

**AL JAZEERA
AT THE NEWSEUM
CLAUDIA ROSETT**

the weekly

Standard

JULY 1, 2013

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ICH BIN EIN BIG TALKER

**THOMAS DONNELLY
REUEL MARC GERECHT
KIMBERLY KAGAN
WILLIAM KRISTOL
TOD LINDBERG
LEE SMITH**
on Obama's failed
Middle East policies

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Coin of the Realm

THE SCRAPBOOK tends to avoid inductive reasoning—that is, drawing a general conclusion from specific examples—because any good polemicist can cherry-pick his anecdotes. But some recent tidings from Bratislava, in Slovakia, have tempted us to wander down Inductive Lane.

It was, in fact, a story in the *New York Times* last week that caught our attention. Slovakia, which is a member of the European Union, is about to mint some commemorative euro coins, and had sent along design samples to Brussels for approval. That's where the *Times* story comes in: "It . . . came as a rude surprise when, late last year, the National Bank of Slovakia announced that the European Commission, the union's executive arm, had ordered it to remove halos and crosses" from the coins because their reference to Christianity was too explicit. The coins, designed by a Slovak artist, show stylized images of two Byzantine evangelist-monks, Cyril and Methodius.

This order was especially galling to Slovakia, which is largely Roman Catholic, since the event the euros are intended to commemorate is the 1,500th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in that country. But it is

also worth noting that the order to remove the crosses and halos came not from the infamous EU bureaucracy in Brussels—which has issued its share of tin-eared demands—but from rigidly secular member-states, notably France, where the Slovak euros would be legal tender.

In the end, we are pleased to report, the government of Slovakia stuck to its guns, the EU conceded, and those commemorative euros with halos and crosses, Methodius and Cyril, will soon be minted and circulating (we hope) in large numbers all over Europe. THE SCRAPBOOK says this not because we are members of Team Christianity, but because this episode symbolizes a problem, perhaps an insoluble problem, at the heart of European unity.

It is true, as many point out, that religious faith in general, and Christianity in particular, is in retreat in Europe. It is also true that Europe, for good or ill, is home to large numbers of Muslims, as well as lapsed Christians and nonbelievers. But Europe now faces a dilemma that has, so to speak, bedeviled the United States for decades: how to reconcile a secular state with its religious background and the beliefs of citizens. For it is impossible to separate

Christianity from the history of European civilization—and while faith may be quiescent in France and Germany and the Netherlands, it is very much alive in those parts of Central and Eastern Europe (Slovakia, for example) which languished for decades under atheist regimes.

Here in America, unfortunately, courts and school boards and city councils and federal agencies have mastered the balancing act by restricting religious observance and symbolism to the private sphere—in effect, offending a likely majority of citizens to avoid offending one theoretical citizen, who may or may not be offended. The result has been scattered defiance, and a clash of cultures that shows no signs of abating. Nor is there any reason to suppose that this cannot occur in Europe as well, where the quest for political and economic unity has revealed a fracture between Christian and post-Christian societies, and states and bureaucracies are equally ham-handed.

A commemorative coin minted in Bratislava is a trivial thing in itself. But there is an irony in the fact that one unifying element in the history of Europe is now, through no fault of its own, a divisive factor, which may undermine the whole enterprise. ♦

Second Time as Farce

FOR a brief moment last week, THE SCRAPBOOK felt a twinge of compassion for President Obama. The setting was Berlin. Readers will remember the extraordinary (and extraordinarily peculiar) sight in 2008 of Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama speaking to a throng of 200,000 worshipful Berliners in the Tiergarten. No American candidate had ever before campaigned in a foreign country—especially one where spectacles of mass enthusiasm revive

instructive memories. But Barack Obama was declared historic even before he had gained his party's nomination, and that huge rally at the foot of Berlin's Victory Column was just more proof.

What a difference a half-decade makes! Escaping from a G-8 summit in Northern Ireland largely memorable for the images of Obama and Vladimir Putin scowling at one another, the president sought to salvage his journey with a triumphant return to Berlin to mark the 50th anniversary of John F. Kennedy's "Ich bin ein

Berliner" address. But, alas! Berlin seemed to greet its adoptive son with the same enthusiasm as Putin: The crowd that listened to Obama preach about intolerance, global warming, and nuclear weapons amounted to a listless 4,500, by invitation only. Even his faithful acolyte Chris Matthews complained on MSNBC that Obama's limp performance was caused by glare from the sun.

In fact, of course, President Obama was the victim of a common misstep in political theater: trying to re-create something unique. When

Kennedy spoke in Berlin in 1963 the Wall was less than two years old, and there was lingering uncertainty about his administration's commitment to West Germany. When Ronald Reagan spoke at the same site a quarter-century later, his defiant words ("tear down this wall!") were hurled at a barrier, and a Soviet empire, still very much in evidence. By the time Bill Clinton made the trek in 1994, however, the Soviet Union was history, Germany was unified, and you had to go to a museum to see fragments of the Berlin Wall.

Which is why THE SCRAPBOOK felt some fleeting pity for Obama last week: There he was, orating and perspiring in the shadow of the Brandenburg Gate—and no magic in evidence. It reminded us of poor Jimmy Carter's televised "fireside chat" about energy in 1977. Carter knew that Franklin D. Roosevelt's fireside chats had been immensely popular on radio, and so he dressed himself in an energy-efficient cardigan sweater while the camera pulled back, as he spoke, to depict a White House fireplace. Of course, FDR's "fireside chats" referred to his audience, the people listening to their president beside the fireplace in their parlors, not the White House chimney.

Jimmy Carter couldn't impersonate Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Barack Obama, to coin a phrase, is no Jack Kennedy. ♦

More Borders, Please

THE SCRAPBOOK was alarmed at the very French way that the OECD, the Europe-based club of rich countries, tried to make a splash at last week's G-8 summit in Northern Ireland—by urging the world's governments to make their tax systems more transparent to one another. THE SCRAPBOOK would feel a lot better if the OECD had not used the plan to promote an initiative it calls "Tax Inspectors Without Borders." The model is Doctors Without Borders, the group of idealistic physicians, founded in France, who

have been vaccinating children and treating the sick and wounded since the 1970s. Either the OECD has an unduly mundane view of what it is like to work as a doctor in a warzone or an unduly romantic one of what it is like to work as a tax collector in a large bureaucracy. ("I will follow you anywhere," she sighed, "you dashing rogue of a tax inspector, you!") ♦

The New Etiquette

What pronoun do you prefer?" THE SCRAPBOOK, as readers may know, prefers *its*. As in, the question above left THE SCRAP-

BOOK scratching its head. But if you seek "to be inclusive," it's the polite thing to ask. We gleaned this from a sign titled "Transgender Etiquette," posted in San Jose, where a cadre of über-liberal techies came together last week for the annual Netroots Nation conference—a sort of Woodstock meets South-by-Southwest meets the Democratic National Convention.

The sign was situated near the bathrooms, because the next big thing, in case you were wondering, is bathroom equality. Since what happens in San Jose won't stay in San Jose, here are some etiquette tips from the sign:

- "One way of acknowledging

WE ARE STILL LOOKING
FOR CONCRETE PROOF
THAT SYRIA IS USING
CHEMICAL WEAPONS



transgender people's needs is to designate restrooms as gender neutral. In bathrooms, many transgender people face harassment, so please let everyone pee in peace."

- "Please do not assume anyone's gender, even people you may have met in the past. A person's external appearance may not match their internal gender identity. Pay attention to a person's purposeful gender expression. It's polite to ask . . . 'How do you identify?' before using pronouns or gendered words. Or better yet ask for their name."

Etiquette, of course, only gets you part of the way to the brave new world, these days. What begins with manners ends in lawsuits. Thus we note that Maine's supreme court earlier this month heard arguments in a lawsuit filed by the family of Nicole Maines and the Maine Human Rights Commission regarding his/her right to use the girls' bathroom. Born a male, Maines identified as a girl while in the fifth-grade but was not allowed to pee in peace with the

other girls, being directed to use a staff bathroom instead. The Maine Human Rights Act bars gender discrimination in schools.

We're not sure how the high court will resolve the case. To each its own is THE SCRAPBOOK's view. ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

‘A couple of weekends a month, Tom McMahon, 44, a federal government budget analyst who lives in Scottsdale, Ariz., joins his wife for a special indulgence, squeezed in around brunch and his regular Sunday touch rugby games: simultaneous pedicures, complete with nail polish as the finishing touch. Mr. McMahon, who is 6-foot-4 and weighs 270 pounds, typically chooses a decidedly bold color for his toes, often either China Glaze's Gaga for Green, a hue that brings Kermit the Frog to mind, or . . .” (New York Times, June 13). ♦

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Sam and the Sabra Tomcat

The anniversary of the start of the last war between Israel and Lebanon is coming up on July 12, and it makes me wonder how Israel is doing. Not Israel the country, of course—it's thriving seven years after fighting Hezbollah on its northern border for 34 days. I mean Israel the cat.

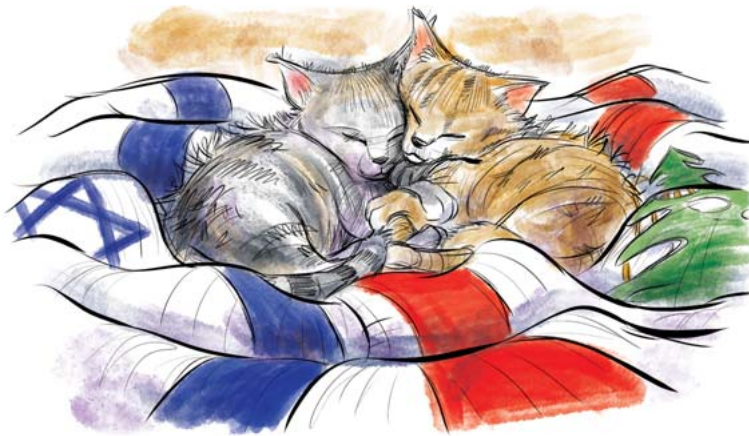
A couple of months before the war broke out, I was walking home one night after an evening with friends in my Beirut neighborhood, when I heard the loud cries of a cat. I looked around and spied her peeking out from behind the tire of a parked car. She was still a kitten, much smaller than her voice let on, and she looked hungry. As I was deliberating whether to go in search of a can of tuna for her before sending her on her way, she made the decision for me. She raced up my blue jeans and blazer, claws first, and perched on my shoulder for the walk home. As soon as she surveyed the beautiful view of the city and the Mediterranean from the balcony of my apartment, she resolved to stay.

A calico, the kitten, whom I named Sam, was a product of the large feline clan that lives on the campus of the American University of Beirut, where students feed and care for them. It's part of the ambivalent relationship that Lebanese who grew up during the country's 15-year civil war have with feral animals, cats as well as dogs.

In her wonderful *Diary of a Cat*, the Lebanese novelist Emily Nasrallah explains that one of the least remarked aspects of that war was the sheer number of pets that the violence—

including the death or exile or impoverishment of owners—forced into the streets. Nasrallah tells the story of the war through the eyes of one cat and the little girl who took her in.

The sad irony of the book is that the war also left many young Lebanese terrified of animals. “Parents used to tell their children that if they didn't behave, the wild dogs and cats in the street would come for them,” my friend Fawaz told me. One of my



Lebanese neighbors was both repelled and fascinated by Sam, wanting to touch her, then hiding behind me whenever she came too close.

Many Lebanese were the same with dogs. Fawaz and I would walk downtown with his white golden retriever, and stylish and sophisticated Lebanese would shrink away in fear. Although many Muslims steer clear of dogs, it was often tourists from the Gulf countries, including girls shrouded in black, who used to stop to pet and play with Fawaz's retriever.

Before long, it came time for me to flee the violence, and my calico cat came with me. We left Beirut a week into the 2006 war and made our way across the Syrian border to Damascus, then to Jordan, and finally to Jerusalem, where I rented a basement apart-

ment on Emek Refaim Street. Because Sam was a street cat, it was difficult to keep her inside. She'd push against the loose screen in the kitchen window and disappear for the day. At night, she'd sit high in the tree outside our building watching for me to come home after dinner with friends and then scramble down to greet me.

Somehow I hadn't had a chance to get Sam fixed before the war started and we embarked on our carefree life as refugees. As summer turned into fall and I prepared to go back to the United States, I was oblivious to the reality that a female cat spending most of her time outside is likely to conceive. The fact that numerous male cats used to hover around the apartment was also lost on me.

As we left Israel, the girls at the border, in their green uniforms and sandals, were smitten with Sam, but none so much as an enormous Russian-Israeli kid, Alex, whose unit had fought in Lebanon two months

before. “A Lebanese cat!” he said. “I have to get one.” Had I known at the time, I could've produced two for him—with Israeli lineage on their father's side.

Sam's two kittens, both male, were born in Washington. I know who your father is, I thought to myself as I watched their kitten ears unfold in their first weeks: one of the rogues of Emek Refaim, a thick-set black-and-white tough with eyes as old as an Israeli general's, a real Sabra, a Zionist.

So when it came time to give the kittens away, Craigslist lit up with talk of the two “peace kittens,” half-Lebanese, half-Israeli: black-and-white Lebanon and his brown-and-white brother, Israel.

LEE SMITH

Ich bin ein Big Talker

On June 19, President Barack Obama delivered a lengthy speech in Berlin, in front of the Brandenburg Gate. The shades of John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan surely wept.

Half a century ago, President Kennedy declared, “All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and, therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words ‘Ich bin ein Berliner!’” A quarter-century ago, President Reagan challenged the general secretary of the Soviet Union: “Come here to this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev—Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!” President Obama, by contrast, declared nothing notable and challenged no one powerful. With the Berlin Wall down and the Cold War won, the president of the United States talked at length and had nothing to say.

It would be too harsh, perhaps, to say that Obama’s remarks served only to ratify the judgment rendered the week before by Bill Clinton: that President Obama is pretty much “a total wuss.” It wouldn’t be too harsh to say of Obama’s foreign policy what Winston Churchill said in 1936 about the Stanley Baldwin government: He is “decided only to be undecided, resolved to be irresolute, adamant for drift, solid for fluidity, all-powerful to be impotent.”

To be fair, there were times when President Obama sounded resolute. He said, for example, that “the struggle for freedom and security and human dignity—that struggle goes on. And I’ve come here, to this city of hope, because the tests of our time demand the same fighting spirit that defined Berlin a half-century ago.”

But nowhere in Obama’s speech does he actually demonstrate the fighting spirit he says the times demand. Nowhere does he cite an actual place where it is just and necessary that we fight, or even one where it has been just and necessary that we have fought. Nowhere does he praise those who actually have fought on our behalf. In Obama’s world, the “struggle for freedom and security and human dignity” is more like a group hug. It’s not really a struggle against anybody. Obama is for “extending a hand to those who reach for freedom.” But it’s a limp hand. And it never

gets used as a fist against those who deny freedom.

So Syria is never mentioned by Obama. Iran is mentioned once: “We can forge a new international framework for peaceful nuclear power, and reject the nuclear weaponization that North Korea and Iran may be seeking.” The nuclear weaponization that North Korea and Iran may be seeking? Isn’t North Korea past the “may be seeking” stage? And Iran? In any case, there was no pledge in Berlin by Obama that he would act to prevent Iran from getting such weapons.



A ‘citizen of the world’ in Berlin

Indeed, there was virtually no mention of military action or of keeping our military strong enough to deal with the world as it is. What Obama did say is that while we have been at war for over a decade, the good news is “the Iraq war is now over. The Afghan war is coming to an end.” You might note that the Afghan war won’t come to an end just because we choose to stop fighting in it. You might note that there is more conflict in Iraq today than there was before the Iraq war “was over,” when we had won it and still had troops there to enforce the peace. But if you note that, then you have failed to understand that “we must move beyond a mindset of perpetual war.”

How nice it must be to believe in mind over matter, and in mindsets over reality. We can be exhorted to move beyond a mindset, but there is a reality out there, and we’re being mugged by it. Barack Obama is remarkably impervious to this. Or perhaps he’s simply one of those liberals who, when mugged by reality, has no interest in pressing charges. Pressing charges would mean seeking victory. Needless to say, the word victory never appears in Obama’s Berlin speech.

After all, victory would mean one country or one set of countries—the free world, perhaps?—prevailing over others. But we should “care more about things than just our own self-comfort, about our own city, about our own country,” Obama said. He’s right that we should care about more than just our own country. But another president would have emphasized that it’s fine to begin by caring about and struggling on behalf of one’s own country.

Not Obama. He's a citizen of the world: "For we are not only citizens of America or Germany—we are also citizens of the world." He talks abstractly to the world and about the world. He talks, and talks, and talks some more . . . as the world burns around him. And around us.

—William Kristol

Adrift in Syria



Syrian rebels in Aleppo, June 20, 2013

Two weeks ago, the Obama administration seemed to announce a major reversal of policy: In light of the American intelligence community's finding, with a high level of confidence, that Syrian president Bashar al-Assad had used chemical weapons against the opposition, the White House was going to arm the Syrian rebels.

For more than a year and a half, ever since the Sunni-majority opposition took up weapons to defend itself against a brutal regime firing on unarmed demonstrators, Obama had resisted arming the rebels. The opposition was too fragmented, administration officials said at first. Then the concern was that the rebels were indeed coming under a central command, that of al Qaeda. The White House reasoned that it couldn't very well send weapons if it didn't know who it was arming. Nonetheless, Obama warned last summer that if Assad used unconventional weapons, that would change his calculus. And so when the Damascus regime crossed the president's brightly drawn red line, the game changed.

Or did it?

In fact, it's still not clear what the White House is doing,

In a June 13 conference call with reporters ostensibly rolling out the new policy, deputy national security adviser for strategic communications Ben Rhodes failed to provide any details. Reporters asked several times what kind of aid the administration had in mind, and whether Obama was actually going to arm the rebels. "We're just not going to be able to lay out an inventory of what exactly falls under the scope of that assistance," said Rhodes.

Last week, Obama himself addressed the Syria issue, without providing any more clarity than his point man for strategic communications. In an appearance on the *Charlie Rose* show, the commander in chief told his host, "I've said I'm ramping up support for both the political and military opposition. I've not specified exactly what we're doing, and I won't do so on this show."

Maybe someone in the White House is advising Obama that obfuscation and ambiguity make a president look presidential. His administration is stealthy and indirect—instead of communicating with the public through press conferences, it prefers leaking to the media via unnamed officials. Accordingly, it was through several press reports that the "inventory," as Rhodes repeatedly called it, was laid out. The White House will send the rebels small arms and ammunition—lethal aid, to be sure, but hardly game-changing, or even likely to tilt the balance of power on the ground in Syria.

Even Obama's secretary of state realizes this isn't enough. John Kerry petitioned for U.S. strikes against Syrian airfields but, as Jeffrey Goldberg reported last week, was rebuffed by chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey. It would take 700 sorties, Dempsey told Kerry, just "to neutralize Syria's integrated air-defense system."

We don't know how Kerry responded (Goldberg writes that he "gave as good as he got"), and maybe he asked Dempsey how he came up with that number. In the last year, the Israelis have gotten around Syria's now-famed air defenses three times without any loss of men or materiel. So why would it take the United States 700 sorties? Why not 7, or 70, or 7,000? What's the math and where's the paperwork? Is the assessment based on the patently unimpressive record of Syrian air defenses? Or is it simply, as Elliott Abrams wrote last week, Dempsey's way of saying, "I don't want to."

