.

So we're lucky to have the public we have—both by comparison with other publics around the world, and by comparison with so many of our elites. Now if only our leaders could live up to the American people's high standard of decency and common sense.

We're happy to report that President Obama made a start:

> If, as has been discussed in recent days, their death helps usher in more civility in our public discourse, let us remember it is not because a simple lack of civility caused this tragedy—it did not—but rather because only a more civil and honest public discourse can help us face up to the challenges of our nation in a way that would make them proud.

The words "it did not" were not in the prepared text. They were apparently added on delivery by President Obama.

And now, while holding in our thoughts and prayers the fallen and the wounded, and their families, conservatives can civilly and honestly take the lead in facing up to the challenges of our nation, as President Obama has called on us to do. So let's repeal Obamacare, cut domestic discretionary spending, reinvigorate federalism, reform entitlements, and strengthen our national defenses.

—William Kristol

States of Crisis

As if Congress didn't have enough to worry about, the states are on the verge of a fiscal meltdown. From Albany to Springfield to Sacramento, the bill for decades of profligacy has suddenly come due. A gimpy economy brings in lower revenues for state comptrollers. The bond vigilantes have caught the scent of the states' massive unfunded liabilities. The federal stimulus money that some states used to cover expenses is about to run out. And worst of all, Mitch Daniels can't be cloned.

The good news is that, thanks to recent elections, a slew of pro-business budget hawks now occupy governors' mansions across the country. What's more, even some liberals recognize the magnitude of the crisis. There must be something in the water of the Hudson, because New York Democrat Andrew Cuomo is starting to sound like New Jersey Republican Chris Christie. Cuomo recently delivered a state of the state address that ought to be required reading in every capital. He railed against an out-of-control government, dismissed any tax hike, and extolled the virtues of the private sector. Ronald Reagan would have been proud.

No one wants his state to end up like Illinois, which massively increased personal and business taxes last week to cover a fiscal gap the size of the Olduvai Gorge. But the governors won't easily avoid that fate on their own. State budgets are so dependent on federal dollars that Congress has a role to play as well. What the governors need are federal policies that allow the states maximum discretion to economize and innovate. It's lucky for everyone involved that the governors' interests dovetail with those of the House Republicans.

AP IMAGES

Chris Christie and Mitch Daniels

One of the biggest drivers of state deficits, for example, is Medicaid, the health insurance program for the poor. Medicaid is funded through a combination of state and federal dollars; the poorer your state, the larger the federal subsidy. But those subsidies come with strings attached. The federal government, in the form of "maintenance of effort" requirements, dictates where and how the states must spend Medicaid funds.

Such requirements tie governors' hands when it comes to writing budgets. They also force governors into uncomfortable situations, since the offer of federal money is often predicated on additional spending by the state. As a group of 33 governors put it in a January 7 letter to the president and Congress, "Efforts by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to regulate state operations impose greater uncertainty on our budgets for oncoming years and create a perfect storm when coupled with the current state of the economy."

Even absent a crisis in the states, the GOP House would

be wise to reexamine Medicaid. So why not begin by suspending or eliminating the maintenance of effort requirements? This would allow the governors greater latitude in shaping their budgets. Congress could also turn Medicaid into a block-grant program along the lines of welfare. That way each state would know in advance how much money it would receive in a given year. A block grant would force state governments to spend the money more responsibly. Feckless legislators and governors would no longer be able to drink from an endless spigot of money originating in Washington.

The federal government doesn't restrict its meddling to health care. There are all sorts of mandates with education and transportation spending as well. Putting fewer conditions on the money the federal government sends to the states would not only help the governors. It would also advance House Republicans' deregulatory agenda. Anything that allows the states to experiment and compete is worth trying. The Davis-Bacon Act, for example, requires states to

Andrew Cuomo and Scott Walker

pay the "prevailing wage" in contracting. In the real world, this forces the states to contract with unions at the taxpayers' expense. Repealing Davis-Bacon would enable the states to save money—or build more highway projects at the same price. It's a good deal either way.

There are also things the federal government can do to make states better bookkeepers. Congressman Devin Nunes of California proposes shining a light on state and local governments' defined-benefit pension plans. His Public Employee Pension Transparency Act would give us a sense of the true cost and disposition of pension funds. Municipalities would have to reveal their (currently hard to find) financial data and disclose their actuarial assumptions. And since state pension fund accounting makes Enron look like a paragon of fiduciary responsibility, the bill would discourage further binges.

Republicans in Congress might also want to revisit the way the federal government subsidizes state borrowing through the tax deduction for municipal bond interest. And Congress could take up the state bankruptcy law proposed by University of Pennsylvania law professor David Skeel in these pages last year. As always, the best solution to debt crises is robust economic growth, so conservative tax, spending, and regulatory policy will help the states too. The opportunities for imaginative and constructive policy are endless. Time to get to work.

—Matthew Continetti

WALKER: AP IMAGES

Why Liu Matters, and Hu Doesn't

As President Obama prepares to welcome China's Communist party general secretary Hu Jintao to Washington for a state visit on January 19, it's easy to get nostalgic about an earlier era in U.S.-China relations. Throughout the 1990s, there was at least the prospect that America would use the political capital of a summit meeting to force concessions on human rights. Less than two weeks after the state visit of General Secretary Jiang Zemin in 1997, for example, Wei Jingsheng, one of China's most famous dissidents, was released from jail.

Before getting misty-eyed, however, we should remember that Wei was forced into exile, dissidents continued to be arrested, and the White House and Congress approved China's Most Favored Nation trade status every year until it was finally made permanent. To this day, America avoids confrontation and refuses to impose consequences for egregious Chinese behavior at home and abroad. The idea that "engagement" with Beijing is the key to changing China has become the foundation of American policy. Nothing can shake it.

Until now. The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo, a writer associated with the democracy manifesto Charter 08, demolishes what has been an article of faith—that there is no alternative to Communist party rule.

China's Communist leaders lashed out at the Nobel Committee over Liu's prize not because he and his fellow democrats are currently a threat—the party crushes them when necessary—but because recognizing people like Liu undermines the carefully cultivated image of a legitimate regime in full control of, and tacitly accepted by, its people. The party's cooptation of intellectuals, artists, and businessmen is designed not only to neutralize potential political opposition, but also to deter expectations of change from abroad. Chinese people and media are greatly constrained in what they can say in public or tell an opinion pollster. Yet observers abroad often take

self-censored views to represent the whole of Chinese popular opinion or, to paraphrase the title of a book on mostly state-approved thinkers, "what China thinks."

Soviet authorities reacted with "intense irritation and some nervousness" when the dissident Andrei Sakharov won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1975, Sakharov recalled in his memoirs. Like the Soviets, Chinese leaders fear international support for individuals who are brave and stubborn enough to work for a democratic alternative to the Communist party. Among other signatories of Charter 08 are Ding Zilin, the leader of the Tiananmen Mothers who seek accountability for the murder of demonstrators on the night of June 4, 1989; Zhang Zuhua, a former Communist cadre now working for democratic reform; Pu Zhiqiang, Mo Shaoping, and other lawyers; the scientist Jiang Qisheng; writers Wen Kejian and Wang Debang; law professor He Weifang; economist Mao Yushi; Cui Weiping, a film scholar and translator of Vaclav Havel into Chinese; and thousands of others.

Protest to release Liu Xiaobo

President Obama did not meet with these or other dissidents on his visit to China. On January 13, he did meet at the White House with a group of experts and activists on China. But people who would have offended Chinese leaders—people like Harry Wu, the former prisoner of China's *laogai* or forced labor camps; Rebiya Kadeer, the exiled Uighur leader; Ngawang Sandrol, a Tibetan nun jailed and tortured for her songs of praise for the Dalai Lama; Wang Juntao, a former Tiananmen protester; or Wan Yanhai, a famous AIDS activist and longtime associate of Liu Xiaobo—they were absent.

The president's determination to avoid using the weight and prestige of his office to support democratic opponents of authoritarian regimes in China, Iran, Belarus, and elsewhere is quickly becoming a hallmark of his administration. It's a dispiriting trend. And it suggests that the president simply does not grasp the meaning and potential of Liu Xiaobo and his fellow Chinese democrats.

—Ellen Bork

AP IMAGES

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.

The *Times* Loses It

Sense and nonsense about Tucson.

BY P.J. O'ROURKE

DAVID CLARK

It was a weekend of great sorrow. On Saturday, January 8, an insane young man tried to kill Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, injuring her horribly. The man then fired his gun into a small political gathering, murdering a nine-year-old girl, a federal judge, a congressional staffer, and three of Giffords's constituents. Thirteen other people were wounded. In the midst of life we are in death. There is, in this world, no making sense of such events.

Among the worldly, however, there is a temptation to make nonsense. Thus it was that on Sunday, January 9, the *New York Times* provided a further grief, much less important than the death and mutilation of innocents but shameful nonetheless.

The *Times* ran, as its second lead, above the fold on the front page, a story about the Tucson shootings headlined "Bloodshed Puts New Focus on Vitriol in Politics." The article, by Carl Hulse and Kate Zernike, contains almost nothing newsworthy. Nor can it be called news analysis, beginning as it does with an attempt to create a self-fulfilling prophecy: "The shooting of Representative Gabrielle Giffords . . . set off what is likely to be a wrenching debate over anger and violence in American politics."

If self-fulfilling prophecies were wanted from reporters—and they are not—a better one would have been "Bloodshed Puts New Focus on Mental Health Policies." The person in custody for the Tucson crimes is, according to all accounts, profoundly crazy. For decades in America there has been an effort to ensure that the rights of those who are not sane are the same as the rights of those who are. Perhaps a wrenching debate over this should be had.

In the article's second paragraph we are told that the accused, Jared Loughner, had an Internet site that "contained antigovernment ramblings." The same may be said—at least in respect to ramblings against the newly sworn-in House of Representatives—about Internet sites posting speeches by President Obama.

But antigovernment ramblings coming from outside the government are so sinister that they are sinister whether they are sinister or not. "And regardless of what led to the episode," Hulse and Zernike say, "it quickly focused attention on the degree to which inflammatory language, threats and implicit instigations to violence have become a steady undercurrent in the nation's political culture."

To maintain that there's a lack of evidence for such a sweeping statement would be inaccurate since Hulse and Zernike themselves are doing

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what they claim is being done. And given the tight deadlines of a Sunday edition they have focused their attention quickly indeed.

They make an interesting choice of verb tense in "have become." Maybe Hulse and Zernike are very young and, what with the way American history is taught these days, are unaware of riots, bombings, lynchings, exterminations of native peoples, assassinations, assassination attempts, gun fights, and the Civil War, not to mention the inflammatory language, threats, and implicit instigations to violence in the writings of Tom Paine.

Or maybe Hulse and Zernike are old hacks in the pocket of certain political interests that feel threatened by populism. A member of the populace—however deranged—has shot a liberal—albeit one who is independent and selective in her liberalism. Even this most pathetic of excuses will serve. Ordinary Americans skeptical about the powers, prerogatives, and expense of certain political interests shall be execrated.

Hulse and Zernike do say, "In the hours immediately after the shooting . . . top Republicans including Speaker John A. Boehner and Gov. Jan Brewer of Arizona quickly condemned the violence." There's that word "quickly" again, a superfluous modifier, this time implying that slow, reluctant condemnation might have been expected.

The sheriff of Pima County is quoted: "He said it was time for the country to 'do a little soul-searching.'" Hulse and Zernike don't take his advice and recommence arguing beside the point about health care legislation that "ignited opposition from the Tea Party movement" and "stirred strong feelings that flared at angry town hall meeting held by many Democratic lawmakers." This, it seems, is part of a "broader anger and suspicion rising about the government, its finances and its goals, with the discourse partially fueled by talk shows and websites."

Hulse and Zernike pause and duly note, "Tea Party activists also condemned the shooting." Nice use of *also.*

Then they're off again, into the jump, for a total of more than 18 column inches of "protesters outside the House hurling insults and slurs . . . " "Sarah Palin's political action committee with cross hairs . . . " "Republican candidates seemed to raise the prospect of armed revolt . . . " and "other Tea Party activists said it would be hard to separate the shooting in Tucson from the current ideological clash."

Hulse and Zernike have the nerve to end with a quote from one of the "other Tea Party activists,"

A reaction so disproportionate and immaterial to a news story by a news organization is indicative of trouble in the body politic. I worry that in the tremors and hysteria of the 'Times' we're seeing the sad end of liberalism. Its passing is to be mourned.

Judson Phillips, founder of Tea Party Nation: "Violence of this nature should be decried by everyone and not used for political gain." Left unprinted are descriptions of Hulse and Zernike smirking.

A great deal of other ugly and offensive writing went off on a tangent from the crime scene and wound up published in the Sunday *New York Times.*

Some was in the guise of commentary, such as Matt Bai's dredging up of a quip by Sharron Angle, "I hope we're not getting to Second Amendment remedies." Gabrielle Giffords is a gun rights advocate.

Some was in the news coverage: "Democrats denounced the fierce partisan atmosphere in Ms. Giffords's district." Voters in that conservative locale chose Giffords over a GOP candidate backed by Tea Party supporters.

Worse came in Monday's *Times.* News analyst Jennifer Steinhauer wrote, "Arizona has shifted from a place on the political fringe to a symbol of a nation whose political discourse has lost its way." It's worth remembering that another place the *Times* considers to be on the political fringe is Staten Island.

Editorialized the *Times*: "It is legitimate to hold Republicans and particularly their most virulent supporters in the media responsible for the gale of anger that has produced the vast majority of these threats." Interesting how a few small changes would make that sentence appall the *Times* as much as the *Times* appalls me: "It is legitimate to hold Muslims and particularly their most virulent supporters in the media responsible for the gale of anger that has produced 9/11."

The most cringe-inducing article was titled "In the Shock of the Moment, the Politicking Stops . . . Until It Doesn't." Jeff Zeleny and Jim Rutenberg wrote, "Some Democrats were urging [President Obama] to look back to recent history, when President Bill Clinton seized the political high ground after the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing."

In the matter of self-serving, bitter, calculated cynicism, there wouldn't seem to be much left to prove against the *Times*. Judging by what I've heard from my fellow conservatives, the issue is decided. The *New York Times* is a worthless, truthless, vicious institution. But I disagree. I think things are worse than that.

A reaction so disproportionate and immaterial to a news story by a news organization is indicative of trouble in the body politic—trouble almost as severe as that which the *Times* claims the Giffords shooting indicates. I worry that in the tremors and hysteria of the *Times* we're seeing the sad end of liberalism.

Its passing is to be mourned, perhaps most by true conservatives. Civilization owes a debt to liberal politics. From the Reform Act and the religious emancipation fight of the British Whigs to the American civil rights movement, liberals have in fact held positions on political high

ground (though not during Clinton's exploitation of the Oklahoma City bombing). Liberals have seen government as a force for good, and sometimes it can be. World War II comes to mind. While conservatives have delighted in the free market, liberals have been there to remind us that all freedoms, including market freedoms, entail responsibilities. At the very least it can be said that we conservatives would not be so upright in our ideals if we hadn't been pushing against liberals.

