the weekly Standard

A NEW WORLD DISORDER
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GRANT TAKES CHARGE

The appointment that won the Civil War

BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

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Contents

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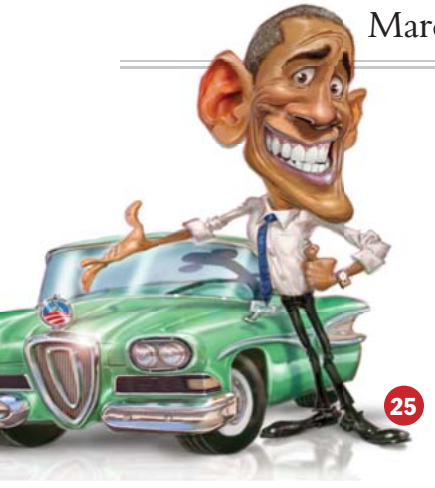
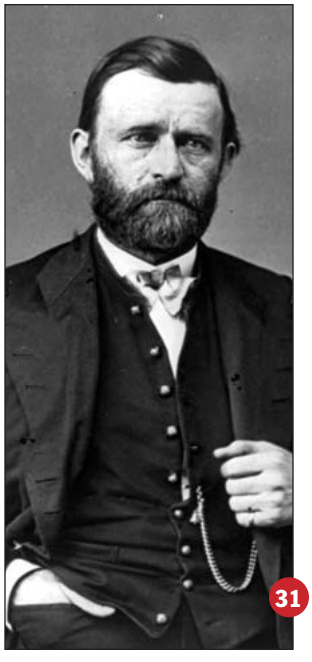

25

Articles


31

Feature

Books & Arts


42

Bo Callaway, 1927-2014

Howard "Bo" Callaway, who in 1965 became the first Republican congressman from Georgia since Reconstruction, died last week at the age of 86. A West Point graduate and Korean War veteran, Callaway was the scion of a wealthy Georgia family—his parents were founders of the Callaway Gardens resort near Columbus—and as secretary of the Army (1973-75) he presided over the transition to an all-volunteer force. In later years he moved to Colorado, where he served as chairman of the state Republican party and ran unsuccessfully for the Senate.

The memory of Callaway as a New South GOP businessman-politician, respectable but obscure, seems fixed: The *Washington Post* ran a 200-word wire service obituary, beside the former Sierra Leone president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, under the heading of "Deaths Elsewhere."

You would never know that, nearly a half-century ago, Bo Callaway had dominated the political headlines across America for several weeks. That's because, in 1966, he was the Republican nominee for governor of Georgia and, after a contentious Democratic primary, the favorite to win. The Democrats had been sorely divided among a former governor (Ellis Arnall), a retiring state senator (Jimmy Carter), and an unreconstructed segregationist named Lester Maddox, owner of the Pickrick Restaurant in Atlanta, who had become famous for chasing black patrons away from his business with an axe handle.

In the Democratic primary, Carter drew enough votes away from Arnall to force a runoff, which Lester Maddox won. Arnall, in turn, chose to stay in the race as a write-in candidate. In theory, this should have divided the anti-Maddox vote, thereby depriving Callaway of a popular victory. But on Election Day in November, Callaway won a plurality among Georgians with 453,665 votes to 450,626 for Maddox—and 52,831 ballots for Arnall.

The problem for Callaway was that, under the provisions of the Georgia constitution at that time, if the winner of the popular vote in a gubernatorial contest failed to gain a majority, the legislature would select a governor between the two candidates with the most votes. By any reasonable measure, that choice should have been Howard Callaway, especially since Arnall's votes were basically a protest against Maddox. But in 1966 the Georgia legislature was overwhelmingly Democratic, and its members voted accordingly: Lester Maddox, of Pickrick Restaurant/axe-handle fame, became governor of Georgia.

Bo Callaway and the Georgia Republican party pursued legal challenges, but to no avail: Early in 1967 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Constitution does not dictate the way states choose their governors—although a dissenting justice, Abe Fortas, declared that "if the voting right is to mean anything, it certainly must be protected against the possibility that victory will go to the loser." Bo Callaway, for his part, accepted his lost victory with equanimity.

The Scrapbook recalls this extraordinary episode in political history partly as a tribute to Callaway's gentlemanly conduct—he never publicly complained about the rank injustice he suffered—but largely to recall the fact that, for most of its history, and up until comparatively recently, the Democratic party, especially in the South, was the party of slavery, and tolerance for Jim Crow and inequality. The actual story behind the success of New South conservatives like Howard Callaway, and the emergence of the Republican party in the South, is often forgotten.

Shortly after taking up residence in the governor's mansion, Lester Maddox was visited by Vice President Hubert Humphrey, who pronounced him a "good Democrat" and exclaimed to reporters afterward that "the Democratic party is like a big house. There's room for a lot of folks!" Good Democrat, indeed: By 1971 Maddox was Governor Jimmy Carter's lieutenant governor; and in subsequent years, President Carter never had anything nice to say about his rival in the 1966 governor's race, Howard Callaway. About Lester Maddox, he's breathed barely a word. ♦

Protecting bin Laden

Did Pakistan's intelligence service, the ISI, help Osama bin Laden hide in the years before he was killed in Abbottabad in May 2011? According to an extraordinary piece of reporting in the *New York Times Magazine*, we finally know the answer: yes.

Carlotta Gall covered the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan for more than a decade. She had long tried to determine just how much Pakistan's ISI knew about bin Laden's whereabouts. For years, there had been rumors and suspicions about the role of the Pakistani government.

After bin Laden was killed, U.S. officials downplayed those suggestions. "It was as if a decision had been made to contain the damage to the relationship between the two governments. 'There's no smoking gun,' officials in the Obama administration began to say."

But suspicion remained. Ziauddin Butt, former head of the ISI, once told Gall that he believed former Pakistani prime minister Pervez Musharraf had a role in arranging bin Laden's Abbottabad hideout. But proof had been as elusive as bin Laden himself.

Then, a breakthrough:

> Finally, on a winter evening in 2012, I got the confirmation I was looking for. According to one inside source, the ISI actually ran a special desk assigned to handle Bin Laden. It was operated independently, led by an officer who

made his own decisions and did not report to a superior. He handled only one person: Bin Laden. . . . (Two former senior American officials later told me that the information was consistent with their own conclusions.) This was what Afghans knew, and Taliban fighters had told me, but finally someone on the inside was admitting it. The desk was wholly deniable by virtually everyone at the ISI—such is how supersecret intelligence units operate—but the top military bosses knew about it, I was told.

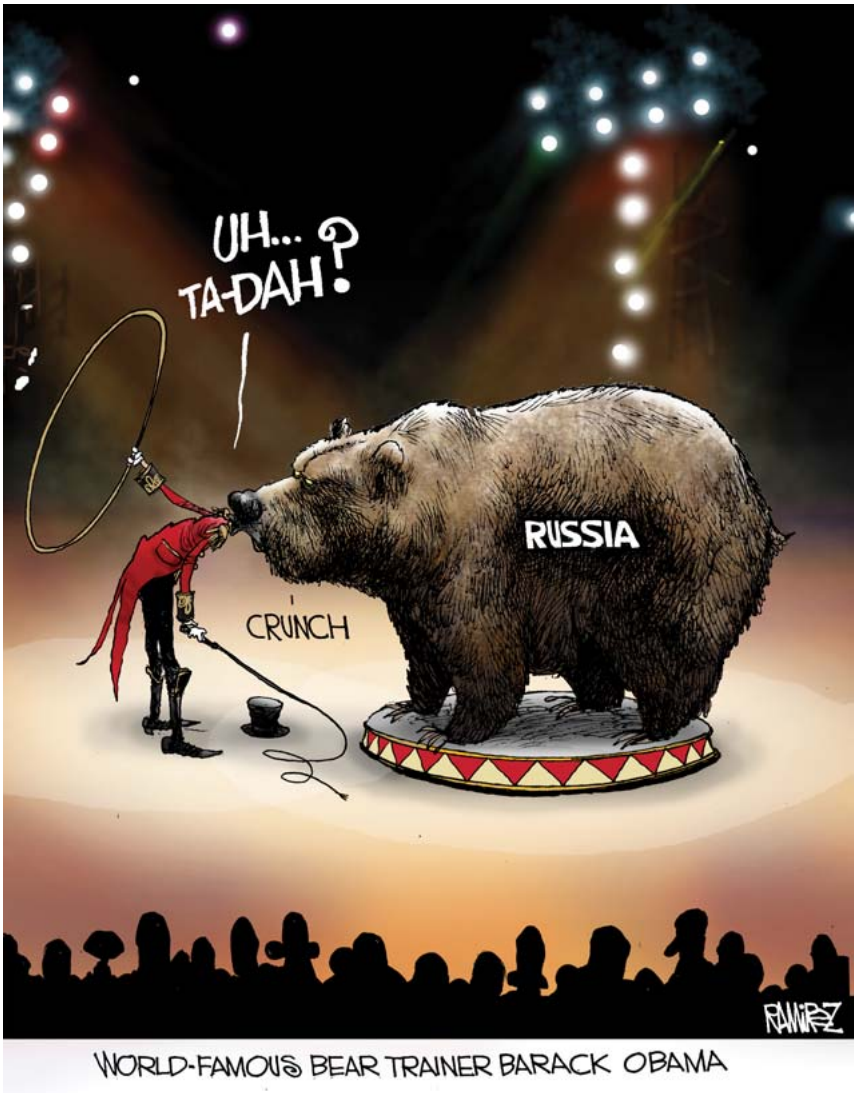
The U.S. government—over the course of two administrations—has chosen to set aside the evidence of Pakistan's role in nurturing al Qaeda. Under George W. Bush, the strategy was pressure and hope. Under Barack Obama, it's unclear there's any strategy at all.

Gall's article, an excerpt from her forthcoming book, *The Wrong Enemy: America in Afghanistan, 2001-2014*, provides a tough reminder of the failure of the United States in Pakistan. It's also a stern warning about the continuing challenge. ♦

Double Standards

The Scrapbook continues to scratch its head over the barrels of ink spilled over the Chris Christie bridge scandal. It's well worth reporting, but none of the Christie revelations to date justify the flood-the-zone coverage. So you'll forgive us for suspecting that Christie's political affiliation just might have something to do with the intense media interest. Compare and contrast with this story in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* last week, which, unless you live there, you probably haven't heard about:

> The Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office ran an undercover sting operation over three years that captured leading Philadelphia Democrats, including four members of the city's state House delegation, on tape accepting money, The Inquirer has learned. Yet no one was charged with a crime. Prosecutors began the sting in 2010 when Republican Tom Corbett was attorney general. After Democrat Kathleen G. Kane took office in 2013, she shut it down.



WORLD-FAMOUS BEAR TRAINER BARACK OBAMA

The investigation apparently entailed 400 hours of audio and videotape, with most of the politicians involved accepting bribes in exchange for votes and contracts. According to the *Inquirer*, as state representative Vanessa Brown put an envelope with $2,000 cash in her purse she said, "Yo, good looking and Ooowee. . . . Thank you twice." Further, "sources with knowledge of the sting said the investigation made financial pitches to both Republicans and Democrats, but only Democrats accepted the payments."

And yet, the AG dropped the fraud charges secretly last fall despite the investigation's potential to capture more corrupt leaders. Kane claims the investigation was "tainted by racism." In a statement given to the *Inquirer*, Kane's office quoted the lead agent in the case as saying he had been told to target members of the Legislative Black Caucus. But that doesn't appear to square with the *Inquirer*'s reporting: "People close to Thomas said no one ever gave him such an order and he never said such a thing to Kane's staff. Had anyone made such a suggestion, Thomas would have rejected it, they said."

Of course, Philadelphia has such a long track record of corruption—the Abscam scandal of the 1970s ensnared two Philly congressmen and three city council members—one might get the impression that state Democrats aren't much interested in rooting out corruption.

The best construction we can put on this is that the media blow GOP malfeasance out of proportion because, while not unheard of, it is comparatively rare. Pervasive Democratic corruption that goes to the top levels of state government is passé. In 2010, the White House even endorsed a well-known mob banker in the Illinois Senate race. The national media shrugged and effectively said, "That's Chicago politics, what do you expect?" Even The Scrapbook's cynicism has limits. Americans still expect to be represented by politicians who aren't bought, and it's time the media treated corruption as a big deal whenever and wherever they encounter it. ♦

Busybodies Get Busy

CVS, the nation's second-largest pharmacy chain, recently decided to stop selling tobacco products. That was all well and good: There's nothing objectionable about a corporation making the decision to stop selling a product that is well-known to be harmful. (Though we could have done without the theatrics from President Obama, who felt the need to issue a statement "congratulating" the chain.)

More troublingly, last week, the attorneys general of 28 states, led by New York's Eric Schneiderman and Ohio's Mike DeWine, sent a vaguely threatening letter to five other large chains—Walmart, Walgreens, Rite Aid, Safeway, and Kroger—"urging" them to do the same: Selling cigarettes "normalizes tobacco use," you see, according to the AGs.

Are the private merchandising decisions of corporations really the business of leading law enforcement officers? Last time we checked, tobacco is still a legal product—even in New York. We are also well aware that Officialdom loathes smokers. But do the AGs really think smokers are so lazy and stupid that they'll quit just because they have to go to the local bodega rather than Walgreens to get their fix?

If the AGs are successful in their quest, we're quite certain that 7-Eleven franchise owners nationwide will be grateful for the extra business. ♦

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The Saint of the Family

In our dining room, there was a small glass-top table that looked like an old-fashioned pushcart. On it my mother kept several small plants that made a mess of the glass top as they shed their leaves and, when watered, dripped soil from the holes at the bottom of their pots. To clean the table you had to remove all the plants, wipe down the glass, clean off the bottoms of the pots, and return them to the glass. It was a chore we always put off, except when Aunt Eileen was coming to visit.

Aunt Eileen is my mother's older sister. She is also a nun and a missionary, now retired, who spent most of her life in Africa—in Ghana, Nigeria, and later Uganda. She did not usually wear a habit, but she was so thin and dressed so simply in starchy-looking fabrics and decades-old eyeglass frames that you would never mistake her for a layperson.

During her missionary years, Eileen would occasionally return to the United States and come to see us. Preparations were strenuous. All family members were on notice to be not just good, but better than they really were. The house was cleaned so thoroughly that upon entering certain rooms you instantly felt an urge to leave. The tension became so great you could almost sleep standing up.

Then, finally, Aunt Eileen would arrive. And the first, totally awful thing she did was take your hand and look at you. I mean really look at you. Usually, when adults looked at me it didn't occur to me to wonder what they saw. In my family I was just one of three young boys who were all freckle-faced, under-bathed, and foul-mouthed. There were hundreds more like us around the neighborhood.

But in Aunt Eileen's huge and unblinking eyes, you were special. It was as if you were glowing and no one else had bothered to notice. Meanwhile, her long thin fingers pressed into your hand and, as she listened to you, gently fussed with your arm.

In a singsong voice, she'd question you about school and sports and whether you were being good to mom. After that, I had no idea what to say except, "How's Africa?"

Sister Eileen with Ugandan friends, circa 2005

COURTESY OF THE SKINNER FAMILY

The answer was always sad and long, not that I listened closely. My aunt's gaze was so luminously intense that I spent the whole time waiting anxiously for her to look away.

Ordinary things became different when she was around. Hastily said prayers at the dinner table became minor liturgical ceremonies. The usual bickering ceased as the kids sat quietly and the adults talked seriously. Behind Eileen's back, however, my brothers and I made fun, mimicking her gaze and mocking that thing she did with our hands.

Sometimes on her visits, she brought slides. I remember sitting for hours in the living room with the rest of my family as she projected photos on the wall above the fireplace. Eileen's narration consisted of identifying every single person in every single picture. She told no adventure stories and, to my disappointment, had apparently had no encounters with lions, elephants, or giraffes.

Only when I was grown did it occur to me that Eileen's life was far more adventurous than my own. In early 2001, I called her up and talked her into an interview.

Eileen was then in Philadelphia. She had been working in American hospitals, updating her nursing skills, but also plotting to get sent back to Africa.

She talked far more about the Medical Mission Sisters than about herself. Still, I learned that she worked as a midwife at the tiny hospital in Berekum, Ghana, and trained others to be midwives there. I heard about her work in Nigeria, where she arrived in 1973. That year, the city of Lagos hosted the Pan-African Games. The government rounded up hundreds of homeless people and locked them in a camp outside the city. The parish Eileen worked with adopted the camp, bringing food and, as she put it, "consideration."

She had delivered many babies and helped treat many cases of malaria, but the health crisis she talked the most about was AIDS. In Uganda, she worked with AIDS victims, including children. The message she tried to convey to patients, especially the most hopeless, was, "I think you are important. . . . I am here for you if you need me." Not long after we spoke, Eileen, although in her seventies, was sent back to Uganda for another tour of duty.

Today, however, Eileen is in a nursing home and her health is failing. I visited a few weeks ago. She smiled a lot, her eyes as big as ever. She took my finger and held onto it. I don't think she knew exactly who I was, but she still looked at me as if I was very special, which, I can finally appreciate, is how she always looked at everyone.

David Skinner

the weekly Standard

Superpower Once Lived Here

On February 22, popular protests led to the fall of the pro-Russian government of Viktor Yanukovych in Kiev. On February 27, in response to this setback, President Vladimir Putin sent forces into Crimea to seize it from Ukraine. On March 19, President Barack Obama delivered his response. He reassured Putin, "We are not going to be getting into a military excursion in Ukraine." Obama added, "What we are going to do is mobilize all of our diplomatic resources to make sure that we've got a strong international coalition that sends a clear message."

NEWSCOM

The message is clear. The problem is its content. Obama certainly isn't sending the message that Colin Powell, after the Cold War, wanted America to send: "Superpower lives here." Obama's message, by contrast, is: "Superpower once lived here. No forwarding address."

Putin understands Obama's message. He knows he's won Crimea. The question is whether he'll win Ukraine.

He thinks he will. He's dealing with the Obama administration, after all. He looks at the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan, he witnesses the failure to enforce the red line in Syria and the subsequent successes of his friend Assad, he chortles at the relaxation of the sanctions on Iran and the desperate desire to cut a nuclear deal, and he sees Obama's defense cuts. And he reads the *New York Times*, where David Sanger reports, "Mr. Obama acknowledges, at least in private, that he is managing an era of American retrenchment."

So Putin sees retrenchment. Putin sees retreat. And Putin sees that Obama is unlikely to reverse course.