Dempsey was really making a policy argument, Abrams explained, augmenting it with a "ridiculous military argument that should have been shot down with alacrity." The problem, however, is that it's not Dempsey's policy but Obama's. The Kerry-Dempsey showdown is merely a play within the play, directed by the president himself.

"If you haven't been in the Situation Room," Obama told Charlie Rose,

poring through intelligence and meeting directly with our military folks and asking what are all our options and examining what are all the consequences and understanding that,

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for example, if you set up a no-fly zone that you may not be actually solving the problem on the ground or if you set up a humanitarian corridor are you, in fact, committed not only to stopping aircraft from going over that corridor but also missiles? And if so does that mean that you then have to take out the armaments in Damascus? And are you prepared then to bomb Damascus?

It apparently wasn't enough for Obama to talk about the Situation Room on national TV. The scene needed to be staged with dramatis personae. So Dempsey, standing in for Obama, played the voice of reason and experience, and Kerry the wild-eyed interventionist—or, in more neutral terms, anyone who thinks Obama has mishandled Syria since the beginning of the uprising in March 2011. “Unless you’ve been involved in those conversations,” Obama told Rose, “then it’s kind of hard for you to understand the complexities of the situation.”

For Obama, everything about Syria is complex—its vaunted air defenses, Iran’s massive investment there in men, money, and arms, Russia’s intractable diplomatic position, and especially the rebels themselves. “The people who are being suppressed inside of Syria who developed into a military opposition,” said Obama, “are carpenters and you know blacksmiths and dentists. These aren’t professional fighters. . . . I don’t think that anybody would suggest that somehow that there was a ready-made military opposition

inside of Syria that could somehow have quickly and cleanly defeated the Syrian Army or Assad or overthrown it.”

Rose might have asked the president for the intelligence community’s assessment: Are the rebels dentists or al Qaeda? He also might have noted that rebellions are often waged by nonprofessional fighters. The American Revolution, for instance, was fought largely by blacksmiths and carpenters. It is only Obama who believes that uprisings are typically packaged with a “ready-made military opposition.” The reality is not that Syria’s complexities are beyond the ken of mortals denied access to the Situation Room, but that the man elected to make policies on behalf of a superpower that address the world’s most complex situations is simply confused. It is in the national interest to ensure that the regime in its entirety, and not merely Assad himself, is toppled. With the end state in mind, it should not be difficult to make policy to bring that about.

“I hear debates out there,” Obama told Rose, “folks saying, you know, ‘Katie, bar the door, let’s just go in and knock out Syria.’” Perhaps this line kicked off the laugh-track when it was rehearsed in the Oval Office, but it’s an absurd caricature of the White House’s critics, including it seems, those within the administration who believe that the president’s Syria policy, more than two years on, is still adrift.

—Lee Smith

Entitlements: Myths Versus Facts

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

Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid together represent our nation’s compassionate commitment to the elderly, the sick, and the less fortunate. They must be reformed and modernized to ensure that every family can count on them now and in the future. But before our nation can have an honest debate on how to fix them, we must separate the myths from the facts.

Myth: Making any changes to these programs will undermine our commitment to care for the elderly and those in need.

Fact: Reform is the best way to ensure that these programs survive for the long term. As currently structured, they will not be able to withstand rising medical costs and the huge influx of retirees who are living longer than ever. Failure to address this problem will guarantee that we can’t uphold our responsibility to seniors and low income Americans.

Myth: We must make deep cuts to the programs, resulting in drastically reduced benefits.

Fact: Leaders on this issue are not proposing actual spending cuts. But to sustain these programs, we must slow their explosive growth. It can be done through slight adjustments in payments, benefits, eligibility, administration, coverage options, and program efficiencies with minimal effects on beneficiaries. And the sooner we act, the smaller the impacts will be.

Myth: We may have a problem, but there’s plenty of time to fix it.

Fact: All major entitlement programs are projected to be insolvent in 20 years. The trust fund for Social Security Disability Insurance will be exhausted in 3 years. The trust fund for Medicare Part A, which pays for hospital services, will go bankrupt in 13 years. Social Security will be unable to pay full benefits beginning in 2033.

Myth: These programs pay for themselves and don’t contribute to the deficit.

Fact: Entitlement programs have almost

never been self-funding. Medicare has had a cash shortfall every year except in 1966 and 1974. Its annual shortfall in 2011 was \$288 billion. Social Security had a cash flow deficit of \$58 billion in 2012. Money must be borrowed to make up these shortfalls, contributing to the deficit. Entitlement spending also squeezes our investment in national priorities like defense, education, infrastructure, science, and research.

Myth: We can solve the problem by raising taxes.

Fact: It would take almost \$40 trillion to make the programs solvent for the next 75 years. Hiking taxes by \$40 trillion would cripple our economy and stifle the growth we need to support our nation’s social safety net.

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A Texan Takes Manhattan

With Gov. Rick Perry in New York.

BY FRED BARNES



Someday, all of this will be in Dallas: the governor in Midtown, June 18

Look up the definition of poaching,” Rick Perry told his press secretary Josh Havens. Perry was annoyed at being accused, in headlines and news stories and by Democratic governors, of trying to “poach” companies from blue states and carry them off to Texas, where he is governor.

Perry didn’t think the word applies to his forays—to California in February, Illinois in April, and last week to New York and Connecticut. Sure, he wants to lure companies to Texas, bringing thousands of jobs with them. But “poach”? Nope, not that. It sounds sneaky, illicit, or, at best, would still be hostile conduct by one governor toward the state of another.

Havens tapped into an online dictionary and read the definition to

Perry: “to take fish or game illegally.” “Or jobs,” Perry said.

He felt vindicated. His high-visibility raids are unprecedented for a governor, but they’re clearly not against the law. Perry likes football analogies. He told Steve Forbes, the publisher of the eponymous business magazine, his efforts are “straight up, off right tackle.” He’s compared them to a hypothetical recruiting trip by Texas A&M coach Kevin Sumlin. “He flies in by helicopter to a small town to recruit a high school football star. He doesn’t quietly come in under the veil of darkness.”

Following the session with Forbes last week, Perry hurried across Manhattan to meet with Donald Trump. You’re trying to “grab all our people,” Trump teased. “Just giving them opportunity,” Perry replied.

After his freshman year at Texas A&M in 1969, Perry sold Bible-related books one summer in rural Missouri.

“It took weeks before I sold my first books,” he says, but he learned salesmanship. “I look at myself just like a businessman trying to sell a product,” he says. Perry told Trump he’s selling the “opportunity” for business owners to flee the “high tax, high regulation, high litigation” environment of states like New York and thrive in a free market state that lets them keep more of the money they earn. Texas has no state income tax.

Perry is never bashful. When touting Texas as a safe haven for American business, he’s doing what no governor has done before. And he’s doing it with as much fanfare and buzz as possible. Some governors send letters, urging companies to pick up stakes and move. When Perry spent a day in Connecticut last week, he bumped into Dennis Daugaard, the Republican governor of South Dakota. Both were on economic missions. The Connecticut media latched on to Perry and ignored Daugaard.

Perry relied on Jeff Miller, a political consultant, lobbyist, and longtime friend, for advice in organizing the recruiting trips. Miller is a newcomer to Texas, having vowed to leave his native California if Republicans were crushed there again in the 2012 election. They were. He arrived in Austin on Christmas Eve.

The key to the Perry-Miller strategy is its focus on the big blue states (Connecticut was an afterthought) and advertising. Perry spent a meager \$25,000 on radio ads in California, then benefited from Gov. Jerry Brown’s crack that the ad was “barely a fart.” Brown said the Perry visit was “not a story, guys.” But he made it one.

For his foray into Chicago, Perry spent \$100,000 on radio spots. Again Democrats fell into his trap. Gov. Pat Quinn and Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel attacked Perry furiously. His visit became a major news story.

Perry and Miller figured New York would be different. A modest radio buy would be drowned out. So they spent \$1 million on TV and radio spots that bragged about the business climate in Texas. The killer line: “If you’re tired of the same old

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AP / MARY ALTAFFER

recipe of over-taxation, over-regulation, and frivolous litigation, get out before you go broke.” Perry delivered the closer. “Texas is calling,” he said. “Your opportunity awaits.” The ads made a splash.

“Advertising works,” Perry says. “If it didn’t, people wouldn’t buy ad space. . . . We had different catch phrases for each state.” In California, it was: “Building a business is tough. Building a business in California is next to impossible.” In Illinois: “Get out while there’s still time.” In New York, it was the “go broke” line.

Accompanying Perry here were several dozen Texans from Texas One, a foundation that touts the state’s economy and pays for Perry’s trips and ads. A special Perry recruitment target was arms manufacturers who feel unwelcome in New York and Connecticut. At Colt Manufacturing, he fired pistols and rifles for 15 minutes. He also met privately with health care and financial management firms.

During Perry’s three days in New York, I joined him for most of his meetings, dinners, and speeches. Up close, Perry isn’t quite what I expected. He often notes he majored in animal science in college, but his interests have broadened as governor. He’s learned a lot about brain science. He knows a good deal about economics. After back surgery last year, he had to give up his cowboy boots. “My feet are happy,” he told Forbes. He made a point of being photographed under a storefront sign near Times Square. “Going Out of Business. Everything Must Go,” it read.

At one dinner, he sat next to Mark Teixeira, the Yankees first baseman who may run for office when his baseball days are over. Perry offered a piece of advice. “Mark, everybody loves you now,” Perry said. “You’re one of the best first basemen of all time. But the moment you announce, either as a Democrat or a Republican, half of those people are going to hate you.”

Perry had three goals for his trip. He succeeded, partially anyway, on two. In time, he may on the third. The

Two States, Two Stories

	2005	2010	Increase
Number of New York City residents moving to six Texas counties in or near Dallas-Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin, and Houston ¹	2,955	3,957	33.9%
	TEXAS	NEW YORK	USA
Exports, 2012 (in billions) ²	\$264.7	\$81.4	\$2,195.0
Fortune 500 companies headquartered in state (as of May 2012) ³	52	50	—
Jobs created (April 2012–April 2013) ⁴	326,100	111,600	—
Percentage unemployed in labor force (as of April 2013) ⁴	6.4%	7.8%	7.5%
State income tax (maximum) ²	0.00%	8.82%	—
Hourly earnings (private) after state tax (maximum 8.82% rate) ²	\$22.75	\$25.35	—
Hourly earnings (manufacturing) after state tax (maximum 8.82% rate) ²	\$19.95	\$17.55	—
Median household income ⁹	\$50,920	\$56,951	\$52,762
Best state for businesses, ranking ⁵	#1	#49	—
Regulatory environment ⁶	#15	#24	—
Quality of life ⁷	#35	#28	—
Cost of living rank, Q1 2013 ⁸	#9	#47	—
Gross state product growth, 2012 ¹⁰	4.80%	1.30%	2.50%
High school graduation rate, 2010-2011 ¹¹	86%	77%	78%
Average price per gallon of gasoline ¹²	\$3.43	\$3.75	\$3.60
Ranking, uninsured for health care, 2009 ⁹	50th	24th (tie)	—
Poverty rate ranking (2011) ⁹	41st	38th (tie)	—
Union membership ²	5.7%	23.2%	11.3%
Building permits issued in 2012 ²	135,514	24,872	—

¹ Internal Revenue Service; ² “Texas: Wide Open for Business,” Texas Economic Development and Tourism Division, Office of the Governor; ³ CNN Money; ⁴ Bureau of Labor Statistics; ⁵ *Chief Executive Magazine* (2013); ⁶ *Forbes* (Dec. 2012); ⁷ CNBC, 2012; ⁸ Missouri Dept. of Economic Development; ⁹ Bureau of the Census; ¹⁰ Bureau of Economic Analysis; ¹¹ Dept. of Education; ¹² American Automobile Association Daily Fuel Gauge Report, June 20, 2013.

first was to attract businesses to Texas. Perry insists it takes nine months from his pitch to a company’s decision to move. So we’ll have to wait on that. But Perry says he expects

to hear this summer that an untold number of California companies are Texas-bound.

The second goal was to stir a national debate on “blue state versus

red states policies.” Perry thinks he’s set this in motion and he may have. It should shine a favorable light on the Texas model of low taxes, light regulation, and less litigation—small government that works.

Perry didn’t acknowledge the third goal. It was a test of his skill as a potential presidential candidate after his disastrous performance in last year’s race for the Republican nomination. He says he “parachuted” into that campaign both too late and unprepared. He knows better now.

He passed this preliminary test with ease. His speech comparing the roaring economy of Texas to that of other states was impressive. I heard him deliver it to three separate groups. There were no uncomfortable moments or glitches. What’s significant is that he has a positive, upbeat message. Most Republicans don’t.

But it will take months of gaffe-free speeches and TV appearances to begin to overcome the legacy of 2012. His “oops” moment—when he forgot in a televised debate the third federal agency he would abolish—lives on. Before he arrived in Chicago, Mayor Emanuel said, “I hope when he comes he remembers all three of his reasons for coming.”

Wherever Perry went in New York, the same question was asked. Will he run and for what office? Perry is the longest-serving governor in Texas history, 13 years and counting. He’ll soon announce, possibly this week, if he intends to seek another term in 2014. My guess is he won’t.

But there are strong hints Perry will run again for president. He says candidates do better the second time. His speeches are geared to a national audience. So is his message. In Jeff Miller, he has a strategist he trusts. And he’s from a big state.

While running for president, “You find out so much about yourself,” Perry says. “Some of it is even true.” In 2012, a reporter discovered Perry is a distant relative of Sam Houston, the fifth Texas governor. Perry recalled this fondly, as if he’s ready to discover what a presidential bid in 2016 would bring. ♦

The Iraq War Is Not Over

Since the departure of U.S. troops, it’s only heated up. **BY KIMBERLY KAGAN**



Iraqi Shia militiamen in Baghdad, preparing to depart for Syria, June 2013

Sectarian war has reignited in Iraq. Iranian-backed Shia militias have remobilized, Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) is conducting an intensive and escalating campaign of spectacular attacks against Shia targets, and some of the former Baathist insurgents are staging an effective campaign against the Iraqi Security Forces in the vicinity of Mosul.

The deteriorating security results from two trends that have caused both Sunni and Shia extremists to mobilize and gain traction. The first is Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki’s deliberate marginalization and ouster of prominent Sunni national politicians, which has led to a six-month-long Sunni protest movement. The killing of 53 protesters and wounding

of another 200 in Hawijah on April 23 caused some protesters to rejoin the insurgency. The second trend is the radicalization and mobilization of Shia militants, both to serve in Syria and to oppose Al Qaeda in Iraq.

SUNNI EXTREMISTS

Prime Minister Maliki’s consistent targeting of his Sunni political rivals has removed two senior Sunni politicians from his cabinet. Former vice president Tariq al-Hashemi is living in exile and has been sentenced in absentia to death on terrorism charges brought after the arrest and torture of his bodyguards the day U.S. forces left Baghdad in 2011. Former finance minister Rafi al-Issawi, whose bodyguards were similarly targeted in December 2012, has led the Sunni protest movement, which has spread from Anbar all across the

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northern provinces and into Baghdad.

That nonviolent protest movement has been radicalizing since Maliki postponed provincial elections in Anbar and Ninevah. Those elections were finally held on June 20, months after the rest of the country had voted. And the movement has turned increasingly violent since the January killing of several protesters in Fallujah and a deliberate military maneuver on the protest camp in Hawijah in April that left 200 casualties. After these events, Maliki attempted to arrest tribal and protest movement leaders, generating further active and passive support for AQI and other extremist groups, such as the neo-Baathist organization Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al-Naqshabandia (JRTN).

Since January, AQI and the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) have conducted spectacular attacks in Baghdad and the south, such as those that rocked Mahmudiya, Hillah, Madain, Nasiriyah, Kut, and Basra on June 10, resulting in more than 180 casualties. And since March, many of their signature car and truck bombs have targeted Shia religious sites and neighborhoods. This sectarian targeting has increased over the past month, as Shia militia groups have mobilized in Baghdad, conducting execution-style killings of Sunnis and morality killings in Shia neighborhoods. AQI/ISI attacks now occur nearly weekly.

AQI and ISI still function as terrorist groups, and Ansar al Islam, another Sunni extremist movement, is increasingly active as well. But the main body of the Sunni insurgency even in 2006 consisted of former Baath party members, often with military backgrounds, who conducted small-arms attacks and planted improvised explosive devices (IEDs) against U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces. The JRTN has been present at protest sites, including the one at Hawijah where Iraqi Security Forces killed numerous civilians. Since that incident, there has been an uptick in the number of highly accurate small-arms attacks inside Mosul proper, as well as IEDs in Qayarah, the approach to Mosul from the south. These attacks primarily target Iraqi Security Forces. Given the similarity of historical and

current attack patterns, it appears that the JRTN is now resurgent in Mosul and fighting the Iraqi Security Forces.

As Iraq analyst Stephen Wicken notes,

The protesters have been dissipating from the protest sites this week, something that should be expected at this time, as the provincial elections in Anbar and Ninevah were held on 20 June. But the rising violence trends, and in particular, the attacks that do not bear the AQI/ISI hallmark, suggest that some Sunni have given up on the political process and are resorting to arms to resist the Maliki government. This trend has accelerated also after the fall of al Qusayr in Syria, which, because of the involvement of Hezbollah, has become a rallying cry for Sunni in the region. And as Maliki deploys ISF into Anbar and Ninevah in order to secure the provincial elections, the opportunity for violent opposition to the ISF increases.

There is thus a new inflection point in the Iraq conflict. The peaceful Sunni protest movement appears to be becoming an armed insurgency in northern Iraq.

SHIA MILITIAS

Another Iranian-backed Shia militia, Asaib Ahl al Haq (AAH), has been responsible for the deaths of many American soldiers through its lethal Explosively Formed Projectiles. This group too began remobilizing in Baghdad in early May. AAH has been fighting alongside Lebanese Hezbollah at a prominent Shia shrine in Damascus since 2012. AAH's intensified presence in Baghdad is roughly concurrent with Lebanese Hezbollah's mobilization of a 2,000-man fighting force sent to Syria to reinforce the siege of Qusayr.

Shia militias have mobilized in Iraq and have resumed extrajudicial killings in Baghdad, Diyala, and Hillah. Since parading in a Baghdad soccer stadium ostensibly to celebrate its tenth anniversary, in front of leader Qais al Khazali, who was long in U.S. custody for his role in the murder of five American soldiers in 2007, AAH took to the streets.

The groups are responding in part to the wave of Al Qaeda in Iraq attacks on May 20 and 27, an escalating campaign

of suicide bombings. The first attacks targeted the approaches to Baghdad and several sites around the country, the second hit the Shia and mixed fault-line neighborhoods that were contested in 2006-07.

By early June AAH had resumed some of the violent behaviors that characterized Shia militant attacks against Iraqis in 2006-07: establishment of false checkpoints, ID checking, kidnapping people from their cars or public places, and executing them. For example, two people were kidnapped from a bus stop near Baghdad University in the late afternoon, and their bodies were found in western Baghdad at a traditional 2006 dumping site, hands bound, shot in the head or chest, a few days later. AAH has also resumed executions with silenced weapons of other targets with an intent to intimidate: whether pulling shopkeepers from their homes and killing them and their families; executing teachers; executing liquor store owners and conducting other morality policing. These events have occurred in areas not far from Sadr City, as well as in Diyala, in places familiar during the violence of 2006-07. The militias are evidently reasserting their control of East Baghdad while projecting checkpoints into West Baghdad.

