

**THE 'SCIENCE' OF
SAME-SEX MARRIAGE**
ANDREW FERGUSON

the weekly

Standard

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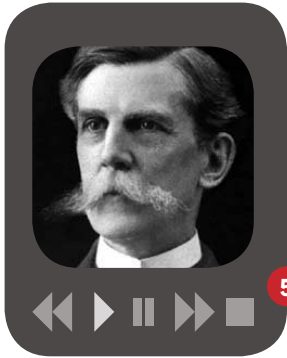
'Changed, Changed Utterly'?

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL reports from Dublin
on Ireland's debate over abortion and national identity



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Razing Reagan

Absent a miracle, Ronald Reagan's childhood home in Chicago will be slated for demolition this week to make way for a new facility owned by the University of Chicago. It's a sad and unnecessary end to a historic residence of a president born and bred in the state.

Those who would preserve the place have tried just about everything. But the small-minded Commission on Chicago Landmarks has refused to give the small apartment building on 57th Street landmark status. It's not "associated with Mr. Reagan during his active and productive years," and the building "does not have sufficient architectural significance," the commission decided. How about historic significance? Meanwhile, an effort to raise millions to buy the property and turn it into a Reagan museum failed to raise enough in time.

Was politics a factor here? Of course it was. Chicago is a Democratic redoubt and the Reagan site is in Hyde Park, better known as the neighborhood of President Obama. No doubt that home will be lovingly

tended for centuries to come. And the University of Chicago is also said to be lobbying for an Obama Presidential Library in Hyde Park. Even a small Reagan presence—recalling a president who overshadows Obama—might clash.

The university won't bear all the blame when the Reagan home is torn down. Conservatives and Reagan fans



Ronald Reagan slept here: the childhood home in Chicago

are partly at fault. They haven't rallied to the cause, though they've had plenty of time to do so. Instead, they appear satisfied that Reagan's birthplace in Tampico, his home in Dixon as a teenager, and his four years at Eureka College are sufficient memorials to our 40th president's more than two decades in Illinois.

Reagan lived in Chicago for 10 months in 1914-15 when his father Jack worked for a store on the South Side of the city. The Reagan family rented a flat in the four-story building in Hyde Park. Reagan almost died of pneumonia that year. The site "figured in the development of his character (his political philosophy came later) and thus is important to understanding this very significant president," ex-Reagan aide Peter Hannaford wrote in the *American Spectator*.

The 102 miles from Eureka to Dixon—Tampico is in between—has been designated the Reagan Trail. And the house in Galesburg, where Reagan lived for two years after the family left Chicago, has been beautifully restored by its private owner.

The Chicago flat, in contrast, is quite ordinary. But "the ordinarieness of it all—where one of our most extraordinary presidents once lived—is worth preserving," writer Mary Claire Kendall, who has spearheaded the drive to save the home, wrote for the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Indeed it is. ♦

How Now Chairman Mao?

THE SCRAPBOOK doesn't spend a lot of its time surfing tired bureaucratic websites that look like relics of the 1990s, but our interest was piqued last week by a quotation on the "Kids' Zone" page of the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics: "Our attitude towards ourselves should be 'to be satiable [sic] in

learning' and towards others 'to be tireless in teaching.'"

The author was indeed a tireless teacher who tirelessly aimed his precepts at hundreds of millions of people. Too bad those who weren't interested in his teachings were tortured, beaten, and killed.

The "Kids' Zone," of course, was channeling Chairman Mao's *Little Red Book* (or more likely one of the thousands of "quotable quotes" websites on the Internet that mistakenly

render *insatiable* as *satiable*. We're not, by the way, suggesting that the Department of Education has been infiltrated by Maoists. Rather, one of its websites seems to be in the hands of historically illiterate hacks.

Needless to say, the prominent featuring of Mao's quote attracted more than the usual quota of attention to the "Kids' Zone," and the snippet was quickly removed. Here is what it was replaced with: "Sorry there is no quote of the of the today."

Come again?

Secretary of Education Arne Duncan has been claiming, ludicrously, that because of sequestration “there are literally teachers now who are getting pink slips.” Instead of engaging in politicized doomsaying, he should take this opportunity to clear some of the underbrush in his own bureaucracy. We recommend deep-sixing the “Kids’ Zone” for starters. ♦

The Dating Game

To the list of perennial press stories—the schoolgirl who refuses to pledge allegiance to the flag but is off to Harvard this fall, the old Vermont farmer who voted for Dewey but doesn’t much care for today’s Republican party—may be added the importunate celebrity invitation.

This newly minted tradition began two years ago when a pair of ambitious Marines—one male, one female—invited Mila Kunis and Justin Timberlake to their respective Marine Balls. Now, the 2013 version is in the news. A nerdy high school student in Los Angeles posted online a “charming” video invitation to his senior prom, and sent it along, via Twitter, to his heart’s desire: *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit model Kate Upton.

Miss Upton, like Miss Kunis before her, quickly recognized that this (a) put her in a slightly awkward position, but (b) was an opportunity for some friendly publicity. So she replied, once again via Twitter: “You can call me Katie if you want! How could I turn down that video! I’ll check my schedule ;).”

At which point, if you will excuse THE SCRAPBOOK, we pause to gag.

There are several ways of looking at this. From the celebrity point of view, these can be win-win situations: The Marine invitations to Kunis and Timberlake were undoubtedly made half in jest; but the willingness of the two stars actually to attend the balls, and apparently enjoy themselves, was testament both to their good nature and support for the armed forces.



It also did no harm to their image.

But there is another angle as well, nicely captured by the *Onion* last week in one of its inimitable headlines: “Scarlett Johansson Immediately Rejects Heartwarming Prom Invite from High School Senior.” The *Onion* made the point—satirically, of course—that these public pleas “essentially amount to emotional blackmail.”

THE SCRAPBOOK has no deep conviction on the subject, except to say that celebrities are free to ignore such gestures, in which case the whole dreary phenomenon would quickly disappear.

So it was with some measure of surprise when we opened the pages

of the *Washington Post* the other morning, and discovered that the *Post* takes all this very seriously indeed. Prompted by the Upton prom invitation, reporter Jessica Goldstein talked to the author of a book entitled *Celeb 2.0*, as well as a “social media theorist,” and managed to include a touch of *Post*-style snark in her analysis: “Depending on how generous your definition of ‘celebrity’ is, you can add former *Laguna Beach* star Kristin Cavallari to the roundup. She was asked to a Marine Corps ball on Twitter and replied with a yes in less than 30 minutes.” Speaking of the *Onion* satire, Goldstein explained that it “nails what’s so bizarre about the requests.”

Bizarre, perhaps—but is that for the *Post* to say? The annual dinner of the White House Correspondents’ Association used to be a (metaphorically) sober gathering of journalists assembled in a ballroom to hear the president deliver a speech on some suitable topic of interest. Now it has become a televised laugh fest, featuring an address by an actual comedian, an obligatory presidential stand-up routine, and frantic competition among the organs of the press, including the *Washington Post*, to lure as many out-of-town celebrities—Kim Kardashian, George Clooney, Lindsay Lohan, Ozzy Osborne, Charlize Theron, Steven Spielberg, Kelly Ripa—as possible to their tables.

If the *Post* has deplored this development, or refrained from competing with *Vanity Fair* or NBC for the honor of inviting the cast of *Duck Dynasty*, we are unaware of it. Which is something to remember the next time the *Post* treats celebrity suck-up fever with disdain. ♦

Regulations that Deserve a Burial

Fifteen months ago, THE SCRAPBOOK cheered on the monks of Saint Joseph Abbey, in Covington, Louisiana, as they fought in court for their right to earn a living by selling to the public the plain wooden caskets they’d been making for years for their own use. Now we celebrate their triumph in the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Last week, the court voted unanimously to free them from “irrational” regulations.

Here’s what those regulations required—and listen up, you skeptics of Tea Party demands for less government and for economic liberty. We’re talking about a product designed to be buried in the ground forever.

Under the legal regimen secured by the Louisiana Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors, according to the 5th Circuit,

a prospective casket retailer must become a licensed funeral establishment. This requires building a layout

parlor for thirty people, a display room for six caskets, an arrangement room, and embalming facilities. Second, the establishment must employ a full-time funeral director. A funeral director must have a high school diploma or GED, pass thirty credit hours at an accredited college, and complete a one-time apprenticeship. The apprenticeship must consist of full-time employment and be the apprentice’s “principal occupation.” None of this mandatory training relates to caskets. . . . A funeral director must also pass a test administered by the International Conference of Funeral Examining Boards. The exam does not test Louisiana law or burial practices.

The purpose of these Alice in Wonderland requirements was plain: to protect the guild interests and profits of a politically favored industry. So that the funeral directors and licensed embalmers who occupy eight of the nine seats on the state board could comfortably enjoy their monopoly, the upstart monks of Saint Joseph would have to think of some other way to make a buck.

Well, not anymore—at least not in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, the jurisdiction covered by the 5th Circuit.

The state board has 90 days to decide whether to appeal to the Supreme Court, which might or might not take the case. Either way, there is now a “circuit split” on the constitutionality of government protection of a narrow economic interest without public benefit. The 6th Circuit unanimously struck down a similar casket monopoly in 2002, while the 10th Circuit upheld an Oklahoma law in 2004, cynically pronouncing the “dishing out of special economic benefits” to the well connected to be the “national pastime” of governments.

Sooner or later, the High Court seems likely to clear up the conflict. That is the goal of the strategically selected litigation pursued by the valiant Institute for Justice in these and other cases: to have the Supremes strike a blow for individual economic liberty and place limits on legislators’ power to rig the system for their friends. Not to mention burying bad regulations. ♦

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A Voice, Not an Echo

Switching through the dozens of cable TV channels we seem to receive at home, I was reminded of a disheartening thought I've had in the past: There must be thousands upon thousands of hours of sound and video of, say, Justin Bieber or Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.), but no photograph exists of Ben Jonson or Benjamin Franklin, and no one has any idea what Geoffrey Chaucer or Joan of Arc or Saint Augustine or Stonewall Jackson sounded like. The technology that assails us with the sights and sounds of Madonna, or Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, doesn't exist for those we would truly value hearing and seeing. Or I would like to hear and see, at any rate.

Between a fascination with the past, and a capacity for hero worship, I have always been on the prowl for the sound of historic voices, the more distant the better. Yet to what end? The human voice cannot have evolved very much since the invention of speech, and as likely as not, we might be surprised to learn that Jesus actually sounded like Wally Cox, or Jane Austen like Amy Winehouse.

There was widespread indignation, for example, about Daniel Day-Lewis's impersonation in *Lincoln* of Abraham Lincoln, whose voice was rendered in reedy, slightly tenor, decidedly rustic tones. But who knows what Lincoln sounded like? We may safely assume that most accounts of his way of speaking are either generous or imprecise, like descriptions of music. I gather that Lincoln is thought to have had a high-pitched voice, and he was certainly born and raised on the frontier. But the high notes might have been caused by the effort to speak to large crowds without amplification, and our knowledge of what someone

born in Kentucky in 1809 sounded like is based on a handful of phonetic renderings in stories and anecdotes. So Daniel Day-Lewis's guess is as valid as any—and probably closer to reality than the usual stentorian, voice-of-God versions of Lincoln.

In my own case, there is a certain pleasure in detecting signs of social class and regional origins, of hearing



obsolete accents and modes of speech. My late father-in-law, for example, was from Mississippi, and spoke in an antiquated, port-wine tone that was probably closer to the speech patterns of the Old South than the sound of, say, the cast of *Here Comes Honey Boo Boo*. I understand just enough German to hear the rough Prussian burr and diphthongs in Paul von Hindenburg's voice. Oliver Wendell Holmes wields the WASP/Brahmin vowels you would expect from the source—and in a tone and timbre now almost entirely eradicated from American speech. Addressing a radio audience on his ninetieth birthday (1931), Justice Holmes refers to the program as a "simpozhim" (symposium) and to himself as a "listener-in."

Of course, voices are more than their anthropological tags. Speaking of Lincoln, we are reasonably accustomed to his photographs, and can therefore

imagine—minus the static quality, flat black and white, and frozen expression—what he must have looked like in person. But step back a generation or two, and the mystery deepens. You can recognize George Washington on the dollar bill, or in the Houdon sculpture; but it would be awfully interesting to see him in the sharp image of a daguerreotype, or hear him speak. Similarly, the very sound of remote, even legendary, figures provides an intimate glimpse, an immediacy that can be startling. You are not only hearing the actual sound of so-and-so, but the voice of somebody indescribably remote, who fought in the Civil War or grew up in the Manhattan of Henry James.

Two examples come to mind. There is an early Edison recording of Walt Whitman, easily found on YouTube, reciting a late poem entitled "America." It strikes me in two ways. First, I am hearing the voice of someone who was born in 1819, during the presidency of James Monroe; and second, I am struck by how contemporary he sounds. Whitman was a native of the North Shore of Long Island and grew up in Brooklyn; yet there is little evidence of what we might consider a New York, or Brooklyn, accent, and no trace whatsoever of the Victorian oratorical style.

The other sound is one I associate with an occasion, a commemorative service at Westminster Abbey for William Gladstone (1809-1898) on the centenary of his death. At the end, a recording of Gladstone's voice was played, and it boomed and echoed through the precincts in ghostly fashion. I was surprised to hear that Gladstone, a rich man's son and product of Eton and Oxford, had something of a Liverpool twang in his delivery. But mostly I was gripped with a kind of emotion, transfixed to hear this voice of the distant past, in a place he knew and where, indeed, he lies buried.

PHILIP TERZIAN

The ‘Science’ of Same-Sex Marriage

Oral arguments on gay marriage take place before the Supreme Court the last week of March, and the pile of amicus briefs filed by interested parties long ago passed the point of redundancy. We prefer briefs filed by *disinterested* parties, such as the one put before the Court earlier in the month by Leon Kass of the University of Chicago and Harvey Mansfield of Harvard University. The Kass-Mansfield brief is silent on the larger question of gay marriage as social policy. The professors instead confine themselves to a shared area of expertise: the relation between social science and cultural and political life, which they have pondered and written about for many years.

The brief is an attempt at intellectual hygiene. Among the many annoying tics of contemporary liberalism is its insistence that liberal social policies are always and everywhere determined by the latest findings of social science. Redistribution, affirmative action, tighter economic regulation—name the policy and you’re sure to find some associate professor of some social science or another beavering away with a labful of undergraduates to discover its benefits. Such are the claims made for gay marriage. “More than thirty years of social science,” as one piece of NPR agitprop declared on *Morning Edition* last week, have demonstrated that children raised by homosexual couples show “no difference” in social outcomes from children reared in heterosexual households. And more recent cutting-edge data show the salubrious effects of gay marriage in general. We are told.

It is the aim of Kass and Mansfield to wave the Supreme Court away from “scientific findings” that are produced by culture warriors, as the findings in the field of “gay studies” nearly always are. “The social and behavioral sciences,” they write, “have a long history of being shaped and driven

by politics and ideology.” They note pointedly that two generations ago, the “scientific consensus,” as represented by the American Psychiatric Association, was that homosexuality was a “mental disorder.” The consensus was publicly reversed in 1973, and science, to paraphrase Mae West, had nothing to do with it: Both positions, before and after, were determined by political and cultural considerations.

Now, of course, the American Psychological Association, which waited until 1975 to “depathologize” homosexuality, tries to lend its shaky intellectual credibility to the cause of gay marriage in general and gay parenting in particular. In 2005, it issued a bull declaring the “no difference” finding a matter of settled science. Kass and Mansfield point to a recent paper by Loren Marks of LSU, who had the temerity (and professional death wish) to



Our robed masters

go back and actually read the 59 studies the APA cited in its decree. They were shot through with conceptual and methodological flaws: small, nonrandom “convenience” samples, a recurring lack of control groups, shifting and poorly defined outcomes, and a steady pattern of comparing apples to oranges—for example, placing the children of intact, well-to-do lesbian households up against children reared by single heterosexual parents.

In all aspects of gay marriage, Kass and Mansfield write, the “body of research . . . is radically inconclusive.” There’s good reason for this, aside from the suspect motives and methods of the researchers themselves. Same-sex marriage and child rearing by self-defined same-sex couples are recent innovations. Whatever effects may flow from these unprecedented arrangements, good or bad or neutral, they are scientifically unknowable until gay marriage and child rearing are widespread enough to yield large samples that can be studied according to a rigorous methodology.

AP IMAGES / PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIN

“Large amounts of data collected over decades,” write Kass and Mansfield, “would be required before any responsible researcher could make meaningful scientific estimates of the effects.” And on these issues disinterested researchers are hard to come by.

Kass and Mansfield are well-known conservatives, as well as men practiced in the business of social science, and we may presume that they’re skeptical of gay marriage. This makes their amicus brief a necessary complement to another brief that has received much more publicity, submitted to the Court in favor of gay marriage and signed by a long list of . . . of . . . well, what are they anyway? Opening their amicus brief with a declaration of interest, they write: “Amici are social and political conservatives, moderates, and libertarians” who have decided that the Supreme Court must intervene to establish gay marriage nationwide.

The list of amici contains several names that will be familiar to anyone whose has had the bad habit of following American politics. Beyond their political coloration, which in many instances seems quite changeable, they do present a typical Washington motley: underemployed lobbyists, society hostesses, TV gasbags, defenestrated politicians, and political hangers-on, most of them draping themselves in the phony-baloney job titles that only our preposterous political culture can pretend to endow with authority (“adviser,” “consultant,” “commentator,” “advocate”). In other cases there are references to real jobs—former special assistants, speechwriters, undersecretaries—that the amici once held and abandoned several administrations ago, when the world was young—and before their moral and constitutional views had progressed to the state of exquisite sensitivity that now drives them to lay their opinions before the High Court.