But liberalism, as personified by the *New York Times*, became a dotty old aunt sometime during the Johnson administration. She's provincial, eccentric, and holds dull, peculiar views about the world. Still, she has our fond regard, and we visit her regularly in her nursing home otherwise known as Arts and Leisure and the Book Review. Or we did until Sunday, January 9, when she began spouting obscenities and exposing herself.

We observe in the *Times* a bizarre overreaction to people and things that can be construed as "antigovernment." (And all people and most things often can be so construed, e.g., the man who just got a speeding ticket.) The *Times* has become delusional, going from advocating big government to believing that it is the big government. Americans being somewhat disgruntled with big government, the *Times* imagines itself under attack from every side, even, no doubt, from within.

Ross Douthat wrote a calm, well-reasoned Monday *Times* opinion column about how most contemporary attacks on American politicians have been of greater interest to psychiatrists than ideologues. "From the Republican leadership to the Tea Party grass roots, all of Gabrielle Giffords's political opponents were united in horror at the weekend's events." The newspaper probably heard this as a hallucinatory voice in its head urging self-destruction. If we're going to discuss dark, paranoid corners of the Internet that have an unwholesome influence on our national life, there's the *New York Times* online. ♦

First and Goal for the GOP

Good football and good politics go together.

BY FRED BARNES

Phoenix

Football is one big repository of analogies for politics. Candidates "kick off" their campaigns. If they're smart, they have a "game plan" that features a "ground game." In the politics of Washington, Bill Bennett says, "if you're not on offense, you're on defense," which is bad. In a pinch, a politician might "throw a Hail Mary." Normally, though, politics is "played between the 40-yard lines." An issue that's hard to agree on becomes a "political football."

But football—big-time college football, aired on TV and played in huge stadiums—is more than a metaphor. It's a mirror. A football team, more often than not, reflects its home state. This may seem like a stretch. And perhaps it is. But you only have to look at Auburn University, which won the college championship last week, and the 11 other football teams in the Southeastern Conference (SEC) to see that teams and states tend to match.

SEC teams, which reach across the South from Florida to Arkansas, are the most fiercely competitive. They've won the past five national football championships. Even Big Ten commissioner Jim Delaney says, "They're a step ahead of everybody else." Given this, it shouldn't be surprising that SEC states—you can throw in Texas too—are the most economically competitive, vying against each other and with states outside the South to attract new investment and create jobs. And, like their football teams, they're succeeding.

At the risk of being redundant, here's another way to understand the phenomenon: The values and practices that produce extraordinary college football teams are similar to those that have transformed the South from the backwater it was a few decades ago into a region bristling today with prosperity, growth, and Republican ascendancy.

The teams play conservative football, with 300-pound (or bigger) linemen the rule and a style of play that overpowers opponents. And they come from states that are increasingly governed by Republicans who play a popular brand of conservative power politics. The similarity is not entirely coincidental.

Two more things. SEC teams are entrepreneurial, recruiting players from all over the country while keeping local stars at home. SEC states have been particularly aggressive in attracting foreign auto companies by offering low taxes along with incentives like right-to-work laws. Auburn is a public university in Alabama. In Alabama alone, Honda, Mercedes, and Hyundai have built manufacturing plants. Just across the border in Georgia, Kia has set up stakes.

And then there's religion. Evangelical Christianity is big in the South among both blacks and whites. All but two SEC teams have full-time chaplains. Chette Williams, Auburn's chaplain, published a book, *Hard Fighting Soldier*, in 2007. "Chette's ministry is a major part of how we build a football team," writes Tommy Tuberville, Auburn's coach at the time, in the book's foreword. Was he exaggerating? Maybe, but he had a point.

The Auburn example is instructive. The school has a conservative student body. When President

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George W. Bush appeared on the stadium JumboTron during an Auburn football game, he was cheered. When he uttered the greeting that Auburn people give to each other—"war eagle"—the crowd went wild.

The greeting, by the way, grew out of the pregame tradition of having an eagle circle the field, then land near the 50-yard line. Auburn folks use it everywhere. My son, who graduated from Auburn in 2008, spent a good bit of time in the two days he was in Phoenix for the BCS championship game saying "war eagle" to anyone connected with Auburn.

Auburn won by executing its power game against Oregon, a finesse team specializing in trick plays. Power teams usually beat finesse teams. Auburn's most important player was a 298-pound defensive tackle, Nick Fairley, who repeatedly disrupted the Oregon offense. Without Fairley, Auburn would have lost.

Shift to politics. In Alabama's November election, Republicans captured both houses of the legislature for the first time in 136 years, aided by an extra $5 million raised to fund candidates against Democratic incumbents who'd never faced strong opponents before. Republicans won every statewide office and outgoing Governor Bob Riley immediately called a special legislative session to pass a sweeping ethics law that Democrats had long delayed. Accountability prevailed.

"The SEC is built on results, not appearances," Art Spander wrote on *RealClearSports* shortly after Auburn's victory. The same is true of political clout. Auburn fired Tuberville after a couple of mediocre seasons. The new coach, Gene Chizik, won the national title in his second year. That gives him job security for no more than two years. If his recruiting of good players slips and the football team falters, he'll be shown the door. Accountability will trump nostalgia.

Chizik isn't taking any chances. "When I said a year ago we were going to roll up our sleeves and were going to recruit the best players in the country, it was not lip service," Chizik told Dan Wetzel of Yahoo! Sports. "We went after the best players in the country, East Coast to West, who we thought fit in at Auburn. We're very proud to be representing Auburn and very confident we can battle anyone for players." The proof is in the championship.

Chizik riled liberal sportswriters by talking about God's role in Auburn's victory. Cam Newton, Auburn's star quarterback, credited God with helping him surmount a controversy involving his father's demand for a recruiting payoff. Cam Newton and Auburn were absolved by the NCAA of any part in the scheme. "I thank God every single day," Cam Newton told ESPN moments after the game. "I'm just His instrument. I'm a prime example of how God can turn something that was bad into something that was very great."

His comment shouldn't trouble anyone. It's just the way many Christians talk about their faith, including athletes like Newton whose father is a Pentecostal preacher. It's a Southern thing.

Alabama Republican party chairman Mike Hubbard personifies the harmony between football and politics. He lives in the town of Auburn and runs the Auburn Network, which broadcasts Auburn sports. He was the mastermind behind the Republican landslide in November, personally raising the crucial $5 million. Now he's the speaker of the Alabama House, proof that good football and Republican politics go together. ♦

A One-Sided Arms Race

China's military ambitions are boundless.

BY DAN BLUMENTHAL & MIKE MAZZA

Last week, Beijing decided that Defense Secretary Robert Gates's fence-mending trip to China was the perfect time to unveil new military capabilities. In the lead-up to Gates's trip, Admiral Robert Willard, the commander of U.S. Pacific forces, revealed that China's "carrier killer" antiship ballistic missile is nearly ready for deployment. Then, just hours before Gates's January 11 meeting with President Hu Jintao, the Chinese Air Force conducted a test flight of the J-20, a fighter jet that appears to have radar-evading stealth capabilities. Washington had an almost perfectly perverse answer, one symbolic of the shape of the emerging Sino-American rivalry: It announced another round of defense cuts. So there is a Sino-American military competition, but only China is competing.

The contours of the strategy driving China's military buildup are clear enough to allow for a serious U.S. response. First, China is pursuing the ability to coerce and intimidate countries along what it calls the "first island chain." This geographic area includes such stalwart U.S. allies and friends as Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. Second, China is seeking more control over what it calls the "near seas," which include the waters closest to its coasts—the Yellow, East China, and South China seas. Third, it is looking to project power into the Indian Ocean to protect the large volume of maritime trade that flows from the Persian Gulf to Shanghai.

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China is developing a layered military capability, which will allow it to strike decisive blows against adversaries closer to the mainland and then employ harassing "guerrilla" air and sea tactics deeper in the Pacific to slow U.S. forces rushing to the region.

This strategy relies heavily on China's advanced missile program. China's missile force is not just large in number, but ever more technologically sophisticated. The Second Artillery is developing precision strike capabilities and missile-defense-evading technologies such as multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs). The missile force will be used to "kick down the door" during an attack to allow for China's fourth-generation fighter-aircraft (and, in the coming years, fifth-generation fighters) to conduct mop-up operations against remaining targets in the first island chain and to establish air supremacy.

At the same time, China will interdict U.S. reinforcements by launching cruise and ballistic missiles against surface ships, jamming Aegis-equipped destroyers' command and control capabilities, and launching torpedoes and cruise missiles from submarines. China's robust mining capabilities provide yet another layer of defense in the "near seas." The idea is to deliver a knockout punch quickly against Taiwan or Japan and then entangle the U.S. military in a web of defenses closer to the homeland.

Many U.S. analysts use the confusing term "anti-access" to describe China's strategy, which makes it sound purely defensive. Yes, China wants to deny U.S. access to Asian airspace and waters. But in doing so the Chinese military will itself gain the maneuver space to control the sea and air closer to the mainland and begin to project power farther from its shores.

Indeed, the Chinese military is looking to project power into the Indian Ocean. China is building a nuclear submarine force, much of it based on Hainan Island, which will allow for undetected movement into the Indian Ocean. China is also set to build aircraft carriers. It may be some time before China can perfect the use of flattops and naval-based carrier aviation, but in the meantime nuclear-powered submarines will at least provide China with retaliatory capabilities should its own shipping come under threat.

But while China's strategy is beginning to take shape, a serious U.S. response is not on the horizon. Instead we are hollowing out our air, naval, and Marine forces at a time when we should be reinforcing and modernizing them, so as to reassure allies that we will maintain the capability to deter Chinese aggression and defeat Chinese forces should they attack. Washington needs to resist the temptation, made stronger by the Chinese ability to attack our forward deployed forces, to adopt an offshore defense strategy. Pulling the bulk of our forces back to Hawaii, Guam, or other Pacific islands would be a mistake. Such an approach would encourage a nuclear arms race in Asia and weaken our alliances. Our presence in the region is also the surest way to push our allies to bone up their own defenses and operate more closely together.

An offshore defense also rests on questionable operational assumptions. There is no way to project the kind of power we have historically needed in the region from offshore. We need forward bases and the intelligence collected from near-constant patrols of the air and waters around China to shape and influence the region. The forward force in Asia allowed us to project power onto the Asian continent when we fought in Korea and Vietnam and intervened to quiet China's intimidation of Taiwan.

With these principles in mind, the Pentagon could take the following steps to redress a balance of power now tilting toward Beijing:

Hardening, dispersal, and diversification of bases. Survivable bases will do much to negate China's missile threat. Existing air and naval bases in Japan, Guam, and Korea should be hardened and dispersed. The secretaries of state and defense should also launch efforts to find more nations to host bases and naval facilities, as Singapore volunteered to do this past decade.

More stealthy fighters sold to and positioned in host nations. With more hardened bases, we should revive the F-22 line both to export to Japan, South Korea, and Australia and to add to our own aging fleet. There is no aircraft like the F-22 for air-to-air missions, and with China developing its own stealthy aircraft, the days of air-to-air combat are unfortunately not over. The Department of Defense should also commit to the "short takeoff and vertical landing" variant of the F-35. The F-35B, as it is known, which Secretary Gates recently put "on probation," is exactly the plane most needed as a response to China's missile force.

A stronger commitment to a long-range bomber. The next-generation bomber program should be accelerated and bought in small blocks as soon as possible. Such a bomber, conceived to have an unrefueled range of approximately 4,000 nautical miles and equipped with stealth technology, would be useful for reinforcing forward operating forces during a time of conflict and for striking targets (such as mobile missile assets) deep within Chinese territory.

More attack submarines and renewed emphases on antisubmarine warfare and offensive mining. Even as China retires antiquated boats, its submarine fleet has been growing. It now has more than 60 subs, all based in the Asia-Pacific region. The U.S. attack submarine program should be ramped up well beyond the current plans for a steady state of 48 boats. The *Virginia*-class

submarines should become the workhorses of the Pacific, primed to conduct antisubmarine warfare, undersea surveillance, and undersea cruise missile launches. As a complement to attack submarines, we must restore our offensive mining capabilities to make Chinese submariners think twice before leaving port.

A regional security headquarters that can coordinate coalition operations. We need a forward-based regional headquarters that can prod allies to work together consistently. Many of our allies have very capable militaries, but they lack collective training, collective planning, and an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) system that only we can provide. A network of allies operating common, U.S.-produced ISR platforms and sharing intelligence through a regional headquarters will provide military operators with a common operating picture. The ability to watch China at all times and from all angles will immeasurably enhance deterrence.

Commitment to the Marine Corps. Recently announced cuts to the Marine Corps bode ill for maintaining a military edge over China. Though the Marines have been used for many critical missions since 9/11, they have historically played an integral role in the Asia-Pacific theater. They are able to conduct forced-entry operations, amphibious landings, and base seizures. They operate well in what are called "nonpermissive" environments. In most Asian conflict scenarios they would be called upon to be on the ground first.

There are, of course, other programs currently unfunded that would help keep the peace in Asia (e.g., directed energy for missile defense). Many once thought the Gates cuts to defense programs would free up resources for China-related defense investments. Instead, the cuts will weaken defense programs useful in the Pacific without adequate investment in other systems that are badly needed. China's military modernization program is destabilizing the region. It's time we woke up to that fact. ♦

Succès Fou

Is the French left mad enough?

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

There is a sweet spot in France's cultural life, and maybe in the cultural life of all countries, where a thinker finds himself able to "raise profound questions" in a way that requires neither profundity nor questioning on the part of his readers. Never has a French book hit that sweet spot quite so squarely as the brochure *Indignez-Vous!* (roughly, "Get Mad!"), which appears under the name of 93-year-old Stéphane Hessel, a politicized veteran of the French resistance. Holding only 14 pages of text, selling for 3 euros a pop, Hessel's booklet promises young readers that they, too, can claim the high heroism earned by those who fought Hitler, with no more peril or intellectual exertion than it requires to watch a five-minute YouTube video. That sounds like a good deal to the youth of France. Since it was published in October, *Indignez-Vous* has sold about 650,000 copies.

Stéphane Hessel

Hessel's diatribe is a meandering collection of a half-dozen slack-minded high-school-newspaper-level op-eds. It draws its popularity in part from Hessel's extraordinary biography. Born into a literary family in Berlin, he moved to France with his parents as a boy. His Jewish father was a friend of Walter Benjamin and Marcel Duchamp. Hessel himself joined the resistance, was captured, and survived deportation to two concentration camps (Buchenwald and Dora).

After the war he became a diplomat and was "involved with" (as he puts it) the writing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. In other words, he was a gofer for the French U.N. diplomat Henri Laugier. To listen to Indigène, Hessel's publisher, however, you would almost think he had penned the declaration himself. Whatever his role, he is one of the last living people who can speak from, and for, a France that really *was* something, culturally and politically, a France in which there were trustworthy authorities. Nothing wrong with that. A similar search for trustworthy authorities, and a similar trek back in time to find them, is what the Tea Party is engaged in in our own country.