Some of the militia activity is occurring within sight of Iraqi Security Forces checkpoints. Maliki is either tolerating it or has lost control over the escalation. In any case, politicians will not be able to check this violent retribution, which has a dynamic of its own—as Americans learned all too well in the wake of the Samarra mosque bombing in 2006.

Not all Shia groups are fanning the flames of sectarian reprisals. Even so, the current mobilization is unlikely to be limited. Some Shia militias are targeting Sunni mosques with IEDs in retribution for AQI attacks. The mobilization of AAH makes it hard for the Sadrist fighters to stay neutral, even when ordered to do so by their leader, Moktada al-Sadr, who has repeatedly instructed them not to reignite sectarian conflict. Rogue Sadrist elements—against Sadr's orders—have paraded in areas south of Baghdad.

In contrast, AAH's political bureau chief, Adnan al-Dulaimi, stated that AAH "is ready for [mobilization] and we are ready to protect our people." Indeed, friction between the Sadrism Trend and its AAH splinter is running high, after AAH attempted to assassinate Hazem al-Araji, one of the most prominent Sadrists, near the Kadhi-miya shrine, a sacred site in Baghdad where he has served as a key patron.

The Sadrism Trend has allied itself with Sunni political parties and Kurds in Diyala and Baghdad to control the leadership of the newly elected provincial councils, freezing out Maliki's coalition. This odd alliance creates new opportunities for Sunni political participation in two swing provinces, where the sectarian fault lines are deepest. But it is difficult to imagine a political settlement that would gain the support of the remobilizing former Baathist elements or the rekindled AQI/ISI.

THE UNITED STATES

The United States must no longer unconditionally back Maliki, who has created this circumstance by choosing to target his Sunni political opponents and by tolerating violence against civilians in the protest movement. The United States cannot simply support the Iraqi Security Forces, which are tolerating the Shia militants willing to kill Sunni civilians. Iraqi Security Forces, even if supported by the United States, cannot target AQI without being able to separate it from the Sunni population.

Secretary of State John Kerry has used the limited leverage that the United States has to try to stop Iraq from allowing Iranian overflights to Syria. This is the least efficient use of our leverage, even though the strategic principle is sound, because Maliki has neither the capability nor the will to stop the Iranian regime from supporting Assad. It is no surprise that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Quds Force has staged inspections of its own aircraft to prove that Iraq is not permitting arms to transit its airspace.

There are, however, ways that the United States could use its leverage to influence the behavior of the

Maliki government, although not to arrest the violence entirely. First and foremost, the United States needs to condition the provision of arms, equipment, and training to the Iraqi Security Forces on Maliki's respect for the representative political system, humanitarian treaties Iraq has signed, and inclusive political solutions. These include dropping his legal charges against the cabinet members and protest leaders, meeting the reasonable demands of the protesters for transparency and de-Baathification measures, and implementing the promised terms of the 2010 Erbil Agreement by which he achieved the premiership. It is also vital that Maliki not tolerate Shia militant groups.

Second, the United States can block the United Nations from lifting Iraq's onerous Chapter VII status, even though Kuwait has at long last agreed to support the change, until Maliki makes those concessions.

Those who argue that conditioning aid is difficult must note that our failure to condition our aid has empowered Maliki disproportionately. His deliberate disenfranchisement of the Sunni population is the main accelerant to insurgency in Iraq.

Iraq sits at the heart of the Middle East and straddles the sectarian divide. The United States once hoped that, with American help, Iraq could decelerate sectarian conflict, serve as a buffer against an expanding Iran, and be an ally against al Qaeda. The United States had largely achieved those political conditions—fragile though the achievement was—by the time American troops departed. But that is not the Iraq we have today. The United States must no longer imagine that it has a friendly government in Baghdad with which to work, or that Iraq is stable enough to buffer the region against the sectarian war that is brewing in its heartland. ♦

Meet the New Mullah

Same as the old mullah.

BY REUEL MARC GERECHT

Iranians aren't wrong to celebrate the presidential victory of Hassan Rouhani. It is a (small) thumb in the eye of the country's clerical ruler, Ali Khamenei. Leaving aside foreign affairs and the nuclear issue for a moment, everyone should take some joy from controlled elections that still deliver surprises. The Islamic Revolution put into permanent tension two irreconcilable forces: theocracy and democracy. Although the regime has rigged balloting before, it doesn't like to do so. It wants to believe that Iranians

will vote the way "good Muslims" should, which is the way the supreme leader wants them to.

Rouhani was for years the all-purpose factotum—the inside fixer—for Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, former majordomo of the political clergy and right-hand man of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Islamic Republic's founder. Without Rafsanjani, Khamenei would never have succeeded Khomeini. Since the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to the presidency in 2005, Rafsanjani has been in a very difficult relationship with Khamenei, who allowed Ahmadinejad, a man with a real bugaboo about corrupt mullahs, to torment relentlessly the great political

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maestro. The volcanic disputed presidential election of 2009, when the pro-democracy Green Movement rose up and was beaten down, left Rafsanjani prostrate before the supreme leader.

Rafsanjani isn't a beloved national figure. Ahmadinejad cleaned his clock in the 2005 presidential contest. But in the Islamic Republic, where small political differences are the engines of hope, a vote for the former servant of my enemy's enemy was the best ballot an angry Iranian could cast in 2013. Rouhani was the only candidate whose triumph could've been construed as an expression of disapproval of the supreme leader's increasingly tyrannical reign.

During the campaign, Rouhani called for the release of the former leaders of the Green Movement, Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karubi, both under house arrest. He vaguely wrapped himself in the sensibilities and civility of their cause—without endorsing their main demand, free elections. Even folks who supported Khamenei in the brutal crackdown in 2009 have bemoaned how nasty politics has become. Founding fathers of the revolution and their families are no longer safe from the regime's thugs.

The Islamic Republic has always had three sets of rules for the citizenry: one for the elite, one for the common faithful, and one for dissidents. It's not surprising that Rouhani by the end of the campaign sounded and looked like Mohammed Khatami, the mild-mannered, always-smiling, reformist cleric who won an earlier surprise victory against the conservative clerical establishment in 1997 and ushered in a brief period of reform and greater civility before Khamenei and his allies crushed the movement.

But the "Rouhani euphoria," in Tehran and in the West, won't last long. The election of Khatami introduced real reflection and tumult into the Islamic Republic's political establishment, in great part because Khatami's critiques of the revolution, theocracy, the United States, and even the Islamic faith were serious. Khatami may have been a bit of a Caspar Milquetoast personally, but

he gathered around him and spearheaded, sometimes unintentionally, a movement of individuals who were serious about changing the system. In a year's time President Khatami will probably look audacious and true of heart compared with Rouhani.

Remember: Rouhani was allowed to run because—unlike his former patron, who took a stand against Ahmadinejad in 2009—he remained pretty quiet, only occasionally making bleats in favor of "consensus." The probable truth: Rouhani allied himself with Khamenei four years ago, if not ear-



President Hassan Rouhani

lier, seeing clearly the collapsing and unreliable power network of his mentor. In the 1990s, when Rafsanjani's and Khamenei's allies started to duel, the white-turbaned hope for "pragmatism" proved himself a fickle and increasingly feeble patron. Rouhani, who has intimately watched the great power struggles inside the republic since the death of Khomeini, is no fool. Khamenei kept him on the national security council after Ahmadinejad dumped him in all likelihood because he knew where Rouhani's real allegiances lay.

We will know a lot more about Rouhani's domestic agenda when he forms a cabinet—how he brings together what the Iran scholar Ali Alfoneh has described as "competing mafias." Once upon a time, Rafsanjani could ride herd on all of the Islamic Republic's battling interests. Those days are gone, and Khamenei has shown that he doesn't have the requisite skill to do such a thing. His love of the Revolutionary Guards and his own increasingly rigid religious ideology and grandiose

self-conception ("the shadow of God upon Earth") have made him a too-active participant in the Islamic Republic's internecine quarrels and spoils. Much more than in the past, Khamenei and his minions solve their problems with brute force.

Rouhani may well try to bring some power back to the presidency. Since Khatami's time, Khamenei has built up shadow ministries within his own office that have veto power over their official counterparts. Rouhani will certainly make the case to the supreme leader that, unlike the last two presidents, he can be trusted. What we are likely to see—in a best-case scenario—is a big tent that includes many, though not all, of the revolutionary establishment figures that Rouhani has grown up with. Others who've fallen away from Rafsanjani will likely be inside; and the conservative clergy, with its mixed feelings about the supreme leader's theocratic hubris, may be there, too.

The only ones unlikely to be included are the serious reformers. They will remain unloved and unwanted, though Rouhani may try to cut down on their harassment. If the supreme leader stops persecuting these people, he may ease up on Rafsanjani (whose children have been interrogated and briefly jailed), for whom Rouhani may have some lingering affection.

But neither Khamenei nor Rouhani likes messiness and dissension among the elite. Rouhani was the first secretary of the national security council, joined to Rafsanjani at the hip, when his patron and Khamenei let loose the assassination teams to snuff out particularly annoying Iranian dissidents at home and abroad in the 1990s. (The regime's leitmotiv has generally been "kill a few, scare a lot.") He was a big fan of crushing Tehran University student demonstrators in 1999. It's a good guess he will not press too hard for the Green Movement's leaders' actual release.

And what happens internally will influence foreign affairs. Obviously the Obama administration is hopeful that the change of presidents

will offer a breakthrough on the nuclear front. It may be tempted to relent on sanctions to see whether Khamenei can be induced to stop constructing a nuclear weapon. Administrations always like to believe in the efficacy of their own handiwork. The White House may think that sanctions have already been so painful to the ruling elite that Tehran is in fact ready to trade away partial control of its nuclear program to foreigners.

It's possible—though just barely—to imagine Rouhani convincing the supreme leader to let him reanimate the rope-a-dope, divide-the-Europeans-from-the-Americans foreign policy that he and Rafsanjani advanced successfully from 1992 to 2003. In his writings, Rouhani has confessed candidly that negotiations for him were designed to split Iran's adversaries while advancing the nuclear program. Since 2005, when his two years as Iran's top nuclear negotiator ended, Rouhani has spent much time defending his work, arguing that Iran's atomic quest could have advanced with less economic damage if he had been in charge. He still defends his successful effort to convince the supreme leader to do something he didn't want to do—temporarily suspend uranium enrichment—in 2004.

Today, Rouhani might, just possibly, convince the supreme leader to ship out some of Iran's 20 percent enriched uranium in return for sanctions relief. It's doubtful. Khamenei has owned the nuclear portfolio under Ahmadinejad. He curtailed Ahmadinejad's love affair with one-on-one discussions with the United States, which for the departing president meant that the Islamic Republic was America's equal. Going back to divide-and-conquer would mean to the supreme leader that his preferred, in-your-face approach had failed.

Which, by the way, it hasn't. With the nuclear negotiations under Rouhani's successor, the one-legged, religiously zealous, and incorruptible Saeed Jalili (who probably was Khamenei's preferred presidential candidate), the Islamic Republic has advanced substantially. Given its ever-growing number of increasingly efficient

centrifuges and the soon-to-be-operational plutonium-separation facility at Arak, Tehran could be within 18 months of having a two-week nuclear breakout capacity. Soon, its stockpile of 20 percent enriched uranium will be irrelevant as a stepping stone to weaponization: Iran's massive low-enriched uranium stockpile, which Rouhani has emphatically said is nonnegotiable, will be all that's required to dash to a uranium-triggered bomb.

That is an impressive achievement for a theocracy that not long ago had a hellacious time just building centrifuges. Sanctions cause real pain for some, especially in the lower and middle classes; but Khamenei, like his predecessor, never stops reminding the faithful that the Islamic Republic isn't about economics.

As Rouhani's promise evaporates over the next few months, President Obama will stare at what he's staring at now: a choice between preemptively bombing the Islamic Republic's nuclear sites and allowing the supreme leader and his guards, who oversee both the nuclear program and terrorist operations abroad, the capacity to build an atomic weapon at any time of their choosing. The president has acknowledged the oncoming breakout capacity for the regime; he's also pledged to stop it. As former CIA and NSA director Michael Hayden has remarked, however, it's hard to imagine James Clapper, the director of national intelligence, ever walking into the Oval Office and announcing that today is the day when the "red line" has been irretrievably crossed. Intelligence officers don't do that.

For the president to avoid this stark choice he needs Rouhani and Khamenei to play ball, to accept what was on the table at nuclear negotiations in Kazakhstan in the spring. Khamenei flatly refused that offer: "I'm not a diplomat; I'm a revolutionary," he answered. Obama could up the ante: offer a really big bag of candy to the Iranian regime—all the stuff that "realists" believe motivates men—in exchange for a verifiable cessation of Iran's uranium enrichment, openness about efforts at weaponization and the

manufacture of centrifuges, a curtailment of centrifuge production, and the implementation of the International Atomic Energy Agency's Additional Protocol, which would allow U.N. inspectors access to any civilian or military site in the Islamic Republic without advance notice.

Or the president could take a different tack. He could act on what the Iranian presidential contest clearly revealed: Sanctions are an issue inside the Islamic Republic. They haven't stopped the nuclear program, but they have brought sufficient pain for the elite to debate their damage openly. Obama loves competitive sports, where weakness is always exploited. He should apply that wisdom elsewhere: Go to the French, British, and Germans and push hard for an embargo of the Islamic Republic. It's doubtful the United States can implement the economy-crunching quarantine that the British brought against the oil-nationalizing Iranian prime minister Muhammad Mosaddeq in 1951. That embargo helped make Mosaddeq an unpopular prime minister by 1953, when Iranians—not Americans and Brits—removed him.

But it's worth a try. It's also certainly worth doing what the Americans did in 2003: Scare the mullahs. After Saddam Hussein went down, the Iranian regime, according to the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate, stopped experimenting with nuclear triggers and warhead designs. In 2004, Khamenei accepted, even if briefly, Rouhani's suspension of uranium enrichment. Update the fear: Obama could declare that he intends to attack Iran by air and by sea but that Khamenei and the Revolutionary Guards have the power to stop him. He could go to Congress and ask for authorization to strike. And he could tell his senior commanders to stop saying publicly that they neither foresee nor need to plan for another land war in Asia.

For Obama to do that he would need to have what Rouhani has in spades: real experience in power politics. So we wait. Most probably the president will do what he's most experienced at doing overseas—nothing. ♦

Al Jazeera at the Newseum

Made-in-Qatar media, live from a studio in Washington. BY CLAUDIA ROSETT



The fledgling Al Jazeera bureau in Washington, 2006

Bankrolled by the oil and gas wealth of Qatar, now hiring 800 staff members and opening 12 news bureaus across the United States, Al Jazeera will soon be coming to a television near you. From its Doha headquarters, the media empire of Qatar's royal family is launching a new channel dubbed Al Jazeera America, devoted to in-depth coverage of the United States. When it goes live later this year, its flagship primetime show, *America Tonight*, will be broadcast from a studio in Washington's Newseum—a high-tech museum of news and journalism with the self-described mission of “educating the public about the value of a free press in a free society.”

Is anything wrong with that picture? Plenty, if you consider that Al Jazeera is effectively an arm of the government

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of Qatar, a Middle East monarchy long on oil money and short on freedom. According to the State Department's 2012 Human Rights Report, Qatar has no independent broadcast media and all print media are owned by “Members of the ruling family or proprietors who enjoyed close ties to government officials.” Journalists censor themselves due to “political and economic pressures.” The government forbids political parties, censors the Internet, and strictly regulates the right of assembly. Foreign residents, who make up the bulk of Qatar's population, are prohibited by law from criticizing the emir.

From this base, Al Jazeera's expanding networks have been part of the Qatari government's efforts to cultivate influence around the globe. This is a complex campaign, in which Qatar currently hosts both U.S. military forces and terrorist Khaled Meshal, one of the top leaders of Hamas, the Palestinian terrorist group that rules

Gaza and is dedicated in its charter to the obliteration of Israel.

Al Jazeera's management has been insisting that its new American network will be independent, though so far the hallmarks of the venture have been opaque multimillion-dollar deals out of Al Jazeera's Doha headquarters. To gain its new foothold in the U.S. cable market, Al Jazeera in January paid former vice president Al Gore and his business partners an estimated \$400 million (the precise amount was not disclosed) for Gore's dud cable news venture, Current TV. Attracting ads may be difficult in America's highly competitive news market, but Al Jazeera Media Network's executive director of international operations, Ehab Al Shihabi, recently told the *Wall Street Journal* that profits are not a primary concern.

What Al Jazeera most seems to need is credibility. Which brings us to its arrangements to broadcast from the Newseum, a venue meant to showcase the glories of a free press, not the advantages of Arab oil wealth. Operating as a tax-exempt public charity, built at a cost of \$475 million and opened in 2008, the Newseum is located on prime Washington real estate just blocks from the White House and Capitol. Complete with conference facilities and crammed with interactive exhibits and historic items—such as a twisted piece of the antenna that once topped the North Tower of the World Trade Center—the Newseum's block-long building offers a prestigious address, especially for those in the news trade. To symbolize transparency, its walls are made of glass, adorned at one end with a 74-foot-high marble slab engraved with the First Amendment.

Giants of the American news industry contributed millions to help create this place. Plastered throughout its premises are the names of such patrons as Hearst, the *New York Times*, Bloomberg, News Corporation, ABC, and NBC. The studio Al Jazeera is now refurbishing to its taste is named for the Knight Foundation, a legacy of the Knight Newspapers empire. Until recently, it was home to ABC's *This Week*, with George Stephanopoulos.

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It's easy to see what Al Jazeera gets from this arrangement. But what is the Newseum getting? Or, to put it in dollar terms, how much? Al Jazeera America, headquartered in New York, did not return my phone calls. When I phoned the Newseum press office recently to ask for financial details of the Al Jazeera arrangements, it turned out that officials of this institution dedicated to reporting would not answer such questions from a reporter. Newseum media relations manager Jonathan Thompson did confirm that while a number of other news organizations rent temporary studio space at the Newseum, "Al Jazeera will be the only news organization that has a more permanent contract."

Al Jazeera is not the only topic on which the Newseum has made troubling decisions lately. This spring, the Newseum included in its memorial to fallen journalists the names of two men killed in Gaza last year while working under the auspices of Al Aqsa Television, Mahmoud al-Kumi and Husam Salama. Al Aqsa TV has been blacklisted by the U.S. Treasury since 2010 as "financed and controlled by Hamas." Treasury noted that Al Aqsa "airs programs and music videos designed to recruit children to become Hamas armed fighters and suicide bombers upon reaching adulthood."

When the Hamas names provoked protest, the Newseum erased them from its online roster of fallen journalists, but not from its in-house exhibit. They remain etched in the glass panels of the memorial, alongside such names as Daniel Pearl. Nearby is a quote from Hillary Clinton, "The men and women of this memorial are truly democracy's heroes."

Honoring dead Hamas terrorists is the kind of gesture that might please the emir of Qatar, who last October traveled to Gaza to honor the living leaders of Hamas by promising them \$400 million in aid. But it seems a strange way of educating the public in the value of a free press. So does a statement, in reply to my questions, from Newseum spokesman Thompson: "Free speech includes the right to not answer questions." ♦

Hucksterism vs. Nonproliferation

Irreconcilable U.S. nuclear policies.

