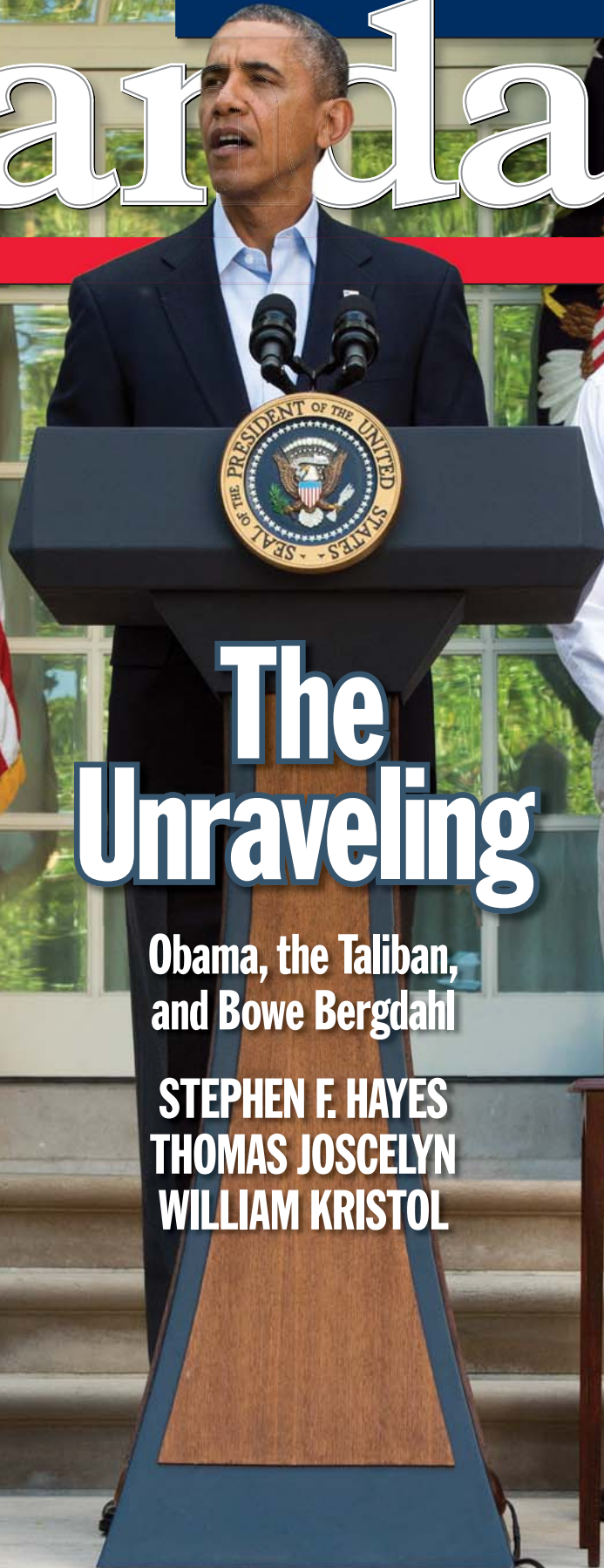


**THE CLIMATE
CULT**
STEVEN F. HAYWARD

the weekly

Standard



The Unraveling

**Obama, the Taliban,
and Bowe Bergdahl**

**STEPHEN F. HAYES
THOMAS JOSCELYN
WILLIAM KRISTOL**

Barack Obama with Jani and
Bob Bergdahl, May 31, 2014

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Mary Soames, 1922-2014

THE SCRAPBOOK notes, with sadness, the death last week in London of 91-year-old Mary Soames, the youngest and last surviving child of Sir Winston Churchill. From her time as a very young woman in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (the British equivalent of the WAC), where she assisted her father at his various war-time conferences, through her career as the wife of a prominent politician, mother, biographer, benefactor, and resource for historians, Lady Soames led a long and productive life. And by all accounts, a happy one as well.

Which is worth noting. For while Mary Soames was the last to die of the 12 (adult) children of World War II's Big Three—Churchill, Joseph Stalin, and Franklin D. Roosevelt—she might well be the only one among that ill-fated dozen who lived a life largely devoid of personal drama and heartbreak. Her three siblings were plagued by alcoholism, marital problems, and stormy relations with both their parents. And all died relatively prematurely, one by suicide.

Not surprisingly, Stalin's three children led blighted lives as well. The most famous (daughter Svetlana) was mentally unstable; and of Stalin's two sons, one died of alcoholism at 40 and the other was killed (or might have killed himself) in a German POW camp. The elder Stalin refused all offers to exchange his son for a German general held prisoner in the Soviet Union: "I will not trade a marshal for a lieutenant," he reportedly said.

Of course, the Churchill and Roosevelt children were not actively mistreated by their fathers, in the way Stalin's offspring were; but parent-child relations in the Roosevelt and Churchill households were famously distant and, in some cases, dysfunctional. Among FDR's five surviving children there were a grand total of 19 marriages.

What this tells us is nothing new: In many cases, the children of historical figures have a tough time in life. Sometimes it's a matter of the parent's natural malevolence (Stalin) and sometimes it's a byproduct of the father's steep ambition (Churchill, FDR). In

any case, growing up in proximity to legendary people, or witnessing historic events, can be a mixed blessing—especially if it's complicated by family relations. A child of a distracted president or prime minister or, especially, a dictator can't walk away so easily from problems; the very qualities that make public figures historic—ego, ambition, devotion to power—are seldom consistent with serene family life.

For whatever reason, Mary Soames was comparatively fortunate, or so it would seem. She was the youngest by several years of Churchill's children, and there is a theory that she was a "consolation baby," conceived and born after the tragic death of a 3-year-old sister. Perhaps, for that reason, she was lavished with parental affection; perhaps, as the last of the line, she felt no pressure to compete or succeed. In any case, it led to a happy ending. As her eldest son: "She was not just a wonderful mother to whom we were all devoted, but the head and heart of our family after our father died, and will be greatly missed." ♦

Red Ceiling

It's an article of faith among *bien pensant* liberals that all institutions in society must achieve perfect gender parity. Consider, for example, the left's outrage at the dearth of women employed at Google and other tech firms (despite the fact that far fewer women study computer science than men) or its efforts to lower physical standards so that more women become firefighters (despite the fact that most people in burning buildings would rather their lives be saved than politically correct mandates be met).

The demand for gender equality apparently extends to less savory lines of work as well. Last week, columnist Ruth Marcus of the *Washington Post* lamented the fact that "Chinese politics may be the ultimate old boys' club."

"Of the 25 members of the Polit-

buro, only two are women," Marcus fretted. "Female membership on the larger Central Committee has actually fallen, from 7.6 percent in 1969 to 4.9 percent today. Just one of 31 provincial governors is a woman."

Left out of the lament was the fact that "Chinese politics" consists of murderous, one-party rule. (She didn't even note this in a column whose publication coincided with the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre.) Marcus also wrote, "Meanwhile, the notion of a Hillary Clinton-like figure poised to lead the country—indeed, even to serve as its chief diplomat—seems remote," as if the installation of a military dictator is the equivalent of the democratic election of a president.

There were a couple of ways that Marcus could have dealt with the unpleasant realities of the Chinese

regime and still left her basic argument intact. She could have made the—admittedly tendentious—argument that if the Chinese government had more female members, it might be a less brutal regime. Or at the very least, she could have added a weaselly "to be sure" caveat, noting, say, that of course she would rather a democratic China than a dictatorial one that happened to have a few more women in positions of power.