Nobody will be surprised to learn that these opinions are not terribly well informed. Indeed the only thing the amici seem informed by is the impress of our country’s most up-to-the-minute intellectual fashion. Inevitably they rely, innocent and wide-eyed, on the same inconclusive social science that Kass and Mansfield warn against. The amici are not a skeptical or penetrating lot. The brief makes the obvious point that science offers no evidence of the harm that gay marriage may do; they do not make the equally obvious and complementary point that science offers no evidence of the good that supporters insist gay marriage will do for its couples, its children, or the larger society.

Their brief also vigorously invokes the advantages offered by marriage, as currently defined. And these advantages are real and well documented by social scientists of all stripes. The amici attribute such benefits to the stability that state-sanctioned marriage bestows on families, which is also true, as far as it goes. But you can’t help but wonder: If stability between same-sex couples is the issue at hand—the great social good we seek—why not institute civil unions that are as binding as the marriage contract, and

avoid the radical social experiment of redefining marriage?

Well, the amici say, marriage is unique. And they’re right again. Marriage is many things, all at once—much more than a simple mechanism for stability between husband and wife. The institution that social science has been studying so exhaustively for so many years is of a singular kind, with singular features. It is an ancient practice grooved by tradition and myth, shaped by social expectations as old as civilization. It arises from the natural sexual complementarity of woman and man, and formalizes the possibility of procreation and the renewal of life.

There’s no way of knowing what combination of these singular features of marriage confers which of its demonstrated advantages, culturally and psychologically. We do know, however, that if the state suddenly creates the institution of gay marriage by fiat, the result will lack most of the features that make marriage unique—and uniquely beneficial. It will not be the same institution that has won the unanimous endorsement of social scientists. It will be a novel and revolutionary institution owing its existence to the devaluation of an old and settled one. Should we assume that the former will confer the same social and personal benefits as the latter, the two being different in such fundamental ways? The only honest answer—the only intellectually respectable answer—is, Who knows?

Which brings us back to the central point that Mansfield and Kass make in their compelling brief: We don’t know what the consequences of gay marriage will be. (We do suspect that such a thing will be less socially divisive if enacted by popular will than by the say-so of judges.) Social science is all but mute on the subject and will have nothing useful to tell us for decades. Lacking objective evidence, suspicious of a rising political hysteria, wary of hidden motives, and unmoved by social blackmail, we would do well to submit to humility, deference, discretion, modesty—all those virtues that conservatives are said to prize. If nothing else, these should be sufficient to stay the judges’ hand, and to let the people themselves decide, if a decision must be made, when or whether tradition is to be disowned.

—Andrew Ferguson, for the Editors

Grand Old Opportunity

As they seek to revive their political fortunes in the wake of last year’s disastrous election, Republicans risk a dangerous misunderstanding: Since Democrats did well last November and Republicans generally didn’t, some on the right have

concluded that the Democrats must be onto some secret formula for success in an altered political environment, and that the task for Republicans is to find elements of their opponents' agenda or style they can comfortably co-opt or uncomfortably accept.

There is precedent for such a response to political troubles. In the late 1980s, a group of centrist Democrats concluded that their party had to adopt the essentials of Ronald Reagan's economic vision if it was to appeal to voters again, and their efforts ultimately bore fruit with Bill Clinton's election.

But the analogy to that era understates both the challenge the GOP now faces and the opportunity it confronts. The fact is that the public is not much happier with the Democrats than with the Republicans, and that neither party has offered a compelling policy agenda for addressing America's challenges in this era of stagnation and uncertainty.

The president's approval rating now hovers around the share of the vote that Mitt Romney won in November, and congressional Democrats receive approval ratings in the low 30s. It would be odd to look to a party the public barely tolerates for guidance on how to appeal to voters. And the 2012 campaign offers cautionary lessons but few constructive insights. The president effectively combined

cynical attacks on his opponent's character with microtargeted pandering to various slivers of the population, but he offered no agenda for addressing the public's deep concerns. The Republicans, meanwhile, sought to benefit from his failure to allay those concerns, but they did not offer their own path to allaying them.

There is no model to look to: Both parties give the impression of having outlived their eras. The moment feels more like the late 1970s than the late 1980s. And if Republicans are to regain their balance and lead the country again, they will have to develop an agenda for national renewal that speaks to today's policy challenges and to the sources of voters' anxieties.

At the heart of those anxieties is a sense that America's economic promise—the promise of growth-fueled upward mobility backed with security against the gravest misfortunes and risks—is waning. Economic growth has slowed dramatically—it averaged 3.6 percent annually from 1950 through 2000 but only 1.6 percent since then. And the cost of living in the middle class has been rising without a comparable improvement in living standards, especially because health care and higher education have gotten much more expensive without getting much better.

The key reasons for this are not income inequality or high marginal tax rates. They basically come down to

Suddenly, a Bold Trade Agenda

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

The United States suddenly has a bold trade agenda filled with ambition and possibility. Its success would reignite economic growth and generate millions of new jobs. It's not complicated—when companies, large and small, have more customers, they can do more business. That, in turn, leads to more hiring and investment.

During its first term, the Obama administration could hardly be considered pro-trade. It slow walked three vital trade agreements with South Korea, Panama, and Colombia negotiated by the Bush administration before finally allowing them to go through after years of needless delays. It also didn't show much interest in pursuing new agreements.

That's all changed. The administration and the business community are joining forces to throw their support behind three groundbreaking trade agreements that

could help jump-start our economy, open new markets to American goods and services, and create badly needed jobs.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement, or TPP, would help patch American businesses into the world's fastest-growing, most dynamic markets. The Asia-Pacific region will import \$10 trillion worth of goods in 2020. If America wants a large slice of that pie, then we need to conclude this agreement as quickly as possible. And TPP isn't just about Asia—it encompasses some of the most promising economies in Latin America as well.

We also need to get moving on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), an ambitious trade pact with the European Union, our largest trading partner. It would remove tariff and nontariff barriers to increased trade, driving jobs and growth on both sides of the pond at a time when our economies badly need it.

Here's one you may not hear a lot about, but it could have a huge impact—nearly 50 countries will soon begin

negotiations on an international agreement to boost trade in services. The United States is the world's largest exporter of services, with a \$195 billion trade surplus. An agreement could boost U.S. services exports by as much as \$860 billion, creating as many as 3 million American jobs.

For any of these proposals to be realized, the administration will need trade promotion authority (TPA), which allows the president to negotiate agreements that Congress can approve or disapprove but cannot amend or filibuster. Other countries will not conclude agreements with the United States if they believe those deals will be picked apart by Congress. Trade leaders in Congress say they want to pass TPA this year, and the administration says it's finally ready to engage.

For a nation starving for jobs, growth, and bipartisan cooperation, trade is just the ticket.



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the inefficiency of our economy. Growth is a function of an expanding labor force and increasing productivity. For much of the postwar era, our economy had both in droves—as women and the baby boomers flooded the workforce and a series of technology-driven efficiency explosions boosted output.

In the coming years, our labor force will not be growing as it did. The baby boomers are retiring, women are fully in the workforce, and a lack of the requisite skills leaves many Americans (and many immigrants) unsuited to the jobs our economy offers. Growth will therefore require solid, steady productivity improvements.

But our economy is profoundly ill-suited to enable them. Our government finances are in shambles, our public sector is woefully inefficient, our private sector is undermined by a set of policies and institutions that seem intent on denying us a productive future workforce and by a regulatory mindset that prefers consolidation to growth. Our middle class (which in America really means the more than 80 percent of people who tell pollsters they are neither rich nor poor) is beset by rising costs and stagnant pay. And among the poor, a catastrophic collapse of family and social institutions makes it increasingly difficult to equip the next generation to rise.

The government can't solve all this, but there is much it can do because a lot of the problem is caused by bad public policy. The sectors of the private economy most dominated by government—education and health care—are burdened by outdated institutions and irrational economic arrangements. Modernizing both (by breaking union monopolies, deflating the higher-education bubble, and using competition to drive higher-value health care and reduce entitlement costs) would help train tomorrow's workers and avoid crushing them with both public and private debt, and it would help save the safety net for the vulnerable from fiscal collapse. Meanwhile, the sector with the most potential for fueling a near-term boom—energy—is being held back by an administration uncomfortable with newly discovered domestic fossil-fuel reserves.

Reforms in other key areas are also badly needed. A simpler, leaner tax code would reduce the government's drag on the economy and could allow us to focus tax relief on lower-middle-class families struggling under the payroll tax. Monetary policy focused on steady nominal growth could power a real recovery. And reinforcing the work of civil-society institutions to strengthen families and communities could help restrain the disastrous social trends that undermine mobility and hold back the poor.

The political and economic appeal of lower health care, education, energy, and tax bills should be obvious, and the moral force of saving the safety net and combating the collapse of poor families and communities is plain. Yet amazingly, neither party has seriously offered such an agenda.

The Democrats have an excuse: Their electoral coalition makes it impossible for them to offer that agenda. Progressives are committed to every jot and tittle of today's broken welfare state, environmentalists are allergic to oil and gas, teachers' unions oppose meaningful K-12 reform, the professors would never put up with a new business model for higher education, public employees will resist every effort to modernize government services, and cultural liberals see a moral awakening as a recipe for repression. Far from owning the future, Democrats are helplessly stuck in the past. There is a reason why the president ran on no agenda and why Democrats now offer only blind reaction.

Republicans have no such excuse except inertia. In fact, a growth agenda geared to reviving upward mobility and offering relief to middle-class families would be a perfect marriage of conservative principles and Republican political objectives. It would powerfully appeal to demographic categories the Democrats imagine they own while uniting core Republican constituencies and exposing progressivism for the spent force it is.

The substantive policy agenda for such a modernized conservatism largely exists in the world of right-leaning wonks, but the politicians have been slow to embrace it. It is high time they did, not only for their party's sake but for their country's.

The reactionary left has little to offer the future except debt and decline. Its exhaustion threatens to become the country's exhaustion. Only an assertive, imaginative, and entrepreneurial policy conservatism geared to applying longstanding principles to new challenges can open another path. And only that kind of path, rather than an attempt to emulate the Democrats' supposed electoral formula, could make possible the Republican renewal that is now essential to America's renewal.

—Yuval Levin

'We Stand Together'

'T'oday, the sons of Abraham and the daughters of Sarah are fulfilling the dream of the ages—to be 'masters of their own fate' in 'their own sovereign state.' . . .

"Why does the United States stand so strongly, so firmly with the State of Israel? The answer is simple. We stand together because we share a common story—patriots

determined 'to be a free people in our land,' pioneers who forged a nation, heroes who sacrificed to preserve our freedom, and immigrants from every corner of the world who renew constantly our diverse societies.

"We stand together because we are democracies. . . . [And] the United States of America stands with the State of Israel because it is in our fundamental national security interest to stand with Israel. . . .

"For the Jewish people, the journey to the promise of the State of Israel wound through countless generations. It involved centuries of suffering and exile, prejudice and pogroms, and even genocide. Through it all, the Jewish people sustained their unique identity and traditions, as well as a longing to return home. And while Jews achieved extraordinary success in many parts of the world, the dream of true freedom finally found its full expression in the Zionist idea—to be a free people in your homeland. That's why I believe that Israel is rooted not just in history and tradition, but also in a simple and profound idea—the idea that people deserve to be free in a land of their own. . . .

"And Israel has achieved all this even as it's overcome relentless threats to its security—through the courage of the Israel Defense Forces, and the citizenry that is so resilient in the face of terror. . . .

"When I think about Israel's security, I think about five Israelis who boarded a bus in Bulgaria, who were blown up because of where they came from, robbed of the ability to live, and love, and raise families. That's why every country that values justice should call Hezbollah what it truly is—a terrorist organization. Because the world cannot tolerate an organization that murders innocent civilians, stockpiles rockets to shoot at cities, and supports the massacre of men and women and children in Syria right now. . . .

"The Syrian people have the right to be freed from the grip of a dictator who would rather kill his own people than relinquish power. Assad must go so that Syria's future can begin. Because true stability in Syria depends upon establishing a government that is responsible to its people—one that protects all communities within its borders, while making peace with countries beyond them. . . .

"When I consider Israel's security, I also think about a people who have a living memory of the Holocaust, faced with the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iranian government that has called for Israel's destruction. It's no wonder Israelis view this as an existential threat. But this is not simply a challenge for Israel—it is a danger for the entire world, including the United States. A nuclear-armed Iran would raise the risk of nuclear terrorism. It would undermine the

nonproliferation regime. It would spark an arms race in a volatile region. And it would embolden a government that has shown no respect for the rights of its own people or the responsibilities of nations. . . .

"Iran must know this time is not unlimited. . . . Iran must not get a nuclear weapon. This is not a danger that can be contained. . . . America will do what we must to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. . . .



Obama and Netanyahu in Jerusalem

"Here, in this small strip of land that has been the center of so much of the world's history, so much triumph and so much tragedy, Israelis have built something that few could have imagined 65 years ago. . . .

"After slavery and decades in the wilderness and with Moses gone, the future of the Israelites was in doubt. But with Joshua as their guide, they pushed on to victory. After the First Temple was destroyed, it seemed Jerusalem was lost. But with courage and resolve, the Second Temple reestablished the Jewish presence. After centuries of persecution and pogroms, the Shoah aimed to eliminate the entire Jewish people. But the gates of the camps flew open, and there emerged the ultimate rebuke to hate and to ignorance—survivors would live and love again.

"When the moment of Israel's independence was met by aggression on all sides, it was unclear whether this nation would survive. But with heroism and sacrifice, the State of Israel not only endured, but thrived. And during six days in June and Yom Kippur one October, it seemed as though all you had built might be lost. But when the guns fell silent it was clear—'the nation of Israel lives.' . . .

"Here, on your ancient land, let it be said for all the world to hear: The State of Israel does not exist because of the Holocaust. But with the survival of a strong Jewish State of Israel, such a Holocaust will never happen again."

—Barack Obama in Israel, March 20-22, 2013

Obamacare Isn't Forever

This is not the second coming of Medicare.

BY JAY COST

With the Supreme Court decision upholding President Obama's health care law last summer and his reelection in November, liberals are triumphant, convinced that Obamacare is here to stay. When pressed on this matter, they point to the political success of Medicare to show how quickly new entitlements become entrenched.

But the politics of Obamacare, and Medicare for that matter, are much more complicated than some would have us believe. In fact, a careful analysis of both demonstrates that there are important differences, which ultimately will make Obamacare considerably more susceptible to reform than Medicare ever was.

To appreciate these differences, it is appropriate to set aside ideological commitments and think of politics in America through the logic James Madison set out in *Federalist 10*: American politics ultimately comes down to the mobilization and maintenance of political factions within the structures the Constitution has established. This intuition remains true today, and an appreciation of the factional politics of American social welfare policy should help conservative reformers understand how exactly they can fix some of the problems Obamacare has created.

Medicare was a broadly popular

program at the time of its enactment. In late 1964 the Gallup poll found that the public overwhelmingly approved of what would become Medicare Part A, a hospital insurance program financed through expanded Social



Senator Mitch McConnell (R-Ky) stands next to a printed stack of Obamacare's 20,000 pages of rules and regulations.

Security taxes. These numbers were basically unchanged from a survey taken in the spring of 1961, despite relentless lobbying by the American Medical Association in the intervening years to move public opinion against such a program. This broad, enduring support for the program is a big reason why roughly half of House Republicans supported the program on final passage. They did not want to be seen on the wrong side of an initiative that had such strong support.

Importantly, it was this support that helped Medicare survive one

budget crisis after another. The program was designed primarily with an eye to political durability rather than efficiency or even sustainability. In particular, it imposed no real controls on the amount that medical providers could charge the government, partly out of fear of a boycott by doctors and hospitals. As such, in 1968 and 1969 Medicare was growing at an annual rate of over 40 percent, inducing Senate Finance Committee chairman Russell Long to label it a "runaway program."

For the next generation, legislators would have to address periodic crises in Medicare, yet none posed an existential threat to the program. The

most that can be said is that, starting in the 1990s, conservatives began advocating structural reforms to modernize the program, bringing it more in line with today's private-sector health insurance. At no point has the idea of repealing Medicare gained traction, nor has the government's commitment to medical care for the aged ever been seriously challenged, despite the demagogic claims of liberal Democrats.

Why was Medicare so popular? To put it simply, LBJ shoehorned it into the Social Security program, which itself had been a stroke of political genius by Franklin Roosevelt. By using a universal, social insurance model, the programs have

created a sense of public ownership and not of welfare. Everybody pays in; everybody benefits.

Medicare, moreover, like Social Security, diffuses costs broadly but concentrates benefits. The average worker paid a small price for Medicare when it was first passed, via a slightly higher payroll tax, but this was not very noticeable given how quickly wages were increasing in the middle 1960s. Meanwhile, the elderly, doctors, and hospitals all reaped windfalls from the program in the early years.

This, naturally, is what sowed the

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seeds of the chronic financing crises of the program: It is simply too good a deal, from a budgetary standpoint. But from a political standpoint, creating a sense of ownership, spreading the costs, and concentrating the benefits are sure-fire ways to guarantee political survival in our Madisonian system.

Not all programs are so politically successful. It depends on the interplay of factions, especially politicians' ability to transform diverse groups into defenders or attackers of existing programs. At the other end of the spectrum of success from Medicare is the Catastrophic Health Coverage Act (CHCA) of 1988, which was the product of a peculiar coalition of the Reagan administration and congressional Democrats, who controlled both houses. Like Medicare before it, the bill passed with overwhelming support, garnering majorities of both parties in the House.