The real appeal of *Indignez-Vous!* is that it confers on France's modern-day political activists the explicit blessing of a resistance hero. Hessel supports the teachers and students who are striking against education reform, the union members who are marching over the raising of the French retirement age from 60 to 62, and the antiglobalization activists of Attac. "How can there not be enough money today to maintain and extend these achievements," he asks, "given that the production of wealth has grown considerably since the Liberation?" As it happens, this is a question with a simple answer: There is not enough money because the production of rights and benefits has outstripped the production of wealth.

But that is not the basis on which Hessel prefers to conduct the argument. What today's protesters are fighting for, Hessel thinks, and what the government of Nicolas Sarkozy is

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Just Released

ORIGINAL U.S. GOV'T MORGAN SILVER DOLLARS

3,264 coins between 89-132 years old

They're called Morgans because George T. Morgan designed them and they were first minted in 1878 and they were the undisputed King of the coin market. These giant cartwheels were the "hard money" of the Wild West. In fact, Jesse James robbed trains to get them. Then, millions of them (270,232,722 to be exact) were melted down when the military needed silver during World War I. This increased the value of the surviving silver dollars dramatically. A few years ago, a very rare Morgan sold for over $500,000!

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threatening, are "the social achievements of the Résistance." The 1943 "program" of the Conseil National de la Résistance laid out a strategy for winning the war and governing the country thereafter. Largely Communist-inspired, it called for "economic democracy," "subordination of particular to general interests," "returning to the nation the monopolized means of production," and "participation of the workers in the management of the economy." Hessel embraces the romantic myth that French socialism was won on the battlefield, although it was the postwar National Assembly, not the resistance, that built the French welfare state.

Sarkozy is hardly the first French president to bow to economic reality and tack against the ideas in the resistance council's program of socialism. Hessel's beloved François Mitterrand, while president, introduced pro-market reforms in 1983 after his program of nationalizations threatened to cripple the French economy. No prime minister privatized more public companies than the Socialist Lionel Jospin did between 1997 and 2002. Never does Hessel accuse them of doing Hitler's handiwork.

What is striking about this booklet is not its arguments but its tone. Even a casual reader will sense that there is something a bit *off* about it. Where the resistance, leftist though it was, extolled the "*puissance*" and the "*grandeur*" of France, Hessel is more attentive to the voice of the so-called international community than to the French national interest. He is constantly spouting newly minted clichés of the antiglobalization movement, citing the number of people worldwide living on "two dollars a day." He uses words that no 93-year-old, and no nonacademic, ever would, like "*interconnectivité*." The voice in this book does not sound like that of an old-timer observing the contemporary scene. It sounds like the voice of a contemporary *enragé* rationalizing his activism with reference to the heroes of the past. Did Hessel even write it?

Hessel himself, in interviews given after publication, has said that he did not. After he gave a speech to an old resistants' gathering in 2008, Sylvie Crossman of the small publishing house Indigène suggested he do a book. A onetime correspondent with *Le Monde*, Crossman founded the house with her partner, who had been a member of a Maoist group, championed by Jean-Paul Sartre, called the "proletarian left." Indigène published Hessel's pamphlet as part of the collection "Those Who March Against the Wind," which, it informs us, is how the Omaha Indians described themselves. (Apparently this proletarian left has a lot of anthropologists in it.) Hessel had three conversations with Crossman and told the magazine *Marianne*, "All I did was correct

a draft that had been written down quickly after a chat." He has generously given up his author's royalties to Indigène, which probably means we will be hearing a lot from them in the future.

What is most suspect about this work is its very idea of resistance, which one suspects no *résistant* ever shared: "To the young, I say: Look around you, and you will find themes to justify your indignation." But the capital-r Résistance was resistance to Nazism. It did not have to rack its collective brains, as M. Hessel is suggesting today's French youth do, to find something to get mad about. Resistance is not worthwhile for its own sake, or useful as a kind of therapy or self-actualization—it draws all its legitimacy from the evil it resists. There is no "heritage" of resistance unless there is a heritage of oppression—unless we today face some genuine threat on the order of Nazism.

Well, lucky us! "Fascist barbarism," Hessel informs his readers, "has not totally disappeared." Hessel is generally vague about what is bothering him, except in this case. "Today," he says, "my main indignation concerns Palestine." Israel "is massacring innocent people," he believes. "That the Jews could themselves perpetrate war crimes is intolerable. Alas, history gives few examples of people who learn the lessons of their own history." It is not worth laying out his whole argument, which includes regret that Hamas "has not been able to prevent rockets from being fired on Israeli cities" and praise for the people of Gaza who show a "constant preoccupation with the well-being of their children" (a preoccupation that hardly seems unique to Gazans). His booklet closes on a note that has more the ring of the collaborationist writers of 70 years ago than of Jean Moulin: "Only an Israeli," he writes, "would describe a nonviolent person as a terrorist."

This is a rather sad ending to a career. One would pass over Hessel in silence had his pamphlet not sold hundreds of thousands of copies and brought the dangerous drug of indignation into vogue. "More noble than rage," wrote the magazine *Marianne*, "more altruistic than contempt, indignation, that purified hatred, has been elevated to the ranks of positive emotions."

That is perhaps why Luc Ferry, the philosopher and former minister of education, warned Hessel in a magnificent open letter last week that indignation, which "blinds" and "coarsens" those in its grip, is the very last thing France needs. "This sentiment," Ferry wrote, "is one that is directed only at others, never at oneself, and authentic morality begins with demands one makes on oneself."

Indignez-Vous! is not much of a book. But its astonishing popularity allows us to measure just how ominously large a part of the French left views mere rage as its best route to power. ♦

Blasphemy in Pakistan

Moderation is now a capital offense.

BY PAUL MARSHALL & NINA SHEA

Over the past 30 years, under Pakistan's laws criminalizing blasphemy against Islam, hundreds of Christians, Ahmadis, Hindus, Sikhs, and unorthodox and reformist Muslims have been tried and imprisoned by the state or killed by extremists. But even against this brutal background, the blasphemy-triggered January 4 assassination of Punjab governor Salman Taseer by one of his elite security detail may prove a defining moment.

Taseer was head of Pakistan's most populous and prosperous state and a close friend of President Zardari. Most pertinent, he was a voice of Muslim moderation, arguably the most powerful one in the nation, who worked for a free society and defended the rights of non-Muslims and dissident Muslims. He had recently publicly supported a pardon for Asia Bibi, a Christian mother of five sentenced to death for blasphemy, and the repeal of the blasphemy laws themselves. In the closed circle of radical discourse, because he criticized those laws, he was himself labeled a blasphemer and killed.

The laws were introduced by General Zia ul-Haq after he took power in a coup in 1977, as an attempt to gain legitimacy by posing as a defender of Islam. Vaguely aimed at those who would insult Islam, the laws have led to horrific communal violence and have been applied against an ever expanding range of victims. This is why Taseer repeatedly called blasphemy legislation a "black law" and believed it was pivotal in determining the country's future.

While most of those accused of blasphemy in Pakistan are Muslims, non-Muslim religious minorities suffer disproportionately: Though 5 percent of the population, they are half of those accused, and the testimony of one Muslim is sufficient to convict a non-Muslim. They also suffer increasing attacks by extremists. On August 1, 2009, after a Christian was accused of burning a Koran, a mob connected to the Taliban-linked Sipah-e-Sahaba attacked Christians in Korian and Gojra: They indiscriminately killed seven Christians, six of whom (including two children) were burned alive. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reported that police knew of the intended attack but did nothing to prevent it. And while the government has so far not executed those convicted of blasphemy, dozens of accused people have been assassinated by fanatics, even when their cases ended in acquittal.

Two of the five blasphemy laws are specifically aimed at the 3-million-member Ahmadi community, founded in 1889 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in Qadian, now in India. Most Muslims reject Ghulam Ahmad's teachings and believe that, contrary to Islam, he claimed to be a prophet. Although Ahmadis consider themselves Muslims, they may be imprisoned for three years if they call themselves Muslims or their meeting places mosques. They are singled out for special vilification in Pakistan's constitution and, to receive a Pakistani passport, a Muslim must declare "I consider Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Quadiani to be an imposter *Nabi* [prophet] and also consider his followers whether belonging to the Lahori or Quadiani group, to be NON-MUSLIMS." On May 28, 2010, gunmen attacked two Ahmadi houses of worship and killed 93 people attending Friday prayers.

The atmosphere stoked by the laws also contributes to violence between Sunni and Shia, as extremists castigate the others as blasphemers. There are also attacks on Sufi shrines. On July 1, three bombers killed 45 people and left 175 wounded at the Data Darbar shrine commemorating the 10th-century Sufi Data Ganj Baksh. On October 25, bombs at a shrine in Pakpattan killed six people and left 15 injured. There is also now pressure for Ismaili Muslims, followers of the Aga Khan, to be declared non-Muslim, like the Ahmadis.

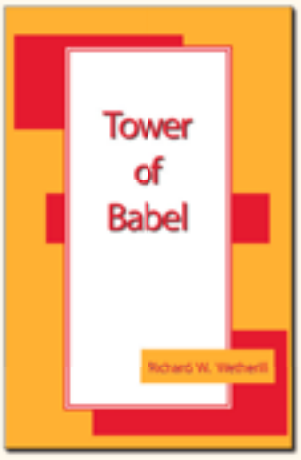
Muslim reformers are also targeted. After medical professor Mohammad Younas Shaikh, a member of Pakistan's Human Rights Commission, raised questions about Pakistan's policies in Kashmir, he was charged with having blasphemed in one of his classes. In 2001, he was sentenced to death. After two years in prison he was acquitted on retrial but had to flee the country to save his life. In 2007, Karachi's Anti-Terrorism Court sentenced author Younus Sheikh to life imprisonment. The judge ruled that one of Sheikh's books had denied the validity of *Rajam*, an Islamic punishment of stoning for adultery.

Now charges of blasphemy are increasingly used to attack reforming politicians. Shahbaz Bhatti, the minister for minorities, and a Christian, has been accused of blasphemy and receives regular death threats for criticizing the laws, as does Sherry Rehman, a liberal legislator, for moving a bill to amend them.

There has been little public sympathy for Taseer, but there has been an outpouring of support for his killer, Malik Mumtaz Qadri. Posters of a defiant-looking Qadri are

Paul Marshall and Nina Shea are senior fellows at the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom and coauthors of Silenced, *a forthcoming book on Islamist blasphemy laws (Oxford University Press).*

Nature's Formula For Success Works For Everybody With The Courage To Pioneer.



Nature's Formula is found in a natural law of behavior identified by the late Richard W. Wetherill early in the past century and presented in his book, *Tower of Babel*. He called it nature's ***law of absolute right. It states: Right Action Gets Right Results; Wrong Action Gets Wrong Results.***

Tower of Babel was published January 2, 1952, but very few people showed interest. So during those past decades, untold numbers of problems and trouble have continued to plague the human race.

Wetherill's book describes the ***causative factor of those problems, explains what is blocking people's awareness of that factor, and how to overcome it***.

Clearly, mankind's teachings of right and wrong action have failed to produce a trouble-free society. Quite the opposite, mankind's teachings are producing worldwide mayhem. The reason is that none of mankind's various definitions of right and wrong action conform to nature's definitions of right and wrong action. ***The behavioral law defines right action as decisions and behavior that are rational and honest, and it defines wrong action as decisions and behavior that do not comply with the criteria of this natural law.***

Just as creation's laws of physics apply indiscriminately to everybody everywhere so, too, does nature's law of behavior. Until people think and act in accord with that law, their wrong results will continue.

Wetherill called his findings *humanetics*, and in the 1970s he formed a research group of ordinary people who were able to make impressive changes. They formed a business that became the major supplier of its industry, doing global sales of more than $200 million. They formed a private school and taught students the principles of the law's right action. Their teachers reported that improvements in the pupils' scholastic abilities and behavior were dramatic.

Clearly, ***nature's formula for success depends on people's continued adherence to the law's definition of right action***.

Wetherill taught the researchers not to *believe* what he said but to let his words direct their attention to the ***reality*** being described so that reality could confirm or deny what had been said. When confirmed, information becomes ***knowledge***. When denied, information remains ***hearsay***.

People tend not to understand ***nature's formula for success*** just by reading about it. They need to see its correctness in the reality of life. ***Reality is not written on paper. Reality is written in life***.

A research scientist has said, "The brain, more than any other organ, is where experience becomes flesh." With the intent to do what is right, applying ***nature's formula for success*** directs thinking steadfastly to the rational, honest behavior that reality calls for, thus releasing the flesh of wrong brain circuits. When released from that influence, people are free to think, say, and do what accords with nature's behavioral law.

As one of America's Founding Fathers, Benjamin Franklin, had said, *"Only virtuous people are capable of freedom."* People who reason from nature's law of absolute right enjoy that freedom.

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This public-service message is from a self-financed, nonprofit group of former students of Mr. Wetherill.

appearing in public spaces and on Islamist websites. Pakistan's Deobandi, Wahhabi, and other extremist groups praise the assassin. He has even been lauded by 500 scholars of the relatively moderate Barelvi sect of Islam and by younger members of the pro-democracy lawyers association. Meanwhile, no lawyer is willing to take on the prosecution. Those who mourn Taseer are alleged to be insulting Islam, as was Pope Benedict XVI when he petitioned last week for the law's repeal.

Taseer's assassination comes amid debates in Pakistani political circles on blasphemy law reform and Islamization. On December 19, the Council of Islamic Ideology, Pakistan's senior constitutional advisory body on Islamic injunctions, recommended some procedural changes in blasphemy laws but opposed repeal. On December 24, Pakistan's religious parties (including the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal ur Rehman, which recently left Zardari's coalition government) held protest rallies against any attempts to change them. Even Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, who avoided Taseer's funeral, says he will keep the laws "undiluted."

Pakistan was conceived by its founding father Mohammad Jinnah as a secular state for Muslims. But since the 1970s, successive governments have given way to increased Islamization. Now, as Islamist violence threatens Pakistan's stability and targets the ruling elite, the revolution is eating its children.

The United States has many security concerns in Pakistan, including nuclear weapons, operations in tribal areas, and ISI support for the Taliban, but addresses blasphemy laws merely as a humanitarian matter. Taseer's killing, however, shows that they have vital security implications: They are a key mechanism in entrenching radicalism and silencing those within Pakistani society who seek peaceful coexistence and religious moderation. As Taseer's daughter Sara observed, "This is a message to every liberal to shut up or be shot." ♦

A blood-stained Christ: Al-Qiddissine church in Alexandria, Egypt, after a bomb attack

The Long, Withdrawing Roar

Christianity on the retreat in the Middle East.

BY LEE SMITH

A few years ago I was in the West Bank with a Christian missionary who worked among Jews and Muslims. The Jewish converts came to his home for Sunday services that were held in both English and Hebrew. But to gather with Arab converts he had to meet them secretly on the outskirts of their town lest his mere presence put their lives in jeopardy.