But Marcus didn't even manage that—no, hers was a simple demand that more women sit atop tyrannical regimes. In that vein, THE SCRAPBOOK awaits future Marcus columns in which she bemoans the lack of women in the American Nazi party, or argues that the real crime of the Khmer Rouge was not having equal numbers of males and females leading its execution squads. ♦

Opaque Obama

This is the way democracy ends, not with a bang, but a footnote. In April, the Congressional Budget Office—the nonpartisan agency typically relied on to make fiscal assessments of government programs—reported that it was no longer possible to measure the cost of Obamacare. This fact wasn't reported until last week because it was buried at the bottom of the page in one of the CBO's interminable analyses of Obamacare's insurance coverage provisions, and no one noticed. According to the CBO, "Provisions of the Affordable Care Act significantly modified existing federal programs and made changes to the Internal Revenue Code. . . . Isolating the incremental effects of those provisions on previously existing programs and revenues four years after enactment of the Affordable Care Act is not possible."

This no doubt suits the administration just fine. On May 21, the Department of Health and Human Services announced that it would no longer report monthly enrollment numbers for Obamacare exchanges. If not enough people, or people of the right demographic mix, sign up for Obamacare, the exchanges will bleed money and force a bailout of insurance companies on the backs of taxpayers. But good luck figuring out if that's happening. "HHS has lost their mind and will deserve every bit of criticism that they receive over [this decision]," said Charles Gaba of the nonpartisan ACASignUps.net.

In April, the census also announced it was revamping the household insurance questions on its widely cited Current Population Survey. The Current Population Survey data are essential to wonks of all stripes, and the change in methodology makes it impossible to compare insurance data before and after the launch of the exchanges. Recall that one of Obama's first major decisions in 2009 was to bring the census director inside the White House. The administration brushed aside a torrent of criticism that this was a move to politicize census data.

Needless to say, if Obamacare



really were reducing the deficit as promised when the bill was passed, the administration would be working with the CBO to find ways to publicize this success. (For what it's worth, a GAO report last year concluded the law would add \$6.2 trillion to the deficit.) Instead, a law that was unwieldy to begin with has been continually and lawlessly amended to cover up its failures, and now it's impossible for any impartial analysis to make heads or tails of it.

Further, if Americans were eager to ditch their current policy—setting aside the millions victimized by "If you like it, you can keep it"—and sign up for Obamacare's overpriced exchange coverage, you bet we'd be

getting enrollment data. And if the White House could then claim they were reducing the ranks of America's uninsured, they'd be blasting this fact from the rooftops. Instead, they're putting cement shoes on the census data and tossing it in the Potomac.

Even typically obsequious members of the press corps have begun to refer to Obama's promise to be the "most transparent administration ever" with derision. However, the problem here is not that Obama is trying and failing to live up to his own standards. By several objective measures that extend well beyond Obamacare, his administration is, in fact, among the least transparent administrations ever. ♦

When a New York synagogue is destroyed...

From the author of *EAST WIND*

Jack Winnick

DEVIL AMONG US

The FBI and the Mossad are enlisted to smash an anti-Zionist plot in the United States. The team who foiled a Hezbollah scheme in the US, Lara Edmond and Uri Levin, take on the Muslim extremists again in an action-packed, international chase.

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-- Lee Bender, Philadelphia Jewish Voice

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Getting the Lead Out

THE SCRAPBOOK was dimly aware that the U.S. Army was reengineering its ammo but still was taken aback to read that it took 15 years and an estimated \$100 million to come up with a new 5.56 NATO round for our infantrymen. It cost so much and took so long because, you know, it's not easy being green. Today's bullet is lead-free—made from copper with a steel penetrator.

The search for a lead substitute began in 1995, funded by the Army Environmental Center. Their first thought was to switch to tungsten. Maj. John L. Plaster, U.S. Army (Ret.), writing last week in the *American Rifleman*, notes that a search of the development literature "did not yield a single document on terminal effects testing or any consideration of lethality. Accuracy was not cited either. It appears that the entire focus was on replacing lead."

But there was a problem: \$12 million and 3 million rounds into the program, somebody noticed that tungsten is as environmentally dangerous as lead. Back to the drawing board. In 2008, they tried an alloy of bismuth and tin. But then they noticed the bullets would often do silly things like fly sideways through their intended targets and end up in places other than where they'd been aimed. Bad luck.

Thus the copper bullet. The new cartridge does have better ballistics—at the expense of much higher chamber pressure. Which means the new round reduces the service-life of rifle barrels by about 50 percent.

Back in 2003, only \$50 million into the program, the Army was offered the MK 318 SOST round, developed and still used by our special forces. As you'd expect, the special forces take things seriously, and their bullet had superior ballistics, could penetrate barriers reliably at longer ranges, and was more accurate. But it contained lead, and who wants that?

Of course lead has certain advantages—it's heavy and cheap. So the new copper bullets take more of a costlier material. But hey, at least our enemies won't get lead poisoning. ♦

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The Family Man

The first writer I ever met was my Uncle Joe. He was tall, with a fading cap of screwy red hair, big mischievous eyes, and a smile that might have been drawn by Dr. Seuss.

I remember him saying to my younger brother and me that there were goblins in his basement. No way were we going to fall for that. He opened the door, inviting us to take a look. “Go ahead. You can see them, can’t you?” We peered down the basement stairs, into the darkness, but saw nothing. “Whoa, there goes one, did you see it?”

Oh, just stop it, we said. There were no goblins. We could tell. “Well, you have to step a little closer,” he said. So, to prove how silly he was, we went down a step or two. Then he closed the door behind us and locked it.

It was so dark that we got scared and began to think that maybe there actually were goblins in the basement. We banged on the door and screamed until Uncle Joe came back to let us out.

I doubt this behavior would pass muster with today’s parenting experts; if not, all the worse for today’s children. Knowing Uncle Joe was a lesson in *How to Be a Character*. This is quite different from what people call character development, learning to overcome setbacks, rising to the occasion, and all those other painfully useful clichés.

As it happens, *Being a Character* is not exactly practical, but, among other virtues, it makes the long afternoons more bearable.

I call Uncle Joe the first writer I ever met, but he was never published, and he made his living as an accountant at IBM. His great accomplishment was raising seven children, all

adults now—not a wallflower in the bunch. He was married for 54 years to my Aunt Ann, who recently told me, “It was no big love affair, but we had a great fondness for each other.”

I did have some inkling that Uncle Joe wrote, and I asked him about it once, but all I can remember is him telling me that he possessed the single largest collection of rejection slips on the East Coast. Yet that didn’t strike



me as sad. It only took a moment of talking to Joe Howard to realize that books had brought him a huge amount of joy.

Sitting in the backyard of our family house in Queens, he once said to me, “There is only one word for God: ineffable.” If you asked him about his time in the Air Force, beginning in 1950, he’d say that he had enlisted to keep Gene Autry, Oklahoma, and Cheyenne, Wyoming, safe from the North Koreans. On the subject of World War II, he was an expert, having read loads of popular history sitting in an easy chair in his living room.