But unlike Medicare, it lacked a popular base of support. Under the CHCA, Medicare beneficiaries would fund an expansion in the benefits offered by Medicare Part A to people with long-term hospital or extended care needs. What happened next surprised just about everybody: Medicare beneficiaries rebelled against the higher premiums required for the extended coverage, and political pressure forced a Democratic Congress and Republican president (this time George H.W. Bush) to repeal the program. The problem was that the noticeably increased costs were distributed among all Medicare recipients, but the benefits went only to those who needed subsidized long-term care, far too small a faction to sustain the new benefits.

Medicare and the CHCA met opposite political fates. What about Obamacare? Liberals have convinced themselves that, simply by virtue of its passage and endorsement by the Supreme Court, it will be just like Medicare. But there are important political differences between Obamacare and Medicare, and equally notable similarities with the CHCA.

For starters, Obamacare looks

much more like the CHCA in that it imposes costs on discrete factions in society. Most prominent are those who will lose their coverage through their employer and be forced into the new exchanges. It is always politically dangerous for a program to affect a particular constituency in such a negative way. Add to this the growing complaints from the business community about the burdens of the program, along with the wariness of senior citizens whose Medicare will lose \$700 billion in funding, and one can discern a political coalition out there ready to coalesce if and when these potential harms are realized. For all of its fiscal irresponsibility from the time of its creation, Medicare never forced people off their existing insurance as Obamacare will, nor was the Medicare payroll tax significant enough to elicit a response from younger workers or businesses.

Still, this is not to say that the politics of Obamacare perfectly match the politics of the CHCA—far from it. In theory, all Medicare recipients were potential beneficiaries of the CHCA. None would have to worry about being bankrupted by a prolonged hospital stay. Yet only a narrow slice of this group would ever realize the benefit, whereas all realized the costs. Not so with Obamacare, which will extend benefits to millions of Americans, even if in a cumbersome and inefficient manner. Once these benefits come online—as they will, thanks to the president's reelection—Obamacare will have political leverage that CHCA lacked. Our Madisonian system works by providing multiple factions within society a veto over public policy changes, and it is likely that the beneficiaries of Obamacare will be able to prevent full-blown repeal.

Thus, the outlook for Obamacare probably lies somewhere between the extremes of Medicare and the CHCA. The program lacks the political power of Medicare, which in turn means it is probably not immune to substantial reforms. But it has created a client base that is much larger than that of the CHCA, which means it will almost certainly survive.

What, then, is the way forward for conservative reformers?

The answer might be found south of the Mason-Dixon line, in Arkansas. As Avik Roy of *Forbes* has reported, Democratic governor Mike Beebe has worked out a deal with Washington in which the state will expand coverage to the poor, but not through Medicaid. Instead, it will do so via an expansion of the new insurance exchanges. The driver behind this arrangement was the Republican-controlled state legislature, which pushed for a deal with the Obama administration.

Herein lies a path for reform. Even if the expansion of coverage is permanent, Obamacare is creating an infrastructure through which conservatives may be able to realize their reform goal of a freer marketplace that drives down costs and provides consumers with greater flexibility. As Arkansas has shown, the exchanges are a potential mechanism for such outcomes, and the Obama administration's desire for full implementation has created an opening for renegotiation.

It is not hard to envision future reforms that peel back the onerous regulations of Obamacare, lowering the costs to the government, while keeping the 30 million or so new beneficiaries under the federal umbrella. From a Madisonian perspective, if the central political problem of Obamacare was that it created too many losers alongside its winners, then a successful conservative alternative would be a free-market approach that makes these losers whole again without depriving the winners of their new gains.

This is a real possibility. Indeed, as Avik Roy and Douglas Holtz-Eakin, former director of the Congressional Budget Office, argued recently at Reuters, "The great irony of Obama's triumph . . . is that it can pave the way for Republicans to adopt a comprehensive, market-oriented health care agenda."

Put simply, the battle over health care is far from over—and the ultimate outcome depends in part on how thoroughly conservative reformers understand the unique coalitional politics of Obamacare. ♦

The Lost Era of Economic Growth

Republicans have neglected their best issue.

BY FRED BARNES

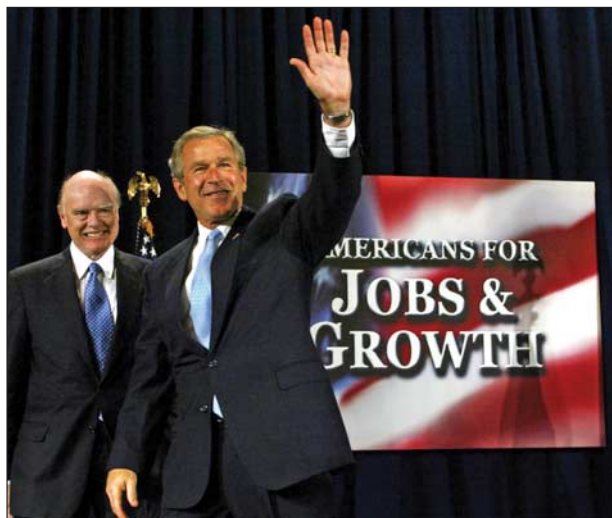
President Obama highlighted the need for strong economic growth in his State of the Union address in February, citing it 11 times. He mentioned it 5 times in a speech in Illinois in mid-March. Last week, when he nominated Tom Perez as his new labor secretary, Obama declared, “As I’ve said before, my top priority as president is doing everything we need to do to make sure we’re growing our economy.”

White House press secretary Jay Carney is even more relentless on the subject. He brought up economic growth 59 times in six press briefings between March 11 and 19. “The proposals [the president has] put forward keep the number one priority in mind, which is economic growth and job creation, not deficit reduction solely for the purpose of reducing the deficit.”

Obama hasn’t a clue about actually generating economic growth—his policies thwart it—but he’s awfully good at messaging. And growth is as good as it gets as a message for public consumption. It’s positive. It’s believable even for Obama because we’ve had strong economic growth routinely in the past, prior to his presidency. Best of all for Obama and Democrats, it steals an issue Republicans had not only owned but also relied on as their most effective talking point.

Republicans have reverted to the pre-Reagan era. In those days, they

were the party of spending cuts, though GOP presidents rarely followed through. Before he reached the White House, one of Ronald Reagan’s favorite talking points was the welfare queen, a woman who gamed the welfare system to drive a Cadillac and live lavishly. Republicans were the negative party.



Ah, the good old days

That changed in the late 1970s. Republicans ran on tax cuts and growth in 1978 and made modest gains in the House and Senate. More important, Reagan, prodded by Jack Kemp, adopted that agenda in his 1980 campaign and, as president, pushed through a 25 percent cut of income tax rates as the centerpiece of his economic policy. The economy boomed and growth became the GOP’s economic watchword.

But confronted with towering deficits and a national debt in fiscally dangerous territory, Republicans have become the negative party again. This

is partly understandable. Obama’s reckless spending has forced congressional Republicans to be responsible and champion spending cuts, reform of entitlements, and a balanced budget.

So while Obama wants to give things to voters, Republicans want to take them away. Or they’re alarmed about a looming debt crisis that’s an abstraction and thus not a pressing concern of many voters.

Republicans need to escape this box. The media won’t help. They’re genetically inclined to follow the lead of Democrats and treat Republicans as obsessive about cutting spending and committed to protecting the interests of the wealthy. The only way out is economic growth.

A surprising number of Republicans have figured this out. Rep. Paul Ryan, as the author of the House Republican budget, is required to defend its Medicaid cuts, reform of Medicare, and other reductions. Yet he believes growth should be the top priority for Republicans, just as it was for his mentor, Jack Kemp. And his budget would provide the means to spur growth by creating two income tax rates, 10 percent and 25 percent.

Ted Cruz, the ubiquitous new senator from Texas, is also a believer. Cruz told me that “growth and opportunity” should be tattooed on every Republican official’s hand to remind them what to talk about. He was joking, but his point was clear. Cruz hopes to sponsor pro-growth policies that could attract Democratic supporters.

Outside Congress, Jim Gilmore, the former Virginia governor who heads the Free Congress Foundation, is agitating in speeches and media appearances for growth. “There’s got to be an imperative to grow the economy,” he says. “There hasn’t been any discussion of that in the last two years. Republicans are making a mistake by putting so much emphasis on the spending side.” Gilmore favors three tax rates on income—10, 15, and 25

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percent—and a tax credit that would keep a family of four earning up to \$43,000 from paying any income tax.

Slow growth under Obama “is devastating the fabric of the nation,” Gilmore says. Democrats are “blind to growth. They’re not organically growing the economy. They’re pumping up the economy” with stimulus dollars and the Federal Reserve’s easy money policy.

Jeb Bush, ex-governor of Florida, is another advocate of making growth a top priority for Republicans. “Every speech I give is totally focused on economic growth,” he told me. (His recent speech to CPAC was an exception.) It gives Republicans “a huge opportunity to lay out alternatives [and] challenge the president’s orthodoxy” on economic policy.

Bush believes economic growth can reverse the decline of social mobility, which he says has occurred “over the past 20 years without a big national debate.” Broad-based growth would reduce poverty by allowing everyone to climb the economic ladder, he insists.

Ryan, Cruz, Gilmore, and Bush were joined last week by the Republican National Committee’s Growth and Opportunity Project, whose report was highly critical of the party, especially the congressional wing in Washington. The report touted economic growth as a message to those who feel “Republicans don’t care.” But despite the project’s title, growth was a minor point in the report.

Rather than praise growth on its own terms as the path to a better life, it was presented as the antidote to reliance on government. “Our job as Republicans is to champion private growth so people will not turn to government in the first place,” the report said. That’s fine, but a far better case could be made.

For the moment, economic growth sits in the waiting room of ideas, while the Republicans consider “rebranding.” But what’s needed is for the entire Republican party to make a growing economy central to its message. Once that happens, political life under Obama will change—to the advantage of Republicans. ♦

Sea-questration

The dismantling of the Navy.

BY SETH CROPSEY



USS Harry S. Truman on a training mission in December 2012

When they agreed to President Obama’s 2011 budget proposal that is responsible for the current sequester, Republicans expected that the nation’s concern and respect for the military would help to prevent the cuts in defense spending that would occur if agreement to reduce the deficit were not reached. They were wrong. And it couldn’t have come at a worse time.

Whatever its other effects, which may well be minor, the sequester arrives amidst increasing Chinese aggressiveness toward our allies in the Pacific, a rising level of North Korean belligerence, the imminent prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran, and a war against jihadists that in the

span of less than two years has spread from the Middle East to Africa. Forsaking a principled commitment to a robust national defense undermines an essential part of Republicans’ claim to responsible governance. Sequestration will hollow all the military services, but because it takes longer to build aircraft and much longer to build ships, American air and seapower are especially vulnerable. In particular, exhausting the Navy’s ability to project power and respond to crises will diminish our security and carve large chunks out of the international order that American seapower helped establish beginning in the early 20th century.

The administration originally requested that Congress appropriate a little over \$167 billion to fund the military’s operations and maintenance (O&M) for fiscal year 2013. When agreement on the budget proved unreachable, Congress, as has become the new norm, agreed on a continuing resolution to fund O&M. These accounts pay for organizing,

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training, equipping, repairing, and operating U.S. military forces. The continuing resolution funded these activities at the previous year's level, in this case about 6 percent less than what the administration had requested. As the military's service chiefs told Congress the week of March 4, this will, itself, cause significant reductions in training, maintenance, and operational readiness. And if no way can be found around the more draconian sequester, funds for military operations and maintenance will shrink by another 8 percent.

Consider specifics. Under the continuing resolution, the Navy was to receive 7 percent less than it would have if the legislative and executive branches could have agreed on a budget for this fiscal year. But, banking on a deal that would have restored O&M funds depleted by the continuing resolution, the Navy was permitted to spend at slightly higher levels at the beginning of the fiscal year in October. Then came the sequester, which

took away roughly another 7 percent against funds that had already been depleted. So the Navy is stuck with significantly less money to operate its ships and no prospect of relief from its global tasks.

What does this mean? The Navy announced its plans (assuming no financial *deus ex machina*) the day after sequestration became a fact. In April it will shut down one aircraft carrier wing, that is, the group of aircraft borne by a single carrier. Another three carrier wings will see their flying time shaved, while an additional two air wings will be "reduced to minimum safe flying levels" by the end of the year. Thus they would not be available immediately to sail with a carrier if a crisis occurred. Until now, postwar presidents faced with crises have always asked, "Where are the carriers?" Henceforth, they will be asking, "When will their planes be ready?" The fact is, sending aircraft carrier planes into combat when their pilots are not at the peak of their ability is

an invitation to disaster. The alternative is to wait until the carrier wing regains the qualifications to take off and land on a carrier as well as conduct combat missions, by which time the crisis may have passed—with regrettable consequences.

Adding to this unreadiness is the cancellation of deployment of as many as six ships around the world. This gap should be regarded with particular concern as Navy and civilian leaders in this administration have argued repeatedly that the size of the fleet matters less and less since the capabilities of individual ships have increased. Other money-saving measures include an early return to the United States of a guided missile destroyer that is protecting the sole aircraft carrier that remains in the Middle East after USS *Harry S. Truman*'s deployment to the Persian Gulf was canceled in February (in anticipation of the sequester). This is just the beginning of sequestration's effects.

The Middle East is far from the only area affected by the Navy's planned budget cuts. Four logistics ships assigned to the Pacific Command will be laid up next month, which is especially noteworthy because the Pacific's immensity makes resupply critical to effective presence and, if necessary, combat missions. Other areas of the world are also harmed. A frigate's deployment to the U.S. Southern Command will end early. The Southern Command is primarily responsible for assisting friendly nations with stemming the flow of illicit drugs into the United States and wiping out narcotics dealers. It is also increasingly burdened with the growing coziness between narco-traffickers and Middle Eastern jihadists. The Navy's traditional humanitarian mission in Central and South America carried out by ships, Seabees (construction battalions), and medical units will also be "deferred." They earn goodwill and contribute to smooth relations with nations with whom we work to alleviate the problems of illegal drugs and imported terror. And, again, this is just the beginning of sequestration.

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Nor do the cuts stop at current missions. The Navy plans to begin negotiations with its contractors to end payments on vessels for which funds will not be available. This will harm the Navy's attack submarine program and the construction of the nuclear reactors that power some surface and all combatant subsurface vessels. The effects will multiply in coming years as increasing shortfalls in the fleet will prevent it from covering regions that until now have been considered central to American strategic interests.

Although it may sound inconsequential, the Navy's crack team of performing fighter aircraft, the Blue Angels, will be canceled for now. The Blue Angels are not only a superb instrument of recruiting. Their appearance around the nation is an inspiration that reminds viewers of the excellence, bravery, discipline, and need for strong naval forces that some of our elected representatives seem to have forgotten. They symbolize the real thing—for both domestic audiences and foreign onlookers.

In sum, sequestration faces the Navy with degrading its readiness, decreasing its presence in the two most volatile regions of the world, the Middle East and East Asia, and deferring the investments required to keep the fleet from shrinking more than it already has. And—it is important to remember—even if sequestration is somehow finessed, both the Congressional Budget Office and the Congressional Research Service agree that if the Navy were to receive the large increases in shipbuilding funds that it wants over the next 30 years, it will still fall substantially short of its goal, resulting in a smaller fleet than the already shrunken one that now exists.

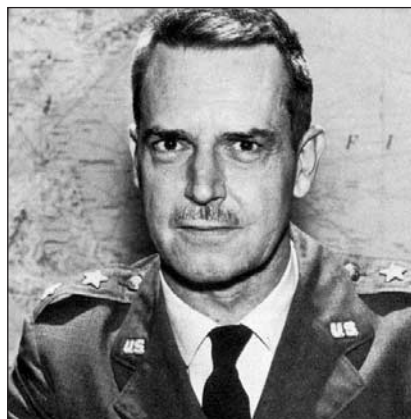
This sets a course for naval impotence. It will vacate the international order that American seapower has played a key role in establishing over the past century. Our place will be filled by chaos, or by China's growing naval power, or by some combination of the two. This is as dangerous for the nation's security as it is foolish for political leaders to acquiesce to. ♦

A Better Afghanistan

Will require a better president.

BY MAX BOOT

Hamid Karzai has been acting even more obnoxiously and erratically than usual of late. He has tried to kick U.S. Special Forces out of Wardak Province, a Taliban-infested area south of Kabul, and he has tried to renege on an agreement over the transfer of an American-run detention facility to Afghan custody.



Edward Lansdale in 1963

Even worse, Karzai's claims that the Taliban and the United States are colluding against his country have forced Gen. Joe Dunford, the top U.S. military commander, to issue an alert to his troops warning them that they face an elevated risk of attack.

All of this highlights the importance of Afghanistan picking a better leader in the next presidential election, scheduled for April 2014. It is vitally important that this balloting, unlike previous

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elections, not be marred by fraud. U.S. forces need to start planning now to ensure a free and fair election.

But securing the vote is only the beginning of the problem. For it is perfectly possible that even a free election can bring to power a weak leader who, like Karzai, will tolerate massive corruption. If that were to happen it would be a disaster, because the ineffectiveness of the existing government is a prime recruiting tool for the Taliban. Unless Afghans elect a better president there is little chance that the massive American investment in Afghanistan, designed to safeguard the country from a return to power by the Taliban and their al Qaeda allies, will pay off.

Given the stakes, the United States can't afford a holier-than-thou attitude of committing ourselves to free and fair elections while remaining agnostic about the outcome. Our tremendous power (we still have 66,000 troops in Afghanistan and provide more than 90 percent of the country's budget) gives us the opportunity to influence the outcome, overtly or covertly. We should use that clout to help secure the election of a candidate who could unite Afghans and defeat or at least marginalize the Taliban—and we should not be paralyzed by fears that our machinations will blow up in our faces.