In late 1979, with the seizure of American hostages by Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Jimmy Carter was mugged by reality. Carter then tried, however haplessly, to change direction. But Barack Obama is no Jimmy Carter. Will Obama increase defense spending, as Carter did? Is he likely to launch a military excursion, as Carter did, over the objection—and then resignation—of his dovish secretary of state?

Carter, whatever his problems, was more hawkish than most in his party. In this he followed in the footsteps of every other Democratic president in the past century. Until Barack Obama.

It's been a bit bewildering, even disorienting, to watch Obama get mugged by reality and refuse to press charges. But of course he doesn't want to press charges. He doesn't believe in an international system in which the American role is to lead. Former Saudi intelligence chief Turki al-Faisal was asked by the *Financial Times* recently about Putin and Obama. He explained: "While the wolf is eating the sheep, there is no shepherd to come to the rescue of the pack. This is where we find ourselves today."

Indeed it is. In the *New York Times*, Sanger comments, "History suggests that such eras [of retrenchment]—akin to what the United States went through after the two world wars and Vietnam—often look like weakness to the rest of the world." Retrenchment looks like weakness because it is weakness. And the consequences of such eras of weakness aren't happy.

What is to be done? Congress needs to push the administration in the right direction as much as possible. Foreign policy experts need to propose sound measures—to ensure, for example, that the loss of Crimea isn't followed by the loss of Ukraine—in the hope that President Obama might be pressured to embrace them.

More broadly, though, the opposition—which one hopes will come to include some liberals and some Democrats—has to articulate a foreign and defense policy of resolve and strength. Allies and enemies around the world will read the American situation differently if they think the American collapse of will is bipartisan than they will if they see that it

is not. Pro-Western forces around the world may be able to maneuver and to hang on if they receive a clear message that the cavalry is coming to the rescue on January 20, 2017.

So it's important to mount a vigorous opposition to Obama's foreign and defense policies. It's important to propose serious alternatives. It's important not just for the sake of intellectual honesty and political clarity. It's important because what the opposition says now can make a difference in the world over the next three years.

It will still be a rough time. America can't be strong with a president committed to weakness. But the prospects for a restoration of American strength will be brighter, the challenges of 2017 will be less daunting, if the opposition today stands clearly and unequivocally for American strength and leadership, and—dare one say it?—for American greatness.

—William Kristol

Boots on the Ground? Yes!

The failures of American will exposed by Russia's invasion of Ukraine are numerous and mounting. Coming on top of the tepid response to China's declaration of an air defense identification zone over Japanese waters and the withdrawals from Iraq, Afghanistan, and the "red line" in Syria, they have revealed Barack Obama as a man who not only "leads from behind" but marches to the rear.

In some ways, however, critiques of Obama's weakness may be as revealing of America's new strategic timidity as the president's policy. Take, for example, Charles Krauthammer's recent "How to Stop Putin" essay in the *Washington Post*. Krauthammer neatly eviscerates Obama's policy. He goes on to describe what an effective response would consist of: reassuring NATO, deterring further Russian adventurism in Ukraine, and reversing the annexation of Crimea. But having imagined what a victory would look like, the clear-eyed columnist tries to reassure us: "This is no land-war strategy," he writes. "This is the 'trip-wire' strategy successful for half a century in Germany and Korea."

But what *was* that trip-wire? It was a thin skein of U.S. Army and other land-force units stretched along the "inner-German border" and the 38th parallel on the Korean peninsula. In Korea, some of that trip-wire is still there, staring through its binoculars at the enemy. A good deal of what deterred the Soviets—and still deters even the nutty Norks—is the knowledge that, should they test the trip-wire, they run a serious risk of engaging with American ground troops. Ground troops who wear boots, patrolling the front lines of what in a less ironic time was called the frontier of freedom.

In the post-Iraq era, even conservatives and Republicans have internalized the no-boots-on-the-ground catechism. Sen. John McCain argued both for intervention in Syria and that "the worst thing the United States could do right now is put boots on the ground in Syria." That was a year ago; since then the Syrian opposition has consistently lost ground to the forces of the Assad regime while al Qaeda affiliates, who love nothing better than controlling territory, likewise prosper. Conservatives should not will the ends without willing the means, or divert their eyes from military realities.

It is no surprise that the focus of the Obama defense cuts has been on land forces, and particularly the U.S. Army. Putting boots on the ground is not merely a statement of American political commitment, but often the only means to be militarily and strategically decisive. Conversely, if your goal is to *prevent* the United States from exercising a decisive influence, then you take those tools away. But if conservatives agree that the United States is out of the land war business, then they will have to concede that there's a method to Obama's madness.

U.S. tanks in Berlin, 1961

AP PHOTO

Krauthammer begins his Crimea column by mocking the president of the Los Angeles World Affairs Council for snidely asking, "What are [we] going to do, send the 101st Airborne into Crimea?" And indeed, putting the Screaming Eagles directly into Crimea would be a tactical blunder. But putting one brigade astride each of the two main roads—and there are only two—that connect Crimea to the Ukrainian mainland would not be militarily silly, if backed by U.S. aircraft and partnered with NATO and Ukrainian units. In 1990, it was the deployment of the 82nd Airborne to Saudi Arabia—the troops called themselves "speed bumps"—that helped Saddam Hussein decide to stop at the Kuwait border.

Russia's tactics in Crimea—using small, elite, stealthy but lightly armed units with limited mobility and with the advantage of support from Russian bases in Crimea—cannot so easily be replicated even in eastern Ukraine. And

last week's events, such as the move on the Ukrainian naval headquarters in Sevastopol, testify that the Russians still have substantial work to do to solidify their grip on Crimea. These tactics betray an essential Russian weakness: Their larger conventional forces have been left to rot since the Soviet era. Russian land-force performance in the 2008 Georgia war was poor, and even Georgia's air defenses proved strong enough to deter the large air assault the Russians considered. Putin is a bold man, but one playing a weak and brittle military hand.

It would be politically courageous to call his bluff and find out what cards Putin really holds, but no American—no Western—politician seems willing to cover that bet with boots on the ground. That is a crippling weakness as, after a generational vacation from history, post-Cold-War strategic competition begins in earnest, not just in Europe, but across the Middle East and throughout East Asia. Power abhors a vacuum, except when—as we see with Vladimir Putin, Ali Khamenei, and Xi Jinping—power covets it.

Ukraine is still, for the present, a no-man's-land, neither West nor East. But Ukraine is hardly the only no-man's-land. The entire Middle East is fast becoming an especially gruesome one. The South China Sea is likewise up for grabs. Absent a constant and powerful military presence by the forces of an American-led coalition, our adversaries are laying claim to these no-man's-lands.

The United States still possesses uniquely powerful air and naval forces that, in the South China Sea, Persian Gulf, or Arabian Sea, can be sufficient to patrol the perimeter and deter conflict. Yet this capability cannot defeat geography. Preserving the peace on the Eurasian landmass demands land forces. These need not be very large—they can indeed be a trip-wire, if backed up by airpower and reserves—but they have to be there.

—Thomas Donnelly

Time to Win the Vote

Democrats are waiting. They're waiting to see if Paul Broun is the Republican nominee for the Senate in Georgia. They're waiting to see if challenger Matt Bevin and the Senate Conservatives Fund

lacerate Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell sufficiently in Kentucky's Republican primary to make him vulnerable in the general election against Democrat Alison Lundergan Grimes. They're waiting to see if Republicans nominate beatable Senate candidates in Alaska, North Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Colorado.

They're waiting because they've all but given up on holding the Senate in the November midterm elections on their own. Their candidates—especially the four incumbents in states won by Mitt Romney in 2012—are too compromised by their ties to President Obama and their votes for Obamacare. To retain the Senate, Democrats require the help of Republican primary voters. And they may get it.

The GOP is likely to gain four or five Senate seats just for the asking, the political environment being so poisonous for Democrats. But that would leave the Senate in Democratic majority leader Harry Reid's hands. Republicans must net at least six seats to take control of the Senate. But they can't manage this if they give away winnable seats.

Take Georgia. Democrat Michelle Nunn, the daughter of former senator Sam Nunn, "is proving to be perhaps the best Democratic challenger of the cycle," Jennifer Duffy of the *Cook Political Report* wrote last week. But it's not as if Nunn is campaigning aggressively. She is biding her time, talking up bipartisanship and how she worked with President George W. Bush on volunteerism.

Winning in Georgia, a red state, is difficult for Democrats. Nunn wouldn't have a chance—and probably wouldn't be a candidate—if Republican incumbent Saxby Chambliss were running for reelection. But he's retiring, creating an open seat. To win, Nunn must avoid becoming the issue. Her GOP opponent must be. That's why Democrats are praying that Broun or his House colleague Phil Gingrey wins the Republican nomination—especially Broun. He's given to exotic statements the media like to feast on. And without a Republican opponent who makes himself the issue, Nunn is toast. GOP primary voters should keep this in mind. Either secretary of state Karen Handler or congressman Jack Kingston would be a tough Republican for Nunn to beat.

Or take Kentucky. The impatient wing of the Republican right has an outsized dislike of McConnell, as if he (rather than Reid or President Obama) were the problem in Washington. True, he's no Ted Cruz. McConnell is a cautious leader, skeptical of rash steps by Republicans so long as Democrats control the Senate, the White House, and the media. He opposes shutting down the government and threatening to block an increase in the debt limit since both hurt the Republican cause.

In a pinch, however, McConnell is invariably summoned to bail out Republicans. And here he's a master of the inside game. He negotiated the two-year extension of the Bush tax cuts in 2010 (despite a new president who'd campaigned on raising taxes) and the fiscal cliff deal that made those tax cuts permanent for everyone earning less than $400,000. And he's responsible for the Budget Control Act of 2011 that included the sequester and actually cut spending.

Yet some Republicans are willing to sacrifice McConnell to the gods of zealotry, even if that means losing a Republican seat and jeopardizing the prospects for capturing the Senate. Nearly $2 million has been spent, most of it by the Senate Conservatives Fund, to malign McConnell. And instead of electing a marginally more conservative Republican like Bevin, the more likely outcome is giving up the seat to a Democrat.

Losing GOP seats in Georgia and Kentucky might not prevent Republicans from grabbing the Senate. But it would surely reduce the odds that now favor a GOP takeover. Why take that risk? Bitter primaries with months of name-calling are loved by the press. But they don't help the candidate who wins the nomination—quite the contrary.

State senator Owen Hill, running for the Republican Senate nomination in Colorado, set a gracious example when congressman Cory Gardner entered the race a month ago. Hill was understandably unhappy with the deal between Gardner and then-Senate candidate Ken Buck, who switched to seek Gardner's House seat. But Hill bowed to reality.

"Gardner has the best chance of defeating [Democratic incumbent] Mark Udall in November, and I pray he does," Hill said in dropping out. Polls show Gardner in a tie with Udall.

Lesser GOP candidates in races against other Democratic senators should ponder Hill's move. Would a primary fist fight in New Hampshire focused on small ideological differences help the likely nominee, ex-Massachusetts senator Scott Brown, defeat Democratic senator Jeanne Shaheen? Hardly. The same is true in Louisiana, where Representative Bill Cassidy leads Democratic senator Mary Landrieu in polls, but still faces a primary foe, Rob Maness, backed by the Senate Conservatives Fund.

Margaret Thatcher's famous dictum "First you win the argument, then you win the vote" is quoted by Republicans who back candidates more vocally conservative than the likely nominee. Her rule might have applied when conservatives were running against liberal Republicans in the 1970s and 1980s. It doesn't any more.

The argument has been won. The gamut of Republican incumbents and candidates for Congress now runs from quite conservative to very conservative. They believe in smaller government, less spending, fewer regulations, strong defense . . . you know the rest. Yes, there are a few exceptions. But Mitch McConnell isn't one of them.

—Fred Barnes

Crimea and Punishment

Time for another Russia reset.

BY TOD LINDBERG

Flags in Moscow's Red Square on March 19 bearing Vladimir Putin's image and celebrating the annexation of Crimea

It's time for a reset for U.S. policy toward Russia. The original Obama reset has now run its course, and President Vladimir Putin has thoroughly dashed all hope of Russia emerging as a partner of the United States and a constructive contributor to a liberal international order. The armed takeover and annexation of Crimea and the threat of further military incursion into eastern Ukraine have established beyond doubt that the United States needs to approach Russia first and foremost as a security challenge.

The Obama reset was, in my view, worth a try, whether one was optimistic about the prospects for Russia as a responsible member of the international community, as were most Obama administration officials, or pessimistic, as were most internationally minded Republicans. The reset really was as clear a test of Russian intentions as one could imagine. If, indeed, it was the case that relations between the United States and Russia had turned sour as a result of unnecessarily antagonistic Bush administration policy or rhetoric, the reset provided an opportunity to put hard feelings aside and get down to constructive business.

Another useful element of the reset was the educational effect it was going to have, one way or the other. Had it gone well, and had Russia become the partner the Obama administration wanted in coping with such pressing matters as Iran's nuclear program, the reconstruction of the Balkans, and the war in Afghanistan, Republicans would have had to concede that maladroit diplomacy and the lingering (if diminishing) unilateralism of the Bush administration had indeed taken a toll. On the other hand, an unsuccessful reset would seem to require an admission from Democrats that the primary source of America's troubles in the world was not Bush's policies but the troubles of the world.

Well, Putin has cleared matters up for us rather decisively. Here is the remarkable assessment of my friend and Hoover Institution colleague Michael McFaul, who served in the Obama White House as one of the architects of the reset and subsequently as Obama's ambassador to Moscow (a post he left just after the Sochi Olympics and before Putin's takeover of Crimea):

> I am very depressed today. For those of us, Russians and Americans alike, who have believed in the possibility of a strong, prosperous, democratic Russia fully integrated into the international system and as a close partner of the United States, Putin's recent decisions represent a giant step backwards. Tragically, we are entering a new period with some important differences, but many similarities to the Cold War. The ideological struggle between autocracy and democracy is resurgent. Protection of European countries from Russian aggression is paramount again. Shoring up vulnerable states, including first and foremost Ukraine, must become a top priority again for the United States and Europe. And doing business with Russian companies will once again become politicized. Most tragically, in seeking to isolate the Russian regime, many Russians with no connection to the government will also suffer the effects of isolation. My only hope is that this dark period will not last as long as the last Cold War.

McFaul, who has been a tireless champion of democracy and liberal reform in the post-Cold War era, is right that, whether we like it or not, we are engaged in a strategic competition with Russia grounded in a contest

NEWSCOM

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of hard power. We have awakened to this fact as a result of Russia's insertion of thousands of special forces in unmarked uniforms into Crimea at the same time we have been winding down our wars, diminishing our military footprint abroad, and severely reducing our defense budget. We must acknowledge that Russia has stolen a march into this new era, for which we were unprepared.

Much rethinking will be necessary in the weeks and months ahead. We could probably do worse than to start by reassessing Russia's recent claims and grievances about the international system in light of Putin's willingness to use force to redraw national borders and to do so in flagrant disregard of a century's worth of treaty and customary international law on the conduct of military operations.

We should give no quarter to any Russian claims about the legitimacy of its annexation of Ukrainian territory. Russian officials like to talk about the supposed risk to ethnic Russians in Ukraine as a result of the ouster of Ukraine's President Viktor Yanukovych, who had become Russia's man and whose government opened fire on demonstrators in Kiev's Maidan Square. It's a mistake to engage Russia on the substance of these claims, for the simple reason that Russia proffered them in an entirely unserious fashion.

If Russia had legitimate concerns about ethnic Russians in Ukraine, it could have taken them to the Security Council to see if they could be addressed there. Under the U.N. Charter, the Security Council has "primary responsibility" for maintaining international peace and security, and Russia is a permanent member with a veto. Russia chose instead to bypass the Security Council and act unilaterally.

Nor was this the first time. In 2008, Russia moved militarily against Georgia, citing as a pretext a need to protect ethnic Russians in two Georgian provinces. If Russia harbored serious concerns, as opposed to naked territorial ambitions as well as Putin's personal loathing of then-Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili, the Security Council would have been the proper venue for raising them. (It's now also necessary to see Georgia 2008 as a prologue to Ukraine 2014, not the aberration the Obama reset effectively treated it as.)

Everything Russia says about Ukraine has to be evaluated in the context of its unwillingness to present and discuss the matter even in a forum where it is a privileged member. And of course the Security Council voted 13-1, with China abstaining and Russia exercising its veto, on a resolution condemning the bogus referendum Russia staged as a pretext to annex Crimea.

Similarly, Russia deserves no quarter from the United States or its allies on Russian claims of hypocrisy. It's true that the United States has taken military action without the explicit authorization of the Security Council. But the United States has always gone to the Security Council first, before taking action. The United States tried to get the ethnic cleansing and imminent slaughter in Kosovo addressed at the Security Council in 1998-99, but Russia balked. Only then did the United States and its allies take military action. There were numerous Security Council resolutions demanding Saddam Hussein's compliance and threatening consequences in the runup to the 2003 war. But Russia did nothing to engage the Security Council on Ukraine before taking military action.

What is more, Russia now stands condemned over Crimea by numerous governments, such as in Germany and France, that opposed the U.S.-led military action against Iraq in 2003. Russia has acted on its own and has garnered no international support for its actions beyond a tiny number of autocratic governments beholden to it, whereas the condemnation of its actions has been widespread and consistent with international law.

The United States also needs to reassess the failure of the Security Council to address the civil war in Syria in light of Russia's move into Crimea. It's unclear whether the United States was ever serious about doing anything to protect Syrian civilians from Bashar al-Assad. But in blocking action at the Security Council, Russia was not acting out of the offense it took over the toppling of Muammar Qaddafi under cover of a Security Council resolution to protect Libyan civilians. Rather, Russia was using all means at its disposal to prop up its Syrian ally. The United States must not straitjacket itself in a forum Russia is using solely to advance a power-politics agenda.

We have no Russian partner in Syria. Putin's intervention at the 11th hour with a proposal for Assad to give up his chemical weapons rather than suffer a U.S. military strike for using them on his people served to relieve the Obama administration of a burden it did not want to bear. But it also bound the United States, Russia, and Syria together as partners in a disarmament process. Russia understood the implications of this—freezing U.S. options in Syria while the disarmament process was under way—even if the United States did not. Under the circumstances, the United States must punish Assad militarily for any noncompliance with his chemical disarmament obligations, including noncompliance related to timetables.