BY VICTOR GILINSKY & HENRY SOKOLSKI

In mid-May a U.S. nuclear sales delegation ventured to Vietnam to convince Hanoi officials to buy Westinghouse reactors. Led by a Commerce Department undersecretary, it included an Energy Department

or extracting plutonium from spent fuel—activities that would give them ready access to nuclear explosives. South Korea, Vietnam, and Saudi Arabia have balked at these terms.

Despite President Obama's lofty

nuclear control rhetoric, his administration doesn't want tight rules that risk nuclear sales. In a fit of honesty, the State Department wrote Congress in January 2012 that we need to "negotiate agreements that our partners can accept and that open the doors to U.S. industry." Ergo: a "country-by-country" approach. This means pressuring those with weak negotiating

hands (e.g., the UAE in 2008) but giving in to those with stronger cards (e.g., Vietnam in 2013).

The claim is that nuclear sales allow us to influence our customers' nuclear policies. But history tells us that when it becomes important to influence those policies, the same export crowd argues we mustn't, that it's more important to maintain our status as a "reliable supplier."

As if to erase doubts about the administration's priorities, Rose Gottemoeller, the acting undersecretary of state responsible for arms control, assured the nuclear industry's top lobbying association in mid-May of President Obama's all-out support for nuclear exports and his belief that they are a "strategic asset." She dangled the Commerce Department's estimate that over the



Not in our backyard: a protest in neighboring Thailand

assistant secretary, the director of the newly created White House Office of Nuclear Energy Policy, and 18 nuclear firm representatives. It represents the new Obama "Team USA" approach to nuclear exports: Prospective sales trump proliferation concerns.

Congress has been pressing the administration for new nuclear trade agreements to meet the nonproliferation "gold standard," set in the 2009 U.S.-United Arab Emirates agreement negotiated by President Bush and finalized by President Obama. It requires customers for U.S. nuclear plants to forgo enriching uranium

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next 10 years U.S. nuclear exports could reach \$100 billion.

This estimate, based on self-serving projections of the International Atomic Energy Agency, is wildly overoptimistic, especially in the wake of the 2011 Fukushima accident. The Obama administration is itself being duped. The truth is nuclear power's future depends on subsidies, as it does not in most of the world meet a market test. We would be doing developing countries like Vietnam a favor if we made that clear instead of beating the drum for nuclear power.

This nuclear boosterism sacrifices the president's own nonproliferation policies as he outlined in his 2009 Prague speech on nuclear policy. He then vowed that "together we will strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty [NPT] as a basis for cooperation." But in practice the administration has gone along with the State Department's fatalistic approach to the NPT—that however flawed the predominant interpretation of the NPT may be, especially concerning the encouragement of the spread of "peaceful" nuclear technology, it is too late to do much about it because that is how the majority of treaty members see it.

Our diplomats, and the president, too, have taken to describing the NPT as resting on "three pillars," only one of which is nonproliferation, the other two being reduction of nuclear arms and strong support for expanded nuclear energy use worldwide. U.S. acceptance of the "three pillars" formulation serves to validate the resistance of nuclear establishments around the world to tough nonproliferation standards. It blurs the distinction between nonproliferation and proliferation.

The reason expanded nuclear energy use worldwide is worrisome from a security point of view is that any new entrant into the nuclear weapons club will likely come from the ranks of countries with nuclear power programs. Every nonnuclear-weapon state is now an NPT member, and if one decided it wanted

nuclear weapons it would put a high premium on getting to a bomb as fast as possible to avoid counteraction. The quickest way for a country to do this is to tap an existing "peaceful" nuclear power program, especially if it has uranium enrichment or reprocessing plants. That is what the nonproliferation "gold standard" is designed to avoid.

Everyone knows we don't have adequate international "safeguards" to prevent countries from getting close to a bomb. In fact, the prevailing interpretation of the NPT says countries have the "inalienable right" to "peaceful" nuclear technology so long as they allow IAEA inspection. But we know from experience with North Korea that a country can toss out the inspectors and keep

the facilities and bomb potential.

Despite this—and in contrast with the idealistic "getting to zero" mantra on the military nuclear side—the administration has no interest even in defining what would constitute adequate controls over nuclear energy, out of fear this might put a crimp in nuclear sales around the world. The administration is mistaken both on the facts and on its priorities.

We need to deal with much more than North Korea and Iran if we are going to be serious about putting a stop to the bomb's spread. A good place to begin is to insist on the "gold standard" for export agreements, and to follow that with a broad new approach to the international control of nuclear energy with the world's other nuclear suppliers. ♦

Beijing's New Slogan

China's president has a dream.

BY DEAN CHENG

For his first summit with Xi Jinping three weeks ago, President Obama was apparently prepped by administration Asia hands that the new Chinese president would likely talk of a "new pattern of major power relations." What that means in terms of actual Chinese policy is perhaps no more clear than the White House's plans to pivot to Asia. In their long meeting in California, the two leaders no doubt touched on matters of substance while trading slogans, the most resonant of which for Xi is the "China dream"—a phrase meant to serve as the ideological basis of Xi's domestic, regional, and international ambitions.

The term "China dream" gained

prominence immediately after the 18th Communist Party Congress in late 2012, when members of the newly invested Politburo attended an exhibition in Beijing, "The Road to Revival." There Xi equated the dream with the revival of China. Embodying the hopes of generations of Chinese to come, the fulfillment of this dream, Xi later explained, would require the party's sustained leadership.

If the notion of the China dream seems vague, albeit evocative, that's intentional. The new president wants to avoid alienating all segments of the party, especially since for the first time in the history of Communist China, the ruling cadre includes no revolution-era figures to lend it gravitas and political legitimacy. The China dream references a national resurgence, without striking a plangently

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nationalist chord. Anything good will contribute to the realization of the China dream, while anything bad will push it further into the distance. Requiring careful stewardship, the China dream also justifies the continued rule of the Communist party. In other words, Xi has reinjected ideology into the party's political discourse, even if it's ideology-lite.

Over the last several decades, the role of ideology became less important as the economy shifted away from central planning, and the party adopted Deng Xiaoping's mantra, "to become rich is glorious." The decision of Jiang Zemin, the party's former general secretary, to allow entrepreneurs into the party further moved it away from its Maoist roots. Today's party is Communist only in the sense that it comprises a small minority of the population, has a monopoly on political power, controls key parts of the economy, and rejects an independent civil society. Egalitarianism, microeconomic planning (often down to the level of individual farmers), and limited disparities between rich and poor have fallen by the wayside.

So long as the economy was growing, the material benefits justified party rule, but, as even Xi has warned, China's economy is likely to slow down in the coming decade. "I don't think China can sustain super-high or ultra-high-speed growth," Xi said at the Boao Forum for Asia in April. Without an economic boom to rationalize its continued rule, the party has little choice but to opt for ideology. Xi's China dream ties the party to the long-term task of leading China's renewal, and returning it to a leading place among the world's nations. This will repair the effects of the "Century of Humiliation," the period from the Opium War (1839) through the end of the Chinese Civil War (1949), when the country's territory and sovereignty were under constant threat. At the same time, Xi avoids associating national revival with the legacy of Mao Zedong, and the catastrophic

disruptions of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.

For Xi the even more relevant legacy is the situation he inherited from his predecessor, Hu Jintao. Under Hu, economic reform ground to a halt. Renewed emphasis on the state's role in the economy benefited many members of the party, who not surprisingly resisted further market-oriented reform. Hu's rule was a period of stasis and retrenchment in the political arena as well. Despite a



I have a China dream: Xi Jinping (right)

dizzying array of theoretical slogans—from creating a "Harmonious Society" to pursuing "Indigenous Innovation" and adopting a "Scientific Development Outlook"—Hu failed to establish any kind of political legacy for the party worthy of, say, Deng Xiaoping's "Reform and Opening."

Hu's era of stagnation left Xi with little room to maneuver. As the first Chinese leader to rise without the support of a revolution-era figure, Xi will likely face greater challenges to his authority from within the party. Attempts to reform the economy by targeting corruption and liberating market forces will only energize potential rivals. Hence, with the China dream as the fault line separating loyalists from adversaries, Xi has framed it as an easy choice—either stand with the nation and contribute to the China dream, or stand in opposition and go against the dream and China.

Nonetheless, the prospects for domestic political reform are next to

nil. There is little evidence that any of the senior leaders, from Xi on down, will use their limited political capital to push for democratization. A useful index is the latest budget, which allocates more for domestic security than national defense. Other problems that Hu bequeathed to Xi include a degraded natural environment and rising ethnic tensions, with increasing numbers of Tibetan self-immolations and Uighur riots in Xinjiang.

On the regional front, Xi's references to the country's glorious past and aspirations to return to it will likely set the neighbors' teeth on edge, no matter how much he tries to round the hard edges of Chinese nationalism. Throughout the history of imperial China, surrounding states, all of whose ways were believed to be inferior to those of the Middle Kingdom, were expected to pay tribute. The recent report claiming that Okinawa and the Ryukyu Islands were traditionally Chinese vassals is an unpleasant echo of this past—while it also indirectly challenges the

United States, which has military bases on Okinawa. China has also pushed Malaysia, the Philippines, and India on territorial issues.

Internationally, China has defended authoritarian regimes, exercising its veto in the U.N. on behalf of Syrian president Bashar al-Assad's regime, opposing further sanctions on Iran, and cooperating with the likes of Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe and Sudan's Omar Bashir. This approach is emblematic of the "Beijing consensus," where economic progress is separate from political liberalization. For Xi, obtaining American acceptance of this approach, as the basis of the new pattern in major-power relations between Beijing and Washington, is also part of the China dream.

Napoleon allegedly said, "Let China sleep, for when the Dragon awakes, she will shake the world." As Obama may have learned last week, how the dragon wakes might well be presaged in Xi's China dream. ♦

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The Great Bugout

Obama's retreat from the Middle East

BY THOMAS DONNELLY

Barack Obama's foreign policy has one core principle: Get the United States out of the Middle East wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that he "inherited" from George W. Bush and avoid repeating those mistakes. There have been other themes sounded by the White House, most notably the "Pacific pivot," but backing out of perceived military overcommitments in the Muslim world has been the prime directive.

Unfortunately for the president, the worsening situation in Syria is raising doubts about the wisdom and universal applicability of this principle, even among the most resolutely war-weary. Maureen Dowd, the *New York Times* columnist with the uncanny ability to reduce every issue to its high-school essence, recently noted how "Bill" (i.e., ex-President Clinton, now acting as "Secretary of 'Splaining Stuff") has had to warn "Barry" (our current commander in chief) that he was looking "like a total wuss" on Syria. And while making deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes "be the face of the Syria plan," the president was off at "an LGBT Pride Month celebration, a Father's Day luncheon and a reception for the WNBA championship Indiana Fever [women's] basketball team."

In sum, even the president's most ardent supporters are beginning to wonder whether the Obama retreat has gone too far. It's a good time to ask the quintessential Ronald Reagan question: Are you better off than you were four years ago? Or rather, is the United States in a better position in the Middle East today than it was when Obama replaced Bush? Not to kill the suspense, but we're much worse off—no better liked, no longer feared, regarded as an increasingly inconstant ally or as an enemy prone to blink. The simple facts make the case.

THE BUSH LEGACY

In 2005, as sectarian violence in Iraq rose to the point of open and multisided war between Sunni militias—most notoriously the Al Qaeda in Iraq faction led by the sadistic Abu Musab al Zarqawi—Shia militias centered

on Moktada al-Sadr's Jaish al Mahdi, and U.S. and Iraqi government forces, Congress began demanding quarterly reports from the Bush administration, "Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq." The first reports were anodyne outlines of the ever-shifting plan for "transitioning" security missions to Iraqis. But by late 2006 the reports could no longer avoid the truth that Iraq was on the edge of large-scale conflict. The November 2006 installment was particularly bleak, concluding that the reconstruction and reconciliation "project has shown little progress."

Sectarian violence has steadily increased despite meetings among religious and tribal leaders. The proposed meeting between political leaders has been repeatedly delayed. Concrete actions by the Government of Iraq to implement national reconciliation have not been successful. Some Iraqis now express a lack of confidence in the government's ability to equitably solve fundamental issues.

But by the last quarter of 2008, the report could accurately trumpet a "nationwide reduction in civilian deaths by almost 63 percent compared to the same period in 2007." More generally, the last Bush-era report assessed an improving overall security situation, allowing that "[m]any factors have contributed to an environment of enhanced security and political progress, including increasingly capable Iraqi Security Forces aided by the Sons of Iraq, Coalition forces' continuing support . . . and the demonstrated will of the Government of Iraq." The conclusions about Iraqi political reconciliation were more cautious, but the evidence was undeniable: The "surge" of 2007 and early 2008 had achieved its military objective of suppressing the civil war. The successes were fragile but real.

Through all eight years of Bush's presidency, Iraq was the administration's major Middle East concern. The long-simmering contest with Saddam Hussein had made Iraq a recurring headache for a generation, and the insurgencies that arose in the wake of Saddam's overthrow had taken on a vicious sectarian cast. Whether as an overweening, would-be regional power or a collapsed society, Iraq had been Bush's first priority. But, of course, not the only concern.

During his last four months in office, President Bush also authorized a major review of his Afghanistan strategy. It planned to double the size of the Afghan National Army, restructure the International Security Assistance

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Force—the NATO-centered coalition there—and devote more intelligence assets to tracking down al Qaeda and Taliban leaders in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. It had asked the senior military commander, U.S. Army general David McKiernan, to prepare a request for a troop “surge” of his own, but chose to leave such a decision to the next president. The administration recognized that its unexpectedly rapid successes of late 2001 and 2002 were an incomplete victory; al Qaeda and the Taliban leadership had been driven from power, but Afghanistan—particularly in the Pashtun stronghold of Kandahar—remained a chaotic place, corruptly and weakly “governed” from Kabul. Indeed, the regime of President Hamid Karzai was beginning to look problematic.

Despite the shock of the 9/11 attacks and the declaration of a “global war on terror,” the Bush administration did not entirely lose its sense of traditional Middle East power politics. This was an administration in which the president’s decision-making circle was small and practical-minded, and devoted to inherited strategic tradition. Almost by habit, they regarded Afghanistan as an economy-of-force mission. Thus, the Iraq mission and “surge” took precedence over Afghanistan; who ruled in Baghdad was inherently more important than who ruled in Kandahar—Islamabad was more important than Kandahar, too.

And from the first, President Bush viewed the terror war within its regional context. Speaking to Congress on September 20, 2001, he argued that the effort “begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there.” To be sure, the Bush administration made huge efforts to target Osama bin Laden, but it also attacked many other elements of the al Qaeda network, notably in the Philippines and Indonesia. Indeed, both those “antiterrorism” campaigns were broadly crafted to rebuild damaged strategic partnerships and reform militaries prone to excesses. The results are now visible both in the form of deepened democracies and—in two countries also feeling the pressures of Chinese encroachments—the desire for deeper ties to the United States.

Assessing Bush’s Middle East strategy in light of the overall regional balance of power also casts Iran questions in a different light. While there was no moderation of the revolutionary bent of the Islamic Republic or halt to its drive to acquire nuclear weapons, the strong U.S. positions in Iraq and Afghanistan did much to contain Iranian mischief-making and posed a credible threat to Iran’s nuclear facilities; in Iraq, Nuri al-Maliki’s bold “Knight’s Charge” operation in early 2008 defeated a gaggle of Iran-friendly Shia militias in the southern city of Basra, militias including Moktada al-Sadr’s Jaish al Mahdi. At the time—meaning in the context of the perceived successes of the U.S. “surge”—it appeared that Maliki might be an

independent leader with a bit of a nationalist streak willing to take on Iranian proxies.

Bush also courted traditional regional-power partners in Turkey and Saudi Arabia. The administration’s efforts to rebuild the Turkish alliance have been little studied, but from the low point of 2003, when Ankara rejected requests for access to support the Iraq invasion, there was a slow, difficult, but steady improvement in cooperation with the avowedly Islamist government of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Much of the success is measured in crises avoided—the de facto “liberation” of Iraqi Kurdistan occasioned by the overthrow of Saddam Hussein might easily have poisoned U.S.-Turkey relations, but by the end of the second Bush term the U.S. and Turkish militaries were cooperating in—and the Iraqi Kurds tolerating—an aggressive campaign to suppress the attacks of the Kurdistan Workers’ party, a radical group better known as the PKK. It had long been operating on the Turkey-Iraq border and conducting terrorist raids in Turkey.

The Bush administration also built a deeper partnership with Israel, despite disagreements over provocative issues such as settlements on the West Bank and Israeli concerns over the Iraq war. For the most part, Bush focused on areas of strategic agreement and avoided the briar patch of trying to broker a comprehensive deal between Israel and the Palestinians. Bush made two trips to Israel in 2008 alone, where he was thanked by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert for having “stood like nobody else on our side in sunny mornings and stormy weather.”

It would be wrong, of course, to think of the Bush strategy as simply a continuation of the past—in many particulars it represented a revolution in the American approach to the region. But Bush’s “freedom agenda,” most powerfully enunciated in his second Inaugural Address, proved to be a disappointment to its most ardent champions. In fact, the origins of this policy lay in the underlying assessment of the shifting regional balance of power and an acknowledgment that the past habit of relying on regional autocrats as partners was now part of the problem, not the solution. In November 2003, Bush had observed that “stability”—the mantra of “realist” policymakers—“cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty.” Further, he forecast that as long as “the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export.”

By 2008, Bush’s strategy had not come close to accomplishing the goal of a free and flourishing greater Middle East, but the gains in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere in the Muslim world were real, if reversible. The price had been higher than it needed to be. Bush and his lieutenants had blundered and badly, but they recovered, and deservedly felt a certain modest optimism about what might come.

THE OBAMA RECORD

Barack Obama had never shared a sense of optimism about traditional U.S. strategy in the Middle East, and especially not about George W. Bush's version of it. As an Illinois state senator—an office with few national security obligations—he had told a 2002 Chicago rally that he wasn't "opposed to war in all circumstances," just "dumb wars," and that the looming Iraq war promised to "encourage the worst . . . impulses of the Arab world and strengthen the recruitment arm of al Qaeda."

Having forecast that the invasion would lead to a long and inevitably fruitless investment in rebuilding a post-Saddam Iraq, in 2006 then-U.S. senator Obama naturally opposed the idea of a troop surge: "It is clear at this point that we cannot, through putting in more troops or maintaining the presence that we have, expect that somehow the situation is going to improve." Nor did any subsequent evidence change his mind. In July 2007, months before the full complement of surge forces was even in Iraq, he offered, "My assessment is that the surge has not worked."

His anti-Iraq stance was also the distinguishing feature of his 2008 campaign, first in upsetting Hillary Clinton in the Democratic primaries and then in defeating John McCain for the presidency. Candidate Obama stressed that Iraq was the "wrong war," not just a series of tactical and operational mistakes but a profound strategic error. He saw it as a blunder of global consequences. In a March 2008 address meant to showcase his strategic savvy, Obama claimed that the Iraq war "emboldened" Iran, North Korea, the Taliban, and al Qaeda.