"My brother became a Christian at the same time as I did," one Palestinian told me. "But neither of us knew of the other's conversion for many years. It would have been too dangerous, until the missionary was certain of our conviction."

We were sitting in a clearing in the brush that was one of the converts' meeting places. I imagined that Jesus and his disciples must have prayed in places like this, maybe even here. An Israeli Defense Forces patrol passing on the nearby road stopped to see what was going on. The missionary explained to the officer in charge, who nodded and went on his way.

"My brother and I converted because we knew we needed love in our lives," the Palestinian continued. "I think that Jesus is going to bless the Palestinian people by spreading his gospel of love here."

Perhaps someday, but for now the Christians of the Middle East are facing danger. Both recent converts and ancient congregations—the Assyrians in Iraq, the Copts in Egypt, Lebanon's Maronite Catholics, and more, long antedating Islam—are under fire. The land where Christianity began is being cleansed of Jesus' followers. It is possible that we will soon see an event without precedent: the end of a living Christian witness in this region after more than 2,000 years.

So why now? And how did Christians manage to thrive here in the past?

"We survived, but not the way we

Lee Smith is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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The Evolution of Hearing Products

Invention	Date	Easy to Use?	Invisible?	Affordable?
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Wearable Hearing Aid	1935	Weighed 2.5 pounds	No	No
Digital Hearing Aid	1984	No	No	Not for most people
Neutronic Ear	2010	Yes	Yes	Yes

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wanted to," says Habib Efram, president of the Syriac League of Lebanon, which represents some 60,000 Syriac Christians. Efram often visits the much larger Syriac Christian community in Iraq, which is under siege. "Some were forced to leave the country, and there have been massacres," Efram tells me on the phone from Beirut.

"The Christians have always been under attack," explains Lebanese political analyst Elie Fawaz. "Our numbers used to be much higher throughout the Middle East. We were here centuries before the Muslims, so there used to be many more Christians, until the raids and conversions to Islam."

In Mt. Lebanon, the country's Christian heartland, there's a valley called Wadi Qadisha where the Maronites held off the Mamluk sultans in the 13th century. It was partly geography that ensured the survival of Lebanon's Christian community. The Mediterranean coast provided access to European powers—the Vatican and France—that have long seen themselves as the protectors of Lebanon's Christians; and the high mountain passes afforded a vantage point that turned hostile incursions into suicide missions as the Christians picked off intruders one by one. It is no coincidence that Hezbollah has bought and expropriated property in Lebanon's mountains. There the party can survey not only its Israeli enemy, but its local Christian foes as well, whom Hezbollah and its pro-Syrian allies have targeted in a series of assassinations over the last six years.

"The Maronites are politicized," says Fawaz. "You cannot compare them to Iraqi Christians." That is, Lebanon's Christians are under attack from rivals who wish to take their power, while Iraq's and Egypt's besieged Christian sects are powerless to defend themselves against superior numbers, and no one is willing or able to protect them.

Even rhetorical defenses of the Christians are cautious. Pope Benedict, like popes before him, chooses his words carefully when addressing the situation of Middle Eastern Christians, lest they be made to pay for perceived slights. Arab nationalists and Sunni Islamists assume that any discussion of regional minorities—whether Christians, Jews, or even Shia—by outsiders is coded language for a project to colonize the Middle East on behalf of the great powers. To be sure, the French did come to the aid of the Maronites in Lebanon in 1860 to end the war between them, the Druze, and their Ottoman overlords. And after the First World War, France held the mandate for Lebanon and rewarded what was then a Christian majority with a constitution that gave most of the power to the Maronites.

Lebanon's civil war from 1975 to 1990 was largely a product of shifting demographics and a changing political culture. While the Christian community fought to preserve the state's territorial integrity and avoid war with Israel, the country's increasingly numerous Sunnis wanted to attach themselves to the great Arab cause—Palestine—and open the border with Israel to the Palestinian resistance. After the war, the Taif Agreement of 1989 gave more political say to the Sunnis and Shia. It made official what everyone knew: Lebanon's Christians had lost.

"We don't want foreign support," says Habib Efram, by which he means a Western military adventure on behalf of the Christians. "We don't want the West thinking of Christians as puppets of the West, using us for their agenda. We are from the Middle East and belong here."

What they want, he says, is something like a Marshall Plan for Middle East Christians—"Some money to build schools and other programs." "The United States," he continues, "can also ensure that Christian minorities are fairly represented in their parliaments. The Copts make up 10 percent of Egypt's population, and yet there are only 2 or 3 elected Coptic representatives and another few named by the government. The Copts should have at least 40 seats out of the 500-seat parliament. In Iraq, even with only 3 percent of the population the Christians should have 14 members of parliament." Instead, they have only 2.

It is a fantasy of U.S. omnipotence familiar in the region. It would take U.S. troops, of course, to ensure the safety of U.S.-backed programs; nor could a more robust representation of Christians in weak Arab assemblies—even if the United States had a way of bringing it about—prevent the murder of Christians by mobs or terrorists. Efram's hazy plan seems the wishful thinking of a minority under fire with nowhere to turn.

Efram attributes the rise in anti-Christian violence to the virulent strain of radical Islam that began with the Muslim Brotherhood and now comes in both Sunni and Shia variants. Arab security services fight Islamist groups when it suits regime interests—and it is dangerous for regimes to be perceived as siding with Christians against the Muslim majority. Thus, every day brings a fresh outrage against Egypt's Copts, while the Cairo government's notoriously active, and vicious, security services sit idly by. In Iraq, some Christians even long for the reign of Saddam Hussein and his Christian deputy, Tariq Aziz, who protected them.

That notion of "protection" has a particular history. Since the Arab conquests beginning in the mid-seventh century, Christians and Jews under Muslim rule were recognized as "people of the book." In theory, they were protected minorities, or *dhimmi*. But they could not enjoy equality with the Muslim, typically Sunni, majority, and the lot of *dhimmis* varied with the disposition of the rulers. That Saddam, for instance, "protected" Christians to some degree did not ensure that his sons would have done the same.

And as for the glory days of Middle Eastern coexistence that supposedly preceded the rise of the present extremists, the Ottomans' slaughter of the Armenians and other Christians belies it. As long as believers are without legal rights guaranteed by governments willing and able to enforce them, the Christian presence in the region will be in peril. ♦

The Price of Power

The benefits of U.S. defense spending far outweigh the costs

F-22 Raptors over Southwest Asia

By Robert Kagan

The looming battle over the defense budget could produce a useful national discussion about American foreign and defense policy. But we would need to begin by dispensing with the most commonly repeated fallacy: that cutting defense is essential to restoring the nation's fiscal health. People can be forgiven for believing this myth, given how often they hear it. Typical is a recent *Foreign Affairs* article claiming that the United States faces "a watershed moment" and "must decide whether to increase its already massive debt in order to continue being the world's sheriff or restrain its military missions and focus on economic recovery."

This is nonsense. No serious budget analyst or economist believes that cutting the defense budget will aid economic recovery in the near term—federal spending on defense is just as much a job-producing stimulus as federal spending on infrastructure. Nor, more importantly, do they believe that cutting defense spending will have more than the most marginal effect on reducing the runaway deficits projected for the coming years. The simple fact is, as my Brookings colleague and former budget czar Alice Rivlin recently observed, the scary projections of future deficits are *not* "caused by rising defense spending," and even if one assumes that defense spending continues to increase with the rate of inflation, this is "not what's driving the future spending." The engine of our growing debt is entitlements.

So why are the various commissions, including the Rivlin-Domenici commission, as well as members of Congress, calling for defense cuts at all? The answer boils down to one of fairness, and politics. It is not that cutting defense is necessary to save the economy. But if the American people are going to be asked to accept cuts in their domestic entitlements, the assumption runs, they're going to want to see the pain shared across the board, including by defense.

This "fair share" argument is at least more sober than phony "cut defense or kill the economy" sensationalism, and it has the appearance of reasonableness. But it is still based on a fallacy. Distributing cuts equally is not an intrinsically good thing. If you wanted to reduce the gas consumption of your gas-guzzling car by 10 percent, you wouldn't remove 10 percent of your front and rear bumpers so that all parts of the car shared the pain. The same goes for the federal budget. Not all cuts have equal effect on the national well-being. Few would propose cutting spending on airport security, for instance. At a time of elevated risk of terrorist attack, we don't need to show the American people

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that airport security is contributing its "fair share" to budget reduction.

Today the international situation is also one of high risk.

• The terrorists who would like to kill Americans on U.S. soil constantly search for safe havens from which to plan and carry out their attacks. American military actions in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, and elsewhere make it harder for them to strike and are a large part of the reason why for almost a decade there has been no repetition of September 11. To the degree that we limit our ability to deny them safe haven, we increase the chances they will succeed.

• American forces deployed in East Asia and the Western Pacific have for decades prevented the outbreak of major war, provided stability, and kept open international trading routes, making possible an unprecedented era of growth and prosperity for Asians and Americans alike. Now the United States faces a new challenge and potential threat from a rising China which seeks eventually to push the U.S. military's area of operations back to Hawaii and exercise hegemony over the world's most rapidly growing economies. Meanwhile, a nuclear-armed North Korea threatens war with South Korea and fires ballistic missiles over Japan that will someday be capable of reaching the west coast of the United States. Democratic nations in the region, worried that the United States may be losing influence, turn to Washington for reassurance that the U.S. security guarantee remains firm. If the United States cannot provide that assurance because it is cutting back its military capabilities, they will have to choose between accepting Chinese dominance and striking out on their own, possibly by building nuclear weapons.

• In the Middle East, Iran seeks to build its own nuclear arsenal, supports armed radical Islamic groups in Lebanon and Palestine, and has linked up with anti-American dictatorships in the Western Hemisphere. The prospects of new instability in the region grow every day as a decrepit regime in Egypt clings to power, crushes all moderate opposition, and drives the Muslim Brotherhood into the streets. A nuclear-armed Pakistan seems to be ever on the brink of collapse into anarchy and radicalism. Turkey, once an ally, now seems bent on an increasingly anti-American Islamist course. The prospect of war between Hezbollah and Israel grows, and with it the possibility of war between Israel and Syria and possibly Iran. There, too, nations in the region increasingly look to Washington for reassurance, and if they decide the United States cannot be relied upon they will have to decide whether to succumb to Iranian influence or build their own nuclear weapons to resist it.

In the 1990s, after the Soviet Union had collapsed and the biggest problem in the world seemed to be ethnic conflict in the Balkans, it was at least plausible to talk about cutting back on American military capabilities. In the present, increasingly dangerous international environment, in which terrorism and great power rivalry vie as the greatest threat to American security and interests, cutting military capacities is simply reckless. Would we increase the risk of strategic failure in an already risky world, despite the near irrelevance of the defense budget to American fiscal health, just so we could tell American voters that their military had suffered its "fair share" of the pain?

The nature of the risk becomes plain when one considers the nature of the cuts that would have to be made to have even a marginal effect on the U.S. fiscal crisis. Many are under the illusion, for instance, that if the United States simply withdrew from Iraq and Afghanistan and didn't intervene anywhere else for a while, this would have a significant impact on future deficits. But, in fact, projections of future massive deficits already assume the winding down of these interventions.Withdrawal from the two wars would scarcely make a dent in the fiscal crisis. Nor can meaningful reductions be achieved by cutting back on waste at the Pentagon—which Secretary of Defense Gates has already begun to do and which has also been factored into deficit projections. If the United States withdrew from Iran and Afghanistan tomorrow, cut all the waste Gates can find, and even eliminated a few weapons programs—all this together would still not produce a 10 percent decrease in overall defense spending.

In fact, the only way to get significant savings from the defense budget—and by "significant," we are still talking about a tiny fraction of the cuts needed to bring down future deficits—is to cut force structure: fewer troops on the ground; fewer airplanes in the skies; fewer ships in the water; fewer soldiers, pilots, and sailors to feed and clothe and provide benefits for. To cut the size of the force, however, requires reducing or eliminating the missions those forces have been performing. Of course, there are any number of think tank experts who insist U.S. forces can be cut by a quarter or third or even by half and still perform those missions. But this is snake oil. Over the past two decades, the force has already been cut by a third. Yet no administration has reduced the missions that the larger force structures of the past were designed to meet. To fulfill existing security commitments, to remain the "world's power balancer of choice," as Leslie Gelb puts it, to act as "the only regional balancer against China in Asia, Russia in eastern Europe, and Iran in the Middle East" requires at least the current force structure, and almost certainly more than current force levels. Those who recommend doing the same with less are only proposing a policy of insufficiency, where the United States makes commitments it cannot meet except at high risk of failure.

The only way to find substantial savings in the defense budget, therefore, is to change American strategy fundamentally. The Simpson-Bowles commission suggests as much, by calling for a reexamination of America's "21st century role," although it doesn't begin to define what that new role might be.

Others have. For decades "realist" analysts have called for a strategy of "offshore balancing." Instead of the United States providing security in East Asia and the Persian Gulf, it would withdraw its forces from Japan, South Korea, and the Middle East and let the nations in those regions balance one another. If the balance broke down and war erupted, the United States would then intervene militarily until balance was restored. In the Middle East and Persian Gulf, for instance, Christopher Layne has long proposed "passing the mantle of regional stabilizer" to a consortium of "Russia, China, Iran, and India." In East Asia offshore balancing would mean letting China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and others manage their own problems, without U.S. involvement—again, until the balance broke down and war erupted, at which point the United States would provide assistance to restore the balance and then, if necessary, intervene with its own forces to restore peace and stability.

American leaders after World War II determined that the safest course was to build 'situations of strength' in strategic locations around the world, to build a 'preponderance of power,' and to create an international system with American power at its center.

Before examining whether this would be a wise strategy, it is important to understand that this really is the only genuine alternative to the one the United States has pursued for the past 65 years. To their credit, Layne and others who support the concept of offshore balancing have eschewed halfway measures and airy assurances that we can do more with less, which are likely recipes for disaster. They recognize that either the United States is actively involved in providing security and stability in regions beyond the Western Hemisphere, which means maintaining a robust presence in those regions, or it is not. Layne and others are frank in calling for an end to the global security strategy developed in the aftermath of World War II, perpetuated through the Cold War, and continued by four successive post-Cold War administrations.

At the same time, it is not surprising that none of those administrations embraced offshore balancing as a strategy. The idea of relying on Russia, China, and Iran to jointly "stabilize" the Middle East and Persian Gulf will not strike many as an attractive proposition. Nor is U.S. withdrawal from East Asia and the Pacific likely to have a stabilizing effect on that region. The prospects of a war on the Korean Peninsula would increase. Japan and other nations in the region would face the choice of succumbing to Chinese hegemony or taking unilateral steps for self-defense, which in Japan's case would mean the rapid creation of a formidable nuclear arsenal.