In 2008, my Aunt Ann discovered an old manuscript in her attic. It was

a complete novel, along with some sample chapters and other evidence of Uncle Joe’s marketing efforts. Called *The Tribe*, it’s a coming-of-age story about growing up Irish in the Bronx during World War II. Full of overbearing parents, busybody priests, and other lower-class white people looking nervously over their shoulders, it’s an earlier version of the world rendered in Alice McDermott’s fiction, and an emotionally rich portrait in its own way.

To my cousin Brian, Uncle Joe’s son, it was “a one-of-a-kind thing.” Brian felt protective of the manuscript, and it gave him an idea. He scanned the fading pages into his PC, typing in many passages where the ink was too light for the scanner to pick up, and did a touch of copyediting. Then he found a way to self-publish the book.

It was intended as a Father’s Day gift, but the work took much longer than Brian, a professional journalist, anticipated. After missing a second self-imposed deadline for his father’s 77th birthday that fall, Brian redoubled his efforts and got the book finished in time for Christmas. With the whole family gathered, Brian made a speech. “I . . . told my dad he’d done something we were all proud of but for which I wasn’t sure he was proud enough.”

When Joe passed away this year, his friends and family talked a lot about the novel, and it made me think that, when all is said and done, who we want to be but never quite become says something important about the people we truly are. My Uncle Joe set aside a great love—for writing—to go on supporting his family as an accountant. I don’t suppose it ever occurred to him to regret the choice. Still, it was its own kind of fulfillment that his children loved him enough to notice.

DAVID SKINNER

Period? Full Stop?

“Regardless of the circumstances, whatever those circumstances may turn out to be, we still get an American soldier back if he’s held in captivity. Period. Full stop. We don’t condition that. That’s what every mom and dad who sees a son or daughter sent over into [a] war theater should expect not just from their commander in chief but the United States of America. . . . The United States has always had a pretty sacred rule. And that is we don’t leave our men or women in uniform behind, and that dates back to the earliest days of our revolution.”

—President Barack Obama, June 3, 2014

Lexicographers are no doubt penning learned treatises on the transformation of the words “period, full stop” from a term of art in punctuation to a rhetorical device meant to . . . well, meant to what? The answer: Shut down debate before it begins.

That’s what President Obama tried to do following his trade of five terrorists for one deserter. First he sought to shield himself from criticism by flanking himself in the Rose

Garden with the long-suffering mom and dad of a soldier who had been behind enemy lines for five years. Then he sent his national security adviser out to try to deflect criticism by praising that soldier for serving “with honor and distinction” before, supposedly, being “taken in battle.” When these ploys didn’t work, the president chose to appeal to American history.

What the president wanted above all was no debate. “Period, full stop” means: This is unequivocal; this is unconditional; this is incontestable. What he said was: If you challenge this, you’re challenging “every mom and dad who sees a son or daughter sent over into [a] war theater”; you’re challenging a “sacred rule” of the United States, one “that dates back to the earliest days of our revolution”; you’re asking to be labeled by the White House, using all the PR resources at its disposal, as at best uncaring, at worst un-American.

And so the president himself and his minions have done their best, or their worst, to preclude debate and to silence criticism. Their effort has failed. It failed not because pundits or politicians came up with especially clever lines of criticism. Rather, the administration failed because the American people didn’t fall for it. In particular, military families—the prime audience of the president and his team—didn’t fall for the administration’s spin. Instead there was a spontaneous reaction of dismay, a sincere and heartfelt disgust on the part of the American public. Late in the week, the president claimed that the whole controversy was “whipped up in Washington.” He

had it backwards. America led Washington, not the other way round.

Indeed, nothing has been more heartening than the reaction of Americans to the Obama administration’s attempt to preclude discussion and then overwhelm critics. Americans know about the stresses on parents whose sons and daughters are in combat. Americans know soldiers and Marines who’ve seen the face of

battle. Americans know their historical traditions. So they know that trading five terrorists for a deserter when a war is far from over, and then not telling the truth about what has been done, is wrong.

Last week, reacting to the president’s decision to remove troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2016 and, more broadly, to President Obama’s policy of American weakness and retreat, we quoted in this space Winston Churchill: “This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup which will be proffered to us year by year unless by a supreme recovery of moral health and martial vigour, we arise again and take our stand for freedom as in the olden time.”

Is it too much to hope that one can see, in the spontaneous reaction of the American people to the actions of Bowe Bergdahl, to the statements of his father, and to the rationalizations of the Obama administration intimations



Obama with the Bergdahls

of such a “recovery of moral health and martial vigour”? Is it too much to hope that their revulsion at being told to sit down and shut up by the president of the United States may inspire in the American people a determination to “arise again and take our stand for freedom as in the olden time”?

—William Kristol

No Confidence

President Barack Obama and his advisers have long sought to release the five most dangerous Taliban commanders held in U.S. custody at Guantánamo. Bipartisan opposition scuttled a possible deal in 2012 because of a consensus that the “Taliban Five,” as they’ve come to be known, posed too great a threat. Even Senate Democrats were unwilling to go along with the administration’s plans then. But last week the president had the Taliban Five transferred to Qatar. Although administration officials stressed that this was primarily a swap to get back an American soldier, Bowe Bergdahl, they have always had an additional motive for letting the Taliban Five go.

The Obama administration has hoped, based on scant evidence, that returning the Taliban Five to their brethren would be a “confidence-building measure.” It is supposed to coax the Taliban’s leadership into meaningful peace talks. This reconciliation effort would be led by the Afghan government, which opposed releasing the Taliban Five, but would also involve the United States. Obama has wanted to make this concession from the outset to convince the Taliban, an extremist group long allied with al Qaeda, that they can trust us to abide by the terms of whatever imagined deal is struck in the future.

President Obama alluded to this theory of the hoped-for negotiations in his statement heralding Bergdahl’s release. After praising Qatar for its help in brokering the deal, the president said the prisoner swap could “open the door” to more talks.

“The United States also remains committed to supporting an Afghan-led reconciliation process as the surest way to achieve a stable, secure, sovereign, and unified Afghanistan,” Obama said in his statement on May 31. “While we are mindful of the challenges,” he went on, the deal “could potentially open the door for broader discussions among Afghans about the future of their country by building confidence that it is possible for all sides to find common ground.” Other administration officials, including Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, made similar remarks.

The Taliban wasn’t impressed. The day after Obama’s statement, spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid dismissed the idea of future negotiations. The prisoner swap “won’t help the peace process in any way, because we don’t believe in the peace process,” Mujahid said.

The Taliban’s renunciation of the “peace process” was entirely predictable. Mullah Omar’s group has never been serious about reconciliation. National Security Council officials who briefed the press after the Bergdahl deal was finalized even told the press that the Taliban had no interest in broader talks. Omar’s spokesmen have, however, consistently demanded that the Taliban Five be released. And the Taliban has long been willing to exchange Bergdahl for them.

In June 2013, for instance, Taliban representative Suhail Shaheen described the group’s thinking in an interview with the Associated Press. “First,” he said, “has to be the release of detainees”—that is, the Taliban Five—and only after that would the Taliban “want to build bridges of confidence.” This amorphous confidence-building process has been so alluring to the administration, which has desperately sought peace talks, that the president is still talking about it years after it became clear that the Taliban has no intention of agreeing to the U.S. government’s demands.