This is a difficult task to pull off, but Edward Lansdale showed how it could be done. This legendary CIA and Air Force officer arrived in the Philippines in 1945 at the beginning of an uprising by the Communist Huks (short for Hukbalahap). To counter the Huks, the Philippine Army was attacking barrios with artillery and bombs and indiscriminately locking up and torturing suspects. This cam-

paign was not only brutal but ineffective, because it was overseen by a government that Lansdale described as “rotten with corruption.” The Huks, who numbered 10,000 to 15,000 active fighters, only grew stronger under this ham-handed assault.

To counter the Huks’ influence, Lansdale set out to talk to Filipinos from all walks of life. He quickly made friends with his soft-spoken manner, which was a welcome contrast to the hectoring tone adopted by so many Americans in Southeast Asia in those days—or in Afghanistan today. A Filipino friend recalled, “He would always say things in such a nice, disarming, and charming way. He never ordered but only asked, ‘What do you think about doing it this way?’ or ‘Don’t you think this is how we should treat the problem?’”

The most important friend Lansdale made was Ramón Magsaysay, a former anti-Japanese guerrilla fighter who was just a congressman when the two met in 1950. Lansdale became Magsaysay’s closest confidant, for a time even his roommate. The two men saw eye to eye on how to combat the Huks—and it wasn’t the way that the Philippine security forces were going about it.

Magsaysay believed that the government had to win the trust of the people. So did Lansdale. He lobbied Washington to use its clout to get Magsaysay appointed secretary of national defense in 1950 to carry out this program. The new cabinet minister’s motto was “All-Out Friendship or All-Out Force.” With Lansdale’s advice, Magsaysay “practically had to reinvent the Armed Forces,” noted a Filipino writer. Troops “entering an inhabited area” were now told “to conduct themselves as though they were coming among friends.” They were warned that “a soldier who steals a chicken from a farmer cannot claim to be the farmer’s protector.” To make sure that soldiers were doing as they were told, Lansdale and Magsaysay would travel together to stage snap inspections in the field.

Magsaysay and Lansdale knew that the Huks had benefited from public disgust over vote stealing in the 1949 presidential election. To prevent

a recurrence, they employed the Philippine Army to safeguard the 1951 congressional elections and the 1953 presidential election. The winner of the latter contest was Magsaysay. After his friend defeated the corrupt incumbent, Lansdale earned a new nickname: Colonel Landslide.

The American had used his advertising expertise and the CIA’s covert funds to build up Magsaysay’s public reputation. He even contributed a campaign slogan: “Magsaysay is my guy.” But fundamentally the honest, modest, and hardworking defense minister won not because of public-relations tricks but because he had become, as two veterans of the anti-Huk campaign noted, “the personification” of “dedicated, aggressive leadership.” The “peaceful, clean” elections delivered the coup de grâce to the Huks, who conceded that people no longer saw “the immediate need of armed struggle.”

“The Huks became,” in Lansdale’s words, “fish out of water.” By the mid-1950s the Huk Rebellion was over.

Afghanistan today could desperately use its own Magsaysay, and we can’t trust the political process to produce him on its own because warlords, Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence, and other malign actors will influence the outcome. If we refuse to play the same game, we will be able to congratulate ourselves on our moral purity—but we will also be in serious danger of losing the war we have been fighting since the fall of 2001.

If he hasn’t already, President Obama should tell the U.S. ambassador and CIA station chief in Kabul that it is time to emulate Lansdale by selecting and grooming the best possible candidate to succeed Karzai. Of course such a decision could backfire in numerous ways. Karzai, after all, was originally selected by the U.S.-run Bonn Process in late 2001. But we have learned a lot about Afghanistan since then, and, one hopes, we can make a better choice this time around. If we don’t, Afghanistan—and American security interests—will pay a heavy price. ♦

Defining Torture Down

Every policy the left dislikes becomes a crime against humanity. **BY WESLEY J. SMITH**

Now they are defining “torture” down. “They” in this instance are the international community in general and the United Nations special rapporteur on torture, the Argentine human rights activist Juan E. Méndez, in particular.

Méndez—whose full title is “special rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment

or punishment”—just released a report to the General Assembly on torture “in health care settings.” It is a startling read. He brands with that extreme term not only medical actions and omissions that clearly are not torture as most people understand it, but also national policies disfavored by the international ruling class. Thus, “The Committee against Torture has repeatedly expressed concerns about restrictions on access to abortion and about absolute abortion bans as violating the prohibition on torture and ill treatment.” Unstated (but implied) is that pro-life countries

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like Ireland are committing crimes against humanity.

Torture, however, has a specific definition. According to the U.N.'s Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, it means

any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he . . . has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him . . . or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.

Two clear examples of torture are “disappearing” a political prisoner in indefinite solitary confinement and kneecapping a prisoner during police interrogation to obtain a confession. But Méndez reports that the definition of torture and ill treatment is subject to “evolving interpretation” and “ongoing reassessment in light of the present-day conditions and the changing values of democratic societies.” Whenever international bureaucrats want to “reassess” venerable definitions to reflect “changing values,” hold on to your national autonomy.

Not by accident, Méndez places special emphasis on “reproductive rights violations” as torture—and in so doing conflates mere policy differences and clear abuse:

International and regional human rights bodies have begun to recognize that abuse and mistreatment of women seeking reproductive health services can cause tremendous and lasting physical and emotional suffering, inflicted on the basis of gender. Examples of such violations include abusive treatment and humiliation in institutional settings; involuntary sterilization; *denial of legally available health services such as abortion* and post-abortion care; . . . female genital mutilation; *violation of medical secrecy and confidentiality in health care settings*, such as denunciations of women by medical

personnel when evidence of illegal abortion is found [*italics added*].

Equating involuntary sterilization and female genital mutilation—unquestionably cruel and abusive practices and arguably instances of torture—with the denial of an abortion or a violation of confidentiality obviously diminishes the truly abusive nature of the former. Méndez even goes so far as to claim that denying prenatal testing to reveal “a potential fetal abnormality” could be torture because “access to information about reproductive health is imperative to a woman’s ability to exercise reproduc-



Juan E. Méndez

tive autonomy, and the rights to health and physical integrity.” One could certainly argue that impeding such testing is wrong or misguided—but *torture*?

Méndez further distorts the meaning of torture in dealing with transgender issues. For example, he declares that laws requiring sex reassignment surgery before a person can legally register a sex change amount to coerced “sterilization” and may thus be a “severe and irreversible intrusion into a person’s physical integrity.”

Prostitutes—or rather, “sex workers”—are also supposedly tortured when required to undergo “mandatory HIV testing and exposure of their HIV status.” Other people infected with HIV are also tortured by “compulsory HIV testing,” which Méndez claims “may constitute degrading treatment if it is done on a discriminatory basis.” Really? After New York passed a law requiring testing of all newborns and disclosure of status to their mothers—bitterly resisted by some AIDS

activists and feminists—thousands of babies’ and women’s lives were saved.

And Méndez wants to protect drug addicts from torture. “In some cases,” he fumes, “the laws specifically single out the status of drug user as a stand-alone basis for depriving someone of custody or parental rights.” Imagine that!

To be sure, many of the actions and omissions that Méndez identifies in his report are clearly negligent, abusive, or inhumane. Denying treatment to AIDS patients is obviously cruel and unacceptable. So are involuntary sterilization, wrongful sentencing to psychiatric hospitals, physical and sexual abuse in medical facilities, and medical discrimination against people with disabilities. State policies that impede the adequate provision of pain control beg for a cure. But something can be wrong, indeed highly abusive, and still not be usefully equated with torture.

The broad goal of the U.N. report is to impose universally its preferred ethical worldview. For example, the special rapporteur “calls upon all States” in which abortion is legal to “ensure that services are effectively available.” He also recommends adopting “a human rights-based approach to drug control,” closing all “compulsory drug detention and ‘rehabilitation’ centers,” to be replaced by “rights-based health and social services in the community.” But such policy questions are best addressed by sovereign states, not through an international effort to eliminate torture.

The political left—which includes the U.N. bureaucracy—loves to redefine words so as to stigmatize controversial policies with which it disagrees. Now, Méndez (who moved to the United States in 1977, after being expelled from Argentina for courageous opposition to the dictatorship) has asked for an official invitation from the U.S. government to assess how much torture we permit in health care settings. Just imagine the *New York Times* headlines reporting on his visits to, say, states that impose waiting periods before abortions: “Torture in 26 U.S. States!” NARAL will be thrilled. ♦

NEWS.COM

Irish Stew

Where abortion and national identity collide

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

Dublin

Wide-eyed, heavily lipsticked, with a delicate jeweled bindi between her eyebrows and an almost joyous expression on her face, Savita Halappanavar has been staring out from the front pages of Irish newspapers, week after week, for almost half a year now. The 31-year-old Indian dentist, four months pregnant, was rushed to University Hospital in Galway in the middle of a miscarriage last October. She begged for an abortion, reportedly, and was haughtily informed by a doctor that she couldn't have one. "This is a Catholic country!" he allegedly said. She died of septicemia a few days later.

People who tell the story of Savita Halappanavar often don't agree on much. Her doctors have been accused of dogmatism by those who favor legalized abortion and of incompetence by those who do not. That Ireland is among the very safest countries in which to have a baby—6 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, versus 21 in the United States, according to the World Health Organization—argues against both explanations. In February, excerpts from a government inquiry were leaked to the press. They made no mention at all of that "Catholic country" taunt. But by then, the Savita case, as it is always called, had unleashed a battle over abortion laws that was tearing the country, and its coalition government, to pieces.

Abortion is forbidden under the constitution of traditionally Catholic Ireland. Aside from tiny Malta, it is the last country in the European Union with such a ban. Certain of Ireland's leaders are embarrassed by that. Top lawyers, many of them trained in American law schools, have kept Irish and EU courts under a barrage of litigation for two decades, in hopes of shaking loose a liberal regime of abortion rights. Over the same period, the EU has claimed

an ever-larger share of what used to be the sovereignty of the Irish Republic, in exchange for generous-looking subsidies. Almost all the leaders of the major parties are pushing to bring Ireland's laws into line with those of "our European partners," in the face of resistance from the Irish public.

There is now an American-style pro-choice establishment (with its litigation, its keep-your-hands-off-my-body agitation, and its coalitions-of-convenience built out of trade unions, antiracists, and others you wouldn't suspect

of caring about abortion rights) facing off against an American-style pro-life establishment (with its marches, its robocalls, and its ultrasound posters). Those who want abortion have the zeitgeist on their side, those who don't want it have the law. By the time the Savita case happened, the battle lines between two camps were sharply drawn. And at that point, Prime Minister Enda Kenny, whose Fine Gael party had made an election promise just a year before that it would not legislate for broader abortion rights, switched sides.



Protest vigil for Savita Halappanavar

CATHOLIC ZIONISTS

Campaigners for abortion rights like to describe Ireland's restrictive abortion regime as dating from an 1861 law, the Offences Against the Person Act. That law is indeed still on the books. To invoke it makes opponents of abortion sound like fusty, obscurantist, retrograde lackeys of colonialism. But Ireland's abortion regime is just as much a product of the country's modernization—of a series of decisions made with broad democratic legitimacy between the 1930s and the 1980s.

At the end of the revolt against Britain almost a century ago, the church was the only major national institution free (or freeable) from the taint of colonialism. To compare it to the Polish church under communism in the 1980s would not be out of place. The Irish made the church the bedrock of their new state. They invoked the Trinity in the preamble to the constitution of 1937. They granted the church a partnership—or a stranglehold, according to your view—on

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education and health care, along with a voice in censoring books and public entertainments. This ancient and ill-fated people, nearly exterminated in the previous century and scattered by migration, a people that seemed to provoke admiration of its lyricism and fear of its criminality wherever it traveled, created a state suited to the needs of an underdog citizenry. With its resurrected ancient language made compulsory in schools and a “law of return” permitting the grandchildren of the Irish diaspora to claim citizenship with no questions asked, the political culture of the early Irish Republic bore a striking resemblance to Zionism. It was not a theocracy, exactly, but Irish Catholicism—as both an identity and a belief system—became a large part of what the state was about.

This was not a country where new, feminist understandings of family life could easily take root. According to Article 41.2 of the constitution:

The State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved. The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.

This family-based political order may be a noble alternative to lowest-common-denominator twentieth-century consumer capitalism and twenty-first-century credit-card capitalism—to say nothing of the fascism and communism that were spreading their influence in the year that Irish constitution was written. But it has not been to everyone’s liking. Many forces worked to corrode it. A constitutional convention has recently been seated to expunge it. The outside world, with its hip-hop and pornography and Viagra, could not be kept at bay forever, particularly since the relative poverty of Ireland encouraged emigration to more liberal societies that, being richer, looked more successful. In the 1990s, the late novelist Maeve Binchy told me that Ireland was changing because “almost everyone has a kid who works in a bar in Rome.” By 1995, Ireland had gained legalized divorce in a referendum (“Hello Divorce, Bye-Bye Daddy,” read one campaign poster), although it was a close-fought battle.

At first, there were plenty of non-Catholics in Ireland. The rich, elegant, well-traveled Protestant elite—centered in what is now the postal code of Dublin 4—eventually opened to people of Catholic background, but never changed its philosophy, which was built on a fear of being saddled with the lifestyle and worldview of the peasantry. The journalist and memoirist John Waters laid out this elite’s culture in his 1991 book *Jiving at the Crossroads*, as he described the winning presidential campaign of the human-rights lawyer Mary Robinson, Harvard Law School’s gift to

Ireland. Dublin 4, Waters wrote, was made up of people

who had pulled themselves away from their roots, who had scraped the last trace of cowdung from their souls. They were well-educated and had been to university and studied concepts like dialectical materialism, positivism, gradualism, and democratic centrism. They had long been appalled at the fact that their own country refused to reveal itself in terms of the learning they had accumulated.

Irish progressives’ sense of what is right has usually come from abroad. They perennially warn that Irish institutions and opinions are not “keeping pace” with international norms. They are at odds with the traditions of the state, at least as they were understood by Éamon de Valera, the state’s conservative founding father, who towered over Irish politics until the 1970s. De Valera did not believe that the setters of the world’s “norms” necessarily had Ireland’s best interests at heart. In his wake, conservatives, not just in the church, have found it easy to depict Dublin 4 as un-Irish, self-loathing, contemptuous of Irish ways and Irish common sense. The traditional code was not perfect, conservatives argued, but it met the minimum standards of self-respect and cultural self-preservation.

Two developments in the 1990s changed that. First, Ireland’s politicians appeared to discover a way to bring the country undreamt-of prosperity. They lowered corporate tax rates, invited Apple, Dell, and Intel to set up headquarters and assembly plants, encouraged borrowing, and sent real estate prices through the roof. It was only an illusory prosperity, we can see now, but by the time the illusion was dispelled many of Ireland’s institutions had been changed forever to accommodate it.

Second, the sexual misconduct of Ireland’s Catholic priests began to be uncovered in the mid-1990s. The powerful Galway bishop Eamon Casey, with his secret American family, was the leading symbol of clerical shenanigans. There was an interesting episode in 1994 when a priest fell down dead of a heart attack in a Dublin gay pickup joint and the two fellow patrons who tried to revive him both turned out to be priests as well. In Ireland as elsewhere, pederasty became the church’s most serious problem. Whether or not the offenses were more severe than in other countries, the scandal was worse because priests in Ireland were a political power. For years the state had been set up so that all parents, not just believing Catholics, had to deliver their children into the church’s care at one time or another. Priests and nuns ran schools and hospitals, yes, but also “industrial schools,” where wayward, lower-class kids were sent to be taught morals and virtues, and then—in dozens of cases revealed in graphic detail by the so-called Ryan Report of 2009—sexually abused.

The scandals were enough to make any citizen’s blood boil. They turned the independent-minded burghers of

Irish country towns, previously a bulwark of the church against Dublin 4, into a bulwark of Dublin 4 against the church. “My brother thinks of the Catholic church as a criminal conspiracy,” a levelheaded Dublin businessman friend told me a month ago.

So at Maynooth, where Ireland’s leading Catholic seminary used to graduate hundreds and hundreds of priests a year—and then send them to missions around the world, because they were far too many for the churches of Ireland itself to accommodate—the class photo of 2007 shows only four new fathers. Three sides of the seminary’s vast quadrangle, which was still overflowing with religious offices and classrooms when I visited in the 1990s, are now given over to other things—one side allotted to Trócaire, the Catholic charity; two sides rented out to the (secular) Irish National University. And a half-dozen other seminaries around the country have been shuttered.

Until recently, almost no one perceived this as a loss. When church attendance collapsed, and with it much of the moral underpinning of the state and the culture, lots of people just said: Good riddance. In certain sexual ways, Dublin today is racier than New York. Look at the “Life” section of the *Irish Times*. It writes up gay dating websites and tells readers where to find a geo-location app that can be used for gay hookups. The headlines in the *Irish Independent* are similar: “Meet the sex guru who says no to marriage,” for instance. Or “Childless & happy? You better believe it.” Amid the church scandals, Ireland rewrote its legal and its informal rules on sex from scratch.

But abortion has been different.

MISCARRIAGE AND JUSTICE

Diarmaid Ferriter is a craggy-faced, crew-cut, 40-year-old historian who wears a lot of black. He has won acclaim for his prolific writing about (among other things) sexual mores in Ireland. On a late-winter afternoon, with a low sun slanting through the picture windows of his office at University College Dublin, Ferriter explains, “In relation to contraception, in relation to homosexuality, in relation to a variety of different areas, it was clear that Ireland was going to begin to follow other countries—with the exception of abortion. It has remained more divisive than other issues, it has remained more emotive.” The Irish are uncomfortable with abortion, although explanations vary. “One of the cases that has often been made in relation to Ireland is that we are a beacon of moral purity and we have to retain that in an ever more secular world,” Ferriter says. This seems far from his own view.