We should also recognize that we have no Russian partner in Iran. In fact, the administration's Iran policy is in serious trouble, not because Russia was ever going to be helpful enough to get Iran to halt its nuclear weapons program, but because Iran has seen what is happening in Ukraine, which returned its Soviet-era nuclear weapons to Russia in exchange for paper guarantees of security. Iran's determined pursuit of a nuclear weapon is a position Putin likely respects.

Meanwhile, we have NATO allies to reassure about the seriousness of our commitment to their defense and two decades' worth of rhetoric and policy in pursuit of "Europe whole, free and at peace" to uphold against what has become a serious Russian challenge. Sen. Richard Lugar once said that in the post-Cold War era, NATO would either go "out of area or out of business." Now it's time for NATO to get back to basics and back in business. ♦

But ICANN Can't

Don't lose sleep over international 'control' of the Internet.

BY JEREMY RABKIN & ARIEL RABKIN

The Commerce Department issued a low-key bureaucratic announcement on March 14: The government will not renew its contract with the Internet Corporation for Names and Numbers (ICANN), under which ICANN has administered the Internet's domain name system since the mid-1990s. U.S. government supervision will be superseded next year, according to the announcement, by new arrangements to "support and enhance the multistakeholder model of Internet policymaking."

Critics on the right worry that the Obama administration is giving away the Internet to foreigners. It's an understandable concern, given the administration's general approach to foreign policy. It just happens to be a wildly exaggerated concern here, given the actual power of ICANN.

We often talk about the Internet as if it were a single system. That sort of talk suggests that it must have an ultimate control center. Then it's easy to imagine ICANN is that center, with thousands of beady-eyed nerds monitoring computer screens showing traffic patterns throughout the World Wide Web. Aaron Sorkin might convey the drama of the setting, where ethnic upstarts design the control programs, but the better-dressed, preppie controllers still get the girls.

But that's a screenwriter's fantasy. The actual ICANN is more like the North American Numbering Plan Administration (NANPA). Never heard of it? It assigns telephone area codes. It is operated by a private company, Neustar Corporation. It is one of those happy services whose obscurity confirms its effectiveness.

Some people in Manhattan are upset that they can't get their phone numbers assigned to the historic Manhattan area code, 212. Apart from such snobs, very few people notice NANPA's work. It doesn't matter what area code you have, so long as it directs long distance calls to your phone and not to a phone in Idaho.

Handing out area codes is pretty much what ICANN does. It assigns top-level domain names and numbers to direct Internet traffic—as with ".com" or ".org" or ".edu." ICANN does not operate any infrastructure. The actual machinery that connects users to websites is owned and operated by Internet service providers, who are in no way subordinate to ICANN. ICANN does not even have responsibility for assigning web addresses to individuals and organizations. If you want to buy an address in .com, .net, or the like, the registration is handled by a private registrar. ICANN is not in any way involved in such transactions.

ICANN will continue to operate as a private corporation in Southern California—subject to U.S. law. But what if, like Edward Snowden, ICANN managers absconded to Moscow with all their secret files? It wouldn't matter much. The companies that actually operate Internet infrastructure would pay no heed if ICANN suddenly started barking new orders in Russian. The operators (the "root server technical operators association") could improvise new coordinating arrangements among themselves relatively quickly. The U.S. Internet industry is regulated by the FCC and overseen by the federal courts; there is no danger that the Internet will be totally divorced from domestic political or legal accountability.

Down the road, there is some risk that ICANN decisions might complicate international diplomacy. Each nation now has its own national domain name—".uk" for Britain, ".ca" for Canada, ".ru" for Russia. There has been little controversy about the assignment of these domains. China has not objected to Taiwan's ".tw." Israel has not protested the Palestinian Authority's ".ps." One can imagine disputes about who should be assigned control of Ukraine's domain name, if the country splits into pieces. But even such a dispute would remain a minor diplomatic incident, since Ukrainian users and websites are not limited to sites with the Ukraine suffix. Not many people would sign up for Internet service even there, if that's all they got.

Hollywood fantasy aside, there remains cause for concern about what the Obama administration has done. First, the Commerce Department's announcement speaks in very vague terms about making ICANN accountable to "the global multistakeholder community." But it has left it to ICANN itself to arrange the "transition" to new accountability structures. The odds are that without a

NEWSCOM

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formal role for the U.S. government, ICANN won't impose much new accountability on itself.

ICANN already has a whole series of councils and conferences offering a sense of "participation" to an open-ended set of "stakeholders"—basically, whoever wants to send representatives to attend periodic meetings in exotic locales (the next ICANN conference will be in Singapore). But as with other corporations, voting members of ICANN's board have the last word on its policy. A plurality of board members are selected by the existing board. Others are selected by particular constituencies, like the "Country Code Names Supporting Organization." Once selected, these board members can't be removed by the constituencies that sent them. As a nonprofit corporation, ICANN has no stockholders. However loosely or tightly organized, the "stakeholders" have no authority to override any decision of ICANN's actual directors.

There is legitimate concern about ICANN profiteering. ICANN derives the bulk of its income from fees it charges to register new domain names. Left to itself, its incentive is to continue handing out new top-level domains, regardless of consequences. There is already concern that ICANN has been shamelessly promiscuous in embracing new top-level domains—dot this and dot that.

Established websites on traditional domains (like ".com") worry that their names will reappear in new domains (".biz" or ".fun" or ".rec") and divert confused customers to competing sites—or to scams. Squatters often rush to register established website names in the new domains, so they can sell the rights to the original owners (of the same names, in older domains) for a hefty fee. There is no reason to trust an unaccountable ICANN to strike the right balance here.

There are more serious concerns down the road. The Obama administration has denied that its current policy is an effort to mollify foreign governments, upset at disclosures of NSA spying on their leaders. And it's true that cutting U.S. government ties to ICANN has been under discussion since the beginning of the Obama administration—long before Snowden's disclosures began last summer.

Still, foreign governments—and foreign voters—are upset about NSA spying. So it is hard not to read the Commerce Department's announcement as a placating gesture. But it's a gesture with no relevance at all to actual spying by NSA or anyone else, any more than your vulnerability to telephone wiretaps turns on who controls that North American Numbering Plan for area codes.

The thing about phony gestures is that they risk whetting the appetite for real gestures. By throwing ICANN to some hoped-for-future-development in international "accountability," the Obama administration has shrugged off any serious discussion about the kind of international control scheme we should want. China, Russia, and a supporting chorus of developing countries demand open-ended international controls through the U.N.'s International Telecommunications Union (ITU). EU countries have resisted this idea but offered no clear alternative.

What the Obama administration has done with its latest announcement is give up at the start a main element of U.S. leverage in negotiations about Internet governance in the future. The administration says it will end its formal ties with ICANN next year—just as it will withdraw troops from Afghanistan. And now that we've settled that, can we talk about the future?

Even here, the consequences won't be disastrous. If Russia and China and a hundred developing countries manage to vote new regulatory authority to the ITU, American and European Internet service providers can refuse to cooperate. With the Internet, as with more conventional trade, poor countries want access to rich countries more than the rich want to engage with the poor. But if we want common standards on the Internet—on policing crime or protecting trademarks or defining what content should be excluded (such as child pornography)—we would find it easier to develop them with some sort of agreed forum for negotiation.

Contrary to dark speculations by various conservative commentators, ICANN really can't facilitate Internet censorship in China and Iran to please those governments. ICANN can't stop them from doing that now. Nor is there a plausible scenario in which ICANN imposes censorship on U.S. websites. Actual websites operate through thirteen root servers—some still directly run by U.S. government agencies, some by U.S. universities, some by U.S. private companies. It would be no technical challenge for them to bypass ICANN and coordinate among themselves. Politically, it's really unimaginable that they would all bow to Chinese pressure for censorship because ICANN told them they should.

But it's still true that changing the status of ICANN was an opportunity to initiate a broader discussion about Internet governance. We might have encouraged some sort of international control scheme weighted to the countries with the largest volume of Internet traffic and with a supermajority requirement in voting, as with the World Bank and the IMF. We might have sought to craft safeguards against future abuse, by getting much of the world to commit to limits on suppression of web content. We might have arranged a consortium of Internet companies to oversee ICANN under a more formal control structure. Instead, the Obama administration decided to make no decision—to simply withdraw from any direct supervisory role over ICANN, without any agreed alternative. It may please some foreigners right now, but it's leaving more serious problems to an undefined future—as in so many abortive foreign policy ventures by this administration.

There will be a price to pay down the road for shrugging off ICANN now. But that price won't compare with the price we pay for mishandling Iran's nuclear program or Russia's territorial expansion. We ought to keep the ICANN dispute in perspective. ♦

Mother, Soldier, and Senator?

Joni Ernst tries to separate herself from the Iowa GOP pack. BY JOHN MCCORMACK

In Iowa's crowded, six-way GOP Senate primary, Joni Ernst is trying to break out of the pack by running as the only candidate who is "a mother, a soldier, and a proven conservative."

Born and raised on a small farm in southwest Iowa, the mother of three served in Iraq as an Iowa National Guard battalion commander from 2003 to 2004. She rides a motorcycle (a 2009 Harley-Davidson Softail Deluxe) and has a permit to carry a concealed weapon (she likes to alternate between a Smith & Wesson 9mm and a .380 as her pistol of choice). Now serving her fourth year in the state senate, Ernst has positioned herself as a U.S. Senate candidate who could unite the Tea Party and the GOP establishment.

Joni Ernst

Texas senator Ted Cruz has done a "great job" and the Tea Party is "wonderful," Ernst told me during a recent visit to Washington, D.C. "I do agree with most of their stances." Ernst has won the endorsement of Mitt Romney, and Iowa governor Terry Branstad has said he's "particularly intrigued" by her candidacy. "She's pro-life, she's great on the Second Amendment, and she's been a very successful county official and now state senator," Branstad told the *Washington Post* in August. "She's got a great personal story. And we've never elected a woman to the Senate from our state."

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Ernst is running to the right, but she certainly isn't a bomb-thrower. She speaks diplomatically and dismisses the my-way-or-the-highway approach of unnamed politicians. Ernst would be the third pro-life woman in the Senate if elected. She told me she's "very conservative when it comes to those issues" but emphasized how "tolerant" and "respectful" she is of other people and their views. She singled out Iowa's "phenomenal" Chuck Grassley and Nebraska's Deb Fischer as two senators she admires. But, in her poise and passion about national defense, Ernst reminds me most of New Hampshire senator Kelly Ayotte.

In her stump speech, Ernst talks about growing up on a small farm, where her mother made her clothes, they canned all of their own food, and they turned to neighbors and friends when times were tough. She hits all of the usual conservative notes—the deficit, Obamacare, liberty—but what sets her apart from some conservatives of the Obama era is her willingness to criticize the president for cutting the military's budget. "I will not balance the federal budget on the backs of our servicemen and women," she said at the Polk County GOP convention on March 8. It was one of her biggest applause lines.

"I don't know what the president's foreign policy is. Does he have a foreign policy? I haven't seen it," Ernst told me during her visit to Washington. "We are living in a very unstable world. I think it is very unwise that we focus solely on making cuts at the Department of Defense. I don't feel any safer now than I did 12 years ago." Ernst stands behind the decision to depose Saddam Hussein in Operation Iraqi Freedom. "Given what we knew at the time, absolutely it was the right thing to do," she said. But she hasn't seen enough of a national security interest in Syria to call for U.S. intervention there.

Ernst said she first became "extremely passionate" about national security and foreign affairs when she participated in an agricultural exchange program as a college student in Ukraine just before the fall of the Soviet Union. She ended up on a farm where the family used a horse-drawn plow and lived in a house without running water. They shared a single bicycle for transportation and "didn't have a refrigerator. So any milk that they had sat out on the counter. We just strained the curds out with our teeth as we drank the milk," she recalled.

What struck Ernst was that the Ukrainians she met were more interested in America's political system than its technological advances. When neighbors gathered in the evenings, "they would ask us, 'What is it like to live in a free republic? Talk to us about your forms of government. Tell us how it works.' They were so hungry for freedom. They wanted to know what type of life we lived." It was that experience, Ernst said, that deepened her love for her country and led her to serve in the military and, later, run for office.

The Iowa GOP Senate primary on June 3 seems to be coming down to two candidates: Ernst and Mark Jacobs, a former energy executive and Goldman Sachs employee. "I think they have the only real campaigns out there," said Jennifer Duffy of the *Cook Political Report*. According to a Public Policy Polling survey from late February, Ernst was trailing Jacobs 20 percent to 13 percent, with 42 percent of voters still undecided. If no candidate gets 35 percent in the primary—which is now seen as an unlikely

prospect—party activists will be able to nominate anyone they want at a June 14 convention.

In the PPP poll, Ernst and Jacobs trailed the Democratic candidate, Representative Bruce Braley, both by 41 percent to 35 percent. "Three or four months ago I would have given Braley an advantage, and now I'm not sure he has much of one," Duffy told me. "He can be pretty closely linked to the president, who is upside down in the state. He can be closely linked to Pelosi."

Ernst aides say the only reason she is trailing Jacobs in the primary is that Jacobs is the only candidate who has yet run TV ads. According to sources, powerbrokers at the National Republican Senatorial Committee like Ernst but on balance favor Jacobs. On the one hand, that view is understandable, given that the wealthy Jacobs could fund his own campaign. There are perhaps nine Senate seats more likely to flip from Democratic to Republican than Iowa's. A dollar spent on Iowa is a dollar that can't be spent elsewhere, and Ernst's fundraising has been lackluster to date.

On the other hand, Republicans may be valuing money over candidate quality. A lesson the GOP might have learned from recent Democratic Senate victories in Republican states like Montana and North Dakota is that the most important thing is to find a candidate who is a good fit for the state. And a farm girl turned combat veteran seems to be a better fit for a populist state like Iowa than a former business executive who once worked at Goldman Sachs.

There's also little question that Ernst is more conservative than Jacobs, who supported cap and trade in the past and donated money to Democrats Arlen Specter and Jon Corzine. When I tried to get Ernst to draw contrasts with Jacobs, she would only talk about her record as a "proven conservative" in the Iowa senate. The closest Ernst got to criticizing Jacobs was when I asked if she thought some D.C. Republicans were backing him just because of his wealth. "Money can't buy you Iowa values," she said. "And I'll leave it at that." ♦

NEWSCOM

The Battle for Paris

The next mayor of the French capital will be a woman. But which one?

BY ROGER KAPLAN

If you inhabit the Left Bank of Paris, you live left and vote right. The Left Bank is on the southern shore of the river Seine, and the heart of it is the Latin Quarter and Saint-Germain-des-Prés, a small, dense country you can cross on foot in half an hour. Around here they vote right, though you may have some difficulty finding anyone who owns up to it.

There are a few neighborhoods on the far west side of the city with unapologetic conservative voters, just as on the city's far east there are still echoes of the songs heard on the barricades of Paris's revolutionary history. But people are sensible where a square meter of real estate is worth $10,000, and no one would call the popular, retiring mayor of the city, Bertrand Delanoë, lifelong Socialist, a class warrior. He has been in charge since 2001 (the first nominal leftist to hold the office), and when he turns over the keys to the Hôtel de Ville to his successor, who will be the city's first lady mayor, she will pursue his policies of gentrification and beautification and his preference for avoiding big issues such as gay marriage and immigration, not to mention the huge economic problems of crushing deficits and stupendous unemployment.

Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet

One possible next mayor is the center-right UMP's Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizet, who is young (40), a mother of two, bright, gifted, rich, liberal. She was Nicolas Sarkozy's environment minister, then communications director in his losing bid for reelection as president in 2012. She is mayor of a town in the Essonne, south of the capital. An ancestor was a hero of the American Revolution. She wants to convert some metro stations into swimming pools and make some neighborhoods auto-free. She is what we would call a politically correct liberal, and there are "dissident" conservative candidates who will drain votes from her in the first round of the election on March 23, as will the xenophobic National Front.

Which should comfort the other possible post-Delanoë mayor, his loyal deputy, the attractive, youngish (54) Anne Hidalgo, whose parents brought her from Cadiz at age 2 and who is the very image of the modern nonideological Socialist apparatchik. She too wants to beautify the city with green spaces and pedestrian walks. And she wants "social housing," what we call subsidized, along Avenue Foch, the Park Avenue of Paris.

To be sure, no one expects either Hidalgo or NKM, as Kosciusko-Morizet is known, to take her crazy plans off the drawing boards. The idea in Paris is to come across as big-hearted and do the sensible thing. Live left but govern right, that is the ticket. And it works the other way too: You can talk tough on crime, as NKM does (crime has been spiking

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in French cities), knowing that the mayor has nothing to do with law enforcement. The lady who appears most likely to keep the lid on will win. Hidalgo has played the game no less than NKM, as when she bravely shouted it out with London mayor Boris Johnson over which city is better for entrepreneurial capitalism.

However that may be, it is Paris for sure that takes the prize for most opaque electoral system. Voters vote in their district, or arrondissement, and they choose not a candidate but a party list. The results determine who will sit on the 20 arrondissement councils, each of which elects an arrondissement mayor, and also sends its list-leaders to the all-city council, which in turn elects the mayor of Paris.

Anne Hidalgo

The handsome baroque building that holds the town hall of the Fifth Arrondissement, on the square of the Panthéon, has been held since 1983 by a conservative, shrewd, amiable, hard-nosed pol named Jean Tiberi, who was also mayor of Paris from 1995 to 2001. In this vital core of the Left Bank (the other Left Bank arrondissement, the Sixth, also has a conservative mayor), one is reminded of the *New Yorker* writer wondering how Nixon had won the presidency since she didn't know anybody who voted for him. I have spent half my life in Paris, and I never met anyone who admitted voting for Jean Tiberi until Tiberi showed up on Rosh Hashanah at the shul in the rue Vauquelin and I asked the man next to me, who dat, and he said, the mayor. You guys vote for him? Sure. Goes to Midnight Mass, too, on Christmas Eve.

So there are Tiberi voters after all, and not, as the Socialists used to charge, simply ghosts, graveyard electors, nonresidents, invented ballots.

Traditionally (if less theatrically), it was like this throughout Paris. Paris is the Jacobin city, the city of the Commune, the city of barricades and red flags, but it always voted right. You can have noble sentiments, but you want to temper them with common sense, and you want a city that works. To be sure, there were always red districts. Look at the map.