In essence, Obama was construing Bush's "war on terror" in the narrowest possible sense: The war was a reaction to the attacks of 9/11, properly focused on Osama bin Laden and the al Qaeda leadership cadre, and not on the al Qaeda network and certainly not on the overall Middle East balance of power. The Bush administration had "taken its eye" off the ball in Afghanistan; an Obama administration would "end" the war in Iraq.

President Obama has fulfilled that promise, at least as he meant it: Large-scale American forces are out, and the administration has forgone whatever opportunities for a continuing close security and military partnership there were. The war for Iraq, however, has not ended. Violence has, in recent months, returned to the levels of 2006; more than 2,000 Iraqis have been killed since April in the escalating sectarian clash again pitting Sunni and Shia militias. Al Qaeda-aligned groups, once spurned by the Sunni community in Iraq, are returning. It's the U.S. withdrawal, not intervention, that has most

"emboldened" Iran and increased Tehran's influence.

But even before the final pullout from Baghdad, President Obama's self-defeating Afghanistan "surge" of 2009 had transmitted an unmistakable message of diminishing interest in and commitment to the region. Having asserted that Afghanistan was the right war, the necessary war, and the smart war, the time-clock Obama placed on his surge has proved, in an entirely foreseeable way, fatal to the mission there and crippling to U.S. credibility. In a region where our enemies believe—and our allies fear—that time is on their side, Obama made a bigger strategic blunder than Bush ever did. In such wars, time is ultimately more important than troop strength.

THE MEANING OF SYRIA

A full account of Obama failures across the Middle East—in Egypt and Libya, in responding to both the Iranian uprising of 2009 and the Tehran nuclear program, in driving relations with Pakistan to world-record lows—would require a far longer exposition. But the crisis in Syria, where another set of protests against a despotic regime has metastasized into a civil war and now a growing regional and increasingly sectarian conflict, where the Iran-Assad-Hezbollah "Shia axis," backed openly by Russia and, should it come to it, the Chinese at the U.N., enjoys what could soon be a decisive advantage, is at last beginning to bring the consequences of the Obama retreat home to a complacent political class. The Syria war has gotten too big to ignore, even for Maureen Dowd.

It's also pretty late in the game, certainly for the small-scale, halfway measures—more humanitarian aid and some small-caliber weapons—floated by the White House. As "insider" accounts and blame-shifting leaks appear in the press, it's also increasingly obvious that President Obama won't easily be dislodged from his no-Middle-East-war prime directive.

In 1979, a series of catastrophes jolted the Muslim world. The combined effects of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iranian revolution and subsequent hostage crisis, the seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca by a violent group of Sunni extremists, and Saddam Hussein's taking of the reins of power in Baghdad likewise jolted the United States from a posture of "offshore balancing"—that is, intervening as little as possible, from as much distance as possible, and hoping that local potentates and inherent weaknesses would confine the region's troubles—towards three decades of deeper involvement. George W. Bush followed that trajectory to its apogee in 2008. Barack Obama has reversed course and is accelerating toward what is shaping up to be a crash landing. ♦

A Bear in the Desert

*Why did the Obama administration allow
a Russian resurgence in the Middle East?*

BY TOD LINDBERG

For decades during the Cold War, U.S. policy sought to minimize the role of Moscow in the Middle East. As the Soviet Union weakened dramatically in the late 1980s and early 1990s, so too did its capacity to influence events there (and many other places besides). So matters have stood since. A pretty good question, then, is why on earth the Obama administration seems to be inviting a Russian resurgence in the Middle East.

The first-term Obama initiative to “reset” relations with Russia was probably worth a try. If a dose of conspicuous American respect could lead to progress with Russia on matters of mutual interest, all to the good. And indeed, the policy arguably bore certain limited fruit: an agreement that further reduces nuclear stockpiles (though not one without its critics); cooperation over Afghanistan; restraint in terms of Russian cooperation with Iran (specifically, Russia’s support for sanctions and its nondelivery of the advanced S-300 air defense system Tehran sought in order to complicate military options against its nuclear programs); an abstention on the U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing “all necessary measures” to protect Libyan civilians from the last gasp of Muammar Qaddafi’s effort to stay in power.

But Vladimir Putin’s Russia never really responded to the reset by opting for a constructive role in international politics. Since Putin emerged at the top of the post-Soviet political heap, Russian foreign policy, such as it is, has mainly seemed to be driven by a combined sense of nostalgia, grievance, and resentment—Russia with a chip on its shoulder over the loss of an empire and the supposed abuse inflicted upon it by the United States in its period of weakness.

Putin’s autocratic tendencies are of a piece with his posturing on behalf of a strong Russia. Has there ever been a world leader who so likes to be photographed bare-chested? Yet he has always seemed a little too insistent in delivering his message that *Russia is back*.

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On the op-ed page of the *Wall Street Journal*, he proclaimed his country an energy superpower, as if this were some hitherto undiscovered category of greatness in international politics. Now, if there were such a thing as an energy superpower, Saudi Arabia would surely be one; but, of course, Saudi Arabia is anything but a superpower, notwithstanding its oil riches. And thanks to shale oil and gas in the United States as well as crumbling Russian energy infrastructure, it looks like it’s the United States that will be adding the significant new dimension of energy self-sufficiency to its already considerable national power.

Russia has its nuclear arsenal and the external security such a capability provides. It is, in some sense, untouchable even by greater U.S. power. Hence the skepticism with which Moscow greeted Obama’s proposal in his Berlin speech for further deep cuts in nuclear weapons. Yet the notion of a Russian “grand strategy” that the United States has anything to fret about has long been far-fetched. The biggest problems Russia causes are exactly where you would expect to find them: in countries bordering Russia in the old Soviet space and in countries that have ties with Moscow going back to their status as client-states during the Cold War.

Russia has been especially active where the United States and its allies have been divided or acted hesitantly—a problem that did not begin with Obama. For example, NATO was divided at its 2008 summit on whether to extend an invitation to Russia’s neighbor Georgia to take the next step in its bid to join the alliance. It’s unclear whether doing so would actually have prevented Russia from responding to provocations in ethnically Russian breakaway Georgian regions in August of that year by sending in an invading force. Putin’s hatred for Georgia’s then-president, Mikheil Saakashvili, was personal and deep. But Germany’s insistence that Georgia receive something less than a definitive path to NATO membership was just an early example of an attempt to assuage Russian concerns that ended up backfiring. And even here, Putin lacked the will (or perhaps the capacity?) to send Russian tanks all the way to Tbilisi and “reunite” Georgia with Russia by force.

Western policy toward Ukraine has also been less than a model of coherence, as the United States and the European Union have swung from excessive optimism over the

country's future to self-defeating pessimism. Nevertheless, Ukraine's future independence is not seriously in doubt. Russia seeks and maintains influence there, but influence has not crossed over into the kind of dominance the Soviet Union exerted over neighbors.

Obama didn't improve cohesion among U.S. allies in his first term with a ham-handed effort to cancel a missile defense system scheduled for deployment in Poland. One gets the impression that senior officials in the Obama administration regard the security concerns our Central and Eastern European allies voice about Russia as overblown. They may well be. But the American dismissal of such concerns only serves to exacerbate them, which in turn encourages all the wrong tendencies within Russia. Once again, though, Russian weakness and fecklessness have protected us from major consequences of our miscues.

But in Syria, it looks like Russian weakness and fecklessness may finally be meeting their match in a race to the bottom with U.S. weakness and fecklessness. Maybe the long-overdue decision to supply weapons to the Syrian opposition marks a turning point, and the Obama administration has at last figured out that a vacuum where U.S. leadership should be can lead not only to further humanitarian disaster but also to adverse strategic consequences. But it's remarkable how long the administration has blithely watched the erosion of our position in the Middle East—and with what equanimity it has allowed Russia to once again become a consequential player acting against U.S. interests there.

Russia's marginality in the Middle East has been a constant since 1990-91, the time of the first Gulf war. George H. W. Bush actively and successfully cultivated the cooperation of the last Soviet general secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev, in presenting a united front of opposition to Saddam Hussein's conquest and attempted annexation of Kuwait. The result was a sequence of U.N. Security Council resolutions demanding Saddam's withdrawal and culminating in the authorization of member-states to remove him by force if necessary—along with the mobilization of a large military coalition legitimated by the U.N. and led by the United States. The Soviet Union did not contribute military assets, but Bush and his national security team, led by national security adviser Brent Scowcroft

and Secretary of State James A. Baker III, worked assiduously to keep Gorbachev on their side diplomatically while resisting all Soviet entreaties that they thought would weaken the coalition's position against Saddam.

In retrospect, Gorbachev's sometimes noble, sometimes hapless efforts to cope with the terminal crisis of the Soviet Union give the impression of a man trying to ride a tiger. Some forward-thinking senior Soviet officials seemed genuinely to have supported his position at the side of President Bush. But not all. Yevgeny Primakov, Gorbachev's special envoy for Iraq, was on the hunt from the outset of the diplomatic maneuvering in the run-up to the war for a face-saving out for Saddam. His frantic maneuvering in the days before the commencement of the ground war in February 1991 eventually persuaded Gorbachev to approach Bush with a proposal to defer the ground campaign in response to supposed "concessions" from Saddam. The response from Bush and his team was a diplomatic but firm "no": Saddam's only way out must be full compliance with all the provisions of the Security Council resolutions demanding immediate and unconditional withdrawal.

And that was that. Gorbachev went away empty-

handed, unable to force an outcome more to his liking. The Soviet capacity to influence events against the wishes of the United States in the biggest international crisis in 10 years or more was nil. Within a year, the Soviet Union itself dissolved, its influence in the Middle East having predeceased it.

Gorbachev did not, however, bolt on the coalition effort. He grumbled, but he acquiesced. And this has largely been the pattern of Russian-American relations on matters of high policy ever since. Russia opposed military action against Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia to prevent ethnic cleansing and atrocities in Kosovo in 1998-99, and used its veto power to refuse to allow a U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing military action. When NATO decided to go ahead anyway, Russia denounced the move, but if Milosevic harbored the impression that the Russians were going to come to his rescue (which he may have), he eventually became disabused of the notion and capitulated. The main angle of Russian maneuvering was for participation in the follow-up peace-keeping mission. Russia aspired to a sector of its own—and was denied it by NATO.

Russia was nominally opposed to the 2003 Iraq war but supported Security Council Resolution 1441, in November



Russia Today television interviews Syria's Bashar al-Assad.

2002, giving Iraq “a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations” and promising “serious consequences” for the failure to do so. The United States expected to but couldn’t obtain a second Security Council resolution in early 2003 containing explicit authorization for the use of military force against the Hussein regime; the big problem then was not Russia, but France. And of course the United States was prepared to act on its own authority anyway, about which Russia could or would do nothing of consequence.

Similarly, Russia did not like the idea of NATO enlargement, especially into formerly Soviet territory, namely, the Baltics. But was Russia willing to, for example, act covertly to destabilize Lithuania in the hope of derailing U.S. enthusiasm for its inclusion in the enlargement round in 2004? No, it wasn’t (or couldn’t).

More recently, Russia was hardly enthusiastic about coming to the rescue of Libyan civilians as forces loyal to Muammar Qaddafi closed in to crush the rebellion and—if Qaddafi’s own words were to be believed—exact reprisals on a mass scale. Certainly Russia was not in favor of toppling the Qaddafi regime. But Russia and China did voluntarily subscribe in 2005 at the United Nations World Summit to the principle of the “responsibility to protect”: that if a state fails to act to protect its populations from atrocities (or perpetrates atrocities), the international community acting through the United Nations may do so. And so Russia and China abstained on Security Council Resolution 1973, which authorized the use of force to protect Libyan civilians.

When NATO exceeded the explicit U.N. mandate by continuing its air campaign in support of the opposition until Qaddafi fell, the Russians protested loudly that they had been hoodwinked; they would never have allowed 1973 to go through if they had known NATO intended to topple Qaddafi. Given that the leaders of France, Great Britain, and the United States had all publicly declared that Qaddafi had to go, it’s rather difficult to credit Russia with sufficient naïveté not to have known that the Security Council resolution was providing cover for regime change. Putin, though he occasionally strikes a pose of wounded innocence, is no ingénue.

But then came the beginning of the protests in Syria. The demonstrations against the regime of Bashar al-Assad began peacefully in March 2011. Many Syrians were expecting Assad to respond by broadly opening the political system. He chose not to, but rather to suppress

the protests by force, opening fire on civilians first in Daraa in April. Thus was born the Syrian rebellion.

The United States began to press for action at the United Nations, but no resolution was forthcoming as the death toll continued to mount. A year into the rebellion, in April 2012, came the only resolution the Security Council has ever passed on the crisis, a toothless expression of support for a cease-fire and the diplomatic mission of special envoy Kofi Annan (a mission Annan would abandon as hopeless a few months later). About a month before, a U.N. official placed the civilian death toll at about 9,000.

Russia, along with China, professed to have learned a lesson from the Libya experience. They promised to veto anything that might set Syria on a path toward the ouster of the Assad regime. The Russians have made good on that threat four times, most recently in June by vetoing a British-drafted resolution condemning attacks on civilians in Qusayr. The United Nations recently issued a new estimate of casualties of the civil war, placing deaths at around 100,000 including combatants on both sides. The number of civilian deaths is in the scores of thousands, with millions displaced internally and over a million having fled across the border to

Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, and Iraqi Kurdistan.

Moscow and Beijing have been unyielding in their cynical claim to be issuing their vetoes in order to *uphold* the principles of the U.N. Charter. As the Russian foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, piously noted in June 2012, “These purposes and principles include respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of a state and the obligation not to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign states.” Lavrov, in short, would like to leave international relations about as they were at the time of the Treaty of Westphalia. The purpose of the U.N. Charter, at least notionally, was certainly *not* to allow states to slaughter their civilian populations with impunity. The charter gives the Security Council “primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security” in the hope that the body will act when necessary, as is certainly the case in Syria. The international element is obvious: refugee flows, even leaving aside the responsibility to protect.

So Moscow’s behavior in Turtle Bay has been reprehensible and also newly uncooperative. The pattern of two decades—denounce but acquiesce—has been broken. What’s more, the Russians have gone much further than mere rhetoric. They have actively been supporting Assad, selling him arms, providing military advisers, and making

The Obama administration has been conducting its Syria policy in a fashion that maximizes the influence of Vladimir Putin’s Russia, the least constructive ‘partner’ we have to work with.

a show of their presence in the region. Syria is home to Russia's sole remaining naval base outside the territory of the former Soviet Union, at Tartus. Russia conducted an 11-ship naval exercise in the Eastern Mediterranean not far from the Syrian coast earlier this year, the biggest such Russian exercise since the fall of the Soviet Union. It has provided Syria with antiship missiles, believed to be operational now out of Tartus.

But by far the most troubling show of support for Syria was the Russian foreign ministry's announcement in May of a contract to supply Assad with the S-300, air defense technology far more advanced than anything Syria deploys. This is a system Russia has repeatedly been talked out of delivering to Iran, largely on the grounds that Israel would move militarily to prevent its deployment. After word of the plan (half-baked though it may be) to deliver the system to Syria came out, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu paid a visit to Putin at which he reportedly urged Putin not to make good on the S-300 deal. Israel would certainly act to take out the system before it became operational in Syria. The U.S. State Department has also expressed strong opposition. After considerable confusion about exactly what the status of the deal is—including an apparently erroneous report attributed to Assad that the system had already arrived—Putin weighed in to say that though a deal to supply the S-300 to Syria had been reached some years ago, Russia had not fulfilled it.

The S-300 is no giant-killer. On the other hand, officials from the Obama administration have asserted time after time that Syria's existing air defenses are much tougher than those Qaddafi had in Libya—supposedly evidence of the difficulty of imposing a no-fly zone in Syria that would spare civilians some of the worst of Assad's assaults. Yet it seems implausible in the extreme that the U.S. military is unprepared to defeat existing Syrian air defenses, especially given Israel's demonstrated ability to conduct loss-free airstrikes on Syrian military targets. These cautionary notes seem to have a lot more to do with bolstering a position of U.S. inaction than an honest assessment of military capabilities.

Nevertheless, even the rumor of the arrival of the S-300 was sufficient to elevate the perception of the importance of Russia in the Syrian conflict. Meanwhile, Secretary of State John Kerry has been scrambling to convene an international peace conference on Syria, in which Russia would take a leading role. If this sounds like conventional 1970s-era diplomacy at its worst, that's because it is. Henry Kissinger spent much of his career in and out of office trying to shut down calls for such a Mideast peace conference with Moscow, on the grounds that the most likely outcome would be an increase in the Kremlin's influence in the

region and the isolation of Israel. The world has changed considerably since then; this equation, not so much. Presumably, Kerry envisions Putin pressing Assad into some kind of cease-fire and settlement—on grounds that without Putin, Assad is finished. That analysis essentially leaves Putin in charge of the terms of the settlement.

In short, the Obama administration has been conducting its Syria policy in a fashion that maximizes the influence of the least constructive "partner" we have to work with. The United States spent a couple of years trying to address Syria through the Security Council, where Russia readily blocked action with its veto. Although President Obama himself said almost two years ago that Assad must go, a sentiment he reaffirmed in March with Netanyahu at his side and in May with Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan at his side, the United States has done nothing of consequence to increase pressure on Russia at the Security Council by showing Moscow we have other options. Meanwhile, we have talked up Assad's dubious capacity to deter us, which only encourages his favorite arms merchant, Putin. The prospect of Russian arms sales changing the military balance in the Middle East is now before us, and with it an increase in the likelihood of conflict. Our delay in responding may also have given Russian military advisers an opportunity to take up positions that are potentially in harm's way, further complicating our options. And now we come, hat in hand, hoping for Moscow's good offices at an international peace conference.

There is no good reason for any of this. If the idea was that Russia would get out of the way of constructive action on Syria, as it so often has chosen to do before, the administration should have recognized that its premise was erroneous 18 months ago. It didn't take the Clinton administration very long to figure out that it needed a bypass around the Russian veto over Kosovo. One hopes the idea wasn't that tens of thousands of Syrian civilians are expendable because we need Russia on board for our U.N. diplomacy over Iran's nuclear program.

Without quite realizing what we were doing, our non-response to Assad's atrocities opened a door for malign Russian influence of a kind that we have avoided for more than two decades. It remains uncertain whether Putin has the nerve to walk through it, but that's his call. If he doesn't, it won't be for want of opportunity we have created for him. The president himself has declared, "Preventing mass atrocities and genocide is a core national security interest and a core moral responsibility of the United States." Syria is a textbook example of how failure to act in response to atrocities can leave a vacuum in which our national security interests are at serious risk. ♦

City Under Siege

*The European Union's coming attack
on the Anglo-Saxon financial sector*

BY ANDREW STUTTAFORD

Take a visit to the cyber-belly of the beast, to a website run by the European Commission, the EU's bureaucratic core, and you will be told that "the financial sector was a major cause of the [economic] crisis and received substantial government support." Soon it will be payback time, in the form of Europe's new Financial Transaction Tax (FTT), set to be levied at a rate of 0.1 percent on equity and debt transactions, and 0.01 percent on trades in derivatives. It will ensure that the financial sector "makes a fair and substantial contribution to public finances."

We'll see. This new "contribution," potentially much more onerous than those fragments of a percent suggest, may or may not be substantial (taxes of this type have a record of backfiring), but the revenues predicted by the commission (\$45 billion or so, but the math is fuzzy) could be eclipsed by the punch that the tax delivers to economic growth.