In 1983, the abortion opponent William Binchy, a Trinity College Dublin law professor (and brother of Maeve), had a brilliant insight: Although the Irish disapproved of

legalized abortion they still very well might get it. Binchy had studied the evolution of abortion law in the United States: First came the establishment of a “married” privacy right for contraception in *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965); next, an individual privacy right for contraception in *Eisenstadt v. Baird* (1972); next, *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and abortion on demand. The year of *Roe*, Judge Brian Walsh of the Irish Supreme Court, a friend of U.S. Supreme Court justice William Brennan, handed down a decision that paralleled (and cited) the reasoning in *Griswold*. What Binchy and others did in 1983 was launch a referendum campaign to add to the Irish constitution an amendment guaranteeing “the right to life of the unborn . . . with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother.” Mary Robinson led the opposition to Binchy, mocking him for trying “to raise a scare that the European court might force us to have an abortion law.” The amendment passed, with two-thirds of the vote, and is now known as the Eighth Amendment. The campaign was bitter. The feminist Nell McCafferty, when it was done, blamed “the pig-ignorant slurry of woman-hating that did us temporarily down.”

“Temporarily” was right. An argument could be made (and was) that the Irish did not disapprove of abortion as much as they said they did. Just as the country exported its unemployment problem for most of the twentieth century, it began exporting its unintended-pregnancy problem at century’s end. Britain had legalized abortion in 1967. From that point on, as readers of Edna O’Brien’s novels know, young women seeking abortions crossed the Irish Sea in great numbers. Labour party senator Ivana Bacik, a Trinity College colleague of William Binchy’s and the intellectual leader of today’s pro-choice movement, says: “Since 1967 we’ve had legal abortion available to us, albeit in another jurisdiction.” Legal, yes, but still limited. In 2011, 4,149 Irish women traveled to England or Wales for abortions—roughly 1 in every 500 females in the country. American women, by contrast, get 825,000 abortions a year—roughly 1 in every 200. When an abortion can be had only after a boat or plane trip, it imposes a de facto waiting period, of the sort that has lately been discussed in American states seeking a compromise on abortion law. If the Irish experience is any indication, this appears to reduce abortion sharply.

No one really thought about how English abortions squared with the 1983 amendment until the incredible “X case” of 1992. A 14-year-old girl, known in court papers as X, had been raped and was threatening suicide. Her parents asked authorities a question about whether the fetus’s DNA would be admissible as evidence for rape. The attorney general sought to block the girl from traveling to England for an abortion. The case pitted Ireland’s abortion laws against various EU rights—freedom of travel, for one thing.

X miscarried, but not before the Supreme Court ruled that a threat of suicide was grounds for abortion under the constitutional right-to-life language. Effectively, the court booby-trapped the constitution. Abortion was now strictly illegal except when it was available on demand. The court asked lawmakers to legislate their way out of the contradiction. For reasons that we will get to later, and which are medical as much as legal, this would not have been possible with the best will in the world.

That is why, even in the aftermath of the economic collapse, even with the ruling Fianna Fáil party disgraced by its bubble-promoting, crony-capitalist ways, Fine Gael challenger Enda Kenny felt the need to reassure the public that, if elected in 2011, his party would not touch the abortion issue with a stick.

ENDA INNOCENCE

The present Irish government shares a peculiarity with many Western governments (including the American one): Like them, it came to power primarily because it was *not* in power when the bottom fell out of the world economy in 2008. All these governments claimed a mandate to act with unprecedented force to set their countries' finances to rights. But the complexity of the crisis stymied them, and they failed to come up with anything in the way of economic innovation. They did notice, though, that the Bubble Era ruling parties had been reduced to a smoldering political wreck, wholly unable to act as an effective opposition. So with a combination of zeal and self-delusion, these new governments clung to their mandate to act forcefully, diverting it from the purpose for which it had been granted—the economy—and towards a variety of long-cherished partisan (or interest-group) projects. Barack Obama passed health reform in the United States. David Cameron passed gay marriage in England.

In Ireland, Enda Kenny tried to reinvent himself as something that the Republic of Ireland had never had: an outright anticlerical politician. In Kenny's first weeks in office, the government's Cloyne Report on sexual abuse found "an attempt by the Holy See to frustrate an investigation in a sovereign democratic republic." The evidence for this assertion was thin at the time, and looks thinner today. But Kenny gave a thundering speech, deploring some of the institutions the church had mismanaged:

This is not Rome, nor is it industrial school or Magdalene Ireland, where the swish of a soutane smothered conscience and humanity, and the swing of a thurible ruled the Irish Catholic world. This is the Republic of Ireland 2011, a republic of laws, of rights and responsibilities, of proper civic order.

Actually, to Irish ears, this sounded less like twenty-first-century Ireland than Cromwellian England, especially when Kenny closed his speech by calling out Pope Benedict personally, and wound up, after a war of words, recalling Ireland's ambassador to the Vatican. It was particularly stunning since Kenny's reputation when he arrived in power was as a conservative, a rural Catholic, and one of the longest-serving political hacks in the national legislature. It

was as if, say, Dan Rostenkowski, late in his career, had begun pounding the podium on behalf of vegetarianism or free love.

On abortion, Kenny tacked in line with his Labour coalition partners rather than his own mildly antiabortion party. The European Court of Human Rights offered him a way to do this. It had issued a decision in December 2010 asking Ireland to "clarify" the circumstances in which

women could have an abortion under the X case. The court is not an EU institution. Its rulings are not binding on EU members unless those members let them be. What is more, the founding Maastricht Treaty of 1992 stipulated explicitly that nothing in EU law can require Ireland to legalize abortion. But once the Savita case happened, Kenny announced he would use the European Court of Human Rights ruling as a starting point to "legislate for the X case."

Kenny may have calculated that the scoundrels of Fianna Fáil were now so discredited by their wallet-stuffing greed and their financial incompetence that he would face no viable opposition anytime soon. If so, he was mistaken. In the months after the Savita case, Fine Gael's support in the general public dropped like a rock, from 34 percent to about 25. Left for dead as recently as last fall, Fianna Fáil found itself restored this spring to its position as the country's most popular party. Twenty-five thousand people demonstrated against Fine Gael in front of the legislature—not as impressive as the crowds that came to protest the Iraq war in 2003 or austerity in 2009, but far more impressive than anything Kenny's side could muster.

How Irish people felt about abortion was not easy to



A loud reminder in Dublin, July 2011

tell from the polls. A much-circulated *Irish Times* survey showed 71 percent wanted abortion when the mother's life is in danger and 78 percent wanted it in cases of rape or incest. But only 37 percent wanted it in the "best interest" of the mother. A group called the Pro-Life Campaign issued its own poll showing that when you phrase the question a certain way ("Are you in favour of or opposed to a constitutional protection for the unborn that prohibits abortion but allows the continuation of the existing practice of intervention to save a mother's life in accordance with Irish medical ethics?"), you get three-quarters of Irish people (77 percent) supporting the present ban. This may not settle the matter, but it does indicate that Irish public opinion on abortion is highly cajolable. The expectation that Ireland, after a brief political to-do, will settle into a European-style consensus about abortion is probably wrong. Ireland is more likely to resemble the United States, where the abortion issue, recklessly addressed at the outset, has done decades' worth of damage to the political system.

Two results leapt out from the details of the *Irish Times* poll. The first is that acceptance of abortion rose *pari passu* with income. Rich professionals wanted it most, poor farmers least. No surprises there: The rich can always make more use of sexual autonomy than the poor. But there was also a result that seemed to confound this correlation. The age cohort that most favored abortion was neither teenagers nor young adults, but rather the early-middle-aged—those between 35 and 49. The historian Ferriter offers an explanation for this spike. "If you are between 35 and 49," he says, "you have seen the 1983 campaign, you have seen the X case, you have seen the Savita case, you have learnt that this is not a black and white issue. You have learnt that trying to solve this problem in absolutes does not work. Twenty-four-year-olds haven't seen that." Ivana Bacik believes that the result does not necessarily contradict the correlation between sexual autonomy and abortion approval. It is just that the age of sexual autonomy starts later in Ireland. "People live at home here much longer," she says. "There is no tradition, necessarily, of leaving home at 18."

Kenny let it be known that on the abortion vote he would subject his own party to the three-line whip—a parliamentary procedure of English origin in which those who vote against the government are voting their expulsion from the party. It was an unusual use of the whip, which is generally employed on matters like budgets and tax reforms, almost never on "issues of conscience." It remained to be seen whether his colleagues would take it, especially after 10 Fine Gael legislators traveled to the United States as guests of the antiabortion group Family & Life—"to educate ourselves on pro-life issues," as one of them told the *Irish Mail*.

Polls showed Fine Gael voters were less comfortable

with abortion than the populists of Fianna Fáil, the progressives of Labour, or the nationalists of Sinn Féin. Some of the toughest language against abortion came from within Fine Gael itself. John Bruton, the party's last prime minister before Kenny, argued that it was folly to legislate on the X case, since that decision had misinterpreted the constitutional language about equal rights of child and mother: "To introduce a law providing that an expression of a threat of suicide by one person would be sufficient ground for the taking away of the life of another," Bruton wrote, "would not be in accord with the actual words in the Constitution. There would be no 'equal' right to life in such a law." One of the party's most charismatic and wily politicians, the 33-year-old Europe minister Lucinda Creighton, had joined a party revolt against Kenny years before, and she now began attacking the government's position on abortion. She spoke of women she had known who had had abortions and been "very damaged by it" and warned that "limited abortion has invariably become a liberal regime."

FLOODGATES

The Irish favor the very narrowly limited law they are being promised. But they oppose abortion on demand. Creighton was telling them that if they support the former, they will get the latter. That was the heart of the issue that Savita Halappanavar's death unleashed: Will this itty-bitty, health-based exception to Ireland's abortion ban open the floodgates to the normalization of abortion across society?

My friend with the brother who thinks of the church as a criminal organization says: "It's going to be limited. There's nobody who's saying, 'We want to open an abortion clinic on every street corner.'" That is the Fine Gael view as well. The government is "not considering in any shape or form abortion on demand," Justice Minister Alan Shatter said in a speech in November. Diarmaid Ferriter agrees. "I accept that it's big," he says. "I don't accept that it's a floodgate moment. I think that is propaganda. And I think that it is working to the advantage of the pro-life movement, of the so-called pro-life movement, to present it as a floodgate moment. It's about catch-up. It's quite clear we're not going to have anything resembling a liberal abortion regime." The *Economist* summed up the entire controversy with the bemused headline: "A limited plan to ease Ireland's laws against abortion provokes sharp debate."

All these distinguished people are wrong. Abortion opens up possibilities that societies that lack it cannot anticipate. The "Therapeutic Abortion Act" that Ronald Reagan signed in California in 1967 increased the number of abortions by a factor of 200. The Abortion Act

which passed that same year in Britain was supposed to be tightly limited. But there are about 200,000 abortions in Britain annually, the great majority carried out on the basis of “Ground C”: a “risk, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated, of injury to the physical or mental health of the woman.” This is a gripe of both pro-choicers (who believe it humiliates the women who request it) and pro-lifers (who believe it makes abortion easy).

The case against abortion is at its strongest when the question is “What is an abortion?” It is at its weakest when the questions concern gray areas, such as the number of weeks’ gestation after which abortion ought to be illegal. Once the pro-life principle is surrendered, the argument takes place on pro-choice terms, since pregnancy is full of gray areas. All Western nations used to have mostly coherent regimes that held abortion to be a crime. Today they have mostly coherent regimes that hold abortion to be a right. But the regime that would result from “legislating for the X case,” with its incentives to women to credibly threaten suicide, is so logically feeble that it would self-destruct the moment it made contact with an Irish or a European courtroom. One almost suspects it is *meant* to self-destruct, leaving a court-imposed regime of abortion on demand in its place.

When you travel a certain distance from Fine Gael circles, pro-choice leaders are quite blunt and sincere about what they want. “The agreed position [between Fine Gael and Labour] is that we’ll be legislating for the X case,” says Ivana Bacik, the law professor and Labour senator, sitting in a quiet conference room near her senate office. “And I’m really delighted we’re going to do that after many years of delay on it. We’ll be the first government to face up to this. But it will be very minimal. As somebody who’s very much pro-choice, obviously I would still be campaigning for abortion to be available on a broader range of grounds. I accept that that will probably mean a referendum to delete the Eighth Amendment.”

Senator Rónán Mullen, who spent five years as a spokesman for the Catholic church and is now a pro-life leader in the senate, says, “It is significant that those who have longer-term aspirations to bring about abortion rights in the country are quite happy with what the government is proposing. They see that as getting them off the tarmac.”

The office next to Mullen’s is occupied by Clare Daly,

an ebullient, forthright, charismatic North Dublin radical who advanced a groundbreaking abortion bill last year. A veteran of Labour and the country’s small Socialist faction, she has yet to find a party she cannot get herself kicked out of for being too left-wing. She has a striking head of red hair and an equally striking gift for reasoning her way to the core of political issues. It was she who suggested I speak to Rónán Mullen. They see eye-to-eye on one thing: the vast stakes of the change that Fine Gael is trying to pass off as a mere tweak. “Symbolically it changes everything,” she says over coffee in the sunny cafeteria of the Irish agriculture department, down the street from the legislature. “And once you’ve legislated one circumstance,

well, then, you’re immediately dealing with fatal fetal abnormalities, rape, incest, blah-blah. That’s why they’re all kicking so much. That’s why they’re going mad. That’s why they have the campaign that they have.”

She means the pro-lifers. I say, rather hesitantly, “So the Rónán Mullens of the world—”

“*They know!*” Daly interrupts. “They’re right!”

MIGHTY CASEY

In early January, Patricia Casey, a mild-mannered professor of psychiatry at University College Dublin and an expert in suicide at Dublin’s Mater Misericordiae Hospital, was called to testify about the 2010 European Court of Human Rights

judgment on abortion at a three-day session of the Irish legislature’s joint health committee. By the time she was done, there was nothing left standing of the argument that the X case decision could provide a basis for any kind of abortion law.

The problem lay in the inclusion of suicide threats as grounds for abortion. Doctors have always agreed that suicide among pregnant women is rare. In the two decades since the X decision, pro-lifers and pro-choicers alike trumpeted this rarity—the former to show that such cases, however tragic, were too unusual and specific to build on constitutionally, the latter to claim that the public needn’t worry about opening the floodgates to abortion on demand. Casey presented documentation to show just *how* rare expectant mothers’ suicides are. Since 1980, at the three main Dublin maternity hospitals, there had been 685,511 live births. There had been 79 maternal deaths. Two of those deaths were by



Reform supporters, November 2012

suicide. But on closer examination, both had come after the delivery of the baby. Casey did not claim pregnant women didn't commit suicide. But she found no record of any case at Dublin's three largest maternity hospitals across a third of a century. Casey then examined a Finnish study of suicides surrounding pregnancy. The suicide rate (per 100,000 women) in the public at large was 11.5. For women after birth it was 5.9. For women after abortion it was 34.7.

When I interviewed Casey weeks after this testimony, she showed no eagerness to draw easy conclusions from the data. She urged caution before leaping to the conclusion that abortion increased the risk of suicide. It could be that seeking abortion is correlated with a different factor that creates a vulnerability to suicide. What it did show, if you stood back and looked at the matter scientifically, is that abortion "does not reduce the risk of suicide but rather is associated with a several-fold increase." And now came the devastating argument.

What the justices had done in the X case was practice medicine. They had diagnosed a medical condition—suicidality—in which Casey had specialized for much of her career as a doctor. They had prescribed a treatment for that condition. And that treatment, Casey said, is "not supported by any scientific evidence." As the day wore on, none of the psychiatrists called to testify disputed Casey's general characterization. John Sheehan, a doctor at the College of Psychiatry of Ireland, described the idea that an "intensely suicidal" woman could be treated with an abortion as "completely obsolete." She would need to be admitted to hospital, for one thing—not given a medical procedure and sent home. By the end of the day's testimony, the idea of permitting an intensely suicidal woman to decide on the death of the child she was bearing looked positively odd. What other decisions would you encourage a woman in such a frame of mind to make? Would you let her alter her will, if that were the only "cure" for suicidality? Take out a mortgage? File for divorce? Put a child up for adoption?

It was stunning. An American listening to such public dramas is used to seeing the traditionalist side of the arguments cast as waging a "war on science." Yet here in Ireland the side claiming to speak for progress was espousing medical superstition worthy of a rustic midwife. Priests, meanwhile, especially when alluding to advanced ultrasound, were forever invoking the authority of science. Father Tim Bartlett, assistant to the president of the Irish bishops' conference, told me at breakfast in the refectory in Maynooth, "If we can hold this for another generation in Ireland, I think science and culture are going to change, and future generations will thank us that we didn't allow this regrettable step to happen."

IN THE AFTERMATH

The Kenny government expects to have the rough outlines of its legislation on abortion ready by Easter. After that, the debate on legislation will begin in earnest. The legal reasoning behind legislating for abortion in Ireland has not shown itself particularly strong since Kenny began to argue for it in the fall. And yet, these questions are seldom answered by reasoning. Most Irish people have the sense that they are being led willy-nilly towards a regime of wider abortion rights. "Once you launch an issue like abortion into the kind of discussions we have nowadays," says the author John Waters, "it moves inexorably towards a conclusion. It's not a question of whether we have abortions, it's a question of when. Because the conditions of the debate are not really democratic. It is a discussion from which reason has been extracted."