It is not the Left Bank that is red but the east side of the Right Bank, where the squares and streets have names like Bastille, Colonel Fabien (a Communist hero of the Resistance), and Bataille-de-Stalingrad. The arrondissements here still vote red, maybe from habit. The Twentieth stayed left in 2008 with nearly 70 percent of the votes, and there is no reason to believe it will change. Next door, the Nineteenth did the same, by a smaller majority.

The UMP led by NKM thought this was its year because President François Hollande, a Socialist, is very unpopular, despite his defense of black Africa, a task he has undertaken with a modesty and a determination that one would like to see in an American president engaged in long wars. The UMP is banking on voters' anxieties over issues closer to them than Africa, such as the high cost of living, which combined with precarious employment can be hell. Anxiety, however, may be simply the normal French temperament, balanced by thoughts of the three-hour Sunday lunch and plans for the six weeks at the seashore in summertime.

Hidalgo, bright, good-looking, capable, experienced in all aspects of municipal affairs, is ahead in the citywide polls, if not in the arrondissement where she is running, the Fifteenth, a nice, airy place to live, near the Champ de Mars, with parks and sports facilities. The arrondissement is held by the right and may well stay that way. But under the electoral-list system, Hidalgo will surely receive a seat on the arrondissement council, from which she could still make the move to the Paris city hall.

The problem with the right is that Kosciusko-Morizet, heiress to two great French families representing politics and commerce, and herself a brainy techie yuppie, is not well liked in the UMP. She is green, in the environmentalist sense of the word, she has an engineering bent, she is for modern things, innovation, science. Leading a deeply divided party and contending with the National Front ultras, she may see the left finally seize the Fifth, where Jean Tiberi's son is leading a dissident right-wing list against NKM's designated UMP regular.

NKM, running in the Fourteenth, could win her council seat while, like her rival next door, leaving the other side in control of the district. Delusions of grandeur? Maybe the UMP thought that 2014 was so sure to be their year that they would sweep Paris the way Jacques Chirac used to, and NKM would garner fame and glory by capturing the red Fourteenth.

In this regard at least, the Paris elections are representative of the contests in the country's other 30,000 municipalities (the most in Europe; Germany, for example, has 12,000). The right is not expected to seriously dent the Socialists' control of a large majority of French towns, with only Marseilles and Bordeaux among the bigs staying in conservative hands. By the same token, the National Front, competing seriously in under 100 localities, may get as many as 10, including depressed places like Forbach in the eastern rust belt and Hénin-Beaumont near Belgium, as well as some towns in its traditional bases in the Mediterranean south.

We shall know soon enough. The east of Paris is red, the west is blue, and in between, the arrondissements around the Louvre, the tony streets, the Tuileries, the palace whence Hollande scooters about on secret love missions, are generally blue, but you never know these days, with the UMP and the Socialists happily being elites in the city where, they say, deserving Americans go after they die. ◆

IMAGES: NEWSCOM

How Much Worse Can It Get?

Republicans can't afford to write off African-American voters. BY JAY COST

When pundits talk about the Republican party's troubles with the "nonwhite" vote, they usually mean the Latino vote. There are reasons for this. In 2004 George W. Bush won an estimated 44 percent of the Latino vote; in 2012 Mitt Romney won just 27 percent. What's more, the Latino share of the electorate rose from 8 percent to 10 percent in those eight years, magnifying the impact of the Democrats' inroads.

Yet the nonwhite electorate contains another important problem for Republicans, one that has received less comment: the black vote. Analysts may have ignored it because the GOP loses most African Americans anyway. That's true, but it's getting worse: The GOP's margin of defeat among black voters increased in the last two presidential elections. This should worry Republicans even more than the Latino vote for a simple reason: African Americans hold the balance of power in more swing states.

Already, the damage has been severe. In 2004, John Kerry won about 10 million more black votes than George W. Bush. Then in 2008 and 2012, Barack Obama won about 15 million more black votes than John McCain or Mitt Romney. This means not only that the black vote was decisive in Obama's victories, but his *increase* alone over Kerry's performance in 2004 accounted for about 80 percent of his 2012 margin of victory. In other words, if Obama had "merely" done as well with African Americans as Kerry had, his 5-million-vote margin of victory would have fallen to about 700,000.

A voter refusing to be taken for granted

What is amazing about this is that black voters were already strongly Democratic to begin with. The Republican party, at best, gets about 11 percent of the black vote in any given year. Obama cut that haul in half. Moreover, Obama increased black turnout from 11 percent of the electorate in 2004 to 13 percent in 2008, which, considering that he won almost every black vote, supplemented his final margin by 2 points. Indeed, the GOP's performance among blacks these days is so terrible that Mitt Romney won 800,000 fewer black votes than Bush had eight years before.

For conservatives, there are two ways to look at this problem. The optimistic view notes the decline of black support for Democrats in the 2010 midterm elections and concludes that African Americans have not shifted further to the Democrats; they simply backed Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012. This has some merit, but so does the pessimistic take, which draws a lesson from history.

In 1928 Democrat Al Smith was the first Catholic major-party nominee; he lost overwhelmingly to Herbert Hoover, but his presence at the top of the ticket served to mobilize Catholic immigrants, who strongly backed Franklin Roosevelt in 1932. The latter's New Deal, in particular his labor policies, brought about an alliance between Catholics and the Democratic party that did not crack until 1946 and even then held more or less together until 1972. If the new, and newly Democratic, African-American Obama voters are anything like the Catholics of the 1920s, this will be a lasting problem for the GOP.

What makes the picture all the more troubling for Republicans is the geographic distribution of black voters. Latinos are different: Large portions of the Latino vote are situated in non-swing states, especially California and Texas. The main swing states where Latinos are decisive— Colorado, Florida, and Nevada—together have 44 electoral votes. The black vote is distributed much more effectively for electoral purposes, with large subpopulations in Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin, for a total of 121 electoral votes.

Republicans would be smart to hope for the optimistic scenario but plan for the pessimistic one. In other words, the GOP should assume that the Democrats have expanded their margin among African Americans, and Republicans should craft a strategy to win some black voters back.

No doubt, this is a fraught endeavor. Consider the kerfuffle that Paul Ryan created recently by talking about a culture of nonwork in the inner cities. Ryan was exhorting his audience to get involved in charity work, but liberal critics cried racism, to great effect.

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So hegemonic is the Democratic left's dominance of black politics that most conservatives take the path of least resistance. They keep their mouths shut, aware as they are that an entire cottage industry within the social sciences is devoted to castigating conservative principles as "coded" calls for the oppression of blacks.

Republicans may no longer have the luxury of remaining silent. Besides, there are opportunities for them among African Americans. The Democratic coalition is a motley assortment of interests, and there are latent conflicts that potentially divide black voters from other Democrats. This might explain why the left is so quick to bark "racism!" anytime a Republican starts talking about the inner cities. Democrats need to win upwards of 70 percent of the urban vote these days, and they cannot suffer Republicans to poach their supporters.

Yet why is it written in stone that black voters in Harlem should back the same national politicians as the gentry liberals of the Upper East Side? Not so long ago the two neighborhoods' voting patterns differed as much as their class and social interests. And there remains a divide between them in local politics. Is there really no way for Republicans to take advantage of that, perhaps by promoting economic, cultural, and educational initiatives that the upscale left cannot abide?

Similarly, do not low-income African Americans lose out under the Democrats' preferred version of immigration reform, which would flood the labor market with low-skilled workers and put strains on already thin public welfare resources? How about the potential conflicts of interest between organized labor and African Americans? The Democratic party is not a monolith, and black interests often come second (or third) when the party is deciding who gets what. Those are viable areas for Republican counteroffensives.

But strategic considerations can only set the stage. There has to be more. African Americans overwhelmingly mistrust the Republican party, and the media reinforce their negative view. Republicans seeking to overcome these challenges once again might look to history.

There have been three substantial shifts in black public opinion. First, African Americans chose the Republican party, then remained loyal to it, primarily because of Abraham Lincoln's fight against slavery; next, they started to shift to the Democratic party because Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal began providing them with social welfare benefits; third, they shifted further to the Democratic party because Lyndon Johnson shepherded the Civil Rights Act through Congress in 1964 (and Barry Goldwater opposed it).

In each case, we see a politician stick his neck out for African Americans by putting political capital behind a bold initiative that helped the black community. Importantly, none of them was a perfect advocate for black rights. Lincoln had previously supported the return of African Americans to Africa; FDR had worked in the racist Woodrow Wilson administration, refused during his presidency to push for anti-lynching legislation, and was slow to respond to complaints about discrimination in the military during World War II; and LBJ was instrumental in watering down civil rights legislation under Dwight Eisenhower. In the long run, none of these blemishes mattered politically. Each man took a risk to help African Americans in a big way and succeeded, and his party reaped the political benefit for generations.

It is notable that each of these politicians took black political preferences at face value. It is not simply that the three promoted initiatives that were good for African Americans; the initiatives were also what African Americans wanted. The contrast between this approach and Ryan's comment is illustrative. The warmhearted Ryan meant no harm; he was following in the footsteps of his mentor, Jack Kemp, who similarly shined a light on urban problems. And Ryan's vicious liberal critics were disingenuous in the extreme. That said, the GOP is not going to win black voters without a conscientious attempt to appeal to them *on their own terms*. Talking about idleness in the inner cities will not win urban voters to the conservative cause.

Even in the most optimistic case, the GOP will continue to lose African Americans by large margins. Black voters are much more likely to support liberal initiatives than whites, and Republicans cannot and should not dilute their core governing philosophy to pander to any group. Rather, the goal should be more modest. Republicans should try to win self-identified conservative black voters by roughly the same margins that they win self-identified conservative whites. And they should make their case to moderate African Americans, who today overwhelmingly back Democrats. A diligent focus on the problems that African Americans confront can help Republicans at least rebuild the support they won from blacks before the emergence of Obama.

Both political parties have long taken African Americans for granted. Democrats know they have the black vote in the bag, so they have little electoral incentive to expend political capital on the black community. Republicans, having found ways to win in the postwar era with as little as 10 percent of the black vote, offer rhetorical support for conservative initiatives like school choice or faith-based charities, but spend their energies elsewhere.

Obama's back-to-back electoral victories may have scrambled that long-standing calculus. The GOP, which may no longer be able to rely on its modest share of the black vote, had better start behaving as if the worst-case scenario will come true. The party needs to craft a bold reform agenda for the black community, one that meets the community's needs as African Americans define them. The party also needs to signal that it is committed to enacting that agenda if elected. Otherwise, the "emerging Democratic majority" that the left has dreamed of for over a quarter-century may yet come true. ♦

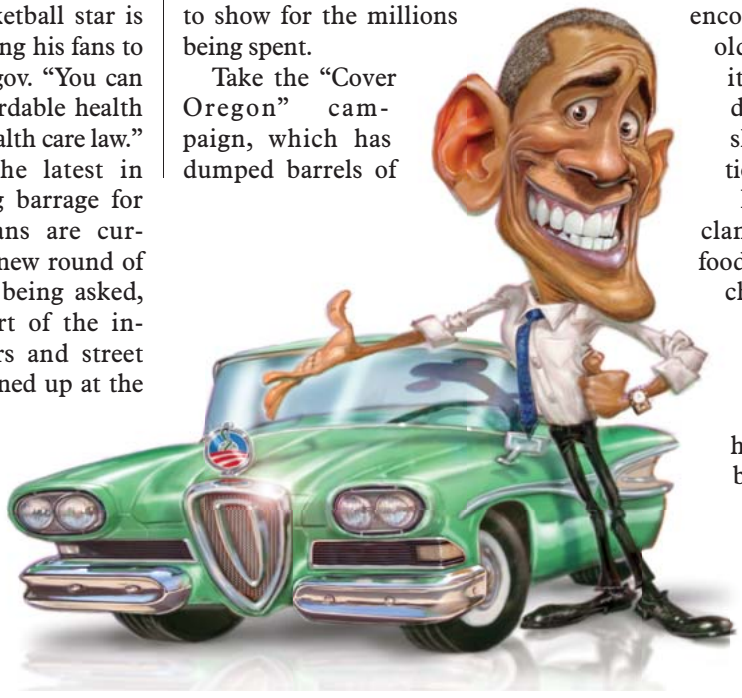
The Hard Sell

No amount of advertising will make Obamacare attractive to the young. BY ERIC FELTEN

Add LeBron James to the ranks of Obamacare pitchmen: The basketball star is featured in new ads urging his fans to sign up at HealthCare.gov. "You can go there to find an affordable health plan that's part of the health care law."

The ads are just the latest in the ongoing marketing barrage for Obamacare. Californians are currently being hit with a new round of ads—this time they're being asked, "Are You In?" i.e., part of the in-crowd of soccer players and street musicians who have signed up at the exchange. The state's Obamacare campaign is slated to spend some $80 million this year, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. Which is just a fraction of the money being poured into the effort around the country, money being funneled through national groups such as Enroll America, which came out last month with a new slate of commercials featuring singing dogs and cats, and state groups such as the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative—famous for the ad featuring a woman leering at a maybe beau and thinking, "My health insurance covers the pill, which means all I have to worry about is getting him between the covers."

The ads may spark buzz and get attention, but are they actually getting consumers to sign up for Obamacare, in particular the young consumers needed to balance the actuarial tables? If the marketing campaigns for the Affordable Care Act so far are any indication, the new efforts aren't likely to have much to show for the millions being spent.



GARY LOCKE

Take the "Cover Oregon" campaign, which has dumped barrels of money into youth marketing. They targeted Portland slackers with TV spots featuring hipsters and hip-hoppers. There was much strumming and warbling, with treacly lyrics such as "To care for each one, each daughter and son; Live Long in Oregon." The state's Obamacare promotional efforts have included sponsoring concerts at which banners were hung reading "Enjoy Life and CYA." And yet, for all its exquisite attunement to the sensibilities of the local plaid-and-beard set, the campaign hasn't just failed, it has failed spectacularly. Of all those who've signed up on the Oregon exchange, the *Oregonian* reports, only 18 percent are in the 18-34 age bracket. The state is tied with West Virginia for the worst showing among young adults. Why the epic shortfall?

Ads have failed to deliver because Obamacare's promoters have asked too much of them. Their overconfidence in the power of marketing is rooted in a quaint disdain for the evils of advertising. It's long been a tenet of liberal faith that advertising has nefarious, mind-controlling power. Vance Packard sounded the alarm in 1957 with *The Hidden Persuaders*, warning that advertisers surreptitiously exploited consumers' "compelling needs." Advertising doesn't just encourage behavior, goes the old antibusiness argument, it compels us to act, bulldozes our better judgment, skews any rational calculation of self-interest.

It's an alarm that keeps clanging away, as with the foodie scolds who tell us that children want hamburgers and fries not because their little palates prefer the stuff to Brussels sprouts, but because they have been brainwashed by the irresistible inducements of commercials with a clown. Typical was the White House event in September at which Michelle Obama declared that kids need to be protected from junk-food marketing because they "believe just about everything they see and hear, especially if it's on TV."

If this is your view of marketing—that advertising trickery forces people to act against their own interests—then it only makes sense to turn to advertising in earnest if you've got a product to hawk that people overwhelmingly dislike. The left has long complained that advertising is compulsion; but now, when it comes to Obamacare, the prospect of compulsion is suddenly very appealing.

The Obama camp's overconfidence in the power of advertising may also owe something to their experience in political advertising. There's no doubt that political ads can be tremendously effective: The Obama campaign wielded them masterfully in caricaturing Mitt Romney as a

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heartless, woman-hating 1-percenter. But the political hands are wrong to think success with political advertising translates into success with product advertising (even if the product has political overtones).

For starters, campaign advertising is predominantly negative advertising; and it is much easier to persuade people to think ill of someone (or something) than it is to convince them someone or something is good. Beyond that, campaign advertisements involve persuading voters to make judgments about products—candidates—that they aren't in a position to test personally. Few voters have any direct and meaningful contact with candidates. And who's to say what a candidate will actually do if elected? Voters often have little to go on other than advertisements.

But it's much harder to shape people's views when their opinions are informed by their direct experience. Bob Fennis and Wolfgang Stroebe write in *The Psychology of Advertising*, "People who are familiar with a product and confident in their ability to judge the quality of that product are unlikely to be susceptible to the distorting influence of advertising messages."

In other words, people aren't idiots: They are hard to sway with advertising when they have firsthand knowledge of a product. If they don't have firsthand experience, advertising may convince them to give a product a try. But then, if the product is lousy, that disappointment is what the consumer remembers, not the fictions propagated by the advertiser.

Mad Men-era advertising guru Bill Bernbach—whose firm, Doyle Dane Bernbach, was responsible for the legendary VW "Lemon" campaign—knew as much. He declared, "A great ad campaign will make a bad product fail faster. It will get more people to know it's bad." And he was hardly the first to make the observation. Albert Lasker is credited with inventing modern advertising a century ago. According to his biographers, Lasker regularly "told his clients that good advertising couldn't rescue a bad product or a bad company." In advertising circles Lasker's and Bernbach's insight has long since been simplified into an adage: "Nothing kills a bad product faster than good advertising."

Which doesn't bode well for Obamacare. The more people those ever-so-clever ads send to the Affordable Care Act exchanges, the more people will discover that the plans involve radically limited choices of doctors and hospitals, gob-smacking deductibles, and, for many, dismaying premiums.

You could say that Obamacare is the Edsel of our age, a product as intensely disliked as it is endlessly hyped. Every time the president comes forward to declare—as he did in his appearance with Zach Galifianakis—that "HealthCare.gov works great now," one can hear echoes of the desperate Ford advertisements of the late '50s declaring, in the face of all evidence, "Everyone who has seen it knows—with us—that the Edsel is a success."

So bring on LeBron. And go ahead: Sing, you kitties, sing. ♦

Border Skirmishes

The Iran-Israel struggle heats up.

BY LEE SMITH

Last week the Israeli Air Force bombed Syrian military and security positions in retaliation for an operation on the Syrian-Israeli border in the Golan Heights.

A wounded Israeli soldier is evacuated after an attack on his Jeep, March 18.

AP / JINIPIX

Four Israeli soldiers were wounded when Hezbollah attacked their Jeep. Hezbollah it seems was looking to kidnap them. This time they failed, but, said Hezbollah sources, "We are sure we will succeed in the near future."

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Maybe. If so, it is sure to resonate throughout the Middle East. The last time Hezbollah kidnapped Israeli soldiers it touched off a monthlong conflict in the summer of 2006. After the devastation Hezbollah suffered, hundreds of its elite troops dead and billions of dollars' worth of damage done, the party's general secretary, Hassan Nasrallah, said that had he known how the Israelis would respond, he never would have taken their soldiers in the first place. So now that Nasrallah knows what Israeli countermeasures look like, what could he possibly be thinking?