Layne and other offshore balancing enthusiasts, like John Mearsheimer, point to two notable occasions when the United States allegedly practiced this strategy. One was the Iran-Iraq war, where the United States supported Iraq for years against Iran in the hope that the two would balance and weaken each other. The other was American policy in the 1920s and 1930s, when the United States allowed the great European powers to balance one another, occasionally providing economic aid, or military aid, as in the Lend-Lease program of assistance to Great Britain once war broke out. Whether this was really American strategy in that era is open for debate—most would argue the United States in this era was trying to stay out of war not as part of a considered strategic judgment but as an end in itself. Even if the United States had been pursuing offshore balancing in the first decades of the 20th century, however, would we really call that strategy a success? The United States wound up intervening with millions of troops, first in Europe, and then in Asia and Europe simultaneously, in the two most dreadful wars in human history.

It was with the memory of those two wars in mind, and in the belief that American strategy in those interwar years had been mistaken, that American statesmen during and after World War II determined on the new global strategy that the United States has pursued ever since. Under Franklin Roosevelt, and then under the leadership of Harry Truman and Dean Acheson, American leaders determined that the safest course was to build "situations of strength" (Acheson's phrase) in strategic locations around the world, to build a "preponderance of power," and to create an international system with American power at its center. They left substantial numbers of troops in East Asia and in Europe and built a globe-girdling system of naval and air bases to enable the rapid projection of force to strategically important parts of the world. They did not do this on a lark or out of a yearning for global dominion. They simply rejected the offshore balancing strategy, and they did so because they believed it had led to great, destructive wars in

the past and would likely do so again. They believed their new global strategy was more likely to deter major war and therefore be less destructive and less expensive in the long run. Subsequent administrations, from both parties and with often differing perspectives on the proper course in many areas of foreign policy, have all agreed on this core strategic approach.

From the beginning this strategy was assailed as too ambitious and too expensive. At the dawn of the Cold War, Walter Lippmann railed against Truman's containment strategy as suffering from an unsustainable gap between ends and means that would bankrupt the United States and exhaust its power. Decades later, in the waning years of the Cold War, Paul Kennedy warned of "imperial overstretch," arguing that American decline was inevitable "if the trends in national indebtedness, low productivity increases, [etc.]" were allowed to continue at the same time as "massive American commitments of men, money and materials are made in different parts of the globe." Today, we are once again being told that this global strategy needs to give way to a more restrained and modest approach, even though the indebtedness crisis that we face in coming years is not caused by the present, largely successful global strategy.

Just another war of choice? American troops enter Paris, 1944.

Of course it is precisely the success of that strategy that is taken for granted. The enormous benefits that this strategy has provided, including the financial benefits, somehow never appear on the ledger. They should. We might begin by asking about the global security order that the United States has sustained since Word War II—the prevention of major war, the support of an open trading system, and promotion of the liberal principles of free markets and free government. How much is that order worth? What would be the cost of its collapse or transformation into another type of order?

Whatever the nature of the current economic difficulties, the past six decades have seen a greater increase in global prosperity than any time in human history. Hundreds of millions have been lifted out of poverty. Once-backward nations have become economic dynamos. And the American economy, though suffering ups and downs throughout this period, has on the whole benefited immensely from this international order. One price of this success has been maintaining a sufficient military capacity to provide the essential security underpinnings of this order. But has the price not been worth it? In the first half of the 20th century, the United States found itself engaged in two world wars. In the second half, this global American strategy helped produce a peaceful end to the great-power struggle of the Cold War and then 20 more years of great-power peace. Looked at coldly, simply in terms of dollars and cents, the benefits of that strategy far outweigh the costs.

The danger, as always, is that we don't even realize the benefits our strategic choices have provided. Many assume that the world has simply become more peaceful, that great-power conflict has become impossible, that nations have learned that military force has little utility, that economic power is what counts. This belief in progress and the perfectibility of humankind and the institutions of international order is always alluring to Americans and Europeans and other children of the Enlightenment. It was the prevalent belief in the decade before World War I, in the first years after World War II, and in those heady days after the Cold War when people spoke of the "end of history." It is always tempting to believe that the international order the United States built and sustained with its power can exist in the absence of that power, or at least with much less of it. This is the hidden assumption of those who call for a change in American strategy: that the United States can stop playing its role and yet all the benefits that came from that role will keep pouring in. This is a great if recurring illusion, the idea that you can pull a leg out from under a table and the table will not fall over.

Much of the present debate, it should be acknowledged, is not about the defense budget or the fiscal crisis at all. It is only the latest round in a long-running debate over the nature and purposes of American foreign policy. At the tactical level, some use the fiscal crisis as a justification for a different approach to, say, Afghanistan. Richard Haass, for instance, who has long favored a change of strategy from "counterinsurgency" to "counterterrorism," now uses the budget crisis to bolster his case—although he leaves unclear how much money would be saved by such a shift in strategy.

At the broader level of grand strategy, the current debate, though revived by the budget crisis, can be traced back a century or more, but its most recent expression came with the end of the Cold War. In the early 1990s, some critics, often calling themselves "realists," expressed their unhappiness with a foreign policy—first under George H.W. Bush and then under Bill Clinton—that cast the United States as leader of a "new world order," the "indispensable nation." As early as 1992, Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson assailed President Bush for launching the first Persian Gulf war in response to Saddam Hussein's invasion and occupation of Kuwait. They charged him with pursuing "a new world role . . . required neither by security need nor by traditional conceptions of the nation's purpose," a role that gave "military force" an "excessive and disproportionate . . . position in our statecraft."

Tucker and Hendrickson were frank enough to acknowledge that, *pace* Paul Kennedy, the "peril" was not actually "to the nation's purse" or even to "our interests" but to the nation's "soul." This has always been the core critique of expansive American foreign policy doctrines, from the time of the Founders to the present—not that a policy of extensive global involvement is necessarily impractical but that it is immoral and contrary to the nation's true ideals.

Today this alleged profligacy in the use of force is variously attributed to the influence of "neoconservatives" or to those Mearsheimer calls the "liberal imperialists" of the Clinton administration, who have presumably now taken hold of the Obama administration as well. But the critics share a common premise: that if only the United States would return to a more "normal" approach to the world, intervening abroad far less frequently and eschewing efforts at "nation-building," then this would allow the United States to cut back on the resources it expends on foreign policy.

Thanks to Haass's clever formulation, there has been a great deal of talk lately about "wars of choice" as opposed to "wars of necessity." Haass labels both the war in Iraq and the war in Afghanistan "wars of choice." Today, many ask whether the United States can simply avoid such allegedly optional interventions in the future, as well as the occupations and exercises in "nation-building" that often seem to follow.

Although the idea of eliminating "wars of choice" appears sensible, the historical record suggests it will not be as simple as many think. The problem is, almost every war or intervention the United States has engaged in throughout its history has been optional—and not just the Bosnias, Haitis, Somalias, or Vietnams, but the Korean War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, and even World War II (at least the war in Europe), not to mention the many armed interventions throughout Latin America and the Caribbean over the course of the past century, from Cuba in 1898 to Panama in 1989. A case can be made, and has been made by serious historians, that every one of these wars and interventions was avoidable and unnecessary. To note that our most recent wars have also been wars of choice, therefore, is not as useful as it seems.

In theory, the United States could refrain from intervening abroad. But, in practice, will it? Many assume today that the American public has had it with interventions, and Alice Rivlin certainly reflects a strong current of opinion when she says that "much of the public does not believe that we need to go in and take over other people's countries." That sentiment has often been heard after interventions, especially those with mixed or dubious results. It was heard after the four-year-long war in the Philippines, which cost 4,000 American lives and untold Filipino casualties. It was heard after Korea and after Vietnam. It was heard after Somalia. Yet the reality has been that after each intervention, the sentiment against foreign involvement has faded, and the United States has intervened again.

Depending on how one chooses to count, the United States has undertaken roughly 25 overseas interventions since 1898:

Cuba, 1898
The Philippines, 1898-1902
China, 1900
Cuba, 1906
Nicaragua, 1910 & 1912
Mexico, 1914
Haiti, 1915
Dominican Republic, 1916
Mexico, 1917
World War I, 1917-1918
Nicaragua, 1927
World War II, 1941-1945
Korea, 1950-1953
Lebanon, 1958
Vietnam, 1963-1973
Dominican Republic, 1965

Grenada, 1983
Panama, 1989
First Persian Gulf war, 1991
Somalia, 1992
Haiti, 1994
Bosnia, 1995
Kosovo, 1999
Afghanistan, 2001-present
Iraq, 2003-present

That is one intervention every 4.5 years on average. Overall, the United States has intervened or been engaged in combat somewhere in 52 out of the last 112 years, or roughly 47 percent of the time. Since the end of the Cold War, it is true, the rate of U.S. interventions has increased, with an intervention roughly once every 2.5 years and American troops intervening or engaged in combat in 16 out of 22 years, or over 70 percent of the time, since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The argument for returning to "normal" begs the question: What is normal for the United States? The historical record of the last century suggests that it is not a policy of nonintervention. This record ought to raise doubts about the theory that American behavior these past two decades is the product of certain unique ideological or doctrinal movements, whether "liberal imperialism" or "neoconservatism." Allegedly "realist" presidents in this era have been just as likely to order interventions as their more idealistic colleagues. George H.W. Bush was as profligate an intervener as Bill Clinton. He invaded Panama in 1989, intervened in Somalia in 1992—both on primarily idealistic and humanitarian grounds—which along with the first Persian Gulf war in 1991 made for three interventions in a single four-year term. Since 1898 the list of presidents who ordered armed interventions abroad has included William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush. One would be hard-pressed to find a common ideological or doctrinal thread among them—unless it is the doctrine and ideology of a mainstream American foreign policy that leans more toward intervention than many imagine or would care to admit.

Many don't want to admit it, and the only thing as consistent as this pattern of American behavior has been the claim by contemporary critics that it is abnormal and a departure from American traditions. The anti-imperialists of the late 1890s, the isolationists of the 1920s and 1930s, the critics of Korea and Vietnam, and the critics of the first Persian Gulf war, the interventions in the Balkans, and the more recent wars of the Bush years have all insisted that the nation had in those instances behaved unusually or irrationally. And yet the behavior has continued.

To note this consistency is not the same as justifying it. The United States may have been wrong for much of the past 112 years. Some critics would endorse the sentiment expressed by the historian Howard K. Beale in the 1950s, that "the men of 1900" had steered the United States onto a disastrous course of world power which for the subsequent half-century had done the United States and the world no end of harm. But whether one lauds or condemns this past century of American foreign policy—and one can find reasons to do both—the fact of this consistency remains. It would require not just a modest reshaping of American foreign policy priorities but a sharp departure from this tradition to bring about the kinds of changes that would allow the United States to make do with a substantially smaller force structure.

Is such a sharp departure in the offing? It is no doubt true that many Americans are unhappy with the ongoing warfare in Afghanistan and to a lesser extent in Iraq, and that, if asked, a majority would say the United States should intervene less frequently in foreign nations, or perhaps not at all. It may also be true that the effect of long military involvements in Iraq and Afghanistan may cause Americans and their leaders to shun further interventions at least for a few years—as they did for nine years after World War I, five years after World War II, and a decade after Vietnam. This may be further reinforced by the difficult economic times in which Americans are currently suffering. The longest period of nonintervention in the past century was during the 1930s, when unhappy memories of World War I combined with the economic catastrophe of the Great Depression to constrain American interventionism to an unusual degree and produce the first and perhaps only genuinely isolationist period in American history.

So are we back to the mentality of the 1930s? It wouldn't appear so. There is no great wave of isolationism sweeping the country. There is not even the equivalent of a Patrick Buchanan, who received 3 million votes in the 1992 Republican primaries. Any isolationist tendencies that might exist are severely tempered by continuing fears of terrorist attacks that might be launched from overseas. Nor are the vast majority of Americans suffering from economic calamity to nearly the degree that they did in the Great Depression.

Even if we were to repeat the policies of the 1930s, however, it is worth recalling that the unusual restraint of those years was not sufficient to keep the United States out of war. On the contrary, the United States took actions which ultimately led to the greatest and most costly foreign intervention in its history. Even the most determined and in those years powerful isolationists could not prevent it.

Today there are a number of obvious possible contingencies that might lead the United States to substantial interventions overseas, notwithstanding the preference of the public and its political leaders to avoid them. Few Americans want a war with Iran, for instance. But it is not implausible that a president—indeed, this president—might find himself in a situation where military conflict at some level is hard to avoid. The continued success of the international sanctions regime that the Obama administration has so skillfully put into place, for instance, might eventually cause the Iranian government to lash out in some way—perhaps by attempting to close the Strait of Hormuz. Recall that Japan launched its attack on Pearl Harbor in no small part as a response to oil sanctions imposed by a Roosevelt administration that had not the slightest interest or intention of fighting a war against Japan but was merely expressing moral outrage at Japanese behavior on the Chinese mainland. Perhaps in an Iranian contingency, the military actions would stay limited. But perhaps, too, they would escalate. One could well imagine an American public, now so eager to avoid intervention, suddenly demanding that their president retaliate. Then there is the possibility that a military exchange between Israel and Iran, initiated by Israel, could drag the United States into conflict with Iran. Are such scenarios so farfetched that they can be ruled out by Pentagon planners?