Waters is one of the most interesting thinkers in Europe. He occupies a special role in Irish intellectual life. What Czesław Miłosz did for a place (Cold War Poland), he has done for a generation (the baby boom). He has examined the new ideology that its ruling elites extol as a source of liberation and exposed it as a new form of servility. "This generation," he tells me, "has not been honest about its experience of freedom." Waters is not a clerical fuddy-duddy. He is a Catholic of an undogmatic kind. ("I am alert to the problem of being pigeonholed.") He never went to university. He wears his hair long and made his living for years as a rock music critic.

Others have seen that the collapse of the Irish economy, so much in the world news since 2008, is wrapped up in the collapse of much bigger systems. "Only in the aftermath of the greatest wars," Waters's friend, the octogenarian Dublin essayist Desmond Fennell, told me, "were there so many women living alone with children as there are now in Western Europe. Now they live alone with no men killed on the battlefield." Only in the aftermath of the greatest wars, too, have we seen such high levels of debt. Waters sees Ireland's problems—economic, religious, social—as expressions of the same failing: a tendency to chase after an "approximation of satisfaction that operates by stealing from the future."

"It was one heck of an achievement to persuade a nation that had spent several centuries fighting for its independence to give it away salami-style, slice by slice, in return for motorways and flyovers," Waters wrote in a recent book, "but that's essentially what we did to ourselves." Thirty years ago, Ireland was poor but special. Tempted by the European Union, by prosperity, by sexual liberation, it has swapped much of what was unique, precious, and powerful about it for a conception of freedom that you can find in any country in the West. Some will call it progress into Ireland's European future, others a return to the deference of Ireland's pre-revolutionary past. ♦

Tea Party Insider

Rep. Steve Southerland and the GOP class of 2010 make peace with the House leadership, and vice versa

BY JONATHAN STRONG

‘T o go to the grocery store and get a gallon of milk takes me two or three hours,” said Rep. Steve Southerland, and you definitely believe him. Southerland isn’t the world’s slowest shopper.

His grocery stops are constantly interrupted by people he knows through the family business, a network of funeral homes in the panhandle of Florida.

Undertaker is not on most “best jobs” lists, but Southerland actually misses his work back home. His grandparents lived at the funeral home, and as a kid he stayed there Friday nights. When he was growing up, everybody around town would spontaneously hug his dad.

“You get to know people at a very intense moment of their life. You just are grafted into their family,” Southerland said. “If you love helping people, and you love trying to bring comfort and peace to their life at a very, very difficult time, you’re going to have to look pretty hard to find a profession that gives you more opportunities than the funeral business.”

Southerland is the kind of person who pours boundless energy into engaging with people. Newt Gingrich once told me I had seven minutes for a phone interview; Southerland is more likely to turn a short chat into an hourlong conversation.

He is surprisingly earnest for Washington, D.C.—even for a congressman elected in the Tea Party wave of 2010, the year a lot of unlikely characters ended up on

Capitol Hill. A deeply religious Christian, Southerland says he prays about all his major decisions and talks often and openly about what God says back.

He has a tendency to speak in strings of truisms, like this: “I believe in process. I believe in four seasons. I believe that winter’s tough, but spring’s coming. I believe that there’s a growing season. And I think that you realize that in life you grow. You get better.”

At his baby-blue brick townhouse a three-minute walk from the Capitol, Southerland plays host to his Tea Party friends. The events, often graced with the Bayou-style cooking of former congressman Jeff Landry, Southerland’s

close friend, have been dubbed the “Cajun Caucus.”

Southerland was recently elected the sophomore class representative, an unexpected turn that came when former senator Jim DeMint resigned and Rep. Tim Scott, the previous class representative, was appointed to fill DeMint’s seat in the Senate.

The Florida Republican, a fierce conservative who butted heads with leadership in the last Congress,

now sits alongside Speaker John Boehner and Majority Leader Eric Cantor at meetings to determine GOP strategy in the House.

So far, the result has been a boost in trust on both sides. Southerland doesn’t hold back. Instead, he gives top Republicans a real, live Tea Party conservative to bounce ideas off. Meanwhile, the 2010 class gets a window into leadership’s deliberations.

“I give him a lot of credit for the conference being more united,” said Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy.

Southerland’s story is the tale not just of the Tea Party class coming of political age, but also of the chaos and conflict of the fiscal cliff battle actually strengthening the GOP conference.



Southerland and GOP supporters in Panama City, September 2012

Jonathan Strong is a staff writer for Roll Call, covering the House leadership.

Two months later, it's easy to forget what an ugly episode the fight over the fiscal cliff was for the House GOP. As Southerland put it, it was a "time of aggravation."

"Everybody's kind of ill from the election still. Everybody was on edge. There was this general feeling that we just got the tar kicked out of us and we want to make sure that we get back in the game," Southerland said. "You start analyzing. You start saying, 'Okay, what do we need to do different?'"

On January 1, tax cuts from the George W. Bush era were due to expire and automatic "sequestration" cuts were to begin. Boehner had tried to put tax increases on the table in secret talks with Obama, only to suddenly pull back to his "Plan B," which he then withdrew for lack of GOP support in a spectacularly humiliating episode.

On New Year's Eve, as senators hashed out a deal that would enrage the House, Southerland's usual group had come for an unexpected session of the Cajun Caucus. Ron Meyer Jr., the 23-year-old activist who launched the Twitter hashtag #FireBoehner, showed up somehow, and there was furtive talk of a coup to unseat the speaker. Southerland, who hadn't invited Meyer, worried about appearances. He directed another guest to ask Meyer to leave.

Unbeknownst to most of Washington, the coup plotters were gaining steam. The group employed cloak-and-dagger measures to ensure secrecy, such as never gathering all in one place so no one could report its full size and membership. Under House rules, a lawmaker needs an absolute majority of the votes to win the speaker's gavel. This meant that only a few Republican defections (17) would defeat Boehner, since no Democrats would vote for him. The plan was to obtain enough votes to deny Boehner victory on the first round.

The price of admission to the inner circle was a handwritten declaration of one's intention to vote against Boehner, and these notes were kept together in an envelope, proof of everyone's involvement in the event anyone tried to spoil the plot and deny complicity.

They talked about what would happen in the chaotic conference meeting to follow, where they hoped Cantor or maybe Jeb Hensarling would step forward to challenge the speaker. They talked about confronting Boehner with their intentions, and how to handle it if he cried.

No one ever had to approach Southerland to ask him to join. He was about the likeliest person in the entire House to know what was going on, since he was close to all of its participants. But Southerland wrestled spiritually with what to do.

"I'm searching. I grew up in a Christian home, and I

grew up in Scripture, and you find somewhere in God's word to use as a reference. When you're making a major decision, there's something in there for everybody. There's something in there for every situation. There's something in there, and so you're digging, and you're searching. And so I did all that. And I was digging and searching and I was coming up with nothing. Nothing!"

The night before the vote, Southerland was at Bullfeathers, a Capitol Hill bar, with Reps. Jim Jordan, Paul Gosar, and Raul Labrador. He retreated to his house still searching for the right course of action the next day.

At around 2:20 A.M., Southerland "stumbled upon" a passage in Scripture that pointed the way: David sparing Saul's life.

In 1 Samuel, Saul, the king of Israel, accompanied by 3,000 men, is trying to kill David, his future successor. Saul enters a cave, not knowing that David is hiding there. Unseen, David cuts off a corner of Saul's robe. When Saul departs the cave, David follows him out and shows him the piece of robe to show he could have killed him but did not. Saul weeps and repents.

But not for long. Soon Saul is back out in the Desert of Ziph trying to kill David again. This time, David and a friend sneak into Saul's camp at night and find him sleeping, with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. David's friend wants to kill Saul, but he says no.

"Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?" David asks.

Southerland slept for three hours that night, and when he woke up, he felt a deep, abiding peace, the kind he only gets when he seeks God's input in prayer on important decisions in his life—"not something you can buy at the dollar store."

He walked onto the House floor that day wondering what exactly would happen. That morning, Rep. Stephen Fincher, one of his closest allies, had met with Boehner to inform him the group would vote against him, although Southerland didn't know this.

Among the coup plotters, chaos had overtaken careful plans. Only minutes before the vote, one member lost his nerve, leaving the group short of its self-imposed threshold. They called off the insurrection, leaving participants to vote their conscience. Twelve members withheld their votes from Boehner. Fincher and some others who had signed their names voted for the Ohio Republican.

When Southerland's name was called, he cast his lot with Boehner. Sitting three seats away from the majority leader during the vote, Southerland watched Cantor grimace as several lawmakers voted for the Virginian instead of their incumbent speaker. In his mind, Southerland compared Cantor to David, a young Jewish man who would someday be king.

Perhaps the animating principle of the Tea Party movement and the Republicans who were elected in 2010 was a rejection of business as usual in Washington, including big spending by Republicans.

Southerland came to Washington with no previous legislative experience, unless you count serving on a Florida funeral directors' board in the 1990s. Ten months into his first term in Congress, he told *Roll Call*, "I don't like this place."

He voted against the debt ceiling deal in August 2011 and a host of other major bills that the GOP leadership was whipping. He was known for giving passionate speeches at closed-door GOP conference meetings.

In spite of, or maybe because of, his battles with leadership, Boehner in April 2012 appointed Southerland to his first conference committee, a group of senators and representatives convened to hash out the differences between House and Senate versions of a transportation bill.

Southerland and his freshman friends showed up to their assigned working groups surprised to find aides representing the senators.

"I'm going: I think the American people think that if you're named to a conference . . . you're going to go and represent the people," he said.

The conference process gave Southerland his first up-close exposure to the challenge of getting a bill through the House and the Senate and signed into law by the president, something that's simple on paper but hard in reality.

"You started realizing: You know what? There's a lot that goes into this. . . . It opened my eyes up to the effort. It opened my eyes up to the challenges," Southerland said.

By the time the class representative slot fell vacant in December, it was clear Southerland had become a class standout. Rep. James Lankford, R-Okla., another sharp sophomore Republican, told Southerland he should consider running, pointing out his relationships across the class.

Southerland was elected class representative the day after Boehner survived as speaker. A week later, at a retreat where Southerland sat down as a member of the leadership team for the first time, he told Boehner of his late-night change of heart. "He thanked me. I think that it helped him understand me. I think that the conversation we had helped me understand him. Look, none of us are perfect," Southerland said.



With fellow freshmen outside the White House, July 2011

Boehner, for his part, began to change his approach. He vowed to preserve "regular order," meaning he would no longer engage Obama in secret negotiations.

At the Republican retreat in Williamsburg, Virginia, in January, Boehner sought the input of a working group of five influential conservatives—Paul Ryan, Tom Price, Jeb Hensarling, Steve Scalise, and Jim Jordan—on a new approach to the pending debt ceiling standoff.

The proceedings there produced almost shocking unity on the resulting plan: a short-term debt limit increase attached to a relatively modest demand—for the Senate to finally pass a budget. One reason was several commitments Boehner made to the working group on spending levels, including that the GOP budget would eliminate the deficit in only 10 years.

Most important, the House is now focused almost entirely on pushing the Senate to act, on the budget and everything else. "We're trying to explain to the American people: The Senate's not doing its work. Last term, we passed stuff, passed stuff, passed stuff—and it would just sit there and die!" McCarthy said.

That approach limits moments of political exposure, internally and externally, otherwise known as votes. If the House maintains its current pace, it could set a record for inactivity.

Conservatives are happy, since Boehner is holding firm on the sequestration spending cuts. Moderates might be concerned, but they show no signs of panic.

There's a school of thought that all the chaos and conflict over the fiscal cliff helped the GOP work through its internal issues.

"Would they have come out of Williamsburg united if it wasn't for the confrontation?" asks Landry. "By having that conflict . . . I actually believe we're stronger," McCarthy said.

Asked a question about the tests ahead for the GOP, Southerland points to the long scar on his head. As a boy, he was nearly killed in a baseball accident in the fifth inning when he collided with another player chasing a fly ball. His last memory of the game is from the second inning when his coach made him bunt.

"One thing I learned a long time ago," he said. "When I'm in the second inning, I don't worry about the fifth." ♦



First consignment of sugar to Britain under the Marshall Plan, 1949

The American Story

How does it get told outside America? BY ALONZO L. HAMBY

In academia, scholars trying to get ahead look for the Next Big Thing. In the field of American foreign relations, that just may be something called “public diplomacy,” a term that conjures a vision of diplomatic efforts aimed not simply at other diplomats but at large populations. Justin Hart, associate professor of history at Texas Tech, does not give us a sharp definition of the term, but believes he knows it when he sees it.

Alonzo L. Hamby, professor of history at Ohio University, is the author, most recently, of For the Survival of Democracy: Franklin Roosevelt and the World Crisis of the 1930s.

Empire of Ideas
The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy
 by Justin Hart
 Oxford, 296 pp., \$34.95

He finds its specific origins in Franklin D. Roosevelt’s outreach to Latin America in the 1930s, its enabling methods in the flowering of mass communications during the second and third quarters of the 20th century, and its utilization during and after World War II in the pursuit of “empire.” Based on a dissertation written for the history department at Rutgers—an Eastern outpost of the

venerable Wisconsin school of Cold War revisionism—*Empire of Ideas* has occasional references (enough to make Hart’s advisers happy?) to imperial objectives. Hart, however, seems less concerned with following the money than with chronicling the pursuit of ideas and giving us his own mildly revisionist interpretation of the early Cold War.

No president was more suited to public diplomacy than Franklin Roosevelt. Hart begins his narrative with the Buenos Aires Pan-American conference of 1936, an enterprise suggested by the United States as a soft means of developing Latin American support in the emerging struggle with European fascism. Roosevelt had already reached out

HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTIONS / CORBIS

to Latin America by withdrawing troops from Caribbean nations and pledging nonintervention—all while providing military assistance and trade agreements to friendly authoritarian strongmen.

Hart does not give us a revealing example of FDR's sensibility in this respect. Before his arrival in Argentina, the president stopped in Brazil, addressed its congress, and received the cheers (“*Viva Roosevelt! Viva democracia!*”) of the large crowds that lined the streets for his motorcade. He rode alongside Brazil's president, Getulio Vargas, who, at one point, leaned over to tell him, “They say I'm a dictator.” Vargas was, and Roosevelt knew it, but FDR simply replied, “They also say that about me.” The two men got along famously.

The Argentines, ruled by a quasi-fascist military leadership, were less tractable. The Buenos Aires meeting nonetheless produced a pact providing for cultural exchanges—something the author sees as the first tangible fruits of American public diplomacy. The cultural exchange program started haltingly, but took off in World War II under the guidance of Nelson Rockefeller, delivering his first impression as a public administrator who thought (and spent) big. Henry Luce cheered him on. Two important public intellectuals—Archibald MacLeish and Robert E. Sherwood—immersed themselves in the effort to tell the American story, and Vice President Henry Wallace took his own interests south of the border as well. Both Wallace and Rockefeller saw cultural exchange as simply the first step in a process that would increasingly be about economic development.

Pearl Harbor globalized what had been a hemispheric concern. In 1942, with the United States fully and formally at war, the newly established Office of War Information (OWI) took control of all shortwave broadcasting and established the Voice of America as a worldwide megaphone for accurate news and American values. The OWI was headed by Elmer Davis, a distinguished journalist who rejected “propaganda” and promised factually accurate “information.” The policy sounded noble, but was difficult to achieve in

the real world. It did not help that OWI was responsible for the dissemination of news to both domestic and foreign audiences. “Public diplomacy” inevitably was aimed at one's own countrymen as well as foreign populations.

Largely avoiding blatant falsehood and clumsy advocacy, the OWI succeeded perhaps more than Hart realizes in guiding print and broadcast journalism. Possessing potential influence over export licenses and resource priorities, it also channeled Hollywood films in

Well into the last century, diplomacy was conducted by elites calculating balances of power and undertaking negotiations with little attention to mass opinion. But the mobilization of power throughout human history has usually involved appeals to a larger population.

desired directions. (One OWI directive urged producers to ask themselves, “Will this film help win the war?”) Heavily staffed by liberal idealists prone to vocalize their concerns about American race relations at home and government willingness to deal with pliant dictators abroad, the agency was unpopular with a conservative Congress. At war's end, it was terminated. The Voice of America was relocated to the State Department.

The emerging Cold War with the Soviet Union intensified the liberal-conservative clashes. The fall of China to Mao Zedong's Communists, in Hart's estimation, symbolized the failure of American foreign policy to come to grips with the realities of

revolutionary nationalism in Asia. Conservatives in Congress were more likely to blame mushy-minded liberalism, and perceive Reds hiding in the wings. The Korean War further inflamed these feelings.

With the return of the Republicans to power in 1953, the new secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, had little interest in defending foreign information programs. But Senator Joseph McCarthy saw them as a happy hunting ground and unleashed his minions, Roy Cohn and G. David Schine, on their overseas libraries. Dulles was happy enough, after that, to cut Voice of America and its associated programs loose from the Department of State in the form of a temporarily independent United States Information Agency—bringing to an end, as Hart sees it, the first phase of U.S. public diplomacy.

Whether deliberately or not, Hart invites us to believe that, until well into the last century, diplomacy was conducted by elites calculating balances of power and undertaking negotiations with little attention to mass opinion. But the mobilization of power throughout human history has usually involved appeals to a larger population. Wars of religion, whatever ulterior motives we might attribute to them, have invoked the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Imperial ventures have declared a civilizing mission. The American Revolution is unrecognizable without the Declaration of Independence; the French Revolution without liberty, equality, and fraternity; the Mexican War without Manifest Destiny; the American Civil War without the Emancipation Proclamation; the diplomacy of Woodrow Wilson without the Fourteen Points; the alliance building of Franklin Roosevelt without the Atlantic Charter.