The answer is that it's not Nasrallah calling the shots. Hezbollah is Iran's long arm in Lebanon. Accordingly, its activities on Israel's northern border, taken together with the maneuvers of other Iranian allies on the southern frontier—weapons transfers to Gaza-based militants and their rocket fire on Israel—are evidence of a new Iranian boldness. Perhaps as a consequence of the interim nuclear agreement Iran struck last November with the P5+1 powers (the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany), Tehran imagines that the White House will rein in

Jerusalem. But if that's what Obama is advising, Israel isn't paying attention. Israel's aggressive defense suggests that if Iran keeps pushing, it may soon find itself in open warfare.

For the last year and a half, Israel has kept Iran's allies on its borders almost totally quiet. The 2006 war that many, including Hezbollah, believed Jerusalem had lost served instead to reestablish the credibility of Israeli deterrence. To the south, Israel's November 2012 Pillar of Defense campaign in Gaza left Hamas reeling, while the Syrian civil war and the sectarian furies it unleashed loosened the bonds that tied Iran to its chief Palestinian asset. Even as the conflict in Syria burned, Israel was careful to show that it had no stake in the outcome and would stand aside so long as neither Assad nor the rebels tried to involve it—or transfer weapons to Hezbollah.

Israel has repeatedly targeted weapons convoys moving strategic, or game-changing, arms from Syria to Lebanon, typically striking at their point of origin rather than their destination. The reasoning seems to be that with Assad under fire already and reluctant to open another front against Israel, it's advisable to hit there rather than in Lebanon, where Hezbollah might be compelled to act to save face. Nonetheless, on February 24 the Israeli Air Force struck a Hezbollah position in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. Hezbollah's retaliatory campaign has included at least four border incidents. In one of them, Hezbollah fighters crossed several hundred yards into Israeli territory and planted IEDs.

Until last week, Israeli responses had typically been measured—firing artillery rounds into Syrian territory, for instance. The decision to target Assad's forces now—as Israel did not do during the 2006 war, when Damascus kept transferring supplies to Hezbollah—is something of a game-changer itself, and needs to be seen in the context of Israel's southern front.

Earlier in March, Israeli naval commandos boarded a Panamanian-flagged vessel, the *Klos C*, in the Red Sea carrying arms destined for Gaza, most likely intended for Palestinian Islamic Jihad but undoubtedly with the acquiescence of Hamas. If Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu hoped that the interdiction of Iranian arms was something like a public relations coup that would change the White House's mind about its bargaining partner in Tehran, the administration paid little heed. "It's entirely appropriate to continue to pursue the possibility of reaching a resolution on the nuclear program," White House spokesman Jay Carney said after the arms seizure.

However, the fact that the administration showed itself unmoved was perhaps the key factor in Jerusalem's strategic messaging campaign, for Washington wasn't Jerusalem's only intended audience. The Israeli government was also signaling to its own citizens. The message was twofold: First, Iran is a strategic threat, not merely because of its nuclear weapons program, but also because of its support for the axis of resistance on Israel's borders, a message underscored when Palestinian Islamic Jihad rained dozens of missiles on Israeli towns. Second, the Obama administration isn't greatly bothered by the fact that Iran doesn't, as the president put it, "operate in a responsible fashion."

As Defense Minister Moshe Ya'alon said last week: "We had thought the one who should lead the campaign against Iran is the United States. But at some stage the United States entered into negotiations with them, and, unhappily, when it comes to negotiating at a Persian bazaar, the Iranians were better. . . . Therefore, on this matter, we have to behave as though we have nobody to look out for us but ourselves."

If the weapons seizure was meant to drive home to Israelis that they're on their own when it comes to Iran, then the raid on Syrian targets last week was intended to reassure them. Jerusalem showed that it will stop Iran's allies on its borders, and also that it's willing to go to the source—states that sponsor terrorist war, like Syria and, if the clerical regime continues to escalate, perhaps Iran, too. ♦

Big Philanthropy's New Role

An unhappy partnership with the public sector.

BY JAMES PIERESON & NAOMI SCHAEFER RILEY

Many cheered last month when President Obama finally used his bully pulpit to talk about the problems facing young men of color. Of course, the president did not have much else to offer: Nearly all of the $200 million pledged for his "My Brother's Keeper" initiative is from private foundations, not public coffers.

This comes on the heels of a recent announcement that several private donors, including the Ford, Kresge, Charles Stewart Mott, and Knight Foundations, have pledged nearly $330 million to help the city of Detroit cover its pension costs in bankruptcy proceedings. In return, they have demanded that public officials in the state and city place the Detroit Institute of Art into nonprofit hands so that the institute's art collection cannot be sold to pay the city's creditors. There are apparently more than 20 other conditions that the foundations have attached to this deal,

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which have not yet been made public.

There have been other cases in recent years of government officials looking to private institutions to underwrite favored causes. The mayor of New York City recently asked the Nature Conservancy to redistribute private funds from the care of Central Park to the upkeep of other parks around the city. Some years ago legislators in California introduced a bill that, if passed, would have required private foundations to appoint advocates to their boards and donate more of their funds to the needy. More such cases are bound to arise as financially starved governments search for new sources of funds.

As these cases suggest, a significant change has occurred in recent decades in the relationship between government and private philanthropy. During the 1960s, in the heyday of the Great Society, prominent foundations funded new programs on an experimental basis in the hope that the federal government would step in with its vast resources and fund them on a permanent basis. The Public Broadcasting System, the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, "model cities" and urban renewal programs, federal housing efforts, and many more such programs began in this fashion.

The foundations also created advocacy and litigation groups that pushed for race- and gender-based affirmative action, environmentalist protections, and public welfare initiatives. These foundation-funded groups lobbied to expand government programs further and make it impossible to eliminate any of them.

As all of this suggests, foundation initiatives were a one-way process designed to expand the role of government and the welfare state. During the 1980s and 1990s Presidents Reagan and Bush encouraged foundations, corporations, and individual donors to step up to demonstrate that the private sector can address problems that government had failed to solve. President Reagan created a Task Force on Private Sector Initiatives to make recommendations along these lines. President Bush had his "Thousand Points of Light" initiative to highlight successful private sector efforts to strengthen civil society.

But these efforts never attracted much support from prominent foundations and philanthropic leaders. It was not their responsibility, they said, to fill in the gaps caused by federal budget cuts. Having spent so much money building up government programs, they were understandably reluctant to assist in cutting them back.

Visitors looking at the Detroit Institute of Art's Diego Rivera mural

Now, decades later, as government money begins to run out at all levels, this process is finally coming to an end, albeit with most of these expensive programs still in place. Instead of foundations leveraging government, as they did in the 1960s and 1970s, governments are now looking to private foundations to bail them out.

This was an inevitable development given the tendency of government to expand into new fields of activity and to take over previously private institutions. Today many of those charitable organizations started or funded by private foundations receive the bulk of their funds from state or federal governments. According to *The Nonprofit Almanac*, in 2010 public charities received a quarter of their revenue from fees for goods and services from government sources. Health and human services nonprofits raised the majority of their money from government sources, according to the National Center for Charitable Statistics. All of the work that these foundations have done to influence public policy has actually made the independent sector more a tool of government than the other way around.

In an article in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, the leaders of four of the Detroit-saving foundations wrote: "We do not think philanthropy can be a replacement for social capital or that any foundation has the resources or wisdom to successfully play the role of civic savior." These are fine words, but after many decades of playing the role of "civic savior," it is a little late in the day for philanthropic leaders to make this claim.

There may be some rough justice in the fact that these foundations have to step forward to help save Detroit. After all, many of them stood by or even encouraged Detroit's civic leaders as their policies ran the city into the ground.

It might in turn be satisfying to cheer as these foundations spend down their endowments to save the public from the effects of the policies they have supported. But it's worth taking stock of how both foundations and government have been hurt by this brave new world of government-foundation interdependence. One would be hardpressed to show that this new relationship has improved the performance either of government or of private and supposedly independent philanthropy.

There is a lesson here: Those who think they can control big government are bound to learn sooner or later that, rather than pulling the strings, they are the ones who are the puppets—or, as the proverb has it, "He who rides the tiger will soon find himself inside." ♦

NEWSCOM

Grant Takes Charge

150 years ago—the appointment that won a war

By Geoffrey Norman

He arrived without ceremony. No pomp, no pageantry. It was as far in spirit from Caesar's entry into Rome as it could possibly have been. He had come to Washington to be made only the third lieutenant general in the nation's history (George Washington and Winfield Scott were the others) and to assume command of all the Union armies and, consequently, the direction of the war from Texas to Virginia. He was being asked—commanded, actually—by civilian leadership to save the Republic. He was not the first.

But when he appeared, with his 12-year-old son, in the lobby of Willard's Hotel, the clerk did not recognize him. The oversight could be forgiven. He was dressed in a worn uniform that was anything but gaudy—no braided epaulets and polished brass, but merely the insignia of a major general, and, God knows, they saw enough of them at Willard's. In the recollection of someone who had been in the lobby at the time, he seemed a man of "no gait, no *station*, no manner." Of "a rather scrubby look withal . . . as if he was out of office and on half pay with nothing to do but hang round the entry of Willard's, cigar in mouth." And he had "rather the look of a man who did, or once did, take a little too much to drink."

He asked about a room. The desk clerk sized him up and responded, condescendingly, that he supposed they could manage something. There was something on the top floor, very small. He said that would do, and the desk clerk gave him the register to sign.

When the clerk read what the new lodger had written—"U.S. Grant & Son; Galena, Illinois"—his attitude changed instantly into one of complete and energetic sycophancy. *Boy, fetch those bags! Best room in the house for the general!*

Grant was given Parlor 6, the same suite that had been occupied by Abraham Lincoln in the days before the inauguration and where Julia Ward Howe had composed "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." These quarters were not only plush but symbolic to the cause.

Grant accepted the upgrade with equanimity. He wasn't, as Washington was to learn, a man given to conspicuous displays of emotion. If he had feelings, he kept them to himself. Anyway, one hotel room was as good as another, one imagines him thinking. It was just for sleeping, and, after all, he didn't plan on being there long. He had other business to attend to, down in Virginia.

Ulysses S. Grant had come to Washington, in early March 1864, a stranger to its culture and its customs and its intrigues. As regards those things, he was what the observer in Willard's lobby had him pegged for—a rube. He may have had a reputation, even been something of a legend, and the nation might have placed all its hopes in him, but he was still a Midwesterner—a frontiersman, almost. His reputation had been earned far away, on the other side of the Alleghenies, and not in the theater of war that Washington knew intimately and mostly in the form of defeat at the hands of the Army of Northern Virginia and its commander, Robert E. Lee.

Still, General Grant had won his battles—Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga. These victories were complete and unequivocal and had, each of them, enhanced his reputation. Fort Donelson had revealed a firmness that bordered on brutality. When the commander of the Confederate forces asked for terms, with his men outnumbered and bottled up, Grant messaged back, "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted."

His initials "U.S." were thereafter said to stand for "Unconditional Surrender." The man to whom Grant dictated these terms, Brigadier General Simon Bolivar

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Buckner, was an old Army friend who had once lent him money when he was desperate. After the surrender, Grant offered to do the same for him. Buckner politely refused the offer. Long after the war, Buckner called on his old friend and adversary, who was then near death, to pay his final respects. No hard feelings. That demand for "unconditional surrender" had just been Grant being Grant.

Shiloh, in April 1862, was the first of the many Civil War battles where the casualty count exceeded that of Waterloo—almost 25,000 men counting both sides. When the battle opened, Grant was not even on the scene, and the forces under his command were surprised and nearly routed. When he arrived on the field, they were huddled in defensive positions with their backs to the Mississippi River and in danger of being driven into it, if not into prisoner of war camps. Demoralization, retreat, and surrender were in the air. But the Confederates had lost their commanding general, Albert Sidney Johnston, and they were spent. The day ended with the Union reinforcing and holding its lines.

While the soldiers slept on their arms, Grant's subordinate, General William Tecumseh Sherman, searched the field for his commander and found him, near midnight, in the rain, under a tree, smoking a cigar and using a crutch for support. Grant had been injured in falling from a horse, which was unusual. His one distinction in an otherwise unremarkable four years at West Point had been as a horseman.

"Well, Grant, we've had the devil's own day, haven't we?" Sherman said.

"Yes," Grant said. "Lick 'em tomorrow, though."

And he did, and he was hailed, initially, as a hero for the victory. But the news that accumulated in the days after the battle cast a pall over his reputation. There was the business about his troops being surprised, something he would deny for the rest of his life. And then there were the awful casualty rolls that made some wonder if any victory could have been worth the price. Furthermore, there was the business about his not being on the scene, which led to rumors that he had been drinking. A decade earlier, he had left the Army under a cloud. Given the choice between resigning his commission and facing court-martial for being drunk while handing out payroll at a post in California, he had submitted his resignation and returned to a civilian life of disappointment and failure.

Rumors of his drinking would follow him throughout the war, leading to Lincoln's famous, and perhaps apocryphal, rejoinder: "I wish some of you would tell me the brand of whiskey that Grant drinks. I would like to send a barrel of it to my other generals."

Criticism of Grant's handling of Shiloh became increasingly intense and vitriolic, to the point where the lieutenant governor of Ohio visited the battlefield and reported back to a newspaper that the feeling in the Army was that Grant

HAL JESPERSEN / WWW.CWMAPS.COM

(along with one of his subordinates, a general named Prentis who, in fact, may have saved the day for the Union at a place in the line known thereafter as the Hornet's Nest) "ought to be court-martialed and shot."

Grant more or less rolled up in a ball and took it. Sherman, intense in both temper and loyalty to Grant, wrote to his brother, Senator John Sherman: "The American press is a shame and a reproach to a civilized people. When a man is too lazy to work and too cowardly to steal, he becomes an editor and manufactures public opinion."

While Grant did not fight the enemies at his back, he had learned something from the awful experience at Shiloh of fighting those at his front. This, in short, was a new understanding of the war, one that he and his friend and trusted lieutenant, Sherman, would refine to a principle of total war. After Shiloh, Grant later said, "I gave up all idea of saving the Union except by complete conquest."

He might not have had the opportunity if Lincoln had listened to Grant's critics, who wanted him relieved. One of them, Alexander McClure, an early supporter and influential friend, visited Lincoln in the White House after Shiloh to make the case against Grant. Lincoln listened, then thought for some time before replying, "I can't spare this man; he fights."

Grant had learned something from the awful experience at Shiloh that he and his friend and trusted lieutenant, Sherman, would refine to a principle of total war. After Shiloh, Grant later said, 'I gave up all idea of saving the Union except by complete conquest.'

Grant's next battle—campaign, actually—was his masterpiece. The Confederate fortress on the high bluffs of Vicksburg was its nominal objective, but the larger, strategic goal was control of the Mississippi River, along its entire length, cutting the Confederacy in half.

The campaign was the antithesis of the great Napoleonic battles where vast armies settled things in a day or two. The Vicksburg campaign lasted months, and its intricacies would take a book full of maps to explain. The effort was characterized by a series of false starts and frustrations so serious that even Sherman advised Grant, at one point, to give up the effort, return to Memphis, and start over. He had tried a direct approach, and he had tried various engineering schemes that would have made navigable some side channels in the river so naval vessels could move troops downstream without coming under Vicksburg's guns. After these had come to nothing, Grant simply ordered the ships to run the guns.

He was never short of that quality called "audacity."

The ships made it downriver, enabling Grant to move his troops from the west to the east bank and assume the offensive. But, to the alarm of both his superiors and his subordinates, he was cut off from his own bases and lines of supply. So his army lived off the land. They fought and won several engagements east of Vicksburg and effectively prevented any relief of the city from that direction. Then, with the Confederate Army of General John Pemberton trapped inside the city, they laid siege. Grant accepted Pemberton's surrender on July 4, 1863, one day after George Meade's army had broken Pickett's charge at Gettysburg.

Meade, in Lincoln's opinion, had allowed Lee to escape across the Potomac and return to the relative safety of his old lines in Virginia when it would have been entirely possible to pursue and annihilate him. And when Meade did, at last, move, he found himself in an alarming approximation of the situation faced by his predecessor, General Joseph Hooker, on the eve of his catastrophic defeat at the battle of Chancellorsville. Meade escaped Lee's trap, but there were no victories in the East following Gettysburg.

Grant, meanwhile, had turned his sights on Chattanooga. And, again, he was successful. After the battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, the way was open to Atlanta, which would fall in a few months to Sherman.

Grant's string of victories was now unbroken and conclusive. Still, there was something of a "yes, but" quality to his record. He had won battles and campaigns, but not in what people in Washington and other Eastern cities considered the main theater, against the principal enemy. One soldier in the Army of the Potomac caught the essence of this sentiment when he said, "Vicksburg wasn't much of a fight. The rebels were out of rations and they had to surrender or starve. They had nothing but dead mules and dogs to eat, as I understand."

It wasn't until the war was over and years had passed that the Vicksburg and Chattanooga battles came to be appreciated for what they were. In his *Decisive Battles of the Western World*, J.F.C. Fuller writes, "Grant's victories at Vicksburg and Chattanooga sealed the eventual doom of the Confederacy. The one severed the states east of the Mississippi from those to the west of it, and the other blocked the main approach northward into Tennessee and opened

the road to Atlanta—the back door of Lee's army in Virginia."

Grant's successes also moved Lincoln to summon him East, where Lee was not the only one waiting for him to make a mistake. The Union Army had been infiltrated by politics and political generals from the beginning. Its upper echelons were populated by generals with political ambitions and politicians lusting after military glory. The settling of scores and the advancement of personal agendas went on almost ceaselessly and shamelessly. After the battle of Missionary Ridge, Joseph Hooker, who had been humiliated at Chancellorsville and was now under Grant's command in the West, wrote a letter to a supporter in Lincoln's cabinet calling Sherman "an active, energetic officer," but adding, "in judgment [he] is as infirm as Burnside. He will never be successful."

Hooker, the man who had lost his nerve at Chancellorsville, sniping at Sherman: Here, anyway, was audacity to go with the pettiness that was all too typical of Union generals.