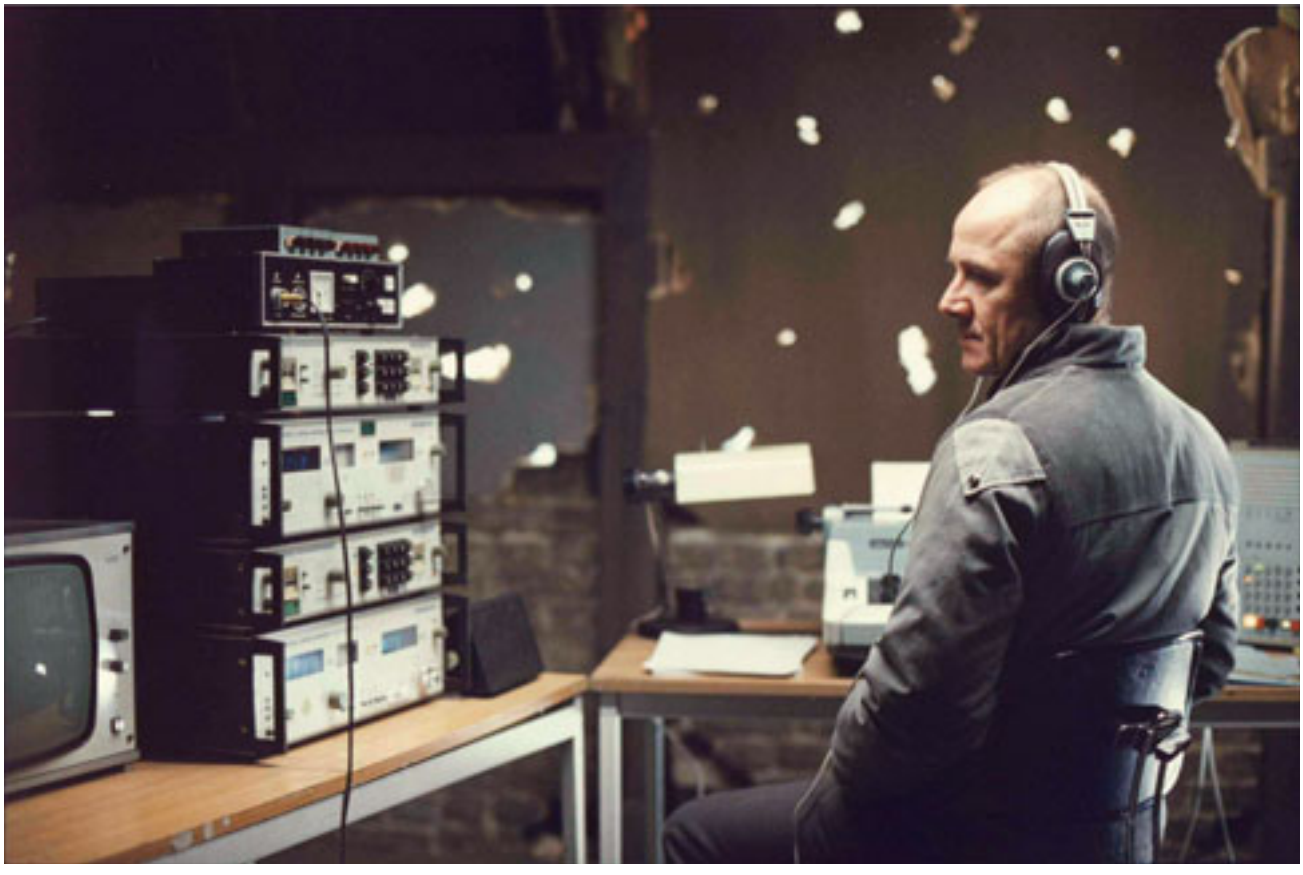
Other possible contingencies include a war on the Korean Peninsula, where the United States is bound by treaty to come to the aid of its South Korean ally; and possible interventions in Yemen or Somalia, should those states fail even more than they already have and become even more fertile ground for al Qaeda and other terrorist groups. And what about those "humanitarian" interventions that are first on everyone's list to be avoided? Should another earthquake or some other natural or man-made catastrophe strike, say, Haiti and present the looming prospect of mass starvation and disease and political anarchy just a few hundred miles off U.S. shores, with the possibility of thousands if not hundreds of thousands of refugees, can anyone be confident that an American president will not feel compelled to send an intervention force to help?

Some may hope that a smaller U.S. military, compelled by the necessity of budget constraints, would prevent a president from intervening. More likely, however, it would simply prevent a president from intervening effectively. This, after all, was the experience of the Bush administration in Iraq and Afghanistan. Both because of constraints and as a conscious strategic choice, the Bush administration sent too few troops to both countries. The results were lengthy, unsuccessful conflicts, burgeoning counterinsurgencies, and loss of confidence in American will and capacity, as well as large annual expenditures. Would it not have been better, and also cheaper, to have sent larger numbers of forces initially to both places and brought about a more rapid conclusion to the fighting? The point is, it may prove cheaper in the long run to have larger forces that can fight wars quickly and conclusively, as Colin Powell long ago suggested, than to have smaller forces that can't. Would a defense planner trying to anticipate future American actions be wise to base planned force structure on the assumption that the United States is out of the intervention business? Or would that be the kind of penny-wise, pound-foolish calculation that, in matters of national security, can prove so unfortunate?

The longest period of nonintervention in the past century was during the 1930s, when unhappy memories of World War I combined with the Great Depression to constrain American interventionism to an unusual degree and produce the first and perhaps only genuinely isolationist period in American history.

The debates over whether and how the United States should respond to the world's strategic challenges will and should continue. Armed interventions overseas should be weighed carefully, as always, with an eye to whether the risk of inaction is greater than the risks of action. And as always, these judgments will be merely that: judgments, made with inadequate information and intelligence and no certainty about the outcomes. No foreign policy doctrine can avoid errors of omission and commission. But history has provided some lessons, and for the United States the lesson has been fairly clear: The world is better off, and the United States is better off, in the kind of international system that American power has built and defended.

As Haass and Roger C. Altman have correctly noted, "it is not reckless American activity in the world that jeopardizes American solvency but American profligacy at home." The United States may be in peril because of its spiraling deficits and mounting debt, but it will be in even greater peril if, out of some misguided sense that our national security budgets must "share the pain," we weaken ourselves even further. ♦



Ulrich Mühe in 'The Lives of Others' (2006)

HAGEN KELLER / SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

Big Bruder Watching

The East German brand of tyranny

BY ANDREW STUTTAFORD

Stalin's observation that the death of one man is a tragedy but the death of a million is a statistic helps explain why some of the finest portraits of 20th-century totalitarianism have been miniatures. Ivan Denisovich's "day without a dark cloud" and the hunt for the Jewish schoolboys in Louis Malle's *Au revoir les enfants* illuminate horrors that stretch far beyond one outpost of the Gulag or a stagnant Vichy town. The decision by the Canadian historian Gary Bruce to focus his new history of the East German secret police, the Stasi (*Staatssicherheit*), on Perleberg and Gransee, two out-of-the-way districts in communism's distaff Germany, might have promised something of the same. But that's not what his book delivers.

The Firm
The Inside Story of the Stasi
by Gary Bruce
Oxford, 264 pp., $34.95

Instead, Bruce takes advantage of the fact that an unusually high proportion of the Stasi archives were left untouched in the backwaters that are his setting to produce a meticulous, grassroots examination of (to quote Timothy Garton Ash) "the quieter corruption of [East Germany's] mature totalitarianism." Supplemented by a series of interviews both with former secret policemen and those they watched over, *The Firm* is well done, even if Bruce's approach has meant that the *grand guignol* of the Stasi's formative years is passed over too lightly for his book to be viewed as a truly comprehensive analysis of that organization's malignant DNA. The worst aspects of the later, more

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discreetly brutal, decades also escape the scrutiny they deserve. There's little on the fates of those "the firm" (the Stasi's smug nickname for itself) considered its most serious opponents. Their cases would have been handled by (and usually in) East Berlin.

This matters. East Germany's past remains poorly known outside its former borders and, judging by the perverse phenomenon of *Ostalgie*, even within them. In making *Au revoir les enfants*, Malle could rely on his audience's familiarity with the film's backstory of war, occupation, and Holocaust. Bruce is in no position to make similar assumptions. Nonspecialists would thus do better to turn elsewhere, perhaps to Anne McElvoy's *The Saddled Cow* (1992), a perceptive overview of East German history written by a journalist who witnessed its final years, or for a somewhat later examination of still raw memories, Anna Funder's haunting *Stasiland* (2003):

> Frau Paul started opening doors. First a compartment so small a person could only stand. It was designed to be filled with icy water up to the neck. There were sixty-eight of these, she told me. Then there were concrete cells with nothing in them where prisoners would be kept in the dark amid their own excrement. There was a cell lined entirely with padded rubber. Frau Paul was held nearby.

You won't find much of that in *The Firm*. Also missing are the Stasi's international activities, from espionage to the support of terrorism, dirty work that took place far from the dull towns in which Bruce's narrative unfolds. Equally, there are few traces of the dangerous dance between regime and intelligentsia that forms the subtext of Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's Oscar-winning *The Lives of Others* (2006). The prominent playwright who is that movie's principal protagonist bears scant resemblance to Bruce's bullied provincials.

Where *The Firm* comes into its own, however, is as a demonstration of the remarkable reach of East Germany's surveillance state. The Stasi employed 91,000 full-time officers at the time the regime fell. In the prewar Reich, a country with a population well over three times as large, the Gestapo made do with 7,000. To be sure, the Nazis enjoyed greater popular support than their Communist successors, but statistics from other Warsaw Pact countries suggest that this cannot be the sole explanation for the difference. As Bruce notes, "The secret services of . . . Czechoslovakia (1:867) or Poland (1:1,574) did not even come close to the ratio in East Germany of one full-time secret police officer for every 180 East German citizens."

We are left to guess why. Fear of the vanquished fascist enemy? Maybe. Stereotypically Teutonic thoroughness? Probably. The dangerous, reproachful proximity of the free, increasingly prosperous, Germany next door? Almost certainly.

The snooping didn't stop with the 91,000. In 1989, the Stasi had 173,000 informants on its books. They were given the generic, now reviled, name of unofficial coworker (IM—*Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter*) but were then subclassified according to a distinctively totalitarian taxonomy. This included Secret Lead Informants (GHI), and below them, trusty Full-time Unofficial Coworkers (HIM), and below *them*, lowly Societal Coworkers for Security (GMS), and then, forming part of the base of this unlovely pyramid, Sporadic Contact Persons (KP) and Collaborative Operational Partners (POZW). In 1988, there was one informant for roughly every 76 preretirement adults in sleepy Perleberg District, a total that Bruce contrasts with one snitch for every 16,800 people in the Ukrainian regional hub of Kharkov at the depths of Stalinist terror.

The Gestapo, of course, benefited from the willingness (for varied reasons) of so many Germans to volunteer information on their neighbors to authorities for whom they had some sympathy. As "the sword and shield" (naturally the iconography was borrowed from the Soviet secret police) of a regime profoundly disliked for most of its existence, the Stasi had to be more proactive. Bruce shows how it recruited (predictably, a mixture of carrot and stick) and why. One Kurt Wollschläger was chosen because of the need to ferret out grumblers at the local river port. That Wollschläger was separated from his wife was, the Stasi (prudish when it came to behavior within its own ranks) reckoned, a plus: He had more time to hang around in bars. That he was a former Nazi was no problem.

Informants would report regularly to their handlers, a snippet here, an observation there, sometimes harmless, sometimes not, and sometimes, perhaps most characteristically, as a piece in a complex composite portrait being assembled of an individual that the regime was beginning to distrust. If it looked as if those suspicions might have been justified—the bar was low: no laws needed to have been broken—the screws would tighten, relentlessly, remorselessly, but not necessarily attributably. There was not always a warning chat. A job would be suddenly lost; new employment would be hard to find. A child would not win that university place. Ugly gossip might be circulated. The phone would ring at night, with only silence at the other end—a perfect expression of this shadowy, subtle, and devastating form of repression.

There was a word for this: *Zersetzen* ("to undermine" or "to break down"). For outright dissidents, for those "preparing to flee the Republic" or those whose mutters of discontent had tipped over into something more insistent, there was prison (and, on occasion, the bullet). The more fortunate won exile, or had exile forced upon them. For the law-abiding who never crossed such lines, there was always the reality or the risk of *Zersetzen*, a vital element in a system of understated control that Bruce describes as hovering "ominously in the distance, always threatening, always unsettling, a constant potential threat." And it worked. The German Democratic Republic was, almost until the end, one of

Moscow's better-behaved satellites.

Coerced good behavior should not be confused with enthusiasm. An appropriately skeptical Bruce reports on reprehensible efforts by some historians to strip that ill-mannered adjective "totalitarian" from the regime that collapsed with the Wall: "Welfare dictatorship . . . post-totalitarian bureaucratic dictatorship . . . thoroughly ruled society . . . forced through society" and, thanks to its colossal number of informants, "participatory dictatorship" are amongst the euphemisms that have slithered into view. We can only speculate at what motivates such nonsense: Is it the persistent academic desire to minimize the crimes of the left, or is it an unwillingness to come to terms with the full implications of past horrors?

Such poisons have a way of seeping out from university campuses, but in the case of the former East Germany, their potency is reinforced by the natural tendency of its onetime citizens to allow past moments of personal happiness to cast a favorable glow over the republic in which they once endured: "Oh, it wasn't all bad, you know." Bruce handles this difficult topic with considerable subtlety before concluding that one can no more put a boundary between everyday life in the fallen republic and the ever-present awareness of the Stasi's presence than "one can encircle a scent in a room."

The Stasi's stink not only lingers where it once did (and sometimes very strongly) but has also been allowed to waft into the former West Germany. The Left party, a grouping formed by the merger of western leftists with the "reformed" heirs to East Germany's old governing party, took some 12 percent of the vote in the united Germany's 2009 elections. Reformed? Well, when Joachim Gauck, a former dissident and for 10 years the first federal commissioner for the Stasi archives, addressed the parliament in Saxony, a territory that was once part of East Germany, the event was boycotted by all Left party parliamentarians. ♦

B&A

Learning Curve

The view from the front row of the academic follies.

BY DAWN EDEN

When I attended New York University during the late 1980s, reading about the school's internal politics in the *Washington Square News*, Gallatin Division Dean Herbert London registered in my undergraduate imagination as a real "no"-it-all: He was against everything—at least, judging by the headlines. Whenever the *WSN* reported on a university senate vote, it trumpeted the tally as 77-1, with him the lone dissenter. In *Diary of a Dean*, an episodic collection of autobiographical essays, London tells how he became a voice crying in the wilderness of liberal academia. At the same time, he depicts the larger story of "the dramatic shift that has occurred in this society over the last four decades," particularly how "political considerations have entered the Academy as an ideological tsunami."

Diary of a Dean
by Herbert I. London
Hamilton, 60 pp., $14.99

It's a noble goal, to be sure—although, perhaps, a bit much for a book that clocks in at 60 pages. At times, the author seems like an eager undergrad trying to complete a double major in modern American literature and political science within seven semesters. Ultimately his micro perspective wins out over his macro perspective—which is just as well, as he has a gift for storytelling and a charmingly self-effacing wit. In describing one of his first positions in academia, as NYU's ombudsman, he quotes a friend who quipped that the job made him a "high-grade hydrant."

"Well," he adds, "at least I can take comfort in being high grade, a point I could not make as a dean years later."

A Brooklyn native who received his undergraduate degree from Columbia and his doctorate from NYU, London was, by his own admission, a "peacenik" until 1966, when an extended stay in Australia on a Fulbright fellowship opened his eyes:

> American power can appear to be quite different when viewed from a relatively weak state possessing modest defense capabilities. Having been taught a foreign policy view predicated on an aversion to brinksmanship and isolationism, it wasn't too difficult for me to accept the idea of America's international role in a "conventional war."

More difficult was retaining his liberal credentials in the wake of his newly hawkish views. How he accomplished this is unexplained, but he does note that, after he returned to America in 1967 to take a teaching position at NYU, students felt they could trust him because he was "under thirty." They voted him campus ombudsman, a position that gave him his first close-up look at "the fragility of faculty egos, the compensatory assertiveness of students, and the byzantine administration of the university."

While London takes joy in chronicling the absurdities of his high-placed academic peers, he is at his most entertaining when recounting the colorful parade of hippie-era freaks and geeks who passed through his office seeking a sympathetic administrator. Among them was "a plain girl with very thick glasses and stains all over her blouse" who "wanted to know whether it was

Dawn Eden is the author of The Thrill of the Chaste.

appropriate to give a professor a gift." When the young ombudsman suggested she simply discuss the matter with her professor, she stared into space "for an extended minute" before the light returned to her eyes and she asked London to examine the proposed present:

> She slipped a white card out of a carrying case and showed it to me. The card was constructed like a triptych, with each section having what seemed to be a globe and a fetus. "What is the significance of the drawing?" I inquired innocently. "Significance? Significance?" she replied, each word becoming more faint.