In fact, while the Taliban stuck to its demands (freedom for the Taliban Five), the Obama administration abandoned all of its preconditions. Originally, the State Department said it would only talk to the Taliban on three conditions: if it laid down its arms, agreed to abide by the Afghan constitution, and renounced al Qaeda. The Taliban repeatedly and openly rejected these demands, and so the State Department abandoned them. As the *New York Times* reported, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton “first signaled the opening for talks by recasting the administration’s longstanding preconditions” as “necessary outcomes” in 2011.

Three years later, the Taliban has still shown no willingness to agree to any of these three precondition-turned-outcomes. And releasing the Taliban Five will not help matters. These are men who devoted their lives to building an Islamic state based on the Taliban’s harsh version of *sharia* law, which cannot accept any other laws as the basis for governance, including the current Afghan constitution. All five have been committed to pursuing this goal by violent means, even if they are willing to use other means as well. All five were deemed “high” risks to the United States, its interests, and allies by Joint Task Force Guantánamo (JTF-GTMO), which oversees the detention facility. President Obama’s own Guantánamo Review Task Force considered all five too dangerous to release and recommended that they be held indefinitely. Two of the five have long been suspected of committing or ordering war crimes in pre-9/11 Afghanistan.

And then there is the issue of the Taliban's relationship with al Qaeda. The Taliban regime harbored al Qaeda in Afghanistan before the 9/11 attacks. Even today al Qaeda has a foothold in parts of the country, including the provinces of Kunar and Nuristan. If the Taliban retakes control of other parts of Afghanistan after American forces leave, then we could find ourselves right back where this all began, with the Taliban giving al Qaeda the freedom to operate. Nonetheless, some in Washington cling to the fanatical notion that the Taliban can make a clean break from al Qaeda. This is one of the principal reasons that the Obama administration is willing to bend over backwards to pursue peace talks with the Taliban.



The Taliban Five: Mohammad Fazl, Norullah Noori, Abdul Haq Wasiq, Khairullah Khairkhwa, Mohammad Nabi Omari

According to leaked and declassified files prepared at Guantánamo, however, the Taliban Five were among those who helped cement the relationship between Mullah Omar's organization and al Qaeda in the first place.

■ Mohammad Fazl served as deputy minister of defense and the army chief of staff for the Taliban. He is one of the two leaders who has long been a suspected war criminal. According to a leaked JTF-GTMO threat assessment, Fazl worked closely with a top al Qaeda commander known as Abdul Hadi al Iraqi, who is still held at Guantánamo. Al Iraqi reported to Osama bin Laden and led the deceased al Qaeda master's chief fighting unit, the Arab 055 Brigade, in pre-9/11 Afghanistan. The 055 Brigade is described in the JTF-GTMO files as being al Qaeda's "primary formation supporting Taliban military objectives" and "was almost exclusively comprised of Arabs, many of whom had affiliations with other international terrorist groups." In addition to leading al Qaeda's paramilitary forces, al Iraqi is suspected of playing a direct role in the July 7, 2005, bombings in London. The JTF-GTMO files for Fazl link him to al Qaeda leaders other than al Iraqi as well.

■ Norullah Noori is another senior Taliban leader who, like Fazl, remains wildly popular within the organization. Like Fazl, Noori has long been suspected of committing war crimes. In late 2001, Human Rights Watch and other human rights organizations urged the international community to try the pair for overseeing atrocities committed against civilians. While at Guantánamo, Noori and Fazl were asked about their role in slaughtering thousands. They "did not express any regret and stated they did what they needed to do in their struggle to establish their ideal state," according to JTF-GTMO's threat assessment. Noori was also "directly connected"

to al Qaeda, and intelligence reports indicate he was colluding with the group as early as the mid-1990s.

■ Abdul Haq Wasiq was once the Taliban's deputy minister of intelligence. Wasiq "utilized his office to support al Qaeda" and "arranged for al Qaeda personnel to train Taliban intelligence staff in intelligence methods." The training was headed by Hamza Zubayr, an al Qaeda instructor who was killed during the same September 2002 raid that netted Ramzi bin al-Shibh, the point man for the 9/11 operation. Wasiq "was central to the Taliban's efforts to form alliances with other Islamic fundamentalist groups to fight alongside the Taliban against U.S. and Coalition forces after the 11 September 2001 attacks," according

to JTF-GTMO's threat assessment.

■ Khairullah Khairkhwa was once the Taliban's governor of Herat, the westernmost province in Afghanistan, and he held other political and military roles. JTF-GTMO found that he was "directly associated" with both Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar. Khairkhwa may have helped oversee one of bin Laden's training camps. And Khairkhwa's deputy reportedly worked with Al Wafa, a charity that served as a front for al Qaeda. Khairkhwa helped organize meetings between the Iranian regime and the Taliban, during which the Iranians agreed to support the Taliban's war against the United States.

■ Mohammad Nabi Omari "served in multiple leadership roles" for the Taliban. According to JTF-GTMO, he "had strong operational ties to Anti-Coalition Militia (ACM) groups including al Qaeda, the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and the Hezb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG), some of whom remain active in ACM activities." Intelligence cited in the JTF-GTMO files indicates that Omari held weekly meetings with al Qaeda operatives to coordinate attacks against U.S.-led forces.

It is easy to see why the Taliban is confident in its ability to negotiate with Washington. The group secured the release of prominent leaders in U.S. custody under the terms it demanded. There is no good reason for Americans to be similarly confident in the Obama administration's ability to negotiate with the Taliban. The U.S. government has abandoned its preconditions for talks while the Taliban hasn't budged. The Taliban has repeatedly said it will not agree to the Obama administration's goals. And now, five dangerous al Qaeda-linked Taliban commanders have been freed.

—Thomas Foscelyn

A Populist Uprising

The nation-state and the political future of Europe.

BY PETER AUGUSTINE LAWLER & RICHARD REINSCH



Anti-UKIP protesters at an appearance by Nigel Farage in Bath, April 29, 2014

Resonating through the chattering classes of Europe and America is the recent triumph of Nigel Farage's U.K. Independence party (UKIP) in the European parliament elections. UKIP bested both Labour and the Tories not only in England but also in Wales and Scotland. The victory might be explained away by low turnout, but that apathy itself is commentary on the EU's unpopularity.

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One thing is certain: Farage's dance card in Brussels will be full. There, he will be joined by other rising populist and nationalist parties from France, Austria, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Farage, a loud and proud classical liberal democrat, has already indicated that he doesn't have much in common with the more deeply nationalist nativism that animates the anti-EU parties in other countries. But they all share a desire to defend the nation-state as a political form against the depoliticizing or deeply administrative "functional" transfer of authority and legitimacy to the bureaucrats in Brussels.

UKIP's victory may one day be viewed as the moment when the post-political fantasy that is the EU began its retreat. The disembodied abstraction that is the emerging European state seems mainly to serve the interests of a globalized meritocracy based on productivity. For many ordinary Europeans, wages are stagnating or declining, worthwhile work is scarce, and it's impossible to connect one's self-interest with the alleged benefits of being European—as opposed to being British or French.

Pierre Manent, the most profound of the Euroskeptical philosophers (and no populist), has long argued that the depoliticizing European "human rights" project is animated by a hatred of bodies. Relational beings with bodies find their homes, their security, their personal significance, and truthful self-understandings through participation in strong, stable institutions. These include the nation understood as a political community with shared memories, loyalties, culture, and virtues. They also include the family and the church understood as an organized body of thought and action. It's a fantasy to believe that people could flourish in a world where they're understood as autonomous persons and not as citizens, creatures, parents, children, and so forth.