Grant had been the target and the victim of political sniping and backbiting since the opening of the war, when he was suspect in the eyes of many. Though he had been formally educated and trained in the profession and had served ably and honorably in the Mexican War, his military services were not at first in demand. He reached out to an old West Point acquaintance, George McClellan, who was soon to assume command of all the Union armies, earn the sobriquet "Little Napoleon," and in 1864 run for president. In Cincinnati in 1861, however, McClellan did not have time to meet with Ulysses S. Grant, who spent three futile days waiting for an audience.

But then, McClellan knew the stories about the drinking, and by some accounts he may have witnessed an episode of drunkenness when he and Grant served together. Certainly McClellan, who was hauteur itself, would have considered it a waste of his time and beneath his dignity to deal with a man who had resigned from the Army under conditions bordering on disgrace, who had then failed first as a farmer and next in the real estate business, and who was, when the war began, clerking in his father's dry goods store. Perhaps McClellan had even heard the story of how one of their old West Point contemporaries, in full uniform, had come upon Grant one day, shabby in work clothes, handling a team and a wagon loaded with firewood and asked, "Why, Grant, what in blazes are you doing here?"

"Well, General," Grant said, "I'm hauling firewood."

Now, in 1864, Grant, having won his battles in the West, had been ordered to Washington to assume the responsibilities and command that had once been McClellan's. The Little Napoleon had not measured up to his duties or his press clippings or his generous estimation of his own talents. This last he was happy to share with his admirers and supporters in Washington, where he considered himself superior to all, including Lincoln, his own commander in chief, whom he described as "nothing more than a well-meaning baboon." McClellan likewise disparaged his adversaries, describing Lee as "too cautious and weak under grave responsibility. Personally brave and energetic to a fault, he yet is wanting in moral firmness when pressed by heavy responsibility, and is likely to be timid and irresolute in action." This was shortly before Lee chased McClellan away from Richmond and all the way back to Washington.

Before McClellan, there had been Irvin McDowell. And then, there was John Pope, who had come from the West, where, like Grant, he'd had some success. But Pope, unlike Grant, was a blowhard who treated the people of Virginia and the countryside vindictively. Lee made up his mind to "suppress" him and did so, decisively and humiliatingly.

McDowell had been beaten in the First Battle of Bull Run. Pope was routed, on the same ground, in the Second, then transferred out to the far West to wage war against the Indians. In between these two defeats, there was the one McClellan suffered just outside of Richmond, in the Seven Days. That made three epic Union defeats in Virginia in less than two years, and three generals disgraced.

Then Ambrose Burnside sent his army charging uphill into Lee's guns at Fredericksburg. And a few months later, Joseph Hooker was turned and nearly annihilated at Chancellorsville. Most recently, Meade had almost come to grief on the same ground.

Six attempts to break Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia had produced six complete failures. Now came Grant, who lacked the bluster, the vanity, and the political skills and ambitions of his predecessors. After Vicksburg, there had been talk that the Democratic party might nominate Grant as its candidate for president in 1864. He was approached, and in his refusal there was a note of something not normally associated with him, something close to fear, which he expressed in a letter:

> I . . . above all things wished to be spared the pain of seeing my name mixed with politics. . . . Wherever, and by whatever party, you hear my name mentioned in connection with the candidacy for any office, say that you know from me direct that I am "not in the field" and cannot allow my name to be used before any convention.

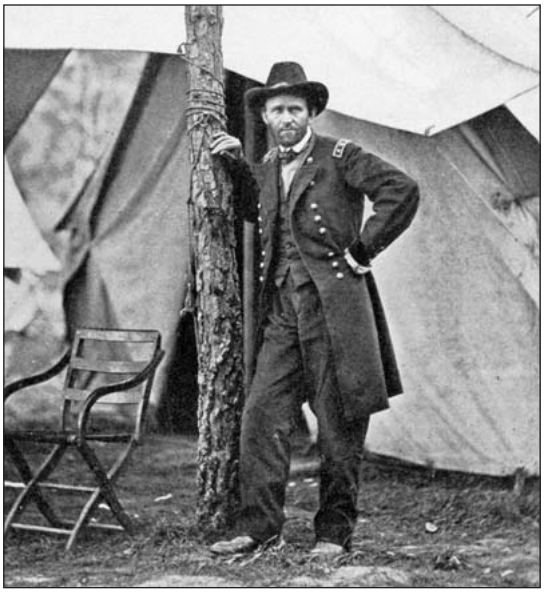
There was no artifice in this declaration, and not much, the world was soon to learn, in the man. He was, in this regard, the antithesis of the Washington generals, above all McClellan. In today's argot, with Grant, what you saw was what you got, and this expression of his feelings about running for president can be taken as sincere. Among his virtues was loyalty, to subordinates and superiors. Lincoln had stood by Grant, and that was

enough reason for him to reject out of hand the notion of opposing the president.

And then, the man knew himself and his talents. He had a flair for the written order. According to one of his staff officers, "His thoughts flowed as freely from his mind as the ink from his pen; he was never at a loss for an expression, and seldom interlined a word or made a material correction."

But he had a kind of bashful aversion to public speaking and even to being the center of public attention. In St. Louis a couple of months earlier, during festivities in his honor, he had been asked to say a few words. "I cannot make a speech," he said. "It is something I have never done, and never intend to do." When he was pressed, he dug in, saying, "Making speeches is not my business. I never did it in my life, and never will."

When Grant and Lincoln met for the first time, at the White House, on the evening after the scene in the lobby at Willard's, the president took note of this element in Grant's makeup. Lincoln had that discernment, as well as a sensitivity to the feelings of others. A ceremony was scheduled for the next day, he explained to Grant. It would make official Grant's commissioning as a lieutenant general, and he would be obliged to make some remarks but not a full-blown speech.



Mathew Brady's portrait of Grant in Virginia, 1864

The president explained that he would make the introduction and keep it short—four lines. Grant should keep his remarks similarly brief. The president gave Grant a copy of what he planned to say and also some lines that the general might consider delivering. Grant, it seems, was touched by the president's solicitude and did, indeed, keep it short the next day. After Lincoln had introduced him, he read from a half-sheet of paper—softly, almost to the point of mumbling—words that he had written in pencil:

> I accept the commission with gratitude for the high honor conferred. With the aid of the noble armies that have fought on so many fields for our common country, it will be my earnest endeavor not to disappoint your expectations. I feel the full weight of the responsibilities now devolving on me and know that if they are met it will be due to those armies, and above all to the favor of that Providence which leads both nations and me.

Grant's remarks came in at seven words under Lincoln's and included none that had been suggested by the president. John Nicolay, who today would be called the president's chief of staff, considered this rudeness bordering on insubordination. If it was a slight, then it didn't disturb Lincoln, who had no time for vanities, and who was too well pleased by what he had seen in Grant, perhaps, even to have noticed.

"Grant," he said, "is the first *general* I've had."

The formalities now behind him, the general wanted above all to get out of Washington and down to work. The next day, he rode the train to Brandy Station, Virginia, to get a look at the Army of the Potomac and meet with—and most likely, relieve—its commander, George Meade.

Grant did not know Meade well and had not seen him since the Mexican War 16 years before. Meade was older, by 6 years, and had graduated from West Point 8 years earlier than the man who now was his commander and in control of his professional fate. Meade was not a lovable man or an inspired or inspiring leader, but he was an able soldier and a patriot. After Grant's arrival, when the two men found themselves alone, Meade said, in effect, that he expected it was time for him to be relieved and for the Army of the Potomac to be led by yet another new commander—someone from Grant's personal orbit, Sherman perhaps.

As Grant reconstructed the conversation in his memoirs, Meade then said that "the work before us was of such vast importance to the whole nation that the feeling or wishes of no one person should stand in the way of selecting the right men for all positions. For himself, he would serve to the best of his ability wherever placed."

Grant was impressed and, characteristically, made an important decision on the spot: Meade would remain in command of the Army of the Potomac.

Meade had seen generals come and go and frequently had been the target of their machinations. Hooker and his political partisans had pressed for Meade's removal so the man who had led the Army into the debacle of Chancellorsville could resume its command. Now, with Grant, Meade had seen a more convincing kind of leader, and he rewarded

it with his loyalty. He remained in command of the Army of the Potomac right up until the end, at Appomattox.

Generals were one thing, soldiers another. The men of the Army of the Potomac, too, had seen generals come and go and had learned not to put their faith in them. If the rank and file were loyal to any general, in fact, it was McClellan, for whom they still had a soft spot. As for this new "little 'un," they would wait and see. It might be true, as one of them said, that "he looks as if he meant it." But it was also true that he had never "met Bobby Lee and his boys." Until he did, they would withhold judgment.

Grant may not have come face to face with Lee, but he had learned, much earlier in the war, not to worry too much about the man on the other side of the hill, whoever he was. That man was sure to have his own problems. He learned this lesson after his first action in the war and recalled that the enemy commander

> had been as much afraid of me as I had been of him . . . a view of the question I had never taken before but it was one I never forgot afterwards. . . . Even to the close of the war, I never experienced trepidation upon confronting an enemy, though I always felt more or less anxiety. I never forgot that he had as much reason to fear my forces as I had his. The lesson was valuable.

Stonewall Jackson had once said much the same thing, in fewer words, to an excited subordinate: "Do not take counsel of your fears."

For now, Grant could do nothing to earn the confidence of the men he would be sending against Lee. That would have to wait until the weather changed and the roads dried. But there was much to do, and that included traveling out west to visit with his generals there and make certain they understood and would execute his overall design. When the time came, he would not be there himself to make sure of it, though Sherman had urged that he make his headquarters there. "For God's sake," Sherman had written, "and for your country's sake, come out of Washington! . . . Come out West. Here lies the seat of the coming empire; and from the West, when our task is done, we will make short work of Charleston and Richmond and the impoverished coast of the Atlantic."

Grant, however, remained firm in his decision to run the war from the East, near Washington. He seemed to consider Washington, no matter how opulent the accommodations at Willard's, a nice place to visit but not to stay—even to the point of turning down an invitation to dine at the White House on the evening after his visit to Meade and the Army of the Potomac.

When Grant declined the invitation, Lincoln protested. "We can't excuse you. Mrs. Lincoln's dinner without you would be *Hamlet* with Hamlet left out."

Grant did not give. He seldom did. "I appreciate the honor Mrs. Lincoln would do me," he said, "but time is very important now."

Then he added, "And really, Mr. Lincoln, I have had enough of this show business."

Grant seemed to consider Washington, no matter how opulent the accommodations at Willard's, a nice place to visit but not to stay—even to the point of turning down an invitation to dine at the White House.

So he traveled west, to Cincinnati, where he and Sherman got down to the business of planning the two-pronged offensive that would finish the Confederacy. They studied maps and inventoried resources and drafted a plan that Sherman later summed up saying, "He was to go for Lee and I was to go for Joe Johnston. That was his plan."

With this decision made, Grant returned to the East and established his headquarters in Virginia, close by Meade, who would have preferred that his new commander remain in the capital. Grant, however, made every effort not to interfere with Meade's running of the Army of the Potomac and attended, instead, to the running of the war.

The soldiers, in their winter headquarters, picked up that the new commander had arrived, and a new urgency came over the Army. Drill and discipline were tightened, and by mid-April, the sutlers—civilian merchants who followed the armies—were gone from the camps and preparations were being made to move against Lee.

On May 4, the columns stepped off, down roads that were now dry and across the Rapidan River, passable now, into densely wooded country known as "the Wilderness," where Hooker had come to grief almost exactly a year earlier.

The battle that followed was terrible in slaughter and chaos. The woods caught fire, and wounded men who could not move fast enough were burned alive. Generals were wounded, formations crushed and panicked. Confusion reigned, but Lee seemed, again, to have the initiative and his victory to be inevitable. At one point in the fighting, an excited Union general came to warn Grant of what Lee might do next.

"Oh, I am heartily tired of hearing what Lee is going to do," Grant said. "Some of you think he is about to turn

a double somersault, and land in our rear and on both our flanks at the same time. Go back to your command, and try to think what we are going to do ourselves, instead of what Lee is going to do."

Still, the battle was so dreadful that even Grant went through a moment of uncertainty, one that, as Shelby Foote put it, revealed the character of the man:

> He had what they call "four o'clock in the morning courage." You could wake him up at four o'clock in the morning and tell him they had just turned his right flank and he would be as cool as a cucumber. . . . Grant, after that first night in the Wilderness, went to his tent, broke down, and cried very hard. Some of the staff members said they'd never seen a man so unstrung. Well, he didn't cry until the battle was over, and he wasn't crying when it began again the next day. It just shows you the tension that he lived with without letting it affect him.

The second day of the battle was equally terrible, and Grant reported to Washington, "Our losses will probably not exceed 12,000, of whom an unusually large proportion are but slightly wounded." Also, "At present we can claim no victory over the enemy; neither have they gained a single advantage."

At this point, in what to many veterans of the Army of the Potomac was a familiar script, it was time for them to withdraw—to put it plainly, to retreat. To move back across the river and onto the secure ground the Army had occupied through the winter.

This was what the veterans of Chancellorsville and the other defeats expected the day after the battle when they formed up their units and moved to the road and began to march. Shortly, the lead column came to a crossroads. If the column turned right, it would be headed back toward Washington, leaving the field, once again, to Lee, who could claim yet another victory. Turn left, however, and the Union divisions would be heading deeper into Virginia, where they could expect more days like the two just endured.

The column turned left, and as a soldier from Pennsylvania later wrote, "Our spirits rose. We marched free and men began to sing."

When their new commander came riding up on his big bay horse, Cincinnati, men cheered him. They threw their hats into the air and pressed in to get closer to their general and leader whose plan was to "fight it out on this line if it takes all summer." He stuck to that plan, and it cost him, and them, some 60,000 casualties. But there would be no retreat.

Neither he, nor they, were going to be falling back on Washington. ◆

Old Route 66, Adrian, Texas

Getting There

A debut novel about the American road trip, family-style.

BY EMILY COLETTE WILKINSON

This is the way the world ends / Not with a bang but a whimper. It's an oft-quoted line of T.S. Eliot, but it's worth trotting out again to summon the mood of *The Last Days of California*. This intriguing first novel is a self-consciously strange hybrid of *National Lampoon's Vacation*, *The Myth of the American Sleepover* (or insert your favorite teenage-y/loss-of-innocence-y tale here), and the Book of Revelation—though not really, since the biblical apocalypse that inspires the family road trip to California at the heart of this novel never shows up.

The Last Days of California
A Novel
by Mary Miller
Liveright, 256 pp., $24.95

Much has been made lately about the disappearance of faith from serious literary fiction. Paul Elie, writing in the *New York Times Book Review*, offered this rather grim assessment of the state of the novel and Christianity:

> This, in short, is how Christian belief figures into literary fiction in our place and time: as something between a dead language and a hangover. Forgive me if I exaggerate. But if any patch of our culture can be said to be post-Christian, it is literature. Half a century after Flannery O'Connor, Walker Percy, Reynolds Price and John Updike presented themselves as novelists with what O'Connor called "Christian convictions," their would-be successors are thin on the ground.

Elie's lament is not the only one: Randy Boyagoda at *First Things*, Dominic Preziosi at *Commonweal*, and Alan Jacobs at the *American Conservative* have

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all echoed Elie. A lone, outlying optimist, David Masciotra at the *Daily Beast*, contends that there is faith to be found in fiction, but only in crime fiction—so even he doesn't really contradict Elie, since crime fiction, good as it is these days, doesn't quite have the heft to go toe-to-toe with, say, O'Connor's *Everything That Rises Must Converge* (1965).

Into this post-Christian literary wasteland comes Miller's well-observed novel. It is modest in scope; that is, if it's not about faith, then it's about the deep longing for faith and the things that serve as its paltry proxies in our faithless modern age.

It is the story of a family car trip to join the televangelist who's predicted the Second Coming and the Rapture in California. Narrating the journey is 15-year-old Jess Metcalf, who is uncertain of herself in that quintessentially awkward teenage way and is overshadowed by her beautiful sister Elise. Elise is a hardened unbeliever (though she does wear the uniform their father has mandated for the family while on their end-times road trip: a black "King Jesus Lives!" T-shirt that she counterbalances with a pair of cut-off shorts so short they're not visible below the hem of her shirt.

The arch Elise is openly hostile to this road trip and is certain that the end times aren't about to roll; but Jess isn't so sure. At one of their overnight stops during the weeklong journey from Alabama, the sisters meet some boys by the motel pool. Elise, who has just discovered that she is pregnant and is not in the mood for male company, tells the boys, in hopes of driving them away, "We're going to California where we're going to witness the Second Coming of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. In Pacific Time." She then proceeds to tell the boys that they, as unbelievers, are going to suffer terrible fires and torments, while she and her family are among the chosen ones.

"Stop," Jess tells her. "You're making a joke out of us." To which Elise responds, "She believes in it." The boys, one of whom Jess is desperate to impress, look at her with bemused "half-smiles."

But Jess isn't actually as sure as her sister describes her to be, as her thoughts in the aftermath of this sisterly humiliation reveal:

> Like Elise, I sat in church and felt nothing. I memorized Bible verses same as I did Robert Frost poems in school. But I wanted to believe. I really wanted to. If the rapture was coming, I hoped our parents' belief would be enough to get us into heaven, like Noah, whose family had been saved because he was a good man.

Jess has little to have faith in if the Rapture does not happen, and much as she wants to believe, she's begun to question her father's faith. Her parents are kind but somewhat remote; her father loses jobs with astonishing regularity and evangelizes in a way that convinces her that "he didn't really want all 7 billion people on the planet to be saved. We wouldn't be special then. We wouldn't be the chosen ones." Her pastor, whom she calls for comfort after a boozy evening with a strange older boy, reveals himself to be a pervert, and the endless stream of Wendy's, Taco Bell, Yoo-hoo, giant turkey legs, and funnel cakes that she and her parents devour in the course of the trip (Elise is a quasi-anorexic vegetarian) never seems to satisfy.

In one ugly, forgettable little town where Jess's family stops at a Waffle House, Jess looks around at her fellow diners and thinks: "[T]hey were all hideous. I could easily live in a town like this." Jess, full of self-hatred and anxiety and always feeling on the outside of things, finds comfort in ugliness and in stories in which outsiders find their place. This explains her attraction to John Hughes movies:

> Molly Ringwald was never pretty enough to be a leading lady, but the eighties were a dream world in which the captain of the football team would leave the homecoming queen for an awkward red-haired girl who made her own clothes.

But Jess is also self-destructive and unable to be true to herself. Having smoked pot for the first time and finding herself numb to all feeling, she ends up locked in a bathroom with an older boy. One thing leads to another: "I didn't want to do it anymore and wanted to stop him—All I had to say was that I'd changed my mind. . . . I could leave. I didn't have to do this. I scooted to the edge of the counter and wrapped my legs around his waist."