In that instance, he was able to restore sanity to the situation by reporting the coed to the university psychiatrist. However, once he advanced in 1972 to a deanship and a place in the university senate, the lunatics were running the asylum. On "almost every issue" he found himself "a minority of one." But, he writes, "at some point, this minority position seemed suitable for me." That's putting it mildly. He positively reveled in his underdog status, regularly calling upon the senate president to put the inevitable 77-1 tally to a roll call vote—"since a voice vote would drown out my dissent." One such lopsided decision was on a proposal to bar the Navy from recruiting on campus because of the military's refusal to admit homosexuals.

> Members of the gay community, who were well represented in this university body, were particularly adamant about this position arguing that the principle in the case, namely discrimination, had to be recognized and condemned. I argued that there was another principle at stake, namely the maintenance of an open campus, even for those with whom many disagree.

After the proposal passed over his lone objection, London mentioned the new policy to a colleague outside the university: Secretary of the Navy John Lehman, chairman of the federally funded Center for Naval Analysis, for which London served on the board. It didn't exactly float his boat. The secretary responded that, in that case, the Navy would simply cut off the $10 million in research funds it had agreed to provide for NYU's Courant Institute for Mathematics and Applied Science. London, "sensing an opportunity to hoist these self-satisfied 'idealists' by their own petard," suggested the secretary raise those concerns with the university president. In swift order, an emergency senate meeting was called, with members changing their vote at the president's behest. Once again, the vote was 77-1.

"This time," London writes, "I was on the other side in what I can only describe as the most delicious moment in my thirty-eight years at NYU."

The Gallatin Division had its genesis in 1972 when London, after working on a committee to develop a college alternative, was tapped to lead the school's fledgling "UWW"—University Without Walls. He and his colleagues replaced the division's 60-credit general education program with the requirement that students read a long list of great books and demonstrate their knowledge of the works by way of an oral exam.

Around this time, in the course of describing this experiment to skeptical colleagues at a Faculty Council meeting, the dean acquired an unexpected ally. The venerable philosophy professor Sidney Hook, mistakenly thinking the new division was an external degree program, asked London if a "great person" had ever graduated from such a program.

> So nonplussed was I by this question that I couldn't think of a great person who had graduated from a *traditional* college program. . . . However, Professor Hook was waiting for an answer. Reaching into my memory bank, where trivia about everything from the etymology of "brouhaha" to George Kell's career batting average swim aimlessly about, I blurted out, "Lenin."

A stunned Hook asked London how he knew that. "I said, 'Lenin attended the University of Moscow extension division. I remember reading that fact in Bertram Wolfe's *Three Who Made a Revolution*.' At that point, Professor Hook noted, 'Anyone who knows that deserves my support.'"

Readers expecting to learn about the actual operations of the UWW (renamed the Gallatin Division in 1976)—particularly the impact its Great Books curriculum had on students' learning—will be disappointed. London is more interested in relating anecdotes about inside politics at a university where the sixties never really ended. As his *Diary* progresses, moreover, it becomes clear that his overriding interest is to show a way out of the "institutional confusion" of contemporary academia: the alternative provided by think tanks, which he calls "universities in absentia." To that end, he provides an amusing sales pitch for the Hudson Institute as he describes the first job he did for Hudson after requesting a meeting with founder Herman Kahn in 1969:

> [Kahn] wanted me to work on a project related to drug abuse in New York. He said that the street price of heroin reveals a great deal about the effectiveness of drug enforcement efforts. . . . "So," he stated, "as your first assignment buy heroin on the streets of Harlem."

As the professor picked his jaw up from off the floor, Kahn assured him that the police were in on the project and would cooperate—which they did. When London says that the Hudson Institute was "more exciting . . . than any academic institution I had encountered," it's hard to argue with him. It would become an oasis for him during his early battles as UWW dean—so much so that he "jumped at the opportunity" to become one of its trustees in 1974: "I had emerged from heroin purchaser to trustee in a five-year period."

Alas, as *Diary of a Dean* frequently reminds us, when it comes to the state of contemporary higher education, there are no quick fixes. That is why, today, Herbert London continues to cast his vote against liberal academia—but from the outside: "I realize, like G.K. Chesterton, that the problem with pragmatism is that it doesn't work." ♦

B&A

How Freedom Rings

Ten ways of looking at man's greatest gift.

BY RYAN T. ANDERSON

Between the extremes of religious fanaticism and secularism, or of libertarian libertinism and moralizing statism, we would do well to seek what Aristotelians call the virtuous mean: that metaphysical and religious worldview which promotes a healthy conception of man and his place in the cosmos, and a political philosophy that supports such a conception.

Liberty and Civilization
The Western Heritage
edited by Roger Scruton
Encounter, 160 pp., $23.95

The Western tradition does just that. Its core understanding is that man was created for freedom, and that this freedom is neither a freedom *of* indifference nor a freedom *from* constraint, but a freedom *for* excellence. In *Liberty and Civilization*, Roger Scruton has brought together 10 of its leading contemporary intellectuals to discuss various aspects of man's freedom and its political ramifications. Originally appearing in the *American Spectator* through John Templeton Foundation funding, these essays provide sophisticated yet accessible discussions of central, longstanding debates in their modern formulations. Perfect for prompting discussions in undergraduate seminars, or for the professional on the go, the essays here deserve a broad audience.

The easiest way into these topics is by considering political rule directly. Two eminent legal scholars, Robert Bork and Jeremy Rabkin, discuss the ways in which the nation-state protects individual liberty. Bork focuses on how the American Constitution, originally meant to protect freedom, was hijacked for advancing lifestyle-liberalism in a way that has undermined the values of a free society. Rabkin explores recent calls for world government and international law to show how, in practice, these institutions undermine the political liberty that only the nation-state has proven able to protect.

Descending from such lofty heights, the editor of *City Journal*, Brian Anderson, emphasizes the importance of cities for freedom. In a learned essay tracing sources from Athens and Jerusalem down to present-day New York, he suggests that most of the ordinances affecting people's daily lives are municipal and, more important, that the city was crucial to Western development: "Without the city, no democracy, no Christianity, no capitalism, no West."

But political entities are sustained —and their power constrained—by prepolitical institutions, as essays by two leading social historians underscore. Paul Johnson shows how the rise of private property, beginning in the Middle Ages, limited regal power by granting small pockets of it to a sufficient number of citizens. Conversely, Johnson argues, private property is only protected under the rule of law, in a regime that respects property rights. As Johnson notes, "In Zimbabwe, where every adult theoretically has the right to vote, but where real power and property belong to the dictator and the leading members of his party, voting can change nothing."

Anne Applebaum draws lessons from the post-Communist world about how cultural differences can drive the vast political differences between places like Russia and Poland. While the Poles never lost their desire for freedom and private enterprise, or developed unquestioning obeisance to the state, Soviet leaders were more successful in quashing resistance and promoting hostility to private initiative and firm state loyalty. The reason, for Applebaum, is that the Poles were able to keep alive the organs of civil society, even under communism, in underground theaters, presses, and galleries, especially thanks to a Roman Catholic Church that resisted co-opting by the Communists.

The role of religion in limiting government is underdeveloped in Seamus Hasson's essay on religious freedom in America, but it should be stressed that, in marking off what we ought to render to God, we limit what Caesar can legitimately claim. Protecting religious liberty, besides being important in itself, is an important hedge against state overreach. Hasson, the founding president of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, discusses the American experiment's checkered history regarding religious pluralism and offers an anthropological argument for protecting religious liberty: to wit, it is man's nature to seek out and adhere to whatever religious truth he might find. He urges us to be less concerned with the establishment clause and more concerned with the free exercise clause, as the former is at the service of the latter.

The two most interesting essays, however, are at least two steps removed from the political realm, dealing instead with feminism and academic freedom. And yet they provide the deepest insights into politics. Christina Hoff Sommers argues that radical feminists have distorted the feminist movement's history, producing an unappealing, monolithic, meager view of women's liberty. *Vagina Monologues* feminism is a kind of "women's liberation" that has "little to do with liberty" since "it aims not to free women to pursue their own interests and inclinations, but rather to re-educate them to attitudes often profoundly contrary to their natures." Sommers considers, instead, Mary

HOLLANDSE HOOGTE / REDUX

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Wollstonecraft's egalitarian feminism promoting legal equality and an ideal of women "as independent agents rather than wives and mothers." And she examines conservative feminism like that of the now-overlooked Hannah More, Frances Willard, and Clare Boothe Luce, who sought to embrace women's "established roles as homemakers, caregivers, and providers of domestic tranquility" but to promote women's rights "by redefining, strengthening, and expanding those roles." Society would be a better place when distinctively feminine virtues were championed.

In another sense, academic freedom is meant not to liberate us from our humanity but to allow us to appropriate the truths of our humanity that make meaningful freedom possible. That is the argument of Robert George, professor of jurisprudence at Princeton and director of its James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions. Despite having collaborated with George for years, I had not come across this essay and was struck by its depth and clarity. Citing egregious examples of campus political correctness, George shows how much contemporary higher education is aimed at "liberation from traditional social constraints and norms of morality" that taught earlier generations to act "for the sake of personal virtue and the common good." Because academics view these norms as outdated and irrational strictures, they seek to emancipate students to become "authentic individuals" by embracing their "true self" where "people are defined by their desires."

Yet the classical understanding of a liberal education is "not to liberate us to act on our desires, but rather, and precisely, *to liberate us from slavery to them.* Personal authenticity . . . consists in *self-mastery*—placing reason in control of desire." The reason to study Plato and Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, Dante and Shakespeare, Rousseau and Kant, is to free our minds from the tyranny of present opinion, to free our wills from slavery to our passions, and to free ourselves to come to know, love, and choose what is beautiful and good. Of course, this presupposes that there are objective truths, and that they are best appropriated when freely pursued. Not merely knowing what *is* the case, but understanding the *how* and *why*, allows us to incorporate the string of reasons into one's own deliberations and choices. This liberation from self, from popular opinion, and from radical skepticism, makes true liberty—freedom for excellence—possible.

Of liberal education, as well as our legal regimes and prepolitical institutions, we might ask what has made it all possible. The French philosopher Rémi Brague argues here that the Judeo-Christian tradition provided the crucial metaphysical foundation for personal liberty, and thereby for political, economic, and academic freedoms. The Hebrew Bible reveals man as a free being created with "the necessary outfit that enables a creature to reach its own good," by a God who "respects the nature of the things He has created." This is seen in the Sabbath rest, Israel's liberation, and the Ten Commandments as a "code of honor of free people" that "connect the gift of freedom with the responsibilities that naturally flow from it." Brague concludes that "free institutions hardly ever developed in places that were not influenced by Jewish and Christian ideas."

Scruton brings the collection to a close by discussing the previous nine essays with an eye to the *limits* of liberty. Borrowing from Locke, he distinguishes liberty from license: Liberty is the ability to direct oneself toward individual and communal fulfillment without trampling on others' well-being, but too much of what passes for liberty today is actually license—self-assertion at others' expense. As he notes, "freedom that can be enjoyed by one generation only by condemning the next to dependency surely deserves the name of license." But it is hard to specify when liberty turns into license without a robust account of human well-being. Just as gender equality should be used to draw out what is best in each gender, and just as academic freedom should be used to discover and appropriate what is noblest in human life, so too political liberty should be used for human excellence, and not as an excuse or a defense for moral corruption.

The Western metaphysical and political tradition points the way between the excesses of religious extremism and secularism, between libertinism and statism. At the heart lies liberty, not license. ♦

Roger Scruton under scrutiny

B&A

Gentleman of Letters

John Gross, 1935-2011.

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

My friend John Gross died on Monday, January 10. His son Tom, who sent out an email announcing John's death to a large number of his friends, noted that his father's death was caused by complications relating to his heart and kidneys. His health had been failing in various ways for quite a long spell. Tom Gross also mentioned that his sister Susanna, John's daughter, was reading to him from Shakespeare's *Sonnets* when he died. That is a proper touch, for John knew English literature, knew it with greater breadth and more deeply than anyone I have ever met.

If a decently educated person knows Shakespeare, and someone with a specialized interest in the theater also knows the plays of Marlowe, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Kyd, John knew Elizabethan playwrights at the next level down. The same was true of every other age or genre of English literature: obscure Romantic poets, unknown Victorian novelists, barely published critics of every age—John knew them all. As a young man, John wrote a brilliant survey of English criticism and reviewing called *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters, English Literary Life Since 1800* (1969). He also wrote *Shylock: Four Hundred Years in the Life of a Legend* (1992), a splendid account of the differing ways the character of Shylock has been presented on the stage, from utter fiend to sympathetic victim. These were subjects that a standard English or American academic could nicely kill, but John wrote about them with easy sophistication, brio, charm, wit, and his always present commonsensical intelligence.

Such fame as John enjoyed was, I suspect, chiefly English, though for a period he worked for the *New York Times* as one of its daily reviewers. He also wrote with some regularity for American journals, among them the *New Criterion*, *Commentary*, and the *New York Review of Books*. Unlike many English intellectuals, he was a man without the least touch of anti-Americanism, and in his memoir of the first 17 years of his life, *A Double Thread* (2001), he recounts how important American movies, popular songs, and comic books were to him when growing up.

COURTESY OF OUPBLOG

Not everyone approved. Objections floated down from the adult world—political criticisms from the left, disdain for American vulgarity from the right. But among children, if I am in any way representative, the image was overwhelmingly favorable. America stood for streamlining and the open road, for excitement and optimism.

John had a good run as an editor, both of intellectual journals and of anthologies. He was an assistant editor at *Encounter*. He was the literary editor of the *New Statesman* at a time when the so-called back of the book, where reviews of books and arts appeared, was easily the best thing about it. He later worked at the same job for the *Spectator*.

But John's great editorial contribution was as the principal editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*, from 1974 to 1981. As editor of the *TLS* he put an end to the paper's long tradition of anonymous reviewing, which too frequently resulted in the corrupt practice of puffing the books of friends and sneering at those of enemies. Quite as important, he widened the range of the *TLS*, making it less scholarly-parochial by opening it up to subjects of broader intellectual interest without in any way diminishing its seriousness.

His editorship at the *TLS* came at a difficult time. For one thing, the then very belligerent British printing union was menacing the paper, frequently threatening not to print the current week's edition or refusing to do the lithography that made possible the photographs and drawings accompanying an issue. (This belligerence was finally put down by the new owner of the *Times*, Rupert Murdoch, who built a new printing plant in the London district of Wapping, which kicked into force, with the help of the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications, and Plumbing Union (EETPU), when the printing unions announced a full-scale strike in 1986.)

The *TLS* had the standing of a national paper, which meant it couldn't, like most American intellectual journals, comfortably hew to a political line. The time of John's editorship also saw the rise, in universities, of critical theory, academic feminism, and other univer-

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sity waste products, whose measure one may be sure John had taken but which he could not altogether ignore in the pages of the *TLS*. Although John had his own politics and his own strong views on all things literary, as editor of the *TLS* he had to walk a high and slippery tightrope. That he did so without ever undermining his own beliefs or surrendering his standards is a tribute to his tact, subtlety, and extraordinary intellectual balance.