Whether the FTT is "fair" is fuzzier still. That's because the real objectives of the tax—to be introduced by 11 eurozone countries in 2014—have little to do with that. To start with, the FTT is about—dread word—the narrative. Problems within the banks were the immediate cause of the crisis—it's not called the financial crisis for nothing—but working out what caused those problems is a messier matter altogether. The number of plausible suspects rivals the haul on Agatha Christie's *Orient Express*. Prominent among them is something for which the commission bears a great deal of responsibility—the euro, a reckless, politically driven piece of financial engineering that has outdone the worst of Wall Street's mad science. With the single currency still the focus of potentially dangerous debate, it makes sense to keep attention focused on fat cat bankers and away from Brussels's more discreet architects of financial destruction. Similar thinking helps explain why—when the euro's troubles grew too big to ignore—there was so much talk of dodgy markets and dark Anglo-Saxon plotting.

Sadly, in a way, not all of this was—or is—deliberate

disinformation. Much of continental Europe's leadership class—across the political spectrum—distrusts "financial capitalism" of the Anglo-American kind, a venerable suspicion that appeared to have been vindicated by the fiascos of 2008. Why there is this distrust is a topic for another time—Roman Catholicism, socialism, and the twists of history have all played their parts—but that it exists is undeniable. The idea that free markets are the least bad way of allocating resources has limited appeal in a political culture still in thrall to the notion that some authority somewhere knows best, a belief that remains the essence of what the EU stands for. This is more than a matter of philosophical disagreement. So far as Brussels is concerned, Anglo-Saxon finance is not just objectionable, it's in the way.

The euro was an attempt to override the market. A nation's currency is a measure of its relative economic performance. If its value falls that's a signal to investors and, in time, a chance to restore international competitiveness. By abandoning marks, francs, lire, and all the rest, the creators of the currency union junked a useful economic tool, replacing the collective sense of the market with crude administrative fiat. France was Germany was Portugal, and that was that.

As millions of jobless Europeans know, the market bit back. But the instinct of those managing the currency union was not to revert to market discipline, but to move farther away from it. There were bans on the short-selling of certain securities, attacks on credit ratings agencies that were at last telling some inconvenient truths, and, crucially, a vow by European Central Bank president Mario Draghi to do "whatever it takes" to save the euro, a declaration buttressed by the prospect of significant intervention in the sovereign bond market. Markets are far from perfect, and some of what has been done can be justified on pragmatic grounds, but it's not difficult to notice the direction of a broader ideological current, one that is not good news for the City—London's Wall Street—or, indeed, American financial firms interested in European business.

That current is sweeping an increasingly burdensome, increasingly made-in-Brussels regulatory regime, expensive and rigid, into the City and beyond. Much of it is profoundly antithetical to the intuitive, principles-based,

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flexible, and often self-regulatory approach that has done so much to transform Britain's financial sector into a world-beating business. That some of these rules—such as the new Alternative Investment Fund Managers Directive—will (effectively) weigh even more heavily on enterprises headquartered outside the EU is bound to damage London's status as a global financial entrepôt, diverting business beyond the reach of Brussels.

The commission doesn't appear to be particularly concerned where that business goes. In fact, it would probably like much of it to go away altogether. Many of Britain's continental partners agree. And jealousy is only a part of it. The inherently unruly (markets are like that) and, to them, morally suspect financial sector is an obstacle to the ideal of a technocratic, tightly controlled Europe. Meanwhile the "island sewer" (to quote a deputy director of the supposedly serious *El País*, Spain's highest-circulation newspaper) acts as a low-tax, lucrative lure for some of the continent's best and brightest: some 300,000 to 400,000 French citizens now live in the U.K., mainly in London. Perhaps most annoyingly of all, financial services' large contribution to the U.K.'s ramshackle economy (directly and indirectly perhaps at least 14 percent of GDP, and a badly needed export earner) helps fund Britain's fondness for going its own way, an independent-mindedness that its European partners could do without.

But if the pie is to be smaller, that doesn't mean that those partners don't want a larger slice of it. National rivalries still flourish beneath that shared EU flag. The mechanism of "ever closer union" is not infrequently used by one member-state against another. It is, of course, only a coincidence that the (Frankfurt-based) European Central Bank is seeking to introduce rules that would force the relocation of clearing houses that handle euro-denominated instruments (in any significant quantity) out of London into the eurozone, to Paris, say, or, uh, Frankfurt. The U.K. is suing to prevent this, but if the currency union deepens, or banking union comes into being, there will be more of the same to come.

Taken as a whole, Europe's financial sector will shrink further—even after the bloodletting of the last few years. London, as its hub, is bearing, and will continue to bear, the brunt. Jobs in the City have fallen by roughly a third and now stand at a 20-year low. In part this is natural, the product both of hard times and the necessary reconnection of the financial sector to economic reality. In part too it's a matter of mathematics. Tougher capital requirements and more restrictive limitations on leverage (and, possibly, areas of business) are a reasonable response to some of the disasters of recent years, but they will make much of the banking

sector less profitable than in the mirage years, and that's before we begin to factor in the costs of Brussels's wider regulatory onslaught.

The FTT adds both further insult and injury. The belated realization that the tax may be even more destructive than its supporters intended (the governor of the Bank of France has warned of the damage it could do to the *French* financial sector) may mean that it will be diluted prior to its planned introduction, but two key features—some targeting of trading volumes and extraterritoriality—will remain, and both will hurt London disproportionately. The extraterritoriality is particularly galling. A trade will bear the tax even if only one counterparty is in the FTT-zone, and so will a transaction where both counterparties are outside the FTT-zone (in London and New York, say) but trading a security (a Peugeot share, for example) where the issuer is based within it. The U.K. and the United States will be acting as the collectors of a tax that hurts one of their key industries—and they won't get a penny for their pains.



Oi, Brussels: Sod off.

As if all that were not enough, the intervention of Europe's reliably authoritarian parliament means that new caps on bonuses have recently been approved. The bonuses of bankers classified as "material risk-takers" (including anyone who earns over \$660,000 a year) will be capped at one times

salary, or two times with the approval of a supermajority of shareholders—an arbitrary diktat at odds with more subtly designed measures preferred by the U.K. The possibility that similar limits may be imposed on asset management firms (a group that received no bailouts from the European taxpayer) gave the lie to the never convincing argument that these changes are about risk control. Rather, like the Swiss referendum in March that also imposed restrictions on executive pay, they are both an exercise in collective punishment and a manifestation of the neo-egalitarianism growing on either side of the Atlantic. There is something else at play. Members of the European parliament see themselves as the continent's elite (check out the deeply discounted tax rates that most of them pay), the vanguard of a new Europe. Earning so much less than those arrogant, unnecessary bankers maddens them: The chance to put a brake on financial sector pay is difficult to resist.

That's more bad news for the City. The cap will—surprise—hit London hardest (that's where most of the EU's "material risk-takers" are to be found) and will make it a less hospitable place for the type of international business that could just as easily be located in New York, Hong Kong, or Zurich. Not only that, mandating less flexible wage

structures will discourage hiring, the last thing that London needs now. And if these changes do end up crimping total compensation, that will be a blow to Britain's cash-strapped treasury, long accustomed to raking in a good bit of that income, among other large "contributions" (to use that fashionable word) from the financial sector.

And so British prime minister David Cameron finds himself in another European swamp. All he can do about the FTT's extraterritorial reach is protest (the United States is also objecting) and maintain a fingers-crossed legal challenge. He could (very) arguably have vetoed the bonus cap under the Luxembourg compromise, a severely eroded understanding dating to 1966, which might still permit a veto in defense of a vital national interest even where no veto power formally exists. That would have been a long shot, but Cameron didn't even attempt it. Going to the mat "against Brussels" in defense of bankers' bonuses would have played no better in euroskeptic Britain than anywhere else.

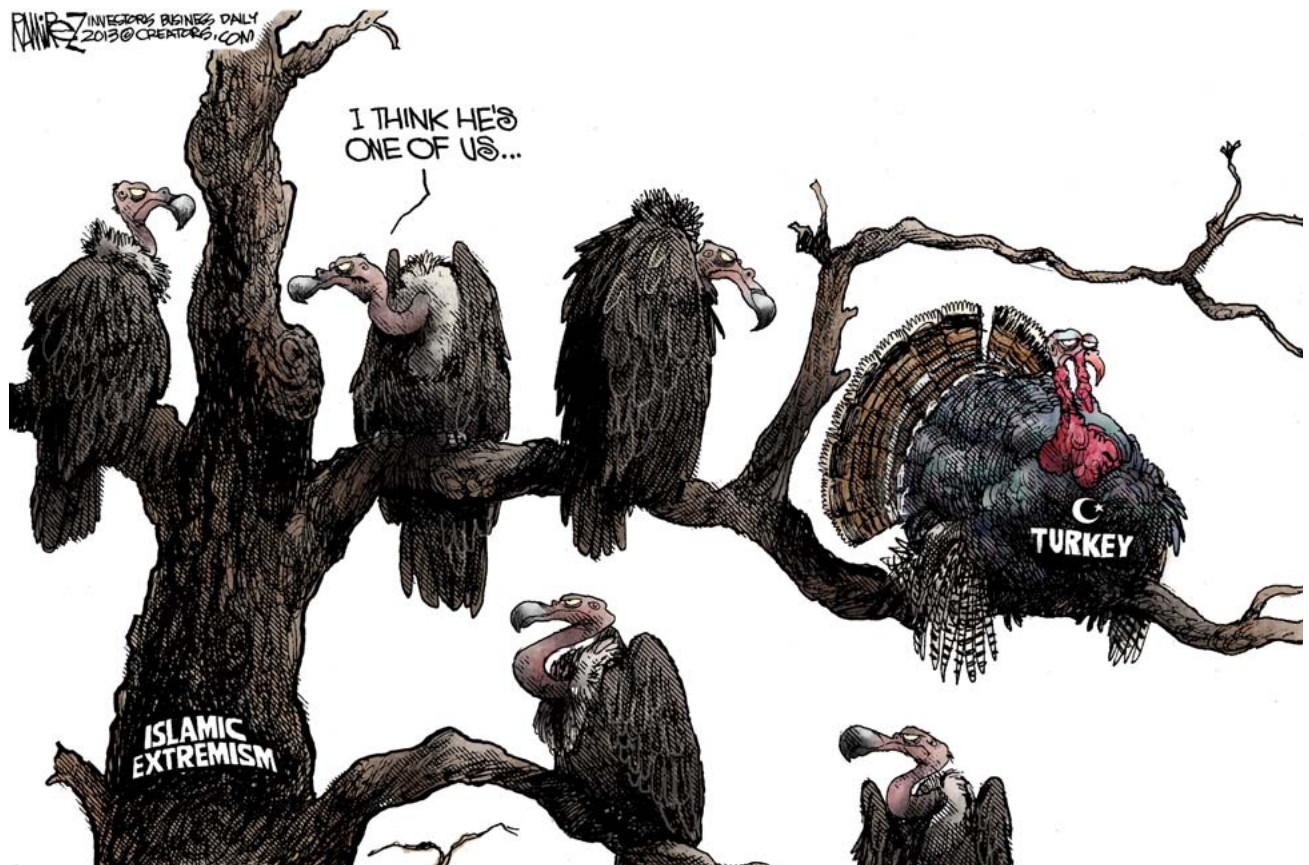
But one important, and generally Conservative, section of the electorate might have supported him. Traditionally nervous about political uncertainty and understandably wary about being cut off from European markets, the City's grandees have long endorsed—if on occasion through gritted teeth—British membership in the EU. That's not going

to change quite yet, but some of them must be beginning to see that staying in an EU fixed on its current course could well be riskier than taking their chances outside. Whatever he is now claiming, Cameron is not going to be able to nudge the EU in a different direction, and he does not have the imagination to see that Britain would be better off out. Sooner or later, the City will have to confront the fact that if the EU is the problem, Cameron is not the answer.

A sign that it may be starting to was a high-profile event hosted last month by London hedge funder Crispin Odey and designed to introduce Nigel Farage, the leader of the uncompromisingly Euroskeptic U.K. Independence party, and a former City trader himself, to financial types. A long-term and generous, if sometimes critical, member of the Conservative party, Odey has not switched his support to UKIP, but this looked a lot like a warning shot.

Cameron would do well to pay attention. The 3 percent scored by UKIP (which up until now has principally drawn its support from the right) in the 2010 general election cost his Tories their chance of an absolute majority. UKIP is now polling in the mid-teens or higher, a feat it has managed on a shoestring. If UKIP can begin to attract City money, and the credibility that can come with it . . .

It's not easy being David Cameron. ♦





President and Mrs. Obama on board the USS Carl Vinson, 2011

Anchors Away

Is naval supremacy a thing of the past? BY GABRIEL SCHOENFELD

Is naval power back? Early in June, Russia announced that it would be permanently stationing an armada of ships in the Mediterranean, restoring a deployment that came to an end with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This muscle-flexing is part of Russia's effort to bolster the government of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, and to stick a finger in the eye of the United States. China, for its part, recently introduced its first aircraft carrier, the *Liaoning*, and the formation of carrier battle groups

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Mayday
The Decline of American Naval Supremacy
 by Seth Cropsey
 Overlook, 336 pp., \$29.95

will eventually follow, enabling the Chinese military to develop long-range capabilities at sea.

As our major rivals expand their naval capabilities, America's Navy has been on the way down. Today, the naval fleet is less than half the force it was at the end of the Cold War, and is roughly equivalent in size to what it was during World War I. And thanks to

draconian cuts proposed by President Obama, the fleet will contract further in the decades to come.

What does this mean for our future? A well-informed view—and not just a view but a cry of alarm—comes now from Seth Cropsey, my colleague, a former officer in the naval reserve, and deputy undersecretary of the Navy under both Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. The course we are on, he writes, “promises nothing except advancing powerlessness, the suspicion of allies, and global challenges to American security.”

Mayday looks forward at these approaching perils by looking backward. It offers a capsule interpretive

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history of American naval power from the Revolution through the Cold War, with stops at some of the major conflicts of the 19th and 20th centuries. But it is less a record of battles fought than the story of the evolution of American naval power, in practice and theory.

Like any intelligent account of the American story at sea, Cropsey's devotes a good deal of attention to the thought of Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914), America's naval Clausewitz. A historian, strategist, and admiral, Mahan saw American seapower as the essential prerequisite for establishing a stable commercial order on the world's waterways. Seapower, therefore, was not to be understood in military terms alone. Rather, there existed a virtuous circle in which seapower was the guarantor of commercial dominance, while commercial dominance was in turn the guarantor of effective seapower. The advantage of the deployment of seapower over other instruments of military power was its unique ability to persuade competitors (in Cropsey's summary) "to develop commercially and militarily in accordance with our strategic interests."

A glance around the world suggests that we have abandoned Mahan's project. Our naval strategy is dictated not by the strategic concern of steering competitors into peaceful commercial relations, but by our budgetary shortfalls and a belief, founded on seemingly no evidence at all, that we will not pay a significant price for withdrawing from naval and other forms of military competition.

If Seth Cropsey had his way, he would propose a "radical change in managing the nation's defense assets," which would include "recognition of China's growing naval reach as a serious threat" and the "reinvigoration of U.S. maritime strength" to counter it. But Cropsey is not likely to have his way. Instead of reinvigoration, a great many pressures are pushing us in the other direction. "Responsibility for this unfolding strategic miscalculation," he writes, "is nearly evenly divided between the leadership of both political parties," who have devoted their attention to diversions in Iraq and

Afghanistan while letting our finances slide into serious disarray.

As a nation, we are now heading for "shoal waters." When Americans had to be evacuated from Libya in February 2011, Cropsey notes, the Sixth Fleet was not in position, and the Obama administration had to rent a Greek ferry to get them out. An operation that might have entailed danger for American citizens was carried out on the cheap.

That minor episode is but a taste of much worse that might come. Over the longer term, if we do not reverse course, the United States will

lose its ability to protect itself at a distance, [be compelled to] look on

helplessly as control evaporate[s] over the lines of communication on which its economy in large measure depends . . . surrender the ability to influence events within the reach that its strategy encompassed . . . see its overseas allies scramble for stronger partners [and] stand by as its international prestige and global influence shrivel.

This is a bleak forecast, and *Mayday*, full of valuable suggestions for reversing our downward course, leaves one with a feeling that the author, in plotting a strategy to arrest our slide in naval power, is whistling in the dark.

But that is hardly his fault. It is a problem of our time. ♦

BCA

Dueling Economists

A century of back-and-forth between Hayek and Keynes. BY CHARLOTTE ALLEN

John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946), godfather of the "stimulus" and the "multiplier," and Friedrich Hayek (1899-1992), who argued that government intervention in the economy breeds prosperity-killing economic distortions, weren't just polar opposites in economic theory. They were real-life sparring partners. And as Nicholas Wapshott points out in his double biography, their ideas played themselves out in Great Britain, where both Keynes and Hayek lived and taught, and in the United States, where the economic philosophies of both informed the highest levels of policymaking—at different times, of course.

During the 1930s, Keynes, at Cambridge, and Hayek, at the London School of Economics, debated each other in person, by proxy (both had coterie of disciples), and in newspaper columns, and exchanged febrile levels of correspondence over a harsh review

Charlotte Allen is a frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Keynes / Hayek
The Clash That Defined Modern Economics
by Nicholas Wapshott
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that Hayek had given Keynes's *A Treatise on Money* (1930). They also spent a night together as unlikely comrades in 1942—on the roof of the King's College Chapel at Cambridge, where they stood, shovels in hand, as part of a volunteer brigade set up to deflect whatever incendiary bombs the Luftwaffe might pour (but fortunately never did) upon that great medieval edifice.

One of the few things that Keynes and Hayek (who became a British subject in 1938) had in common was a loathing of Nazi Germany, each for different reasons. Another thing that Keynes and Hayek had in common was outrage at the bleeding of Germany and its World War I ally, Hayek's native Austria, by the Treaty of Versailles and

its Austrian counterpart, the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye. The brutal reparations exacted by the victorious Britain, France, and the United States, the forced dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (in whose army the patriotic Hayek had enlisted at age 17), and the resultant massive inflation that beggared the middle classes threatened to destroy Austrian civil society. Keynes, by then a British Treasury official who had tried unsuccessfully to dissuade the Allies from seeking the ruin of enemies already starving from wartime privation, published *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* in 1919, a damning account of the Versailles negotiations that accurately predicted the extremist politics that were to follow. The book made Keynes “something of a hero to us Central Europeans,” Hayek later recalled. It was the last time—except, perhaps, for that night defending King’s College Chapel—that the two were to see eye to eye.

Keynes was the son of a Cambridge economist, John Neville Keynes. His mother, Florence, had graduated from Cambridge’s all-female Newnham College, and she later became the first woman mayor of the town of Cambridge. So it was, perhaps, inevitable that Keynes would eventually fall under the spell of his father’s Cambridge mentor, Alfred Marshall (1842-1924), then England’s leading economist. Marshall shepherded Keynes out of his chosen field, mathematics, and into economics. Keynes worked in the civil service’s India Office and, in 1909, became a lecturer at Cambridge, where he continued to teach off and on for the rest of his life. At Cambridge, the young Keynes also fell in with the Bloomsbury Group: Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster, and the like. Keynes was by then a notoriously promiscuous homosexual, which made him a natural for Bloomsbury; but his interest in the mundane field of economics (in the eyes of artsy Bloomsburyites), as well as the patriotism that prompted him to join the Treasury’s war operations in 1915, led to a rift. The final break came in 1925, when Keynes married a Russian ballerina, Lydia Lopokova, whom the group despised as an intellectual light-

weight. (It was nonetheless a surprisingly happy marriage, given Keynes’s sexual history.)