Miller's ability to capture Jess's lostness, her self-punishing streak, her fumbling search for some sustenance beyond McMuffins, iPhones, beer, boys, and her father's sort of Christianity is the great strength of this slim novel; but like so many contemporary novelists, Miller does not seem to know, in the end, what she thinks of her subject, and so the conclusion is less a coming-together than a petering-out. The Rapture is a no-show, of course, but Mr. Metcalf wins big at the hotel casino, and Elise miscarries the child she didn't want without her parents ever finding out.

In the final scene, the family sits down to a big room-service breakfast in their expensive hotel room in Reno, which they can now afford on the casino winnings. Jess's father, who is heavily overweight and diabetic, announces that perhaps he'll go on that diet his doctor's been after him about—as he injects insulin into his stomach and tucks into his bacon and eggs. The novel ends with Jess eyeing the last biscuit and container of jelly.

What does it mean, this ending? It's certainly a whimper where I'd have liked a bit more of a bang, but Miller's in good company in choosing inconclusiveness. Contemporary fiction abounds with such whimpers (*The Corrections*, anyone?), and Miller's novel does seem, at least, to be considering the possibility that modern angst and faithlessness are connected.

The Last Days of California isn't a second coming for faith and literature, and it could not do a round with *Crime and Punishment*; but it is the debut of a promising new voice, a voice that describes the painful longing for transcendence and connectedness with compelling vividness and candor. And maybe the point of Miller's anticlimactic ending is that the apocalypse has already happened and Jess and her family and all of the rest of us are wandering in the wasteland. But if so, I still want to know where we go from here. ♦

B&A

Sea of Troubles

The Pacific as naval battleground.

BY MACKUBIN THOMAS OWENS

In 2005, Thomas L. Friedman published a book that had far too much influence on how Americans think about world affairs. *The World Is Flat* was a paean to the wonders of economic interdependence and "globalization"—the belief that interdependence and cooperation had replaced competition in international affairs and that the result would be more or less spontaneous peace and prosperity.

Friedman echoed the naïve optimism that characterized so much of the chattering classes in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the seemingly easy American victory in the first Gulf war. Political scientists and economists alike agreed that globalization was the most important characteristic of our epoch, against which other forces didn't stand a chance. "Global interdependence" advanced the idea that geopolitics was dead, and that the pursuit of power in its geographic setting had been supplanted by economic cooperation. For many, the process of globalization was autonomous and self-regulating: Advocates of globalization mocked international relations realists, especially those who suggested that geopolitics possessed any explanatory power in an economically interdependent world.

These illusions about globalization should already have tumbled down along with the twin towers on September 11, 2001. Now, recent events in the Greater Middle East and Eurasia, most notably in Ukraine, have confirmed the naïveté of the assumptions underpinning globalization: The fact is, geopolitical factors remain an important element of international relations and statecraft.

Asia's Cauldron
The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific
by Robert D. Kaplan
Random House, 256 pp., $26

Robert Kaplan is the anti-Friedman. For him, the world is definitely *not* flat. By virtue of some 15 books, including *Balkan Ghosts* (1993), *The Coming Anarchy* (2000), and *The Revenge of Geography* (2012), not to mention countless articles, Kaplan has established himself as one of our most consequential geopolitical thinkers. It is not the originality of his ideas that makes him an important observer of world affairs, but his ability to synthesize concepts and insights into a coherent understanding of geopolitical phenomena. In *Asia's Cauldron*, Kaplan turns his geopolitical gaze to the South China Sea, which

> connects the maritime world of the Middle East and Indian Subcontinent to that of Northeast Asia. It is as central to Asia as the Mediterranean is to Europe. If one assumes that the Persian Gulf and Northeast Asia are the two areas of the non-Western world that the United States should never let another great power dominate, consider the energy-rich South China Sea, which lies between them, the third.

The problem, of course, is the proximity of a China whose growing military power concerns not only the United States but the other states that border (and have claims within) the South China Sea.

Kaplan is a realist, one who believes that states operate in their own interests and seek to maximize power relative to other actors in the international system. Accordingly, he contends that China's actions are merely reflective of the South China Sea's role as a strategic hinterland for China. Beijing claims "indisputable sovereignty" over the South China Sea, seeking to dominate a maritime region crowded with smaller and much weaker powers: Vietnam, Taiwan, the Philippines, Borneo, Malaysia, and Singapore.

As a realist, Kaplan makes some observations that cut against the grain of recent American and Western foreign policy, which demonstrates a consensus toward liberal internationalism and a predisposition to see international institutions as the solution to disputes. Kaplan argues, for instance, that any conflict in the South China Sea would reflect what he calls the "humanist dilemma," lacking the moral element that characterized the conflicts of the 20th and early 21st centuries: the moral struggle against fascism in World War II; against communism during the Cold War; against genocide in the Balkans, Africa, and the Levant; and against terrorism and in support of democracy after 9/11.

The South China Sea, says Kaplan, "shows us a 21st-century world void of moral struggles, with all their attendant fascination for humanists and intellectuals." Conflict in the South China Sea would be about power, trade, and business. He describes the region as a Hobbesian "state of nature" out of which conflict may well arise and in which "there is no such thing as an unjust war."

Accordingly, he sees China's approach to the South China Sea as analogous to the Monroe Doctrine. Just as the Caribbean is close to the United States and far from the great European powers of the 18th and 19th centuries, so the South China Sea is close to China and far from the United States. The difference is that, unlike the newly independent Caribbean and Latin American states that saw the United States as a bulwark against the reimposition of European colonialism, China's neighbors look to the United States as a counterbalance against Beijing's military growth.

But Kaplan also invokes a realist argument on behalf of the continuing role of the United States in East

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Asia. The United States, he contends, provides the security for the global commons upon which globalization depends—and which, for the most part, keeps the peace, aside from the small wars that erupt from time to time. Although Kaplan does not use the term, hegemonic stability is what he is describing, a theory that maintains that free and open international trade—globalization—requires more than simply a global invisible hand. Instead, globalized trade requires a hegemonic power to be willing and able to provide the world with the collective goods of economic stability and international security.

During the 19th century, Great Britain functioned as the hegemon; since World War II, the United States has fulfilled this role. Although the role of hegemon creates burdens, those burdens have been in the interest of the United States, since we disproportionately benefit from the resulting order. According to the theory of hegemonic stability, a decline in relative American power could create a more disorderly, less peaceful world; or, as Kaplan puts it, "substantially reduce . . . American military presence and the world—and the South China Sea in particular—looks like a very difference place."

Kaplan is here echoing Samuel Huntington, who wrote:

> A world without U.S. primacy will be a world with more violence and disorder and less democracy and economic growth than a world where the United States continues to have more influence than any other country in shaping global affairs. The sustained international primacy of the United States is central to the welfare and security of Americans and to the future of freedom, democracy, open economies, and international order in the world.

Kaplan also makes a realist argument on behalf of strong autocratic leaders. In words sure to offend the sensibilities of those who see democracy as a panacea for state development, Kaplan defends the approach of such "good autocrats" as Malaysia's Mahathir bin Mohamed, Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew, and even Taiwan's long-vilified Chiang Kai-shek, who all developed "hybrid" regimes that helped create modern (and liberal) economies in their respective countries.

Kaplan's approach here reprises that of his earlier books: It is part treatise on geopolitics, part travel narrative. Indeed, he writes in the tradition of the great travel writers, most notably Gertrude Bell, who helped create the narrative that led to the creation of modern Iraq.

Asia's Cauldron is also a *tour d'horizon* of the South China Sea and its environs, describing how the character of the region arises from the intersection of Indian/Khmer and Sinic cultures. As he has often done when looking at other regions, Kaplan rejects the "area studies" categories that have shaped U.S. foreign policy and diplomacy in the postwar era. Rather than placing Southeast Asia in the East Asia and Pacific realm (as both the Pentagon and State Department do), we should, Kaplan argues, consider the region as "part of an organic continuum that is more properly labeled the Indo-Pacific, whose maritime heart is the South China Sea." What makes this body of water so important—and dangerous—is that it is where the interests of China, the other states that border it, and the United States come into conflict.

Kaplan does not argue that war is inevitable. But it is possible, for a variety of reasons. The military rise of China alarms its neighbors. Will they "bandwagon" with China, or seek counterbalancing alignment with the United States? How will China react if weaker states in the region choose the latter course? The states in the region have competing claims to three archipelagos in the South China Sea: the Pratas in the north (claimed by China but controlled by Taiwan), the Paracels in the northwest (claimed by both China and Vietnam), and the Spratlys in the southeast (claimed by multiple states but coveted by China). Will these competing claims spark conflict?

The South China Sea is a nervous region, crowded with warships and commercial vessels. It is a region where sea denial is cheaper and easier to achieve than sea control. Is such a region particularly vulnerable to miscalculation or miscommunication? Despite the region's volatility, Kaplan contends that the United States "must safeguard a maritime system of international legal norms, buttressed by a favorable balance of power regimen." So the question is: Does the United States have not only the force but the *will* to do so in the face of China's growing power?

Recent actions seem to suggest that the answer to both questions is no. The Obama administration, motivated by its commitment to liberal internationalism, appears to be pursuing a policy of intentional decline. President Obama has made it clear that he rejects the idea that the United States should provide the public good of security, which underpins the very liberal world order that liberal internationalists favor. As we are seeing in Ukraine, American weakness has geopolitical consequences. The combination of a turbulent region, rising Chinese military power, and American retreat threatens the future of freedom, democracy, open economies—and a liberal world order. ♦

B&A

America's Sweetheart

In the 1930s, there really was one.

BY RICHARD STRINER

The Little Girl Who Fought the Great Depression
Shirley Temple and 1930s America
by John F. Kasson
Norton, 320 pp., $27.95

In a time of widespread suffering and frequent despair, this little girl touched the hearts of millions of people in our own land and others. Shirley Temple was a cultural force to be reckoned with in the 1930s, and John F. Kasson shows how her films provided therapy as well as entertainment.

Her breakthrough to stardom occurred in 1934, in Fox's *Stand Up and Cheer!* A mediocre film, it nonetheless contained an impressive production number, inspired in all likelihood by the New Deal's NRA parades. "We're Out of the Red" was a triumphant parade of Americans who had fought their way back to prosperity. The music rings with the spirit of mobilization; its melody suggests other thirties period pieces, such as George and Ira Gershwin's "Dawn of a New Day."

Bill Robinson, Shirley Temple in 'The Little Colonel' (1935)

In "Out of the Red," the marchers prance in uniforms either representative of distinctive professions or suggestive of youthful Scouts and Young Pioneers: bare knees, neckerchiefs, snazzy belts. In front of them all, Shirley Temple, a beaming toddler, struts as drum majorette. By 1935, she was a star.

Kasson argues, convincingly, that Fox (later 20th Century Fox) used Shirley Temple in plots designed to reassure. To Depression-ravaged families suffering from the demoralization of the breadwinner and the alienation of the spouse, these movies showed a plucky, dauntless, and delightful little child giving everyone renewed faith: faith in themselves, faith in each other, faith in the future of the family. Shirley Temple, often cast as an orphan, helped adults to recover their self-esteem and bravery. She healed the sicknesses of shattered families, brought former family members together to form new families, and, in the process, created a brand new home for herself. The orphan—the forsaken child—helped to rescue everybody else.

The idea was hardly unique. In *The Crowd* (1928, MGM), a boy saves his father from a suicide attempt and inspires him to look for a job. In Deanna Durbin's debut as a child star in *Three Smart Girls* (1936, Universal), she and her sisters find a way to reunite their divorced parents (perhaps an inspiration for the later Disney classic *The Parent Trap*). But no one else could put it over like Shirley Temple.

Kasson extends his analysis in several different directions: He compares the reassuring and inspiring appeal of Shirley Temple to the different but related appeal of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He provides an insightful commentary on the racial screen dynamics of Shirley Temple and Bill "Bojangles" Robinson. He discusses the promotional industry that arose in response to the initial success of Shirley Temple: the public relations campaigns, the Shirley Temple-themed products, the careful choice of film vehicles for the child star.

For nearly six years, Shirley Temple was a cinematic sensation. From 1935 to 1938, she was Hollywood's number-one box-office star, and her fan clubs had a total membership of more than three million. Kasson observes that "on the occasion of her seventh birthday, twenty thousand admirers in Bali gathered to pray for her health. A Japanese movie magazine filled two issues solely with photographs of Shirley and sold a million copies."

Twentieth Century Fox stoked the fans with one promotion after another: Shirley Temple birthday parties and Shirley Temple look-alike contests were held all over the world—girls vied with one another for the honor of being proclaimed the French Shirley Temple, the Cuban Shirley Temple, the Japanese Shirley Temple—while the Shirley Temple doll accounted for one-third of all dolls that were sold in the United States during 1935.

From 1935 to 1940, producer Darryl F. Zanuck worked sedulously to roll out the Shirley Temple formula in one movie after another, to capitalize on the fad while it lasted by giving Shirley's fans exactly what they wanted. Shirley was growing up quickly, and she could only be passed off as a wee sprite for a few precious years. Shirley's mother wanted her daughter to be given a chance to be an actress, to demonstrate the range of roles she could perform. But Zanuck was determined, and, of course, his star

20TH CENTURY FOX / NEWSCOM

Richard Striner, professor of history at Washington College, is the author of the forthcoming Woodrow Wilson and World War I: A Burden Too Great to Bear.

was under contract—so Shirley Temple became immortalized as we know her.

When Zanuck did permit a change of format, in *The Blue Bird* (1940), the results disappointed her fans. In any case, the fad was losing its momentum, and the films that Shirley Temple made as a teenager in the 1940s never really caught on.

Was it worth it? Kasson argues that while the typecasting "confined Shirley to a relatively narrow series of roles . . . it might equally well be argued that it gave her special talents extraordinary prominence." And she did have extraordinary talents: Beyond her capable singing and dancing, she had an amazing camera presence, which adult costars admired—but also envied and feared. As Adolphe Menjou, who starred with her in *Little Miss Marker* (1934), wrote, "She's making a stooge out of me. . . . She knows all the tricks. . . . If she were forty years old she wouldn't have had time to learn all she knows about acting."

One can surely do worse than to be an iconic figure for a time and then relax and lead a sensible life thereafter, as Shirley Temple did. For this and other reasons, she remains a remarkable figure. *The Little Girl Who Fought the Great Depression*, though a scholarly production, is aimed at a general audience. And its appearance so soon after Shirley Temple's death on February 10 is a stunning coincidence. ♦

B&A

Honor Thy Fathers

The biblical rules in cultural perspective.

BY DAVID WOLPE

This is a somewhat eccentric book. It is written to oppose the display of the Ten Commandments in American public spaces, but it makes little reference to American law, precedent, principle, or polity. Rather, it is an erudite and interesting *tour d'horizon* of modern scholarship on the Ten Commandments, contextualizing and (inevitably) relativizing them, on the assumption that dethroning their preeminence as an unchanging moral code will persuade us that they should not be elevated in public places. The scholarship is sound, but the concluding peroration is simultaneously the point of the book and its weakest chapter.

Michael Coogan is a Bible scholar who lectures at Harvard. He points out that there are multiple versions of the Decalogue in the Hebrew Bible (to the ones in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 he adds a questionable third, "the ritual Decalogue" of Exodus 34). He explains the formula, how the Ten Commandments relate to suzerain treaties (that is, ancient compacts between Semitic kings and their subjects), and reviews the Exodus story. As is inevitable in such a short summary of scholarship, conclusions that could easily be disputed are stated as givens: "The text of the Decalogue was written on two tablets because each party—in this case, God and the Israelites—was to get a copy of it." Needless to say, although many modern scholars might agree, in the long history of Jewish exegesis no one has thought that God needed a copy just in case recordkeeping in the heavens got sloppy or the divine memory needed jogging.

The Ten Commandments
A Short History of an Ancient Text
by Michael Coogan
Yale, 192 pp., $25

Coogan points out that there are small but significant differences in the two versions of the Ten Commandments in Exodus and the one in Deuteronomy, and that even the numbering differs in different religious traditions. If you are Jewish or Anglican, observing the Sabbath is the fourth commandment; if you are Roman Catholic or Lutheran, it is the third—the difference is dependent on whether the prohibition against images is counted separately from God's initial self-identification. If we must display the Decalogue, writes Coogan with self-conscious mischief, simply display all the versions side by side.

He is not, at heart, a radical revisionist, a position common among modern Bible scholars, who discount the antiquity of biblical teachings. Rather, Coogan assumes that the Decalogue is very old and may indeed be "the essence of the teaching of Moses himself." Although such provenance would argue for its prominence in our society, Coogan himself argues against this presumption.

Coogan's own attitude toward the Bible is clear: It commands his respect but not his allegiance ("The fact that the Bible prescribes it does not make it right. . ."). As he traces the history of the Decalogue, he demonstrates that the text is not "fixed" because there is more than one version and that even its place in tradition is not immutable. Judaism, for example, moved the Decalogue away from the center of Jewish worship because of the fear of outside groups claiming that only these ten laws were given to Moses at Sinai. (Coogan misidentifies the source of this comment as "Mishnah Berakhot." It is from the Jerusalem Talmud.)

All of this is fascinating material, lucidly presented: textual history, ancient parallels, the way in which the Decalogue was treated historically by believers. The reader can certainly understand that a scholar who views the Bible as a human, evolving document would feel uneasy about setting up the Decalogue in a public square. But in this book's last polemical chapter, even the sympathetic reader may feel that Coogan is insufficiently sensitive to the deep religious roots of America: "We

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are much more diverse, especially religiously," he writes. "[W]e should not, we may not elevate a text from one or two religious traditions to privileged status."

Well, yes and no. We are, indeed, diverse and proud of our salad of traditions. Nonetheless, the United Nations has a quote from Isaiah across its portal. The Liberty Bell enshrines a quote from Leviticus. Does acknowledging the complexity and diversity of religious traditions—and celebrating their flourishing in the United States—compel us to downplay those that shaped this pluralistic land? It is both ahistorical and unwise to ignore the preeminence of the Judeo-Christian heritage (an overused term, but one with real substantive content) as the critical theological impetus to America. Surely, when America's sins are laid at the feet of its Western heritage, some of its merits might be as well?