All such motivating rationales amount to public diplomacy, as often as not aimed at the undecided both in the camp of the enemy and in one's own population. The mid-20th century simply presented new methods. Public diplomacy, this useful account reminds us, is ultimately a polite term for propaganda—a loaded word with a neutral core meaning: the propagation of ideas and doctrines. ♦

House of Cards

In the eyes of a child, the collapse of a family.

BY WENDY BURDEN

The Declaration of Independence was signed by, among others, our ancestor Robert Livingston,” 10-year-old Alexandra lectures her younger cousin, as they tramp through snow to skate on a pond at Rokeby, the 450-acre estate on which they both live. Thus we enter Alexandra Aldrich’s childhood memoir, a modern Gothic fairy tale that throbs with the formaldehyde bloodlines of Astors and Livingstons and Chanlers, and the misery of a girl growing up in a family that doesn’t meet her expectations.

Alexandra’s ancestors have made their home at this sprawling Hudson Valley estate for 10 generations. Trust funds depleted, the current owners struggle to maintain their historical riches by celebrating their past, and the effort to keep Rokeby afloat is what keeps the Aldrich family together—and at each others’ throats. In the domestic atmosphere of a barnyard, young Alexandra manages to carve out a self-disciplined life despite the negligence of quarreling relatives and the comings and goings of Rokeby’s many idiosyncratic tenants. In the time-honored tradition of the *Once Hads*, she must also deal with rampant alcoholism, questionable sanity, death—both animal and human—and a bastard or two. All of which adds up to one hell of a childhood.

The title refers to the 11 great-great-grandchildren of John Jacob Astor who inherited and roamed the estate with little management during the late 19th century and grew up to lead marvelous, unhinged lives. Used here in the singular, the title milks Alexandra’s

Wendy Burden is the author of *Dead End Gene Pool: A Memoir*.

The Astor Orphan

A Memoir

by Alexandra Aldrich
Ecco, 272 pp., \$24.99



Alexandra Aldrich

degree of abandonment, and evokes the violin chord that scores much of this memoir.

Over the course of a spring day, as Alexandra darts in and out of unpleasant encounters with her family, we are introduced to a heady blend of the key players and their relationships. Center stage: father, mother, mean uncle and aunt, bibulous grandmother, and French “harlot.” Offstage, but ever present, are the illustrious dead, all “famous,” “aristocratic,” and/or “bohemian” (Aldrich prefixing this triad of adjectives to their names with the diligence of a Page Six copy editor). Looming over all is Rokeby itself. This grand old demented dame plays the people who live within as astutely as Manderley does in *Rebecca*. She is the altar at which they gather and worship, for

the mansion and the acreage represent what they feel *they* represent: American royalty.

Aldrich makes clear the price paid, and draws the reader into Rokeby’s shabby-chic world of ghostly reception rooms, unswept hallways, and watchful, ancestral portraits.

To keep the house as it was then, we sacrifice any resources that might have been invested in current generations. In return, the house gives each of us, the impoverished descendants, an identity. And we live off the remains of our ancestral grandeur.

An only child, Alexandra is an unhappy, bookish misfit, albeit with a healthy ego. She is untethered, and justifiably angry. Her mother and father are reluctant parents at best and treat her more like a lodger than a child. Alexandra dreams of “a three-bedroomed ranch house with employed parents, siblings, cable TV, and functional cars.” No one can blame her.

Aldrich’s mother Ala, whom she describes as a “beautiful Polish woman with blue eyebrows and a truculent temper,” is “minimally interested in propriety or family” and spends her days drawing. Portrayed as a shrewish, bile-addled foreigner, she has seemingly little merit, other than a talent for turning a freshly killed deer into a month’s worth of venison stew in the blink of an eye. Teddy, Alexandra’s father, is like a dog on its back: goofy, affable, and not to be taken seriously. A “filthy gentleman farmer beloved by all,” he tools about the estate on a tractor, or in one of his decrepit cars. Teddy is berated 24/7 by his brother, wife, and mother. It seems no one can converse with him without railing, though he almost singlehandedly runs the property. This persistent criticism of her father feels hackneyed, and Aldrich’s recalled dialogue tediously clichéd. Nor does it make him a sympathetic character.

Aldrich and her parents share the “Big House” with Teddy’s older brother Harry, his wife Olivia, and their two little girls. Unlike Teddy, Harry has a nine-to-five job and provides his children with all of the

niceties that Alexandra, the “poor cousin,” longs for. Each family has its own territory: Alexandra and her parents, the third floor in the “servants quarters”; Uncle Harry’s brood, the sunny north end of the house. Aldrich describes the back hallway leading to her family’s floor as “the point where Rokeby’s three worlds converged: the lonely squalor of the third floor, the elegant formality of the front rooms, and the smug coziness of Aunt Olivia’s domain.” Though she feels unwelcome, she regularly visits her younger cousins in their perfect apartment, where she can’t help but order them around, though it gets her into trouble. Like father, like daughter; Alexandra is constantly being upbraided by her relatives.

She also shares his strong sense of entitlement. In an affecting scene, the two younger cousins don vintage robes and rustle through the mansion, flopping about on couches in a reenactment of Rokeby’s glory days, under the theatrical direction of Alexandra, who drills them on Astor genealogy while producing Beethoven with her violin.

Though Alexandra’s parents seem determined to shake her off, Grandma Claire, matriarch and chatelaine of Rokeby, willingly provides a haven in her comfortable, if messy, house. There, Alexandra finds food, television, books, and Talbots catalogues. Grandma Claire buys her clothes and ferries her granddaughter to violin lessons and recitals, parties and church. I particularly loved Aldrich’s description of the “lemon yellow Plymouth” in which Grandma Claire sails about. Her character is perhaps the most thoughtfully delineated, and though Alexandra ultimately feels abandoned by her, the portrayal of this complicated woman is sincere, even affectionate.

To compensate for the shame she feels about her living quarters and her parents and, well, everything, Alexandra focuses on her lineage and her intelligence: “In my mind,” she writes, “I, too, was a guard of order, perpetuating the family’s image of class and refinement with my violin

playing and outstanding academic record.” Adhering to a regimented routine, she pushes herself to excel at school and at her music. Structure is her lifeline, so when school lets out for summer, Alexandra is as blue as the blood of her forebears.

Enter the French adulteress to make matters worse. Giselle, a particular friend of Alexandra’s father who arrives in a red Fiat on that first long day of introduction, wedges herself firmly within the family unit. Rokeby being not unlike a sixties commune (minus the collective energy), no one seems to give much of a damn, save Grandma Claire and Alexandra. That Alexandra’s father could be anyone’s love interest is a wonder, because Teddy is inordinately unhygienic.

Filth is not your average byproduct of erudition, and though Alexandra’s father attended “elite private schools, then Harvard, and Johns Hopkins,” he apparently never learned to wash. Alexandra may “shiver with disgust at the layer of hardened white grease in the cast-iron frying pan and the mouse droppings sprinkled about” in her grandmother’s kitchen, but in a fascinatingly grisly scene, she has no problem with giving her father a pedicure at the kitchen table during lunch: “His toenails were thick and yellow like sea-shells, each with a dense layer of dirt and grease underneath. After clipping the end of each nail, I also dug under it with the metal file and scraped out the black dirt.”

As summer progresses, Rokeby comes to life with annual visitations from cousins, as well as tenant pageants, square dancing, picnics, and swimming. Despite the distractions, there is continued upheaval in Alexandra’s life. Late one evening she hears Giselle laughing in her father’s bedroom next door. (That is about the juiciest detail we get.) Alexandra’s fears are confirmed, and she is devastated.

But wait; there’s more. Just when things couldn’t get worse, Grandma Claire, Alexandra’s rock, lands in the intensive-care unit with alcohol poisoning, and is shipped off to rehab.

It is impossible not to feel hurt and angry right alongside Alexandra—not the least for this child’s premature exposure to adult themes. The kid is, after all, only 10.

Still, as everyone seems to be implicated in Alexandra’s misery, it becomes difficult to root for her. Indeed, it is not until the end, when—all hail the chemical wonder of puberty—in a ritualistic scene involving makeup and clothing and kissing pimply, undeserving youths, Alexandra drops the blueblood fixation, exits the pity party, and subscribes to a different social register—that of the seventh grade. It is a brief respite; but a satisfying, cleverly written one. And it elicits real compassion.

At 14, Alexandra gets her wish, as her escape from the stranglehold of Rokeby comes in the form of boarding school. As she climbs to the tower of the Big House to say farewell to the realm, we get a glimpse of the writer she will become:

From here, I could see the parts of Rokeby I loved and knew so well—the forest paths and streams; the niches in the brush where I used to hide and chase wild rabbits. . . . I loved those days—before I’d grown stern and angry, before I’d turned my back on the squalor at Rokeby as an enemy against which I felt compelled to build a fortress of order, hygiene, and self-discipline. I loved those days when my cousins and I used to run around the property all summer long, unsupervised, shirtless, barefoot, wild little orphans all.

Alexandra Aldrich has written a poignant story that lays bare a woman’s search for self-explanation. Readers will enjoy a glimpse into America’s Gilded Age and relish the descriptions of Rokeby, if not its state of deterioration. Alexandra’s situation, steeped as it is in bathos, will undoubtedly appeal to anyone who has felt wronged as a child. Absent from *The Astor Orphan*, however, is real humor, or the self-deprecation and clear-eyed accounting that buoy the writing of Mary Karr and Jeannette Walls. Missing, too, is the ruthlessness that can make for a riveting memoir. ♦

Getting There

How, and why, Americans go on vacation.

BY THOMAS SWICK

Every March I drive to Miami Beach to attend the annual Cruise Shipping conference and trade show, and every year I am struck anew by the number of entities connected to cruising: not just shipbuilders (Fincantieri, Meyer Werft) and the ever-widening circle of ports (a booth one year for the English Lake District), but manufacturers of everything from pianos to lasers to waste management systems, caterers (who fill a section of the convention center floor with their seaworthy foodstuffs), interior design firms, clothiers, talent agencies, photographic studios, and special services (“U.S. immigration explained”). The assemblage attests to the seriousness of a business built on fun.

It is a microcosm of the travel industry, the subject of *Overbooked*. A former reporter for the *New York Times*, Elizabeth Becker has produced a comprehensive, often alarming, and sometimes puzzling examination of an oft-invisible powerhouse. Employing nearly one-tenth of the world’s population and creating “\$3 billion in business every day,” Becker asserts that, economically, the travel industry stands “in the same company as oil, energy, finance, and agriculture.” The suits at Cruise Shipping would not disagree.

But the idea of travel as an industry, like the concept of humor as literature, is difficult for many people to grasp. The enjoyment associated with both seems somehow to disqualify

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Overbooked

The Exploding Business of Travel and Tourism

by Elizabeth Becker
Simon & Schuster, 462 pp., \$28



“Tourists II” by Duane Hanson (1988)

them from importance. *Overbooked* should help the travel industry gain respect while, fittingly, giving readers only a modicum of pleasure.

However, it is interesting, if not all that surprising, to learn that the French invented the modern vacation, instituting a paid leave of two weeks for every citizen in 1936. A couple decades later, American workers received the same, in what was perhaps one of the last instances of a trend starting in France before coming to the United States. The substantial growth of the French *vacances*, to a current five-week minimum, has not been replicated here.

Becker begins her journey in Madrid, at the headquarters of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (about as far from the allure of the road as one can get), and notes that travel writers rarely include the

offices on their itineraries. Even more scarce, I suspect, are vacationing families and honeymooning couples. She hears of the need for sustainability, as the increasing numbers of international travelers are threatening the environments they flock to see. Then she sets off to investigate travel in all its modern-day manifestations.

She heads next door to France, the king of cultural tourism, and the most-visited country in the world. (We’re #2.) Its 78 million visitors annually, spending over \$48 billion, make tourism the top employer in France and the primary export. Becker gives a good historical explanation for this development, noting that postwar France greatly increased its number of hotel rooms while, around the same time, airlines were persuaded to offer special tourist fares on transatlantic flights (both thanks, in large part, to the Marshall Plan). And in 1959, Charles de Gaulle created the world’s first Ministry of Culture.

Despite some present-day Gallic concerns that their country is becoming an Old World theme park, France is, for the most part, an example of the positive impact of tourism. Americans who have recently tried to practice their French with their Parisian waiter, only to get fluent English in return, have been astonished witnesses to this. But it’s not just visitors who benefit: Becker and her husband visit Bordeaux, a city that, in trying to lure tourists away from the capital and Provence, became more attractive and livable for its inhabitants as riverside warehouses were replaced with a park and a modern tramway system was built. Bordeaux is the future of tourism, she is told—at least in France.

Venice is a different story. There the crowds of tourists, thickened by the arrival of large cruise ships, are driving out residents who grow tired of fighting for space on their morning *vaporetto* and of finding their neighborhood bakery replaced by a souvenir shop. “Venice is dying slowly, slowly,” a city guide tells her, a man whose livelihood, ironically, depends on tourists.

Cambodia, which Becker knows well from her days as a news correspondent,

is another sad case, as the \$2 billion that tourism brings in each year “enriches Cambodia’s elite.” She notes that the worst poverty exists in tourist areas and that the boom in new hotels in Siem Reap is draining the water table which, in turn, is causing the foundations of Angkor Wat to sink. The country also has the sorry distinction of being a destination for both “dark tourism” (killing fields and torture centers) and sex tourism. Whereas neighboring Thailand, for example, offsets its sex tourism with the more socially acceptable medical tourism.

Moving from cultural to consumer tourism, the author and her husband take a Caribbean cruise. More reporter than sunbather, Becker asks her Turkish waiter his salary and is incredulous when he tells her it’s \$50 a month. She later explains that most of the staff’s earnings come from tips. The shipboard lectures consist entirely of shopping seminars. (Instead of a girl, there is now a Diamonds International store in every port.) Back home, Becker interviews cruise line executives and tourism officials, many of the latter of whom express concerns about the invasion of small towns by masses of cruisers (who often contribute nothing to the local economy), the damage to marine life caused by endless schools of amateur snorkelers, and the pollution—of both air and water—created by the steadily growing number of increasingly large ships.

There are now, Becker reports, around 400 cruise ships in the world; and, as she demonstrates in the section on nature tourism, not all are created equal. She and her husband sail the Pacific Coast of Central America aboard National Geographic’s *Sea Lion*, a vessel that carries only 60 passengers. The five naturalist guides are all from the region. The cruise’s mission is educational—there is no onboard entertainment—and the goal is to have as little impact on the environment as

possible. Passengers are forbidden to collect shells.

Costa Rica, we learn, is the birthplace of ecotourism (which Richard Leakey, a few pages earlier, calls “an oxymoron”). Becker acknowledges that “ecofriendly” is now the rage, with numerous pretenders to the title (in the same way that, less insidiously, any modest lodging is today a boutique hotel). But Costa Rica seems to be to nature tourism what France is to cultural: a country that has decided on its role and has

don’t deserve this sentence: “On landing we were once again struck by the enormity of China.”

The final section, “The Old Giant,” is about the United States, which historically, Becker complains, has paid little attention to tourism. Yes, we came up with the concept of the national park, which some other countries have adopted, but it wasn’t until last year that we had a government website for foreigners wishing to vacation here. And we have fallen behind France as the world’s

most popular country to visit. These are failings that Becker laments—as do, surely, most of the people in our hospitality industry—but after more than 300 pages detailing the ravages of tourism, the lament comes off sounding a little odd. You can’t be indignant about the damage caused by tourists and then disappointed in a country for not trying to attract more. Especially, one would think, when that country happens to be your own.

Overbooked succeeds

in demonstrating the growing heft of the travel industry and the numerous problems that are associated with it. A long-term, workable, global response will be difficult, if not impossible, to find. In the meantime, may I suggest a simple, individual solution? Go where other tourists don’t. It’s remarkably easy—people like to follow the crowd—and invariably rewarding, as residents of unsung places tend to appreciate the long-overdue attention.

So instead of traveling to Las Vegas, Nevada, go to Las Vegas, New Mexico—and stay at the historic Plaza Hotel. On your Florida vacation, replace Orlando with Apalachicola. Heading to Europe? Bypass Spain and visit Portugal; after a few days in Lisbon, take the train to Porto. And if you must see Spain, drop by the offices of the United Nations World Tourism Organization. ♦



‘The Love Boat’ cast on the Great Wall of China (1983)

diligently worked to make it successful.

Becker’s little travelogues are a refreshing break from the stream of statistics, as fascinating as they often are (e.g., Dubai attracts “three times as many foreigners as New York City”), and the frequent polemics—though they’d be more engaging if she were a better writer. Critical of travel writers, whom she chastises for taking subsidized trips and thus serving as pawns of the travel industry, she falls into the habits of the worst of them, resorting to clichés and calling places—parts of Costa Rica and Panama and all of Sri Lanka—“paradise,” the most overused word in the travel writer’s lexicon.

Of course, overuse is preferable to misuse. Chinese leaders, as Becker conscientiously reports, have committed their share of political sins and environmental abuses, but they

Empire of Liberty

*How the New World was made by
an illustrious Churchill.* BY THOMAS DONNELLY



“The Duke of Marlborough at the Battle of Oudenarde” (ca. 1740) by John Wootton

At 8:00 A.M. on July 11, 1708, John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, captain general of British forces, and de facto commander of the Dutch, Hanoverian, Prussian, Danish, and other forces of the Grand Alliance, ordered his 80,000 men across the River Scheldt at the village of Oudenarde in Flanders. Arrayed on the hills north of the village were 90,000 or so French and Bavarian troops under “Le Petit Dauphin” Louis de Bourbon, second in line to Louis XIV, and his military second, Marshall Louis Joseph, Duke of Vendôme.

Marlborough’s maneuver entirely surprised the French, who could not imagine that the allies were capable of moving so quickly. “If they are there,” Vendôme cried, “the Devil must have carried them. Such marching”—60,000

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Marlborough’s America

by Stephen Saunders Webb
Yale, 608 pp., \$45

of Marlborough’s army had covered 50 miles in 60 hours—“is impossible.”