I wrote for John before I had met him. At the *TLS* he gave me, then a youngish writer, plummy assignments. I wrote about Maxwell Perkins, Edmund Wilson, and Walter Lippmann for him. He was an editor whose tolerance for the slightly *outré* and distaste for received opinions one could count on, so that, when asked to review a book on the Pulitzer Prizes, I knew that in his London office John would be amused at my writing that the Pulitzer Prizes tend to go to two kinds of people only: those who don't need them, and those who don't deserve them.

After his seven-year stint at the *TLS*, John worked briefly for the publisher George Weidenfeld and then took a job as a reviewer at the *New York Times*. How one wishes that he had instead been asked to edit the *New York Times Book Review*, for he would have made it, for the first time in its long history, serious and substantial. With his easy charm, he was a great social success in Manhattan. He never mentioned it to me, but I had heard that he led a book discussion club for Brooke Astor and her friends.

Working at the *New York Times*, which he did between 1983 and 1989, was something else. What it mostly produced was a fund of amusing stories about the ineptitude and fecklessness of the paper's editors, at all levels. I recall John telling me a story about his mentioning in one of his reviews the name Plekhanov, whom he described as "the father of Russian Marxism." One of the paper's copy editors wanted to know his authority for calling Plekhanov that. "It's almost a bloody cliché," John told me recounting the story, "like George Washington was the father of his country." But the copy editor wouldn't back down until John, exasperated, said, "Look. Why don't we compromise and refer to Plekhanov as the uncle of Russian Marxism."

John had a keen taste for the absurd behavior of intellectuals and the vanity of writers. He got a kick out of my calling the contributors of the *New York Review of Books* "mad dogs and Englishmen," and told me that the visits to London of that journal's editor, Robert Silvers, given the obeisance that English intellectuals paid him, resembled nothing so much as the return home of the Viceroy of India.

Hugh Trevor-Roper, John Gross, ca. 1990

I didn't see the *Sunday Telegraph*, for which John became drama critic, but always thought it an amusing mating for a man with a taste for the absurd having to review so many plays that must themselves have been well beyond absurd. He was once seated in a London theater, watching a production of *King Lear* being done in mud, when he was attacked by severe angina. "Oh, Lord, I said to myself," he told me, "dear Lord, please don't let this be the last thing I ever see." Fortunately, it wasn't, though he went home afterwards and had a heart attack and, subsequently, bypass surgery.

John's sense of the absurdity of intellectuals was nicely conveyed in his letters, subsequently his emails, and his occasional phone calls to me. He was a wonderfully entertaining gossip with a large supply of artful indiscretions at his disposal. One day he would tell me about Harold Pinter sending out, in John's phrase, "one of his pukey little poems" to scores of friends and acquaintances, and sitting back to await their unfailing praise.

I don't know when, precisely, John's health began to break down, but when it did the steps down the precipice were all serious. He had a heart attack, as I mentioned, and at one point he suffered a stroke that, he reported to me, left one of his arms temporarily dangling out of commission. After some hesitation, I took a chance and wrote to him to say that I hoped he would not take advantage of his bad arm to do imitations of Isaiah Berlin or George Steiner, who each had a withered arm. He thought it very amusing, or so he said.

Part of John's genius was for tact. He reviewed two of my books, praising them both, but in each case quietly getting in real criticisms, both of acts of commission and omission on the author's part. So suave a prose stylist was he that it might seem that John had, to use Sam Lipman's phrase, "no fist." In fact, when sufficiently aroused John had a knockout punch. See his quietly devastating review of Stefan Collini's *Common Reading* in the (London) *Sunday Times* of May 21, 2008. John also had little use for dogmatic critics. Readers of *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters* will recall his attack

CAROLINE FORBES

on the still alive and then-highly influential Cambridge critic F.R. Leavis. In defense of the vigor of his attack, John wrote in an afterword to a republication of the book in 1992: "I still believe I was right to react as I did. Leavis attempted, as no one before him, to pronounce a death sentence on the entire man-of-letters tradition. He also set a precedent for trying to police literary studies and impose one man's will on them."

In the end I am not sure that it is as a writer that John will be best remembered. He wrote four books—along with those I have already mentioned, he did the *James Joyce* volume (1970) in Frank Kermode's Modern Masters series—all excellent of their kind. He edited a number of anthologies for Oxford University Press, among them *The Oxford Book of Essays*, *The Oxford Book of Aphorisms*, *The Oxford Book of Literary Anecdotes*, *The Oxford Book of Comic Verse*, *The New Oxford Book of English Prose*, *The Oxford Book of Parodies*, and *After Shakespeare: Writing Inspired by the World's Greatest Author*—quality goods, all these volumes, exhibiting John's immense range of reading in English literature, and books that will live on for many years. But he never thought to put together a volume of his criticism and reviews. *A Double Thread*, an autobiographical account of his early life, is, for an autobiography, written with an unusual tact and modesty. The truth may be that John hadn't the egotism and vanity, the pushiness and self-absorption, required of the true writer. (Please not to ask how I know about these requisite qualities.)

John may also have enjoyed life too much. He had a natural bonhomie combined with a winning detachment. Once, in Chicago, he told me that he was the next day to visit a woman (he did not vouchsafe her name), who now lived in the city, with whom he had been close during his years as a student at Oxford. "Pity we never married," he said, with his amused irony. "We could have caused each other much heartache." (John's one marriage, to the editor and writer Miriam Gross, ended in divorce, but the two remained good friends, and I never heard him utter a critical word about her.) He once took my wife and me round London, to the (in that day) with-it clubs and to the historical places only a born Londoner knew. His love of the city was palpable.

So John Gross is dead at 75. For me, he has left too early. But then I always felt John had left too early, which is another way of saying that I never got enough of him. During his last phone call to me, six or so weeks ago, we talked about a T.S. Eliot essay I had written; he told me about his own meetings with Eliot, and left me with one of his characteristic golden nuggets of gossip.

The last time I saw John in person was in Manhattan. We had breakfast together, and after breakfast we walked around the block, it must have been 10 times, trading stories, telling jokes, gossiping, laughing. At the end, I remember saying to him, "You know, John, if I were the sort of Jewish gent who went in for show-biz-like hugging, I should bestow upon you my best bear hug. But you don't seem to me a man in desperate need of a hug."

"Quite so," he said, and we shook hands and parted.

John Gross was my contemporary, the smartest literary man of my generation, a sweet character, and his death marks a genuine subtraction, not merely in my life, but in the life of the culture. ♦

B&A

Modern Mélisande

From the ashes of communism, a voice for the new century. **BY CATHY YOUNG**

One of the most sought-after classical singers in Europe, Magdalena Kozena has very little of the diva about her. The 37-year-old Czech-born, Berlin-based mezzo-soprano is warm and unpretentious, whether in interviews or in conversation with backstage visitors. A mother of two sons, ages five and two, she speaks of family as her first priority and readily turns down engagements that would interfere with it. This may be one of the reasons that, while Kozena has many devoted American fans, she is not as widely known among opera and classical music audiences here as she is across the Atlantic.

Her name was new to me when I heard her in Mahler's Fourth Symphony at a Berlin Philharmonic concert in New York in 2006. Struck by her luminous voice and wrenching dramatic intensity, I set out in search of Kozena recordings and discovered a singer of unique personality and power. Since then, I have been fortunate to see Kozena in several other live performances, most recently as Mélisande in a brief run of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the Metropolitan Opera. The effect remains undiminished.

A few years ago, Michael Church of the *Independent* described Kozena's voice as "protean," with an astonishing range and spectrum of colors. The range of her repertoire is equally impressive. She has received high praise for her performances in familiar operatic roles: Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni.* Yet her performances I have attended in the last two years span the gamut from the silver-voiced angel in Elgar's oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius* to the brash street peddler Lazuli in a revival of Chabrier's operetta *L'étoile*—a trouser role Kozena imbued with boyish energy and sassy humor as well as sweet lyricism. In her song albums, the heart-stopping tenderness of Britten's lullabies coexists with the mordant sarcasm of Shostakovich's satires and the subtle nuance and mystery of Debussy, Ravel, and Duparc.

Cathy Young is a columnist for Real Clear Politics *and a contributing editor to* Reason.

Kozena is particularly renowned as a baroque singer, with choices that often stray from the beaten path. Her latest album, *Lettere Amorose*, released last fall, offers what she calls "discoveries" from the early baroque; *Lamento*, a collection of vocal pieces by members of the Bach family, became a bestseller in 2005. Her other uncommon interest has to do with her Czech heritage: Two fascinating albums, *Songs My Mother Taught Me* and *Love Songs*, feature pieces by Dvorak, Janacek, and the lesser-known contemporary Czech composers Bohuslav Martinu, Petr Eben, and Erwin Schulhoff.

More recent additions to Kozena's growing repertoire include Mahler, whose dramatic expressionism and rapid mood shifts are especially well-suited to her particular gifts.

Kozena's versatility extends to different interpretations of the same role. Her new Mélisande—her fourth—was a striking contrast to the previous one I saw at the Berlin State Opera in 2008, in a production far more modern and edgy than the Metropolitan's. (Both were conducted by Kozena's husband, Sir Simon Rattle, music director of the Berlin Philharmonic.) The State Opera's Mélisande was childlike, frightened, helpless, all angles and nerves. Her incarnation at the Met was still vulnerable and victimized but also willful and self-contained, at times seductive, at times angry. In an interview a few days before the opening, Kozena told me that Mélisande was perhaps her favorite operatic role because it can be done in so many ways: "Every time, you can create a different personality, because nobody knows where she's from; it's all very symbolic and mysterious."

The daughter of a mathematician father and biologist mother, Kozena grew up in the industrial city of Brno and entered the Brno Conservatoire at 14, then studied piano and singing at the College of Performing Arts in Bratislava. These were the twilight years of Communist rule; the teenage Magdalena was among the student protesters who ushered in the Velvet Revolution. Today, she has fond memories of her musical training under the old regime but has not lost sight of its grim repressiveness: "I remember that fear. Our parents would say something and then tell us, 'Never say that at school, because we'll go to prison.'"

Has Kozena's early experience of communism left a lasting effect? For one, she believes it has given her a special affinity for Shostakovich; she notes that he "always had a suitcase packed," fearing arrest. Ironically, performing these pieces initially required her to defy a still-strong prejudice among Czechs against the Russian language as the language of official Communist texts. Today, after living in Berlin for several years, Kozena retains strong emotional ties to her native country, where she still gives regular recitals and where, she notes, the classical musical culture still thrives despite the financial woes of its institutions.

Magdalena Kozena, 2010

JENS KALAENE / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

With the Iron Curtain gone, Kozena's international career developed at a swift pace. In 1995, she placed first in the Sixth International Mozart Competition in Salzburg. Two years later, her first disc of Bach arias drew the attention of executives at Deutsche Grammophon, and the studio at once signed her to an exclusive contract. By 2002, the *Guardian* was describing her as a "hot property" whose career was "about to go stratospheric." She has won three Gramophone Awards, including Artist of the Year in 2004. Kozena's success was all the more remarkable because of her often unorthodox choices. (She has said that she did not expect *Lamento* to have much appeal except among aficionados of obscure baroque music.)

Her relationship with Rattle attracted a less welcome kind of attention when they left their previous spouses after meeting at the Glyndebourne Festival. Yet today, their partnership, intensely private and family-oriented, could not be more different from glamorous celebrity coupledom: It is a professional partnership as well, based on an obvious and striking artistic rapport. Kozena and Rattle often work together, allowing them to combine their time on the road with family time. The boys invariably travel with them, or with Kozena when she tours alone.

Kozena's next trip here is scheduled for February 2012, a tour with pianist Yefim Bronfman concluding with a recital at Carnegie Hall. In the meantime, anyone wishing to enjoy her work without going to Europe has a rich discography to choose from. *Lamento*, *Songs My Mother Taught Me*, and *Songs* (a 2004 album that includes the Shostakovich satires and the Britten lullabies), and albums of Handel and Vivaldi arias are particularly notable. Other standouts include Mahler's *Der Knaben Wunderhorn*, recorded in 2010 with the Cleveland Orchestra under Pierre Boulez, and fragments from Martinu's opera *Juliette*. On DVD, Kozena can be seen as Idamante in Mozart's *Idomeneo* and as Orpheus in Gluck's *Orphée et Eurydice*.

What's next? Her upcoming engagements include Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (her first), another run of *L'étoile*, and the role of Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier*. When we spoke in New York, she mentioned that, with her older son Jonas now in school and unable to travel with her during the school year, she will have to further curtail her tours. It was a matter-of-fact statement with no trace of disappointment. Kozena has said elsewhere that she sees motherhood as recharging her emotional energy and completing, rather than hindering, her work. For her, both are labors of love. ♦

"Gradually, over time, political rhetoric used by politicians and the media has become more inflammatory. The degree to which violent words and phrases are considered commonplace is striking. Candidates are 'targeted.' An opponent is 'in the crosshairs.' Liberals have to be 'eliminated.' Opponents are 'enemies.'"

—Gary Hart,* Huffington Post, *January 8, 2011

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THE ARIZONA SHOOTINGS

Obama calls for civility, vows to change rhetoric

'TARGETS' BECOME 'GOALS'

Republicans go from 'enemy' to 'frenemy'

BY KAREN TUMULTY

President Obama says from now on, neither he nor anyone affiliated with his administration will "take aim" at opponents. "Rather," he explained at a press conference Monday, "we will point politely at those who disagree with us." The president, responding to the need for civility in political discourse, issued a memorandum to all White House staff regarding new terminology to replace words that could incite hatred. "Even 'campaign' has a military ring to it," noted Obama. "So from here on in, I'll be talking about my presidential forays."

Former Senator Gary Hart, who recently decried "violent words" used by politicians and the media, praised the president's efforts to bring calm to the nation. "The president actually called to tell me he won't be bringing a gun to a knife fight," said Hart, who was thrilled to get a phone call from anyone these days. "Instead, he says he'll bring with him a copy of his latest book, 'Of Thee I Sing.'" It was unclear if the book would be intended as a peace offering or to be read aloud to lull blade-bearing adversaries to sleep.

In addition, the president and his advisers would no longer meet in a "war room," but instead gather in a "Secret Garden full of happy thoughts," located near the Rose Garden. And he would no longer make references to "battleground states" but rather, "states of mild discontent where we can bandy about policy ideas and playfully tussle with the other side." The president quickly caught himself, however, saying, "I shouldn't say 'tussle.' What I meant to say is, you know, roll around with, like on a grassy hillside."

"Schizophrenia aside, the climate of political hate spewing forth from the right surrounded the shooter," said New York Times columnist Paul Krugman. "And whether he realized it or not, those hateful words served as the tipping point—it's in the very air we breathe, I tell you. It's all around us. Can't you see it? It's right here. It's over there. It's

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