Disembodied Europe (the EU has no definite boundaries), we can see, is incapable of defending itself or even generating enough children to perpetuate itself. It is a fantasy to believe that it can have a future without some dependence on the love and loyalty of citizens who are more than citizens. The truth is that it is a fantasy to believe that the universal human rights shared by all autonomous beings could be the foundation of a new world order, even if it is an understandable reaction to the cruel, ideological utopianism of 20th-century totalitarians—that free persons could be reconstituted as citizens (or comrades) and nothing more. Both extremes depend on unrealistically abstracting from the multifaceted truth about who each of us as a free and relational being really is.

It turns out, of course, that extremes

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are typically more similar than they first appear. The ideology of both the EU and the Leninists (who, of course, descended from the French revolutionaries) is that nothing stands between the solitary person and the state. In one case the state is understood as ministerial to the comfortably unfettered existence of the person, and in the other the citizen is understood to be fodder for the state's glorious historical future. In both cases, ideology denies the truth about personal identity and personal significance.

Roger Scruton—England's most accomplished conservative since Edmund Burke and, like Manent, a longstanding Euroskeptic—has written that both the “U.N. Charter of Human Rights and the European Convention of Human Rights belong to the species of utopian thinking” and aren't so different from what Marx wrote about the withering away of the state. Those charters imagine that a regime that effectually secures rights could be “without history, without prior attachments, without any of the flesh-and-blood passions that make government so necessary in the first place.” That means, of course, that the promotion of an “enlightened internationalism” opposed to all “local chauvinism” and repudiating all claims to loyalty for “inheritance and home” assumes we are or can become ghosts and angels. One problem among many, of course, is that, whatever we might imagine, relational beings with bodies moved by ambition, love, hate, animosity, death, and so forth will remain. And ghosts can't protect us from whatever and whoever threatens those we know and love.

Scruton concludes that the main threat to the future of rights or the free person in Europe today is not “xenophobia” but its opposite—the assertion that national or political freedom is an oxymoron because it defines or constrains the autonomous individual. The idea “that a citizen owes loyalty to a country, a territory, a jurisdiction and

all those who reside in it” is “the root idea of democratic government.”

It's true enough that “that idea has no place in the hearts and minds of many Europeans today,” those prosperous and sophisticated cosmopolitans who enjoy privileges they believe they've earned or are entitled to by right and so have no corresponding responsibilities. But the truth is that international legislators—from the U.N. to the WTO to the EU—are all necessarily “parasitic on national loyalty and could not survive without it.”

The anti-EU uprising was predominantly working class—meaning on the more modest side of the middle class. The most truthful economic expla-



Farage and UKIP members of the European parliament

nation is that the global competitive marketplace has meant, for some, stagnating wages, the dearth of worthwhile work, and increasingly pathological family lives. The situation in America isn't so different. The productive future is bright for the cognitive elite, but many or most people are becoming more marginally productive. This form of inequality may be mitigated in Europe by expansive welfare states, but not by as much as Americans often think. And for demographic reasons alone there's no alternative here or there to trimming and reconfiguring what we call entitlements. No American, we hope, can praise class-based envy and resentment, except to say that the best antidote to envy is being satisfied with the life you have, and that means having what it takes in every way to take care of your own.

By turning to Manent and Scruton,

we suggest there is meaning in the election results that goes beyond mindless opposition to all immigration and international trade. And certainly we don't agree with those right-wing Europeans who admire the political authoritarianism, aggressive nationalism, statist religious orthodoxy, and repressive natalism of Putin's Russia. Like Manent and Scruton, we choose the liberalism of European civilization over Putin's authoritarian vision of Russian civilization. But we can see why so many ordinary Europeans have awakened to the fear that the EU is morphing into less a democracy than a technocracy, in which the technocrats will be unresponsive to the needs—both relational and economic (love and work)—of ordinary people. From the beginning of modern liberalism—and certainly in America—the self-interest of the free individual has been limited and directed by the relational responsibilities shared by all people and citizens.

But even in America a kind of technocratic libertarianism—found both in the Democrats' Silicon Valley and in the complacent fold of oligarchic Republicans—has neglected the need for policies aimed at sustaining the relational contexts on which ordinary people especially depend. So we endorse Yuval Levin's disruptive thought that the excessive libertarianism of some American conservatives can be cured by learning something from Burke about the enduring social nature of man.

Americans can hope that the political lesson drawn by Europeans from this Euroskeptical uprising is that the indispensable political form of liberal civilization in the modern world is the nation-state. That civilized nation of shared customs, conventions, memories, loyalties, property and personal rights, generous tolerance, and moral and spiritual virtues is something more than the merely convenient contractual state described by Thomas Hobbes and something less than the omniscient state that emerged from the French Revolution. ♦

He's Always Right

The monopartisan president.

BY FRED BARNES

‘**M**y goal was to get something done,’ President Obama said at a Chicago fundraiser in May. Yet he’s pursuing a strategy that makes it nearly impossible to achieve that. He’s not acting in his own interest.

The president refuses to deal with Republicans in Congress. He claims they’re committed, above all else, to obstructing his entire agenda. So he’s boycotting them, except on rare occasions when he summons Democratic and Republican leaders together to the White House for a formal meeting. That hasn’t occurred since April 3.

But serious, individual overtures to key Republicans on big issues? Aides of Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell can’t recall the last time he heard from Obama. It’s been “months at least,” an aide told me. The same is true for House speaker John Boehner.

This is a mistake for two reasons. The first is that modern presidents are expected to act, not wait for others to step forward. But Obama seems oblivious to the need for presidential leadership. The chief features of his presidency are passivity and hand-wringing, especially on domestic issues.

The second reason is that Obama is treating Republicans as aliens. He wants to lift his low poll ratings and enhance his legacy. But he can’t do that with executive orders alone. He needs Congress to pass legislation that he’s been active in putting together. For that, he needs Republicans, since they control the House.

In his Chicago speech—at his favorite venue, a fundraiser—the president lamented the lack of “bipartisan legislation to fix our immigration system.” He said Republicans have “refused to

budge . . . despite the fact that every economist who’s looked at it says it’s going to improve our economy, cut our deficits, help spawn entrepreneurship, and alleviate great pain from millions of families all across the country.”

In truth, Republicans have budged. Several committees in the House have passed five separate bills to overhaul the immigration system. And one deals with allowing educated, skilled immigrants to stay in America after college or come in the first place. Yet Obama hasn’t spoken to Judiciary chairman Bob Goodlatte since last year.

The president insisted that congressional Democrats “have consistently been willing to compromise and reach out to the other side.” Sorry, but they haven’t. Democrats won’t give up their demand that immigration reform be “comprehensive”—that is, packed into a single bill.

Obama could change that, especially if he’s as keen on bringing “enormous talent” to this country as he says he is. He could, for example, support legislation to reform the current immigration system and put off the issue of illegal immigrants already here. Republican senator Marco Rubio of Florida has proposed exactly this. But he hasn’t heard from the president since last year when he cosponsored the immigration reform measure that was approved in the Senate.

My point is that Obama would get credit for a less-than-comprehensive immigration bill. He would be seen, correctly, as responsible for taking a major step toward full reform. This would clearly be in his interest. But he hasn’t acted. He’s merely groused.