Even less imaginable was that Marlborough would move directly into an attack, risking an encounter battle in an age of sieges and set pieces. Forced by circumstance and the terrain to commit his army in a piecemeal fashion, and switching the point of attack from left flank to right flank and back, Marlborough nearly risked too much. But when nightfall ended the fighting, the two allied wings had closed upon the French command. Marlborough continued, “in a very soaking rain,” to reinforce the position he had won, ready to renew the contest at dawn.

But daylight revealed that the enemy were gone; they had bolted for the safety of France. The armies of Louis XIV,

after a generation of conquest, took shelter in their frontier fortifications. And when the citadel of Lille fell in December, the Sun King was forced to the peace table. The unending War of the Spanish Succession, fought almost without interruption for a generation, might at last be won. Marlborough believed that his army had “been blessed by God with more success than ever was known in one campaign.”

Alas for Marlborough, King Louis was playing for time. Not even Marlborough’s campaigning could yet secure Britain’s global demands: As much as London wanted to balance Louis’s bid for continental hegemony, it wanted to dominate French North America and to feast off the decline of the Spanish empire there. Louis rejected the allied demands, and the war would continue. Sidney Godolphin, lord treasurer and thus prime minister of the English government, agreed with Marlborough in saying, “I see no more room for signing any Treaty, but on a drumhead.”

But, as Stephen Saunders Webb writes in this masterful new work, the Duke of Marlborough wanted something more than the decisive battle that had thus far eluded him; he wanted regime change in France. He “would conquer all of France, deflate the French monarchy, and restore the French parliament. Marlborough intended that this revolution . . . would reduce French influence and transform a despotic tyrant into a constitutional monarch.” The nature of this new, constitutional, limited government in France would “cement the balance of power and secure the peace of the Atlantic world.” Regime change in Paris, he wrote, “is more likely to give quiet to Christendom [than taking] provinces from them for the enriching [sic] of others”—the Dutch and the Austrians, who put their faith in “barrier fortresses” and buffer zones.

Anyone who attempts a Marlborough book stands in the shadow of Winston Churchill, who intended his multi-volume *Marlborough: His Life and Times* as both a panegyric and a polemic. Writing in the 1930s, Churchill hoped to “recall this great shade from the past, and not only invest him with his panoply, but to make him living

and intimate to modern eyes.” Such pedantic, Whiggish historical purposes, perhaps appropriate to those interwar years, would revolt a modern academic historian. But the long life and times of John Churchill, first duke of Marlborough, cannot be grasped without a prolonged meditation on the relationship between power—military power, “hard” power, coercive power, imperial power—and liberty.

Few contemporary historians are as well prepared to do this as Webb. *Marlborough’s America* is the fourth in his series *The Governors-General*, which together comprise the opening chapters of the long and winding (and still incomplete) story of that paradoxical creation, the Anglo-American empire, in which the protection and extension of naturally endowed, universal political, confessional, and individual “liberties” rest upon the growing powers of a fiscal-military state. The series is also a wonderful genealogy of the British Army’s officer corps, the imperial proconsuls. The Royal Navy may have ruled the waves, but it was the British Army that ruled the empire.

This empire-making began at home. Indeed, Marlborough-minded readers would do well to read Webb’s *Lord Churchill’s Coup*, the precursor to *Marlborough’s America*. Before he was a duke, indeed before he was a lord, John Churchill was a general in James Stuart’s service. But as James II became more absolute and more Roman Catholic—not content simply to suppress Protestant dissenters, but taking on the Tory, Anglican establishment as well—General Churchill engineered what is commonly called the Glorious Revolution (but which Webb delights in calling a “Protestant putsch”). No one can accuse Webb of writing rose-colored Macaulay/Trevelyan-style Whig history. The Anglo-American empire might be the engine of a kind of political progress, but it’s a grimy, creaky, inefficient, fume-producing machine, too.

What were the basic design principles of this British imperial military machine? To begin with, it sprang from an ideological core, the defense of the “Protestant interest.” This was always a fluid idea, always part secular and politi-

cal as well as confessional—and less strictly confessional as time went on. But even when it was more confessional, the Protestant interest was more accurately defined as anti-Spanish or anti-French than anti-Catholic. The many versions of the reformed faith across Britain’s grand alliances—or, say, in England and Scotland—limited the amount of Protestant purity. But no narrow national, or “British,” interest would suffice either to hold the alliances together or to catapult London into the driver’s seat.

British imperial ideology also owed much to classical humanism. It had a civilizing and improving ethos, supposedly traceable to the Roman colonization of ancient Britain—as Webb observes throughout his series, the British officer corps was big on the Romans—but also reflective of early modern political thought, as exemplified in Thomas More’s *Utopia* and John Locke’s *Two Treatises*. Such works gave both justification and practical strategic guidance when it came to colonizing Highland Scotland, Ireland, and North America. The British Army wanted to develop the “wastes” and indigenous peoples, as well as bring them to the true religion, and to avoid what it saw as the Spanish and French models of conquest and exploitation. Of course, if the natives didn’t go along with the plan, the British could crack heads—as More had given his Utopians license to wage war if colonies were left uncultivated.

But for the British Army, the purpose of projecting power and developing colonies was to preserve a favorable balance of European continental power; and though it had a “globalized” view, the Army kept score in Atlantic Europe—particularly in the Low Countries. This put Marlborough and his army very much athwart the naval (and nativist) conception of Little England as an isolated island “set in a silver sea,” relying on its “wooden walls” for security. Thus, the British military tended to split along the lines of domestic political factions which had, by Marlborough’s time, and through the American Revolution, hardened into party politics. Though the Duke of Marlborough was a conservative, a devout Anglican, and a

Tory by mental habit, he maintained a moderate and nominally nonpartisan stance, and was in fact dependent upon the Whig dominance of the period.

Indeed, Webb shows that even at the pinnacle of Marlborough’s military genius, during the campaigns that ultimately convinced Louis XIV that he “loved war too much,” the duke’s year was divided between summer battles in Europe and winter battles in London. Not only did he have to beat back the schemes of Tory politicians for power, but he had also to struggle with the emotional quirks of Queen Anne, for whom politics was intensely personal. Marlborough’s wife, Sarah, had once been the queen’s closest companion; but as the queen aged, the relationship soured badly. By 1710, Marlborough’s triumphs in battle could no longer win him the political cover he needed at home. The Godolphin ministry was defeated and dismissed and, with it, any prospect of dictating a drumhead peace to Louis.

For half a dozen years, the distinction between civil and military power in the English empire had been essentially meaningless. Marlborough had engrossed both. Now, in the autumn and winter of 1710, the new Tory ministry and an embittered, dying queen reduced this former favorite from his imperial preeminence to the role of a theater commander in Flanders.

With Anne’s death, and the Hanoverian succession in Britain, the Whigs (and Marlborough) were restored to power. And, with a few interruptions, their strategic and geopolitical views dominated the building of the first British empire, won by that ultimate Whig, William Pitt, in the Seven Years’ War. Had George III followed his father’s imperial precepts (George II had fought, and nearly perished, with Marlborough at Oudenaarde), he might have held Marlborough’s America within the imperial fold.

And yet, it is not really until the third part of Webb’s study that we get directly to Marlborough’s America. For it was by a blood transfusion, in the form of his staff and officer acolytes, that Marlborough transformed a diffuse set of American “plantations” into economically

and strategically productive imperial provinces that played an essential part in destroying the hegemonic pretensions of the House of Bourbon.

Webb tells this tale in three acts, each one devoted to a Marlborough lieutenant's American adventure, and an epilogue about the "Golden Adventure," the Caribbean expedition led by Admiral Edward Vernon in the early 1740s. This was the catastrophic exposition of Tory "blue water" strategy. It also was an operation that featured the British Army's first experiment with a Royal American Regiment, mustered into service at a strength of 4,183 in January 1741 and out of service by October 1742 at just 1,124. Like their fellow redcoats, most of the American regiment was lost to various forms of disease. It also suffered from command abuse by Vernon and the British officers who made up the regiment's senior leadership.

The outstanding American officer of the regiment was Lawrence Washington, whose distinguished service won him a promotion to major and an appointment as adjutant-general of Virginia upon his return home to the plantation he would name "Mount Vernon" after the admiral. Lawrence might have preferred to keep his British commission had the army been willing to have him; certainly, Lawrence's half-brother, George, wanted nothing more than to win a place as a regular field officer in the official British imperial establishment.

Another casualty of the expedition, though he died while it was being readied, was Alexander Spotswood. Webb characterizes Spotswood's death as "fatal to the West Indies expedition," a sentiment echoed by the Duke of Newcastle, secretary of state and architect of Whig imperial strategy in the mid-18th century: "Mr. Spotswood's Loss . . . is not to be repaired." Spotswood had been Marlborough's deputy chief of staff, courageous in combat, but also a genius of organization and logistics.

These skills made him, in Webb's telling, the "Architect of Empire" in Virginia, and he was literally the architect of colonial Williamsburg, laying it out along the lines of a Roman military camp and ensuring that its principal buildings conveyed an imperial

grandeur. But Spotswood was also the architect of a detailed plan of imperial American penetration inland from the coastal plain—across the range of the Appalachians into the Mississippi basin—expanding the colonies, cutting New France in two, and harnessing and then reducing the power of Indian tribes, particularly the Iroquois league, which could tip the balance of North American power.

Spotswood explained to the British government that the diffuse American colonies needed a centralized executive and legislature, and a commitment of regular British troops to garrison the frontier and push it westward. A generation later, Benjamin Franklin would make exactly the same case as colonial agent in London, and to the Iroquois and his fellow Americans at home.

Franklin and Spotswood, like Marlborough, thus ran afoul of the "country party" oligarchs, the tidewater tobacco grandees who feared the socially and economically disruptive effects of westward expansion and interventions from London. Ironically, these Virginia elites made use of Whiggish rhetoric to protest Spotswood's "Standing Army" as "a means to govern Arbitrarily and by Martial Law." But the securing of the Hanoverian succession in London, and Marlborough's return to power, eventually allowed Spotswood to bend the cavaliers to his program. The combination of renewed backing from London and the promise to use British military power in the service of colonial expansion was a powerful political brew, which the Virginia Assembly of 1720 drank heavily. As Webb puts it, the colonial elites became the greatest enthusiasts for the "empire militant."

The assembly advised King George "how to Extend your Empire" and "Secure our Present Settlements from the Incursion of the Savage Indians and from the more dangerous Incroachments of the Neighboring French" by taking control of the [Appalachian] mountain passes with government-sponsored settlement, royal forts, and regular garrisons. The assembly also endorsed Spotswood's aggressive plan to cut French communications "betwixt the Rivers

St. Lawrence and Mississippi," reminding the king that "our Lieut. Governour Colonel Spotswood . . . has spar'd no fatigue or Expence to visit our Mountains in person and to inform himself of the Exceeding Importance of them both for Your Majesty's Service and for the defence and Security of this Dominion."

The habits of the British imperial mind, brought to their maturity by Marlborough and carried into the American colonies by his legates, took quick root (as with Lawrence Washington) and flourished. Campaigning in the American Revolution, George Washington carried with him a copy of Marlborough's commission; Alexander Hamilton carried a copy of the charter for the Bank of England, another imperial institution in which Marlborough played a founding role. Washington told his Continental Army officers that they fought to give birth to "our rising American empire."

Even the American "country party" was infected. Thomas Jefferson spoke not only of a consensual, contractual "empire of liberty," but also, in correspondence with James Madison, of an "empire *for* liberty." The cause of liberty, and the many particular American "liberties" entailed, was not, after all, a self-evident proposition, but one that needed to be proven in the exercise of power and, most critically, won by military power. In England, it was Marlborough's coup that created the conditions for the Glorious Revolution; in America, a later generation of "Marlborough men" would build an international military coalition and succeed on the battlefields that made an American Revolution.

By setting the Duke of Marlborough within his institutional and colonial context, Stephen Saunders Webb has made us see a great man in an even greater light. This is not a book suffocated by current "lessons." But it is a reminder that the roots of American strategy run deeper than we think—that, though the empire for liberty was turned upside down in 1776, or 1781, it was not created *ex nihilo*. This empire was conceived and nobly advanced well before the United States was formed, and it remains an unfinished work. ♦

Trip to Nowhere

*'The dark heart of shiftless American youth'
just got darker.* BY JOHN PODHORETZ

I won't say *Spring Breakers* is the worst movie ever made, because it should bear no distinction, even one designed to indicate the depths of its wretchedness. This dreadful waste of time scrapes the bottom of the pop culture barrel so severely that, by the end of its 80-minute running time, even the dregs have found a way to escape.

Four college girls from Florida go to St. Petersburg for spring break. They knock over a restaurant to get the money. They stare at the water, ride around on scooters, sit around a parking lot, do drugs. They are arrested and then bailed out for no reason by a white-trash rapper-dealer played by James Franco (who overacts as horrendously here as he does in *Oz the Great and Powerful*). One girl goes home; the other three hang out with Franco. He ends up declaring his love to two of them, after which they have several threesomes. The third girl is shot in the arm by a rival drug dealer. She goes home, too. James Franco decides to kill his rival. He and the two girlfriends travel to the drug dealer's house in a motorboat. Franco, the experienced gangster, gets killed instantly. But the two girls go on to kill everybody at the drug dealer's house with machine guns. The end.

This summary provides a measure of linear coherence to a movie that doesn't actually have any. Most of its running time is taken up with shots of teenagers dancing and drinking and smoking bongos. It's almost excruciating; but again, if it were truly excruciating, that would imply there was something exceptional going on

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Spring Breakers

Directed by Harmony Korine



here. In truth, *Spring Breakers* is notable only for the utter filmmaking incompetence displayed by its writer-director—the almost perfectly misnamed Harmony Korine, who has made several unwatchable avant-gardish films before this. Korine didn't really bother to write a screenplay for this movie, so what little dialogue it has is repeated four or five times, what with flashbacks and flash-forwards. Thus, we hear the first departing girl saying, "I want to go home," and, "This isn't what I signed up for," over and over and over.

I have nothing against repetition per se. Try going to a Jewish religious service sometime—there's so much of it you'd think the Almighty only hears prayers in triplicate. But "I want to go home" isn't exactly Macbeth saying "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow." Besides, in a movie, someone can say "I want to go home" and then there can be a cut to a bus pulling out, and *basta*—in and out in 10 seconds. In *Spring Breakers*, after the endless incantation of her desire to leave, the girl boards a bus, and sits on the bus, and looks out the window of the bus, and lies down on two seats on the bus. This all totals about five minutes of the movie's running time.

The defenders of *Spring Breakers* say the movie has an incantatory quality to it, that its repetitions are purposeful because they highlight the banality of its characters. Manohla Dargis of the *New York Times*, a decent prose stylist but easily the most ludicrous critic ever to write for a major newspaper, wrote with a straight face of *Spring*

Breakers that Korine's "transgressive laughter carries corrosive truth," and that his movie is actually a study of "the pursuit of happiness taken to nihilistic extremes." How utterly absurd. All exploitation movies, from *Reefer Madness* (1936) onward, purport to criticize the ways of life over which they are simultaneously salivating. A well-made exploitation movie succeeds in finding ways of working around this; a bad one makes you aware of its hypocrisy at every moment.

Spring Breakers is soft-core porn without a core, a look into the dark heart of shiftless American youth that primarily reveals its own dark heart; it is a portrait of white-trash racists that proves to be more racist than most white trash. Most interesting, perhaps, is how it has positioned itself in the motion-picture marketplace. *Spring Breakers* is a story of corruption whose marketing strategy depended on seducing squeaky-clean Disney Channel and ABC Family starlets (Selena Gomez, Vanessa Hudgens, and Ashley Benson) with the promise of big-screen stardom into ludicrous amounts of wildly gratuitous nudity and on-screen drug use.

Rather than using their nubility as a lever to lift them into A-list pictures, as Anne Hathaway did when she went from the inanities of *The Princess Diaries* to a nude scene in the Oscar-bait *Brokeback Mountain*, the girls of *Spring Breakers* have earned themselves a ticket to midnight-movie notoriety—just as Elizabeth Berkley did when she segued from the brain-dead kid sitcom *Saved by the Bell* to the brain-melting fiasco called *Showgirls*. Elizabeth *who?* you ask. To which I reply: Exactly.

The only performer who will emerge from *Spring Breakers* with her career intact is Emma Roberts, who dropped out before filming began owing to "creative differences that couldn't be resolved." Smart cookie—though I don't know how she could have had creative differences with Harmony Korine, since he has no creativity with which anyone could have a difference. ♦

“Disgraced former Rep. Anthony Weiner’s dormant New York City mayoral campaign paid more than \$100,000 to a San Francisco-based polling firm earlier this month, suggesting the once-prominent Democrat . . . was contemplating a return to politics in this year’s elections.”

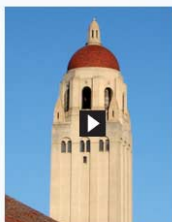
—National Journal, March 15, 2013

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It's official! Throwing my hat in the ring! Looking forward to serving as next Mayor of NYC #redemption

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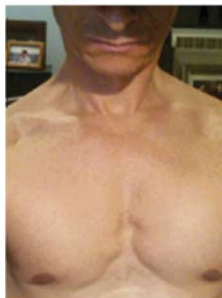


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Had a blast reading to Ms. Connelly's 1st grade class at PS134! Check it out: pic.twitter.com/vnw34957203

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Oops. #youthinkiwouldhavefiguredouthowtousethisbynowlol

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Prepping for tonight's debate against @ChristineQuinn. Bring it on! #inthezone #stayssharp

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