Keynes was not a socialist, but he did believe that market capitalism alone could not prevent, say, the runaway inflation he observed in postwar Germany and Austria. He also rejected the classical economics theory, propounded by his mentor Marshall, among others, that while supply and demand may never be entirely congruent—there will always be “business cycles” that generate job losses as the cycles play themselves out—a kind of equilibrium of nearly full employment will even things out in the long run.

“In the long run, we are all dead,” Keynes famously declared, throwing down the gauntlet to classical economics. He believed that governments have a duty to intervene in the short run to smooth out the harsh effects of fluctuating business cycles. He argued that such phenomena as recessions and falling prices (deflation) were the result of an irrational discordance between savings and private investment at the low end of business cycles, when potential investors might be reluctant to put their money into the capital equipment that could generate the production of goods that would lead to higher employment among the producers.

In order to get people back to work, Keynes advocated that the government itself create jobs by way of public-works projects to be financed by government borrowing. Keynes argued that every new job thus created would generate a demand for goods that the newly hired could now afford—which would, in turn, generate even more jobs manufacturing and selling those desired goods. This was the famous “multiplier effect,” more fully developed by Keynes’s Cambridge disciple Richard Ferdinand Kahn (1905-1989). Then, as prosperity rushed back under demand-instigated production, governments flush with tax revenues from the newly re-employed could easily repay the borrowed money. As a corollary, Keynes urged Western nations to abandon the gold standard, whose strictures

he viewed as interfering with the government’s ability to expand people’s purchasing power (and thus jumpstart the economy) during depressed times by increasing the money supply. Keynes singlehandedly invented the modern concept of “macroeconomics,” the big-picture perspective of economic transactions that implies direction from the top.

On a 1934 visit to America to convince Franklin Roosevelt of the virtues of massive public-works spending—or, skipping public works and putting the unemployed directly onto the dole—Keynes explained to FDR’s skeptical labor secretary, Frances Perkins (as she later recalled),

[A] dollar spent on relief by the government was a dollar given to the grocer, by the grocer to the wholesaler, and by the wholesaler to the farmer, in payment of supplies. With one dollar paid out for relief or public works or anything else, you have created four dollars’ worth of national income.

Friedrich Hayek scratched his head over such supposed multiplier magic as much as Perkins did. His family had been part of the prosperous Viennese lesser gentry—Hayek was second cousin to the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, and his surname had been “von Hayek” until the Austrian government banned titles of nobility in 1919—whose savings were incinerated by postwar inflation. Hayek’s father, a physician, could barely afford his son’s tuition at the University of Vienna, much less his son’s eclectic intellectual interests, which included a desire to study sociology with Max Weber at the University of Munich—a hope dashed when Weber died in 1920. When Jeremiah Whipple Jenks, a New York University economist, invited Hayek in 1923 to be his research assistant for a book about Central Europe’s war-ravaged economies, Hayek had trouble scraping up enough money for a one-way passage to Manhattan.

He had met Jenks through the most important personal contact he ever made in his life: with Ludwig von Mises (1881-1973), one of the founders of the so-called Austrian School

of economics and a lecturer at Vienna, where Hayek was obtaining a doctorate in law during the early 1920s. Mises was a classical economist and then some. He taught Hayek that government intervention in the workings of markets was, at best, ineffectual—because there was no way that a centralized bureaucracy could anticipate or plan for the myriad individual decisions that constituted a functioning economic system. At worst, government intervention on borrowed money (as Keynes advocated) generated wasteful misallocations of funding into capital projects whose economic value was questionable—or private investment would have funded them on its own. The end result, when the government subventions stopped and the plants fell idle, was persistent unemployment—a “collapse at the bottom of the business cycle,” Wapshott writes. As Hayek said in one of his lectures:

The situation would be similar to that of a people of an isolated island, if, after having partially constructed an enormous machine which was to provide them with all the necessities, they found that they had exhausted all their savings and available free capital before the new machine could turn out its product. They then would have no choice but to abandon temporarily the work on the new process and to devote all their labor to producing their daily food without any capital.

In 1928, Hayek was invited to debate Keynes at a meeting of the London and Cambridge Economic Services. Hayek’s critique during the course of that debate—plus an essay entitled “The Paradox of Saving” (1929), which argued that private investment was a generally rational process that produced exactly the goods that would find ready sales (so government intervention was always a distortionary mistake)—earned Hayek an invitation to lecture at the London School of Economics in 1931. The LSE’s head, the economist Lionel Robbins (1898-1984), had been

converted from socialism by Austrian-School theory, and Hayek’s lectures generated a faculty position for him.

At the same time, Keynes was on the radio urging Britons to spend their earnings on consumer goods instead of hoarding them in savings accounts, persuading the British government to abandon the gold standard—which Keynes blamed for having devastated the economy during the 1920s—and preaching the gospel of deficit spending. So, at Robbins’s urging, Hayek wrote a blistering, if impeccably polite,



Friedrich Hayek, 1960

review of Keynes’s *A Treatise on Money*, a work that reiterated Keynes’s theories about the inadequacies of the market in alleviating human misery during economic downturns. Keynes responded to Hayek’s review with a riposte, and the two continued to debate for months in the pages of *Economica*, a journal edited by Robbins, and in a stream of letters. (Hayek even fired one off to Keynes on Christmas Day, 1931.) In retaliation for the assault on *A Treatise on Money*, Keynes dispatched one of his Cambridge disciples, Piero Sraffa (1898-1983), to spearhead a brutal critique of Hayek’s *Prices and Production* (1931).

And so was launched a decades-long battle between John Maynard Keynes and Friedrich Hayek, lasting long after their deaths, in the hearts and minds of academic economists, the general public, and, most significantly, political leaders in Great Britain and the United States. It was a battle that Keynes won

on almost every front, as Hayek was hampered by (among other things) a dense and nearly incomprehensible prose style that made figuring out what he was trying to say rough going. The one exception was Hayek’s runaway bestseller *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), which argued in simple, declarative language that central economic planning was not only counterproductive, but coercive and totalitarian. The book was, in part, Hayek’s brief against National Socialism. Keynes and other liberals had aligned Nazism and capitalism, but Hayek argued that Hitler’s corporatist ideology was profoundly antithetical to the workings of the free market. The success of *The Road to Serfdom* inspired Hayek to found, in 1947, the still-extant Mont Pelerin Society, then a rump group of friends of Hayek, including Mises, Robbins, the scientific philosopher Karl Popper, and Milton Friedman, then a 35-year-old economist at the University of Chicago. Friedman’s brother-in-law, Chicago law professor Aaron Director, had been taken by Hayek’s ideas while visiting him at the LSE, and had been instrumental in getting the University of Chicago Press to publish the American edition of *The Road to Serfdom*.

Still, Hayek seemed determined to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. For inexplicable reasons, he never got around to writing a sustained critique of Keynes’s magnum opus, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* (1936), effectively ceding the arguments to his rival. And unlike Keynes, who successfully transitioned from homosexual polyamorist to respectable husband, Hayek scandalized his LSE colleagues, especially Robbins, by abruptly leaving his wife of 24 years, Helen, with whom he had two children, in 1950, in order to marry his cousin Helene. Helen announced her intention to contest the divorce, so Hayek quit his LSE post and took a teaching job at the University of Arkansas, which was in a jurisdiction where

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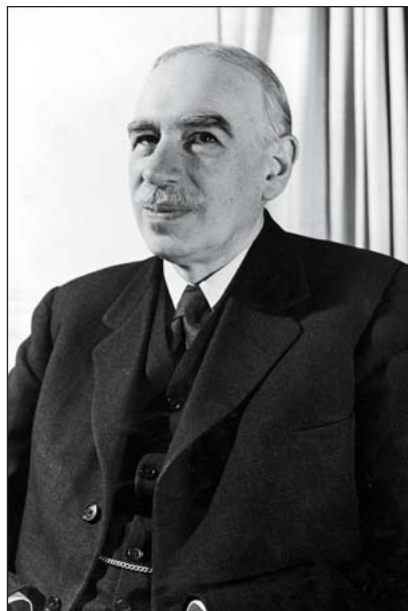
the marriage laws were more permissive. Needing a larger salary to support two households, he sought a teaching job in the University of Chicago's economics department—only to discover that, despite his friendships with Friedman and George Stigler (another Chicago economist), the popular success of *The Road to Serfdom* assured that Hayek would not be taken seriously as an academic economist. He did manage to secure a position with Chicago's Committee on Social Thought—but as a professor of social and moral science, not economics. Hayek's next book, *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960), which was supposed to be his own magnum opus (and set him up financially for life), proved to be a resounding flop, generating few sales and scathing reviews, even from Robbins.

Membership in the Mont Pelerin Society dwindled. In 1960, Hayek suffered the first of several bouts of clinical depression, and the next year, he experienced the first of several heart attacks. In 1962, panicked over his diminished financial prospects and the idea of Helene living in poverty after his death, he left America to accept a teaching post at the University of Freiburg, and then, in 1969, at the University of Salzburg. In 1974, Hayek shared the Nobel Prize for economics with the Swedish Keynesian Gunnar Myrdal, but few American economists remembered who Hayek was.

Meanwhile, Keynes's star soared. "We are all Keynesians now"—a phrase attributed to Richard Nixon when he took America off the gold standard in 1971, but actually composed by Milton Friedman—was an apt description of postwar leaders of all political stripes in Britain and, especially, the United States. FDR, although voicing a belief in "sound money," made public-works schemes financed by tax dollars and swollen budget deficits a central feature of the New Deal. Furthermore, Keynesianism reverberated through university economics departments as the reigning orthodoxy, especially at Harvard, where the young John Kenneth Galbraith became so enamored of Keynes that he made a 1937 pilgrimage to Cambridge to study with the master.

Roosevelt's successor, Harry Truman, was famous for his disdain for economists—he declared that he wanted to meet a one-handed economist so as not to hear the words "on the other hand"—but his Employment Act of 1946 was essentially a Keynesian document toned down to meet Republican concerns about deficits.

Dwight D. Eisenhower might have been a Republican, but, according to Wapshott, he "spent taxpayers' money



John Maynard Keynes, 1944

like no peacetime president had before him, although he overcame conservative objections by passing off the expenditures as essential for national security." (The Interstate Highway System that Eisenhower spearheaded in 1956 went under the moniker of the National Defense Highway program.) As Wapshott explains, Eisenhower was the first president to realize that government manipulation of the economy could be put to political use, to help win elections. That lesson got driven home the hard way in 1960, when a recession occasioned by Eisenhower's belated attempts to cut public spending swept John F. Kennedy into the White House later that year. Writes Wapshott: "[S]uccess at the ballot box comes from managing the economy to bring the business cycle into line with the four-year electoral cycle." Kennedy, and especially his big-

spending successor Lyndon B. Johnson, learned that lesson well.

The fact that the 1960s represented an apex of prosperity for all classes of Americans helped. In 1965, *Time* made Keynes its Man of the Year, even though he had been dead for nearly two decades. Keynesianism underlay Nixon's attempts at wage and price controls (not to mention his abandonment of the gold standard), Gerald Ford's acquiescence in more of the same, and Jimmy Carter's 1978 endorsement of the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act, which required the president and the Federal Reserve to keep aggregate demand high enough to guarantee everyone a job.

There was a respite during the late 1970s, when the chickens came home to roost: In the United States, there was "stagflation," that combination of galloping unemployment and runaway price hikes that was not supposed to occur under Keynes's paradigm; in Britain, there was a decline in living standards in an oppressively state-run economy. In 1979, Margaret Thatcher, who had read *The Road to Serfdom* as an Oxford undergraduate and revered the aged Hayek, became prime minister and began dismantling Britain's bloated public sector. The following year, Ronald Reagan was elected president, with Hayek's disciple Milton Friedman as an adviser. After a brief, inflation-killing recession attributable to Hayek's tight-money policies that Reagan promptly put into effect, America bounded into "Reaganomics"-fueled prosperity. And yet, neither Reagan nor Thatcher could effect the near-privatized society that Hayek envisioned. Reagan, in particular, could not resist tinkering, as with the Reagan tax cuts (disapproved of by Hayek because there were few commensurate spending cuts). As a result, America went from the world's largest creditor to the world's largest debtor by the time Reagan left the White House.

It was the old problem, identified here by Wapshott: that it is more politically productive for a democratically elected government to manipulate prosperity into existence—even a short-lived and ultimately catastrophically damaging

existence—than to allow market forces to run their course and generate the equilibrium that Hayek and the classical liberals predicted. Hence, such phenomena as George H.W. Bush's 1990 tax hikes, despite his read-my-lips pledge; Newt Gingrich's Contract with America, which was supposed to cut Big Government; Bill Clinton's flirtations with Keynesian stimuli; and George W. Bush's own capitulation to stimulus programs and massive bailouts in 2008, as recession crashed over the economy like a tidal wave.

Of course, Barack Obama's presidency has been a kind of Keynesian dream come true, starting with an \$800 billion stimulus package and including massive government invest-

ment in "green" technology (think Solyndra) and the shuffling of millions more Americans onto the dole by way of record food-stamp enrollment, near-interminable unemployment benefits, and the easing of work requirements meant to spur people off the welfare rolls. And all of this has been paid for, so to speak, by way of aggregate federal borrowing that is rapidly approaching \$17 trillion.

There is, as Hayek might have predicted, no evidence that any of these panaceas has actually worked. So perhaps it is high time to give Hayek a chance to prevail in the Keynes-Hayek skirmishes—although, given the perennial allure of borrowed federal money, it's probably more like a fat chance. ♦

ideal background that would enrich everyday experience. Contemporary endeavors should emulate the great works of the past. Even before the dawn of the 20th century, however, elite opinion had begun to take a very different view: Architecture, especially, was now regarded as the byproduct of particular historical circumstances. It was incumbent on creative "genius" in the guise of a Mies van der Rohe or Le Corbusier to divine the essence or "will" of a given epoch, along with a new vessel of forms to give it expression.

It was also Reed's countercultural conviction that, as the United States got richer and richer in the postwar period, it was natural to expect the quality of its public architecture—its courthouses, concert halls, museums, office buildings, and hotels—to get better and better. The opposite, in fact, transpired, as "the new world-order of the machine" (as Walter Gropius called it) found expression in starkly abstract and generally repellent architectural forms. Writing in *Esquire* in 1963, Norman Mailer lamented the advent of a "totalitarian architecture" that "destroys the past," leaving its victimized public "isolated in the empty landscapes of psychosis." The United States thus became the first nation in the history of civilization to rise to world preeminence while its public realm deteriorated precipitously—from the Orwellian precincts of our "re-developed" core cities to the meandering postwar suburbs with their modernist bubble-diagram zoning.

A lifelong New Yorker, Reed became fascinated with the nation's urban environment around the time of his graduation from Harvard in 1938. He took to making road trips to scout out cities and towns with another Harvard man, Wayne Andrews, who would become an architecture historian at Case Western Reserve. Because a hearing impairment rendered him ineligible for military service, Reed found himself working as a reporter in Omaha during World War II. This allowed him to explore the Midwestern cityscape, including many an old river town along the Mississippi or the Missouri.

After the war, Reed's vocational itinerary led him to Paris and the École du

BCA

Classical American

What today's architecture owes to Henry Hope Reed.

BY CATESBY LEIGH

Over half a century ago, Henry Hope Reed, who died in May at age 97, launched a permanent campaign to restore the classical tradition to its rightful primacy in American public art and architecture. *The Golden City* (1959) provided the polemical and pedagogical foundation for this campaign, presenting incisive photographic comparisons of the nation's rich heritage of traditional buildings and other public embellishments with their threadbare modernist counterparts. Flagpoles and lampposts were not overlooked.

The book's title might ring a little sentimental to our irony-saturated ears. It was likely inspired by the Wordsworth sonnet "Composed upon Westminster Bridge":

*This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,*

Catesby Leigh is a writer and architectural critic in Washington D.C.

*Ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples
lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smoke-
less air.*

Wordsworth may have been one of his favorite poets, but Reed was no Romantic. He was a rigorous formalist whose aesthetic outlook was shaped by the great works of imperial Rome, the Italian Renaissance, the Paris of the Louis, and the American metropolis of the turn of the last century. He always insisted that "man is a decorating animal." And he meant by nature, not by temporary historical happenstance. In the midst of an iconoclastic juggernaut, he sought to redeem the art of architecture from a functionalism better suited to the airplane, diesel locomotive, or grain silo. His humanism was anthropologically sound.

Reed believed that the arts of form should play a formative role in the progress of civilization, shaping an

Louvre, where he studied the decorative arts, and from there to Yale, where an extraordinarily gifted urban planning professor, Christopher Tunnard, took him on as an instructor and research assistant. The Canadian-born Tunnard had enjoyed considerable success as a pathbreaking modernist landscape architect in England before migrating to the United States, where he began to entertain serious doubts about the flat, blank façades and simplistic planning the new orthodoxy was inflicting on American communities.

Reed proceeded to write an anti-modernist broadside, “Monumental Architecture,” that appeared in the Yale School of Architecture journal in 1952. That same year, he and Tunnard were deeply involved with a Yale Art Gallery exhibition, “Ars in Urbe.” This exhibition was devoted to the image of the monumental city in European and American art from the Renaissance onward. The unambiguous message in the catalogue preface was that architects and planners who had “turned their faces away from Rome” needed to reconsider.

A scenic arch designed by Reed’s close friend John Barington Bayley was installed at the entrance to the exhibition. A disenchanted alumnus of Harvard’s Graduate School of Design, where Walter Gropius presided, Bayley had studied at the American Academy in Rome on the GI Bill, and he and Reed had explored the city together. Decades later, Bayley would serve as the principal design architect of a very fine addition to the Frick Collection in Manhattan.

The most important result of the Tunnard-Reed collaboration was two critical histories of American urbanism, *The City of Man* (1953) and *The American Skyline* (1955). Reed served as research assistant on the former, coauthor of the latter. These two volumes provide a superb overview of the artistic, social, economic, and technological forces that shaped the urbanization of this country. Jane Jacobs’s *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) focuses more specifically on the

complex functional and spatial order our core cities nurtured prior to postwar “urban renewal.” Jacobs gives us the pragmatically ordered modern *urbs*, that densest of human settlements. Tunnard and Reed give us the *urbs* transformed into *civitas*, the civic community whose ideals are embodied in its public architecture, plazas, parks, and memorials. In doing so, they invite us to question Jacobs’s emphatic claim that “*the city cannot be a work of art.*”



Reed (left) at the Palazzo Mattei di Giove, Rome, 1948

After three years at Yale, Reed introduced architectural tours of New York City that were notable for the level of background research in social and cultural history they incorporated. Above all, Reed used these tours to explain the indispensability of traditional means of architectural embellishment and civic commemoration. He ardently espoused triumphal arches like the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Arch in Brooklyn, one of the nation’s foremost Civil War monuments, as civic focal points and “pedestals for sculpture.”

Reed’s walking tours received ample press coverage and contributed to the explosive growth of the historic preservation movement after the 1963 demolition of Charles Follen McKim’s majestic Pennsylvania Station, whose

principal inspiration was the ancient Baths of Caracalla in Rome.