Then there’s tax reform. Were Obama to lead on this issue by promoting a bipartisan bill, he would benefit politically. This is what President Reagan did in his second term. He

compromised with Democrats and got credit when tax reform was enacted. In the Senate, the vote was 97-3—in other words, really bipartisan.

An outcome even close to that seems out of reach for Obama, if only because he’s stuck to a tax reform concept that Republicans will never accept. Rather than eliminate loopholes, broaden the tax base, and lower the rates—in other words, traditional tax reform—Obama proposes to get rid of special tax breaks, and, rather than use the savings to reduce rates, he’d spend the money.

Indeed, he has plans for spending it. “Let’s just make sure that those of us who have been incredibly blessed by this country are giving back to kids so that they’re getting a good start in life, so that they get early childhood education, so that struggling middle-class families are able to finance their education.” And so on.

Republican Dave Camp of Michigan released a tax reform proposal last winter. It’s important because Camp is chairman of the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee. He’s heard nothing from the White House for months.

Obama also wants more money for basic medical research. Bashing Republicans and refusing to negotiate with them won’t help. Seeking a compromise might. On energy, the president isn’t likely to get more money for solar and wind power unless he offers to open federal land to oil and gas exploration, which many Republicans support. Again, that would require coming to terms with Republicans.

Obama’s attitude is he’s right, Republicans are wrong, and that’s it. “We’re on the right side on every single issue and the majority of the American people agree with us on every single issue,” he said in Chicago. Is it possible he really believes this? I’m afraid so.

There’s also a crass political reason for Obama’s inflexibility. The main Democratic talking point in this year’s midterm elections is that Republicans are solely responsible for polarization and “dysfunction” in Washington. And in his Chicago talk, Obama hewed tightly to the party line, as he has in other speeches.

He does so at his own expense. ♦

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Let's Set Aside Set-Asides

In government contracting, some are more equal than others. **BY TERRY EASTLAND**

In our episodic “national conversation about race,” perhaps it is time to take notice of Rothe Development Corporation of San Antonio, Texas, which, you could say, has been having its own conversation about race—in the federal courts. Rothe is a government contractor that has now brought two lawsuits challenging racial preferences in federal contracting, winning the first, which was filed in 1998 and decided in 2008, and hoping, of course, to win the second, which was filed in 2012 and could go to the Supreme Court while President Obama is in office. At stake, ultimately, is whether the government will quit the business of preferring certain citizens to others on the basis of race—and thus discriminating against some—in awarding contracts.

A small business of roughly 120 employees, Rothe does contract work for the Department of Defense, the government’s principal contracting agency, with about 67 percent of federal contracting dollars. Rothe specializes in work involving computers, among them custom programming and systems design, as well as their operation and maintenance.

Starting in the late 1980s, Rothe had a contract to manage the computer systems at Columbus Air Force Base in Columbus, Mississippi. But when the business was up for bid in 1998, International Computer and Telecommunications, Inc. (ICT) got the job, even though Rothe’s bid was the lowest. The reason had to do with race. Indeed, as Rothe’s vice president, Dale Patenaude, told me, “the only reason we

lost that contract was because of race.”

The statute under which the contract was let sets a numerical “goal”—that 5 percent of federal defense contracting dollars be awarded to certain entities, including small businesses owned by “socially disadvantaged”



The DoD: a passive participant in racism?

individuals. The statute incorporated the Small Business Act’s presumption that black Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and native Americans are socially disadvantaged. And it authorized the Defense Department to take such measures as necessary to reach that 5 percent goal, including awarding contracts to small disadvantaged businesses at prices up to 10 percent above the lowest offer.

The Pentagon carried out that directive by making a “price evaluation adjustment” to bids by firms that were not small disadvantaged businesses. It increased their bids by 10 percent before comparing them to bids by small disadvantaged companies.

Rothe was (and still is) owned by whites and thus was presumed not to be a socially disadvantaged business. ICT was owned by a Korean-American

couple and thus was presumed to be socially disadvantaged. Rothe bid \$5.57 million, and ICT bid \$5.75 million. Rothe’s bid was the lowest, but the Air Force, making a price evaluation adjustment, concluded that Rothe’s bid was \$6.1 million and hence higher than ICT’s. So the Air Force awarded the business to ICT.

Rothe sued, contending that the bid preference statute violated the Fourteenth Amendment’s equal protection clause. In declaring the measure unconstitutional—coincidentally, on Election Day 2008—the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit explained that Congress, which passed the law in 1986 and last reauthorized it in 2006, had failed to demonstrate, as case law requires, “a strong basis in evidence” upon which it could conclude that the Defense Department was “a passive participant in pervasive, nationwide discrimination”—a necessary predicate for racial preferences.

The government had tried to meet that requirement mainly with “disparity studies,” which, as the district court in the case explained, seek to calculate a ratio “between the expected contract amount of a given [racial or ethnic] group and the actual contract amount received by that group.” A finding that a given minority group received less than 80 percent of the expected amount “indicates a relevant degree of disparity and might support an inference of discrimination.”

The government submitted six disparity studies, but the appeals court was unimpressed. Two of the studies failed to weed out unqualified businesses, and five failed to account for potential differences in company size, thus reducing the studies’ value in establishing the necessary “strong basis in evidence.” Furthermore, as only six jurisdictions—five localities and just one state—were the subjects of the disparity studies, the court felt compelled to say, “We would be hesitant to conclude even from methodologically unimpeachable disparity studies of one state, two counties, and three cities that there is a nationwide pattern or practice of discrimination in public and private contracting.”

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NASA

Nor did it help the government's case that, as the appeals court observed, none of the six studies was ever discussed at a congressional hearing. "There is no indication that these studies were debated or reviewed by members of Congress"—again, the arm of government that must establish a strong basis in evidence—"or by any witnesses."

Significantly, Rothe brought what is called a facial challenge, meaning one in which the plaintiff alleges that the legislation is always unconstitutional and therefore must be voided. The appeals court agreed with the facial challenge. The Obama administration declined to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court and advised relevant agencies that programs relying exclusively on the authority of the bid preference statute "should cease." Not that the administration was especially attentive to the matter: Agencies continued to include the language of the now unconstitutional and unenforceable statute in their contract documents—inclusions that Rothe noticed and successfully protested, says its lawyer, David F. Barton.

In retrospect, the first Rothe case was tactically important, a demonstration that preferences in contracting are indeed vulnerable. And so that case led to the second one, which will be argued in trial court this September: a facial challenge to Section 8(a) of the Small Business Act.

Enacted in 1978, Section 8(a) seeks to promote "the business development of small business concerns owned and controlled" by socially disadvantaged individuals. As was the case with the bid preference statute, Section 8(a) presumes that individuals who are members of certain racial groups are socially disadvantaged. The statute sets a government-wide "goal for participation" by such small businesses at "not less than five percent of the total value of all prime contract and subcontract awards for each fiscal year." And, critically, it provides that the competition for contracts awarded under Section 8(a) be "restricted to eligible program participants."

Thus, Section 8(a) "sets aside" a

portion of all federal contracting dollars (and not just the Pentagon's); only members of certain minority groups can compete for them. Rothe's complaint is that the set-aside denies it—and any small businesses owned by individuals who are not members of the preferred minority groups—the opportunity to join the competition. "If Section 8(a) were not there," says Patenaude, "we could bid on double the amount of contracts we do now."