Coogan writes that "display of the Ten Commandments is a blatant and un-American effort to impose a basically Christian perspective on all citizens of the United States." In an increasingly secular society, a reminder of the central text from which our ancestors drew great inspiration is at least an understandable desire, to be sure. The crude triumphalism that Coogan documents is distasteful, and a greater appreciation for the ways religions change and develop would be salutary. Still, in a book devoted to demonstrating that the Ten Commandments themselves have a history, is it too much to ask for more recognition that they are an indispensable part of our history as well? ♦

B&A

An Academic Barred

A New Formalist manifesto—in verse.

BY JAMES MATTHEW WILSON

When Paul Lake published his controversial novel *Cry Wolf: A Political Fable* (2008), critics immediately recognized it as an adaptation of *Animal Farm* for the post-9/11 world. In *Animal Farm* (1945), George Orwell allegorically dissected the mendacity of Stalinism, which had hijacked a genuinely "humane" egalitarian movement to establish a hideous totalitarian order. Lake's fable darkly satirized the abuse of human charity by the academic left, whose preening "multiculturalism" sought to dissolve Americans' sense of patriotism, of cultural and territorial integrity, at the very moment Islamic terrorists were attacking the *patria* itself.

Lake's latest book, and third collection of poems, might also be read as an adaptation of Orwell, but this time of his "Politics and the English Language" (1946). In that famous essay, Orwell established himself as a defender of humane thinking and honest speech against the abuse of language by the "smelly little orthodoxies" of postwar ideologues. So, in *The Republic of Virtue*, Lake's poems skewer the academic and political consensuses of our moment.

The Republic of Virtue
by Paul Lake
Evansville, 80 pp., $15

His perception and wit are sharpened by a personal sense of affront. Since the 1980s, Lake, along with such writers as Dana Gioia, Rachel Hadas, and Timothy Steele, has been regarded as one of the chief advocates of the New Formalism—that is, of a renewal of rhyme and meter in poetry as a good and humanizing enterprise. Those who abuse language or drain it of meaning make any plea for the craft of poetry frustratingly difficult.

Lake's "Epilogue to 'The Emperor's New Clothes'" establishes the abiding theme. He tells us of the later careers of the two men in the old fable who duped king and kingdom into believing that only a fool could not see their splendid woven cloth. Lake uses the first tailor as a stick to beat our politicians for having reduced language, which should be the medium of truth, to a means of manipulation:

Based on the way the first could trim
The facts to craft a fabrication,
The emperor appointed him
His Minister of Information.
Now on the nightly news he spins
Transparent fictions into line
And patterns to clothe royal sins
And cloak imperial designs.

The second, we learn, has joined the academy, and now threads the minds of undergraduates with the belief that words have neither definite meaning nor beauty:

The second weaver scissored air
And mimicked weaving on his frames
So well, he earned a tenured chair
And now employs his language games
To show what lies beneath all texts
Is nothingness, or an illusion.
Revolt's the last thing one expects
Of children tutored in confusion.

Far from serving as a radical, "outsider's" critique of political power, the modern academy's obsession with diversity, cultural relativism, and theory has rendered two generations of students intellectually impotent and aesthetically numb. When the power of beauty is dismissed as ideology, truth comes into contempt as well.

Lake has other targets, some painfully familiar, such as the forces of political correctness, who demonstrate that "intolerance cannot be tolerated"; those infected with a reductive utilitarianism, who believe that "pensions are sin's only wage"; and we hapless slaves of the Internet, who confess, "We long for e-mail like an answered prayer." All are dispatched with villanelles and suave rhymed stanzas that testify to the transformative power of

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wit to render the ridiculous sometimes beautiful, sometimes just funny.

In "Revised Standard Version," Lake reimagines Jesus greeting the Samaritan woman at the well. When the Lord offers her the water of life and prophesies for her, showing that he knows she has been married five times, the woman replies,

My sex life, sir, is none of your damn business.
I don't know where you got your information,
But if you try this sort of thing again,
I'll haul you into court, you stalker, you.

As he turns to go, she breaks into barbs scripted by Planned Parenthood: *Yeah, keep your phony doctrines off my body!*

Lake situates these satires on contemporary folly in a rich historical and thematic context. The title poem returns us to the years of the Terror, in the wake of the French Revolution, when time was "out of joint." The days, months, and streets of the new Republic were secularized and made to conform with the crushing mathematical logic of Danton and Robespierre. The Marquis de Sade was set free to carry out his perverse "experiments in living," and Paris stank with blood and raged with the mob's noisome spirit of "liberation."

Cry Wolf revealed Lake as a Burkean storyteller who appreciates the fragility of civil society and the consequent necessity for a conservative approach to citizenship. *Republic* shows his equally Burkean evaluation of revolutionaries, past and present, as world-bending tyrants who do not hesitate to use terror to realize their vision of *justice, prompt, severe, / And inflexible*.

If Lake proves himself an adept satirist, he is not that only. The book opens with lyric reflections on fatherhood, marriage, old age, and death. These themes reach a climax in his adaptation of François Villon's gallows humor and *huitain* stanza in "Testament," which begins,

In this, my fortieth year of age,
I wake beneath a soggy sheet
Stone sober, my mind a crumpled page,
My life a sentence, half complete;
Still mired in the old conceit
And lust for literary fame,
I stare down darkness, death, defeat,
Burning my candle in the game.

In the remainder of the poem, we detect the origin of Lake's satire in his career as a writer and teacher who has been foiled in his "lust for literary fame"—not by lack of talent, but by an academic climate that harnesses art as a draught horse to drag left-wing ideologies into the souls of students.

Republic is a fine book. But it does not match the achievement of Lake's earlier *Walking Backward* (1999), whose narrative poems deliver all the action of a novel with the vivid personae of a Robert Browning monologue, and whose meditative poems (especially "Interrogations") constitute some of the most exacting and vividly rendered explorations of good and evil, sin and redemption, in contemporary literature. *Republic* does demonstrate, however, that Lake's fabulist imagination continues its brilliant work. ♦

B&A

Whistler's Mother's Son

A portrait of the artist as a self-invented man.

BY AMY HENDERSON

James Whistler's flamboyance assured his fame in decades when mass culture was setting new standards for recognition. He was a creature who relished the spotlight, and he became a star player in the increasingly public art scene that surged to the forefront in late-19th-century life. Whether popularizing new kinds of art or sporting wildly unconventional attire, Whistler was attuned to the rising force of modernism. Self-invention was an essential modernist characteristic, and the public image James Abbott McNeill Whistler carefully crafted gave him an identity that still resonates today.

Since his death in 1903, bookshelves have been well stocked with Whistler art histories and biographies. But Daniel E. Sutherland's new work is the first full-fledged biography in more than 20 years, and it is the first to draw extensively on the artist's unpublished private correspondence.

Sutherland explains: "I first met James Whistler when I was twelve and he had been dead for fifty-five years." Sutherland was on a school trip to a museum when he came face-to-face with Whistler's legendary *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* (1875), and that momentary gaze captured his interest for the next half-century. Now distinguished professor of history at the University of Arkansas, and a recognized expert on 19th-century American culture, Sutherland portrays Whistler as "a pivotal figure in the cultural history" of that century, and perhaps the greatest artist of his generation.

Whistler
A Life for Art's Sake
by Daniel E. Sutherland
Yale, 440 pp., $40

Born in 1834 in Lowell, Massachusetts, Whistler lived in St. Petersburg, Russia, while his civil engineer father worked on the construction of a railroad to Moscow. He first studied drawing there, and he continued that interest when he returned to America to attend West Point. But military discipline was not his style, and when his accumulation of demerits outweighed his academic record, Whistler was dismissed. He went to work at the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, which, if nothing else, introduced him to the art of etching.

Amy Henderson is a cultural historian and critic in Washington.

Sutherland writes that it was then that the 22-year-old Whistler decided to pursue a career as an artist. Not only was he enthralled by art, he was also "infatuated with the romance of an artist's life." In 1855 he left to study in Paris and was quickly mesmerized by the masterworks of Vermeer, Rembrandt, and Velázquez he saw at the Louvre. Four years later, he settled in London and began to focus on portraiture.

Whistler's 1862 painting *The White Girl* incited one of the great artistic controversies of the era: "Old duffers" of the Royal Academy, who championed narrative painting, were outraged at Whistler's "bizarre" and "incomplete" work. Younger, fresher eyes admired his break with convention. When a French critic described the painting as a "symphony in white," Whistler renamed the piece *Symphony in White, No. 1* and began to envision his paintings as musical expressions, calling them symphonies, harmonies, and nocturnes.

Whistler came of age artistically in years when the art world was being transformed. By the 1860s, the art market, no longer the landed gentry's private sanctuary, was awash in new wealth. Liverpool shippers, Birmingham industrialists, and London bankers now imposed their tastes on the art world, and their patronage boosted investments in "modern" art. Art was also being "democratized," writes Sutherland, by the rise of media culture. The magazines and newspapers that appeared in the late 19th century ran popular features on art exhibitions, with headlines trumpeting the art world's hottest new trends.

Whistler happily absorbed the possibilities of art's changing role: It suited his own quest for self-invention. Sutherland writes that the artist "intended that people should see him as he wished to be seen," and delighted in fashioning a public persona that would "seek notoriety with a consciously invented other self." At one exhibition in America in 1881, he sported a monocle, a fawn-colored frock coat, patent shoes with pink bows, and his white forelock arranged artfully across his forehead.

Using new research drawn from Whistler's letters, Sutherland describes how the artist invented a new manner of painting that captured motion. To give the impression, in his nocturnes, that boats and men were moving, Whistler created "sketchy, unfocused, sparsely shaded, 'unfinished' images that implied motion." Sutherland also chronicles how Whistler's work was influenced by both the fad for Orientalism and the rise of photography. He describes how *japonisme* led Whistler to adopt the flattened, two-dimensional perspective and compartmentalized space of Eastern art. The advent of photography convinced Whistler to focus the viewer's eye on a selected part of a composition, while, as with a camera's lens, his artist's brush blurred other areas in the middle or far distance.

The Peacock Room

By the 1870s, Whistler had become a central figure in the Aesthetic Movement, which was renowned for its belief in "art for art's sake." He now signed his works with a stylized butterfly adaptation of his initial "W" and painted his most famous portrait. His *Arrangement in Grey and Black, No. 1: The Artist's Mother* was completed in the summer of 1871 and caused much critical consternation when it was exhibited. The London *Times* sniffed about how "vacant" the canvas seemed, with a "lady in mournful garb" situated in front of a flat, gray wall; another critic complained that it was "not a picture" but an "experiment."

However, Whistler's colleagues were thrilled. His friend Dante Gabriel Rossetti, founder of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, exclaimed: "Such a picture … must make you happy for life, & ought to do good to the time we are now living in." Whistler himself was pleased: "Yes, one does like to make one's mummy just as nice as possible!"

Sutherland also relates the remarkable story of how Whistler created the Peacock Room, his over-the-top masterpiece of interior decoration. An unsuspecting patron, Frederick Leyland, commissioned Whistler in 1876 to decorate some leather panels in his house; but one thing led to another, and (while Leyland was away for several months) Whistler immersed the entire room in a stunning palette of over-glazed peacock blue-greens and metallic gold leaf. Upon his return, Leyland was horrified, but the splendid result—known as *Harmony in Blue and Gold: The Peacock Room*—is today a showpiece of the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art.

Whistler lived his life as an ongoing melodrama, and in the same years that he was involved in the peacock flap, he became embroiled in the era's most sensational art trial. John Ruskin castigated Whistler's *Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket* when it was exhibited at Grosvenor Gallery in 1877. Ruskin ridiculed this abstract night scene of fireworks bursting over the Thames, sneering that it was as if the artist were "flinging a pot of paint in the public's face." Whistler sued Ruskin for libel and, after a lengthy and greatly ballyhooed trial, won—but the award was a mere farthing for nominal damages. The trial left Whistler bankrupt, and to recoup, he worked feverishly on a new series of Venetian paintings, pastels, and etchings. He ultimately restored his finances and lived out his life in relative comfort, maintaining studios in both Paris and London.

Daniel E. Sutherland's deep dive into archival resources has enriched this new study with revealing detail, and, as such, it makes an important contribution to Whistler scholarship. But for the general reader, it will not replace Stanley Weintraub's delightful 1974 biography, which evokes the colorful Whistler with unsurpassed savoir-faire. ♦

FREER AND SACKLER GALLERIES, SMITHSONIAN

B&A

Just Checking In

There's a lot going on at the Grand Budapest, but to what end? BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Ralph Fiennes

The Grand Budapest Hotel
Directed by Wes Anderson

The Grand Budapest Hotel, the latest offering from the writer and director Wes Anderson, is a laborious confection, rather like one of the Mitteleuropa cakes made by one of its characters. It is elaborate and beautiful. It is sweet. It is a work of true artistry. But it is also heavy, and slightly sickening. It may look scrumptious, but it doesn't go down well. Anderson wants to be an elegant pastry chef, creating gossamer objects of great intricacy that are both delicate and substantial at the same time. In truth, Anderson has the soul of a locksmith, whose inventions are no less ingenious and complex than a pastry chef's—but are crafted in lead.

The Grand Budapest Hotel is a story within a story within a story, which is already two stories too many. It is set in a country called Zubrowka, somewhere in the Alps. A reader sitting in the capital's central square in the present day is drawn into a great Zubrowkan novel that was written in the 1980s about a memory the novelist had of a visit to the titular hotel in the 1960s. While there, the novelist had been told a story by an elderly gentleman about the hotel's heyday in 1932. The elderly gentleman had been the hotel's "lobby boy"—the title on his cap—and protégé of the hotel's dapper martinet of a manager, M. Gustav H. (brilliantly played by Ralph Fiennes, who has never before shown such delightful liveliness). He runs the Grand Budapest as one imagines the meticulous Wes Anderson runs his sets: with an obsessive eye for detail and color, and an antic disposition bordering on the manic side of bipolar disorder.

The plot zooms along before us like a runner being unrolled across the floor of the Grand Budapest's lobby. An ancient doyenne of the hotel dies and leaves Gustav H. a great painting. He and the lobby boy are forced by circumstance to steal it, and he is arrested for the doyenne's murder. The lobby boy and his girlfriend, who makes pastries, help arrange a jailbreak. A secret network of hotel concierges helps them along, even as they are being pursued by the doyenne's son and his psychopathic hitman. The chase involves motorcycles, railroads, a mountaintop abbey, and a ski race. Meanwhile, the entire country is falling under the dominion of a fascist regime and its storm troopers, whose logo consists of two Zs.

Wes Anderson is the most meticulous filmmaker alive, and his attention to detail leads to inspired shots, set designs, even logos on boxes. It is in these seemingly throwaway details that he shows his boundless wit and cleverness, and they are not to be dismissed lightly. He is doing things on film that no one else is doing. And one of the things he is doing is calling the moviegoer's attention to the ludicrousness of movie conventions. He does not disguise the way in which plot and dialogue are artifices; he tries to make us laugh at them, to find them amusing.

On stage, this would be called "Brechtian," after Bertolt Brecht, the German playwright who embraced rather than fought against the unreality of theater. Brecht did this to make a Stalinist case that culture is a weapon of the powerful against the powerless, an effort to hypnotize us out of the social consciousness that would inevitably lead to revolution.

I loathe Brecht, but at least he was up to *something*. What the hell is *The Grand Budapest Hotel* about? Beats me. It's impossible, here and in most of Anderson's work, to discern just what on earth Anderson is trying to do. He constructs three-dimensional theatrical sets—like the lobby of the Grand Budapest and the house in which much of the action of his last movie, *Moonrise Kingdom* (2012), takes place—and runs his cast through them as though they are figurines in a diorama. The effect is often amusing, but it's utterly baffling. He creates distance between the audience and the characters, but there seems to be no underlying purpose, no worldview, nothing he's trying to tell us.

It's no wonder his best film is the animated *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (2009), because he dispensed with people entirely and literally used figurines and shoeboxes. They're cute. They're animals. And he got a ready-made plot from Roald Dahl. ♦

FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

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

PARODY

"On Tuesday, [Zach] Galifianakis welcomed President Obama to the comedy show ['Between Two Ferns'] that he has turned into an Internet cult favorite by making his guests feel awkward and uncomfortable."

—New York Times, March 10, 2014

"Russians enter town north of Crimea, say Ukrainians"

—News item, March 11, 2014

MARCH 25, 2014 *ONE DOLLAR CHEAP*

PUTIN ANNOUNCES 'IMMEDIATE, UNCONDITIONAL RETREAT'

Zingers by Obama Credited

By PETER BAKER AND MICHAEL R. GORDON

WASHINGTON — Just as tensions in Ukraine over Russia's recent invasion of Crimea were reaching a boiling point, Russian president Vladimir Putin announced this morning he has ordered the immediate removal of Russian troops from the disputed Crimean peninsula. Though he offered no explanation for the sudden reversal after weeks of taking a hard line with the United States, many are attributing the about-face to President Obama's forceful appearance on the Internet comedy show "Between Two Ferns," hosted by comedian Zach Galifianakis.

President Obama appeared on the show on March 11, and, despite intense pressure from Mr. Galifianakis, the president not only held his own but many times got the better of the quick-witted comedian.

"Does it make you sad to have a turkey taken out of circulation, one less for you to eat?" President Obama cracked to the portly Galifianakis, in response to a question about the annual Thanksgiving Turkey Pardon. "That is the most disgusting thing I have ever seen," the president quipped, when Mr. Galifianakis showed him a rash that had recently developed on his forearm.

Many analysts believe the appearance was Mr. Obama's greatest show of strength in months, and that it will help renew his and America's standing in the international community. "Iran, North Korea, Syria—they're all on notice," says Jay Hardigan, professor of political science at Sarah Lawrence College. "Historically, these things matter," he continued. "I mean, Reagan's public takedown of Robin Williams essentially ended the Iran hostage crisis. And who doesn't remember Woodrow Wilson's disastrous cameo in Al Jolson's revue at the Winter Garden, which, of course, precipitated the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand?"

The White House, keenly aware of the historical significance of comedy programming in maintaining order on the world stage, has scheduled the president for several more appearances on late-night comedy shows in the coming days. With increased brutality in North Korea, civil war in Syria, and a demoralizing lack of progress on Iranian nuclear talks, many believe Mr. Obama's appearance tomorrow night on "Chelsea Lately" is precisely what is needed at this time of ongoing cri-

Continued on Page A3

In this frame from "Between Two Ferns," President Obama responds to a question from host Zach Galifianakis regarding Venezuelan riots and cupcakes.