But Reed was much more than a preservationist. He was far more concerned with shaping the future than mothballing the past. *The Golden City* includes a number of architectural proposals and even urban redevelopment plans, including Bayley’s visionary design for a grand opera house on Manhattan’s Columbus Circle (its exterior modeled on the Colosseum in Rome), as well as a monumental public housing complex in Harlem designed for citizens instead of guinea pigs.

Our cities, in fact, would embody infinitely more in the way of long-term cultural and economic value had the Reed-Tunnard-Bayley path been taken instead of our cultural movers and shakers being dragged along the modernist highway to nowhere. That highway recently led to media huzzahs for California starchitect Thom Mayne’s hideous nine-story academic structure, wrapped in ever-so-cutting-edge perforated stainless steel, at Cooper Union in Manhattan. This expressionistic contraption, whose misshapen main elevation features a weird, jagged cutaway, unquestionably qualifies for one of Mailer’s psychotic landscapes. And its astronomical \$177 million price tag—over \$1,000 per square foot—has inevitably raised eyebrows, as that heretofore tuition-free academy of art, architecture, and engineering founders in a swamp of financial mismanagement.

And we’re told classical architecture is too expensive!

In 1968, Reed, Bayley, and nine others—mostly laymen—cofounded Classical America. Classical America introduced a series of valuable texts (both new works and books that had gone out of print) on art and architecture. It also provided instruction in drawing the classical orders, as well as perspective rendering, at the University of Pennsylvania and the National Academy of Design in Manhattan. The organization with which Classical America merged in 2002, now the

Institute of Classical Architecture & Art, has expanded these programs, and boasts regional chapters from coast to coast. (In Washington, the fledgling National Civic Art Society is waging a remarkably effective campaign against Frank Gehry's abominable stage-set design for a national memorial to Dwight D. Eisenhower and has a longer-term focus on one of Reed's abiding concerns: reconnecting federal patronage with a classical heritage dating back to Washington and Jefferson.)

In later years, Reed's labors were concentrated on particular institutional buildings. Hence his last solo effort: the vastly instructive *The United States Capitol: Its Architecture and Decoration* (2005), published when he was nearly 90. Alas, Reed didn't live to see any new buildings emulate the grandeur of that great temple of democracy, or Whitney Warren's Grand Central Terminal, or the nearby New York Central (now Helmsley) office tower—the latter dwarfed for 50 years now by the MetLife skyscraper, a monstrous concrete slab designed by Gropius and others, seemingly with the overriding aim of ruining views up and down Park Avenue.

"It is astonishing," Reed asserted in a 1997 lecture on the magnificent Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress, "how deeply fixed among American intellectual circles is the disdain—or is it fear?—of abundant ornament."

Only gradually did Reed come to realize just how heavily invested our cultural elites are in fallacious notions of creativity, and what a formidable barrier they present to aesthetic common sense. American civic art has yet to return to the Roman road the Founders opened; but a civic-art counterculture has emerged, buttressed by the advent, nearly a quarter-century ago, of a fully classical (and very successful) program in architecture and urban design at Notre Dame.

The New Urbanism, amply anticipated in the brilliant Tunnard-Reed collaboration, as well as Jane Jacobs's masterwork, has recovered the historic paradigm of the pedestrian-scale, mixed-use neighborhood along with historic regional architectural styles and admirably artistic site-planning

techniques. Traditional buildings are cropping up with increasing frequency on college campuses. And with the rise of a new generation of post-Vatican II bishops in the Roman Catholic church,

we can hope for equally significant improvements in sacred architecture.

For this counterculture, Henry Hope Reed's life work represents a beacon shining far into the future. ♦



Commerce and Art

The disdain is largely one-sided.

BY STEPHEN MILLER

John Kinsella, a highly regarded Australian poet who teaches at Cambridge, was quoted not long ago in the *Times Literary Supplement* as saying that he has "not sold his soul to market fetishization." Kinsella means that he doesn't want even to think about making a profit from his writing. But Kinsella is also doing what comes naturally for most poets and many literary essayists: He is expressing a disdain for the commercial world. To think about selling books is tantamount to worshipping Mammon.

Disdain for commerce is what might be called a topos—a recurrent theme in Western literature. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is insulted when a Phaeacian thinks Odysseus is a trader because Odysseus declines to participate in an athletic competition. In the Homeric world, traders supposedly lack athletic prowess. Odysseus is furious. "Your slander fans the anger in my heart!" Greek, Roman, and early Christian writers often argued that commercial men were avaricious because a desire for profit is an insatiable desire—an obsession. Or, as Kinsella would have it, a "market fetishization." Taking a cue from Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas said that "trade, insofar as it aims at making profits, is most reprehensible, since the desire for gain knows no bounds but reaches into the infinite."

It was not until the late 17th century that some English writers began to

challenge the traditional view of commerce. In the *Spectator*, Joseph Addison defended merchants:

There are not more useful members in a commonwealth than merchants. They knit mankind together in a mutual intercourse of good offices, distribute the gifts of nature, find work for the poor, add wealth to the rich, and magnificence to the great.

Addison made a radical suggestion: English aristocrats, who often led idle lives, should emulate the Jews and become industrious men of commerce. Jews, Addison says, have greatly benefited humankind because they are traders: "They are, indeed, so disseminated through all the trading parts of the world, that they are become the instruments by which the most distant nations converse with one another and by which mankind are knit together in a general correspondence."

David Hume agreed with Addison about the benefits of commerce. So did Samuel Johnson. In Johnson's view, a commercial society gives more opportunity for the poor to better their condition: "To entail irreversible poverty upon generation after generation only because the ancestor happened to be poor is in itself cruel, if not unjust, and is wholly contrary to the maxims of a commercial nation."

But most 18th-century English writers disagreed with Addison, Hume, and Johnson. Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, Oliver Goldsmith, and Thomas

Stephen Miller is the author, most recently, of The Peculiar Life of Sundays.

Gray argued that commercial expansion depopulates the countryside, undermines morality, and weakens public-spiritedness. Most 19th- and 20th-century English poets and essayists also took a dark view of commerce. Deploring the growth of commerce, John Ruskin said that “the ruling goddess [of Britain] may be best generally described as the ‘Goddess of Getting-On’ or ‘Britannia of the Market.’” According to Ruskin, commerce had ruined the minds of Englishmen: “It is simply and sternly impossible for the English public, at the moment, to understand any thoughtful writing—so incapable of thought has it become in its insanity of avarice.” (One wonders if Ruskin thought his remarks applied to his own father, a wine importer.)

A negative view of commerce remains the dominant view in the Irish and British literary world. According to one reviewer, the Irish poet Derek Mahon argues that corporations create “socio-economic and environmental desolation.” One of Mahon’s poems, the reviewer says, “portrays the human and ecological casualties of market forces.” American writers have not been as hostile to commerce as English writers, though: “Many of our most valuable public men have been merchants,” said Washington Irving. According to Walt Whitman, America was destined for a “grander future” than Europe, in part because of “the complicated business genius . . . of Americans.” In his journals, Ralph Waldo Emerson said that “we rail at trade, but the historian of the world will see that it was the principle of liberty; that it settled America, and destroyed feudalism, and made peace and keeps peace; that it will abolish slavery.”

William Dean Howells found ambitious American businessmen interesting. Reminiscing about his first trip to New York, Howells wrote that, on the ferry, “I had the company of a young New-Yorker, whom I had met on the boat coming down, and who was of the light, hopeful, adventurous business type which seems peculiar to the city, and which has always attracted me.” The hero in *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885) is a self-made man who became

wealthy by manufacturing high-quality paint. “Make Lapham vulgar but not sordid,” Howells wrote in his notebook. Lapham is an honest businessman, though he gets into financial trouble when a former partner browbeats him into buying risky securities.

Yet Howells disliked thinking about the commercial aspects of being a writer. In “The Man of Letters as Man of Business,” he says that, among writers, “the instinctive sense of the dishonor which money-purchase does to art is so strong that sometimes a man of letters who



William Dean Howells

can pay his way otherwise refuses pay for his work, as Lord Byron did, for a while, from a noble pride.” A shrewd negotiator with publishers, Howells was one of the most commercially successful American novelists, yet he frequently attacked commerce in his essays. New York was ugly, dirty, noisy, and smelly because it was “the commercial metropolis.”

There are sympathetic portraits of businessmen in novels by Abraham Cahan, Theodore Dreiser, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Sinclair Lewis; yet after World War II, most American literary writers painted the business world in dark colors. In 1978, John Gardner complained that most contemporary American writers preached “a whining hatred of American business.” John Updike was an exception, however. In *Rabbit Is Rich* (1981), he describes commerce

in a positive way. The character Harry Angstrom, who enjoys running a Toyota dealership his father-in-law started, talks about how good a car salesman his father-in-law was: “By the time he had sold a car to the customer the poor bozo thought he was robbing old Fred blind when the fact is the deal had angles to it like a spider web.”

Though Updike implies that commerce is a tricky game of appearances, he was impressed by the entrepreneurial energy of many Americans. (Looking at the new stores and restaurants that have sprouted up in the decayed downtown of a local city, Angstrom reflects: “The world keeps ending but new people too dumb to know it keep showing up as if the fun’s just started.”) But Jonathan Franzen takes the usual literary view of commerce. He argues that Edith Wharton “anticipates two . . . hallmarks of American society, the obliteration of all social distinctions by money and the hedonic treadmill of materialism.” (Franzen’s essay appeared in the *New Yorker*, a magazine whose advertisements celebrate elegant hedonism.)

Puzzled by the literary world’s dark view of commerce, the business world occasionally fights back. In May 2011, the chairman of a major bank holding company said he would give grants of as much as \$2 million to colleges if they agreed to make Ayn Rand’s novel *Atlas Shrugged* required reading in a course on capitalism. This idea has undoubtedly been resisted by most academics, who rightly object to donors’ prescribing what should be taught. Moreover, Ayn Rand’s second-rate novels are tedious and humorless paeans to selfishness.

Wallace Stevens, the poet who was an executive for an insurance company, wished “we could . . . get rid of . . . the caricatures of the businessman.” But it is unlikely that Stevens’s wish will ever be fulfilled, for most American literary writers will continue to dislike commerce, especially corporate commerce, and most will continue to regard profit-making with suspicion, which is why most American writers are liberals. Three years ago, the essayist Daniel Menaker put it nicely: “Republican literary writers are in my experience as rare as ski bums in the Sahel.” ♦

'Arrested' Again

The second life of a much-beloved sitcom.

BY ZACK MUNSON

And now, the story of an Emmy-winning sitcom that was canceled in 2006 and the one writer who had no choice but to spend seven years figuring out how to get it back on the air. It's . . . *Arrested Development*. Or, to be precise, it's the long-awaited, much-hyped fourth season of *Arrested Development*, which made its debut on Netflix a few weeks ago.

For those unfamiliar with the show and the saga surrounding its cancellation and (very) eventual revival, it was created by Mitchell Hurwitz in 2003 and chronicles the lives of the Bluths—a wealthy, WASPy, exceedingly dysfunctional Newport Beach, California, family—after their father is arrested for embezzlement and fraud. It premiered to critical acclaim a decade ago on Fox, and, over the next few years, it developed a small but devoted following: ardent fans who admired the show's clever joke-writing, ingenious, intersecting plot-lines, and sharp and original comedic acting. (Among other things, *Arrested* launched Michael Cera's and Will Arnett's careers, revived Jason Bateman's and Jeffrey Tambor's, and introduced alternative comic David Cross to a large, very appreciative audience.)

After two seasons and six Emmys, the show was canceled abruptly in the middle of season three. It was initially rumored that Showtime was going to pick it up, but Hurwitz backed out of the deal. Since then, there have been whispers here and there that it was going to be revived, or that a movie was imminent; but audiences heard nothing more from the Bluths until the fall of 2011, when Hurwitz announced a

deal that would bring the show back by way of Netflix's streaming video service.

And so, a mere decade after it first premiered, *Arrested Development* premiered again. Each of the new episodes follows a single character from the end of where the show left off to the present day. At first, this device is somewhat jarring to fans expecting the breakneck 22 minutes of chaotic family squabbling that characterized the first three seasons.

The first episode of season four focuses on Michael Bluth (Bateman), the protagonist who always held the Bluth family together, tasked as he was with getting his father out of jail, keeping the family's real estate company afloat—and whatever else his ne'er-do-well siblings and mother might impose upon him to do. The episode reveals his travails over the past few years: He's finally disassociated from the family that had taken such advantage of him, he's lost a fortune developing a subdivision that had no road leading to it, and he's taking online classes at the University of Phoenix while living, uninvited and unwanted, in his son George-Michael's (Cera) college dormitory.

From a material standpoint, it is vintage *Arrested Development*, as are the next few episodes: George-Michael is developing an "anti-social network" called Fakeblock, and has come out of the closet as "O.S." (overtly sexual). George Bluth Sr. (Tambor) is scamming investment bankers at a quasi-spiritual retreat in the desert that sits on land he bought to build a wall to keep Mexicans out of the United States. Gob Bluth (Arnett) is living the party-boy lifestyle with the young Hollywood crowd and takes Rohypnol, the date-rape drug, to erase his memories each morning.

But these first few episodes seem to lack the comedic oomph and careful

plotting of the earlier shows. All the bizarre stories seem a bit disconnected, and it appears that, by isolating the characters, Hurwitz has willfully eliminated the internecine family conflict that made *Arrested* so hilarious in the first place. "Appears" is the operative word here, because what Hurwitz has actually done is much more complex and impressive, and every bit as funny, if not funnier, than the original.

In its first three seasons, the show always seemed to be running a short con and long con simultaneously: creating compelling, episode-long, intersecting arcs that very quickly delivered setups and payoffs, as well as season-long arcs that delivered big twists and big laughs over time. In season four, now unburdened by the 22-minute, three-act structure required by network TV and its advertisers, Hurwitz has made the show one really long, really complicated con.

As each episode reveals the progress (or lack of progress) of the characters in the intervening years, the same scenes are replayed over and over, and the same jokes are hit again and again from different perspectives, with each repetition adding dramatic irony to dramatic irony, and laughs to laughs, until what is actually going on starts to become clear.

This happens slowly at first, then more and more rapidly with each passing episode, until every scene seems to carry some new bit of information, some new joke playing on an old joke, until finally it is one huge comedic payoff after another, line after line, scene after scene, episode after episode, culminating in a series of cliffhangers that will have fans demanding more episodes—or the movie that Hurwitz has long been promising.

In short, *Arrested Development* is one of the most ambitious and brilliantly executed television shows ever made. All things considered, that might not be saying much. But like the handful of shows over the past decade that have helped make television superior to film as entertainment, it is so good as to practically demand watching and rewatching.

And fortunately, it's on Netflix, so have at it. ♦

Zack Munson is a writer in Los Angeles.

Superman's Choice

Less powerful than a locomotive, but more meaningful.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ



Critics aren't crazy about *Man of Steel*, the new Superman movie. It has a 56 percent favorable rating on Rotten Tomatoes, the site that aggregates reviews. But audiences love it; the Cinemascore poll gives *Man of Steel* a grade of A-.

So what accounts for the discrepancy? The answer is simple: *Man of Steel* is an effort to do to the Superman story what *The Dark Knight* and *The Dark Knight Rises* did to the Batman story. It is the superhero-movie-as-morality-play, and today's critics don't like morality plays—unless, of course, they involve good liberal people standing up to evil conservative people.

Man of Steel is deadly serious, unashamedly melodramatic, and entirely without irony. (It shares its screenwriter, David Goyer, with the *Dark Knight* movies, whose director, Christopher Nolan, produced *Man of Steel*.) The movie's plot requires its godlike hero to do something he does not wish to do because he is facing a villain only he can stop—and the villain must be stopped permanently if the Earth is to survive.

John Podhoretz, editor of Commentary, is THE WEEKLY STANDARD's movie critic.

Man of Steel

Directed by Zack Snyder



In the movie's first half, the drama in Clark Kent's life is whether he can survive if the world learns he is an alien. His adoptive father, played by Kevin Costner (who's really good here), thinks not, and is willing to pay a grave price in service to his conviction. But then Clark has no choice but to reveal himself, at least in part, when villains from his home planet show up, demand that he be surrendered to them, and then begin to remake the earth so that it can become the new Krypton.

Director Zack Snyder uses the same monochromatic palette for *Man of Steel* that he did for his breakout hit, *300*. This has the effect of taking Superman about as far from his comic-book origins as it would be possible to go. The villains, led by the brilliant Michael Shannon, are neither cutesy nor creepy nor silly; they are determined and purposeful and relentless.

So the moral dilemmas for Clark/Superman are plain: Does he help others, or protect himself? Does he side with the civilization that gave him

birth, or the civilization—the American civilization—in which he was raised? Is he willing to commit a lesser sin to ward off a greater evil?

Superman may be the first and most enduring of the superheroes, but there is a central dramatic problem with him: If he can't be hurt, and he can do just about anything, what's the point in telling his story? He's perfect already. He doesn't need to change. The clever solution back in the 1970s, when the first of the groundbreaking Christopher Reeve movies was made, was to turn him into a 1930s comedy lead, with a fresh twist. Reeve (and writer Tom Mankiewicz) made him two paradigmatic screwball characters in one. When he was Superman, he was Cary Grant, the sexiest and most unapproachable being on earth; when he was Clark Kent, he was Cary Grant's foil Ralph Bellamy, a goodhearted and dull schnook. This was so sensible an angle to take with such a ridiculous character that the charming ABC television series *Lois & Clark*, which ran from 1993-97, was simply a romantic comedy in which one of the characters could fly.

Remarkably enough, Snyder and Goyer actually succeed in making the action that swirls around Superman visceral and gripping. The dilemmas are very well conceived. But they just can't do that much with Superman himself, especially since they play up his commonality with Jesus Christ—another perfect being whose perfection makes him unrealizable as a character. Henry Cavill, who plays the lead, is insanely good-looking and carries himself attractively, but he's not much spicier than the deeply bland Brandon Routh in the failed 2006 "reboot," *Superman Returns*.

It's pretty good fare, and I don't quite get the critical hostility, but I understand why audiences are taking to it. If they're going to wait in line, spend 20 bucks a ticket for the 3D/IMAX version, and watch \$250 million worth of explosions and mass destruction, they want to *feel* something. They actually want their popcorn entertainment to *mean* something. They want some gravity with their mindlessness. *Man of Steel* gives them a bit. ◆

“In 2005, [Vladimir Putin] admired—and pocketed—a \$25,000 Super Bowl ring with 124 diamonds owned by New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft. Putin walked off with his ring, Kraft said last week, and the White House let him get away with it to avoid an international incident. . . . [I]t’s now on display at the Kremlin’s library, where all official state gifts are kept. . . . Kraft was showing off his oversized bling when Putin slipped it on his finger and said, ‘I can kill someone with this ring.’”

—Washington Post, June 16, 2013

OFFICIAL STATE GIFTS
THINGS VLAD COULD KILL SOMEONE WITH



**BOB KRAFT'S
SUPER BOWL RING**



**TONY BLAIR'S
WATCH**



**BARACK OBAMA'S
HALF-EATEN SNICKERS BAR**



**JOE BIDEN'S
NINTENDO GAME BOY**



**SEAN PENN'S
ACADEMY AWARD**



**KOFI ANNAN'S
WALLET**



**MR. T'S
GOLD CHAINS**