Here, again, Rothe's challenge relies primarily on the equal protection clause. Rothe contends that Congress did not have "a strong basis in evidence" for the racial classification in Section 8(a). The government says it did and this time has gone for volume in trying to prove it, entering into the record some 107 disparity studies totaling more than 40,000 pages. The studies contain, says the government, "significant evidence of large and adverse disparities facing minority business enterprises," disparities that "cannot be explained solely by differences between the minority and non-minority businesses in factors untainted by the effects of discrimination" and which "are consistent with the presence of discrimination and its lingering effects in the small business contracting environment."

Rothe responds that the studies don't involve federal contracting and so are of marginal relevance, examining, as they do, contracting by states, counties, cities, a housing finance agency, a mosquito control district, a sewer district, airports, transit authorities, a toll highway authority, and so forth. Moreover, says Rothe, those 107 studies were done not by the federal government but by disparity study companies, "which may have a vested interest in finding disparities." Rothe says that records of contracts awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation to disadvantaged business enterprises show "dramatic overutilization" of such firms, in contrast to the "underutilization" found in the disparity studies. Rothe argues the government has taken "a haphazard quantity over quality approach" in "scouring the country for disparities studies [and]

then assuming the state and local studies relate to the federal 8(a) program, which they do not."

Rothe also contends that the program's racial classification is an unconstitutional delegation of congressional power to a federal agency, the Small Business Administration. The argument turns on the fact that Section 8(a) names five minority groups, the members of which are presumed to be socially disadvantaged, but then by implication authorizes the SBA to recognize additional minority groups, granting them the same presumption. Rothe's argument is that under the Constitution, Congress may not delegate to the executive branch the power to make racial classifications.

Of the two arguments, the delegation (or, more precisely, nondelegation) argument might interest more justices. But the real issue in the case concerns equal protection and whether disparity studies can sustain racially preferential departures from that constitutional principle.

In 1989 and 1995 cases, the Court, with Sandra Day O'Connor writing, effectively sanctioned the use of disparity studies to make "an inference of discriminatory exclusion" that preferences could remedy—ironically doing so in cases striking down preferences in contracting. An entire disparity studies industry has emerged since, and the Roberts Court may wish to review that development and its implications. After all, as Rothe knows from its rather full experience with these matters, disparity studies are often methodologically flawed, and their premise—that statistics can somehow prove discrimination—remains doubtful.

The question remains, moreover, whether racial preferences, inherently discriminatory as they are, can ever be the right response even to ostensible proofs of discrimination using statistics. The contracting bid process, in particular, is transparent, and acts of bias thus can be identified and corrected. As Chief Justice Roberts wrote in a different context in 2009, "The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race." ♦

PAYGO Begone

A budget rule that encourages dishonesty.

BY IKE BRANNON

An arithmetic riddle: How much money would the U.S. government collect if it were to impose a 5 percent tax on the \$2 trillion currently parked in offshore accounts to avoid the high U.S. corporate tax rate of 35 percent?

If you multiplied \$2 trillion by .05 and arrived at \$100 billion as an answer, you get full credit for your math acumen but zero points for political accuracy. The answer is a negative \$600 billion, at least in the eyes of the Joint Committee on Taxation and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

How can this be? The trouble is that in official calculations of how much a law will change revenue, a counterfactual must be taken into account: How much money would the Treasury have received from those overseas profits if the government did not reduce its tax rate? While common sense and accuracy would put that number somewhere around zero, since most of that money will never be repatriated, the convention is to assume that, eventually, every one of those dollars would be returned to the United States and taxed at the full 35 percent tax rate, bringing in \$700 billion.

The arcane rules and conventions followed in official revenue estimates are problematic because the current budget system requires every piece of legislation that would increase the deficit in some way to be “paid for,” typically with a complementary piece of

legislation that either raises revenues or lowers spending elsewhere. While it may seem like an admirable way to keep a spendthrift Congress in check, the way that our “pay as you go,” or PAYGO, system actually functions creates a whole host of perverse incentives. Ultimately, its use may cause more problems than it prevents.

In some circumstances it actually blocks policies that would generate revenue. For instance, while the possibility of expanding offshore oil drilling to Virginia and the Carolinas—where it is currently banned—may have lots of passionate advocates on both sides, no one disputes that it would generate more tax revenue.

Except the CBO. As they see it, there is not actually a “permanent” ban on such drilling: It is technically a five-year ban that Congress habitually renews. If the ban were lifted tomorrow, no oil would flow—nor would any tax revenues be realized—for at least five or six years, which is how long it would take for the government to auction lease permits and for companies to begin exploring and then acquire the capital and expertise to actually produce oil there.

So while an honest accounting would forecast tax revenue accruing to the Treasury by year six, CBO reckons that, since technically the ban on drilling will not be in effect six years from now, any tax revenue generated by drilling off the Atlantic coast six years out will *not* be a result of ending the drilling ban. Thus, CBO is required to forecast that ending the ban would generate no “new” tax revenue.

The PAYGO rule encourages all sorts of sordid games by politicians. For instance, every so often Congress inserts a clause into a tax bill that, five or six years down the road, will require corporations to push forward a quarterly tax payment. It’s a procedure that doesn’t affect firms in the slightest: After Congress duly passes the law containing that provision, it quietly repeals the provision a year or two later. This sleight-of-hand is done solely to plug a budget hole: If Congress can’t quite make a tax bill adhere to the PAYGO rules within the five-year budget window, it simply maneuvers to temporarily borrow from the year after the budget window to square things up, and then quietly undoes this fix a year or two later.

And don’t get me started about black liquor. A tax loophole was created when an IRS bureaucrat decided that a tax break for clean energy production also—*contra* any actual intent of Congress—applied to the longtime practice by paper companies of burning a byproduct of the paper production process—the aforementioned black liquor—to produce energy. The tax break is worth as much as \$7 billion a year to the paper industry, but to the tax-writing committee it represents \$70 billion (\$7 billion times the 10-year budget window) worth of “pay-fors”: By closing the loophole, legislators can exploit the logic of PAYGO to finance \$70 billion in new tax breaks or spending initiatives.

A procedure that can be gamed this egregiously is not worth saving.

What’s the alternative to PAYGO? How about an honest debate over new spending and tax initiatives, or maybe an approach that forces Congress to confront the \$100 billion of annual increases in entitlement spending? That’s how the country somehow stumbled along until PAYGO made its first appearance in 1990.

This fake constraint is worse than useless. It allows Congress to pretend it’s being miserly with the budget when its members know perfectly well it’s a sham. It’s time the rest of us realize that as well.



Congress's soul? Nope—black liquor.

Ike Brannon, a senior fellow at the Bush Institute, is president of Capital Policy Analytics, a consulting firm in Washington.

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The Unraveling

How the Obama administration's story on Bowe Bergdahl and the Taliban fell apart

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

Late in the afternoon of Saturday, May 31, Barack Obama strode confidently to a lectern in the White House Rose Garden flanked by the parents of Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, a soldier who had gone missing from his platoon in the mountains of Afghanistan in June 2009.

"This morning I called Bob and Jani Bergdahl and told them that after nearly five years in captivity, their son, Bowe, is coming home," Obama said.

The president thanked service members who "recovered Sergeant Bergdahl and brought him safely out of harm's way." Obama also expressed gratitude to the diplomats who had handled the case, and he reported that his administration had "worked for several years to achieve this goal." The

president confirmed news reports from earlier in the day that Bergdahl had been freed as part of a prisoner exchange with the Afghan Taliban—a deal that was brokered by the government of Qatar. "As part of this effort, the United States government is transferring five detainees from the prison in Guantánamo Bay to Qatar," he announced.

The Bergdahls were understandably emotional about the news and in brief statements thanked their friends and their government for supporting them through the long ordeal.

It was, for Obama, a fleeting moment of triumph. For more than a year, the president had been buffeted by events that he could not—or would not—control. The disastrous debut of Obamacare, the continuing fallout from the Benghazi attacks, the consequences of intelligence disclosures by Edward Snowden, the unfolding human tragedy in Syria, the Russian power play in Ukraine, the scandal that has engulfed the Veterans

Administration—in one crisis after another, the man who once boldly declared his intent to be a transformative president had shown himself to be a reactive one.

But in the course of three days in late May, Obama sought to wrest control back by demonstrating progress on two of his longest-held goals: ending America's overseas wars and closing the prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. On May 28, in a commencement speech before cadets

graduating from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Obama declared that all combat troops would be out of Afghanistan by the end of 2016. And three days later, in announcing the transfer of five senior Taliban officials, all designated at "high risk" to return to battle, Obama demonstrated his determination to shutter the detainee facility.

The morning after Obama announced the prisoner exchange, top national security officials

from his administration fanned out on the Sunday talk shows. The job of explaining the president's decision fell to defense secretary Chuck Hagel and national security adviser Susan Rice.

The president, recognizing the "acute and urgent situation" of the missing soldier, had an obligation to "prioritize the health of Sgt. Bergdahl," Rice explained. "His life could have been at risk." Waiting was not an option.

Bergdahl was a hero, she suggested, "an American prisoner of war captured on the battlefield" who had served his country with "honor and distinction."

In an appearance on CNN's *State of the Union*, Rice explained that the five Taliban commanders would be transferred to Qatar, where "they will be carefully watched" and "their ability to move will be constrained."

Rice brushed off concerns that the United States had engaged in hostage negotiations with terrorists, emphasizing that the United States communicated indirectly with the Taliban through the Qataris. Hagel, for his part, was clear about the U.S. diplomatic partners on the exchange.



Bowe Bergdahl with a Taliban member pre-transfer

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“We didn’t negotiate with terrorists,” he insisted in an appearance on *Meet the Press*.

He downplayed the notion that the five Taliban commanders could present a threat to the United States, arguing that he wouldn’t sign off on any detainee transfer unless “our country can be assured that we can sufficiently mitigate any risk to America’s security.”

And then came the unraveling.

Many of Hagel’s and Rice’s key claims would be disputed quickly. Some would prove to be misleading, others simply false.

No risk to America’s security? Michael Leiter, the former head of the National Counterterrorism Center under Obama, said it was “very, very likely” that the five Taliban leaders would return to the fight. An intelligence official who briefed the Senate Intelligence Committee on Tuesday, Rob Williams, the national intelligence officer for South Asia, said that there is a high likelihood that at least four of the five freed prisoners, and possibly all of them, will rejoin the fight. Even Obama, after downplaying the threat, conceded that “absolutely” there was a chance they would take up arms against America.

Didn’t negotiate with terrorists? The United States engaged in “direct discussions with the Taliban in late 2011, early 2012,” a senior administration official acknowledged in a background briefing with reporters on May 31. The Taliban took possession of Bergdahl in Afghanistan, where the U.S. military can freely conduct operations, and quickly transferred him to the Haqqani network, a Taliban-associated group in Pakistan, where it cannot go. The Haqqani network held Bergdahl until shortly before his release. They were formally designated a terrorist group by the United States in September 2012. One of the early U.S. requests in the talks was a simple one: The Taliban had to renounce terrorism. They refused.

The freed Taliban figures will be carefully watched? A report by Reuters quoted a senior Gulf official on security provisions for the Taliban in Qatar as saying, “They can move freely within the country. Under the deal, they have to stay in Qatar for a year, and then they will be allowed to travel outside the country. . . . They can go back to Afghanistan if they want to.” Reuters further reported that the men “will not be treated as prisoners while in Doha and no U.S. officials will be involved in monitoring their movements while in the country.”

Bergdahl served with “honor and distinction”? “That’s not true,” Specialist Cody Full told *THE WEEKLY STANDARD*. “He was a deserter. There’s no question in the minds of anyone in our platoon.”

Bergdahl’s rapidly declining health required immediate intervention to save his life? In a video of the hand-over released by the Taliban, Bergdahl appeared gaunt but

walked without apparent difficulty to the waiting helicopter. Doctors at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany said he was having nutritional issues but listed him in “stable” condition. And, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, the video that generated the sense of urgency was filmed in December 2013, six months before the “emergency” prisoner exchange.

In the days following the announcement of the exchange, the public scrutiny of three aspects of the deal—Bergdahl’s disappearance, his health, and the threat posed by the release of the Guantánamo detainees—left Obama back where he started. His trip to Europe for a meeting of the G-7 was overshadowed by questions about the deal, and Obama found himself, once again, reacting to a crisis of his own making.

THE DISAPPEARANCE

Almost immediately after the Rose Garden ceremony, Bowe Bergdahl’s platoon mates began telling a story they’d been ordered to keep quiet. Bergdahl, they said, was a deserter. Specialist Full took to Twitter and in a long string of posts—interrupted only by short breaks for beer—provided his recollections of Bergdahl’s disappearance.

In a subsequent interview with *THE WEEKLY STANDARD*, Full was blunt. “He was not a hero. What he did was not honorable. He knowingly deserted and put thousands of people in danger because he did. We swore to an oath, and we upheld ours. He did not.”

Specialist Josh Cornelison shared that view. “He walked off—and ‘walked off’ is a nice way to put it,” said Cornelison, the medic in Bergdahl’s platoon. “He was accounted for late that afternoon. He very specifically planned to walk out in the middle of the night.”

In total, nine members of Bergdahl’s squad have accused him of walking out on his fellow soldiers. An AR 15-6 investigation conducted by the Army came to the same conclusion, though it stopped short of formally classifying Bergdahl as a deserter because such a label requires knowledge of intent, which the Army investigators lacked.

Speaking out about the circumstances of Bergdahl’s departure took some courage. At the time of his disappearance, the soldiers were instructed not to talk about Bergdahl, his departure, or his possible whereabouts. That much is routine—any public discussion of the hostage could threaten his life and the lives of the troops and intelligence officials working to rescue him. But these soldiers were also asked to sign nondisclosure agreements. That step, a former senior Pentagon official says, is “highly unusual.”

Bergdahl’s platoon mates’ concern for his well-being

quickly became a concern for their own. Within days of his disappearance, the U.S. military received intelligence reports that Bergdahl had deliberately sought out the Taliban. Evan Buetow, the platoon leader, told CNN's Jake Tapper that they'd gotten a report that Bergdahl was in Yahya Khel, a village less than two kilometers away, asking villagers for someone who spoke English and could lead him to the Taliban. "I heard it straight from the interpreter's lips as he heard it on the radio," Buetow said. "There's a lot more to this story than a soldier walking away."

The minute-by-minute military log of Bergdahl's disappearance and the subsequent rescue efforts was made public via WikiLeaks. And while that long, jargon-filled account includes reporting on Bergdahl's asking for an English speaker, it does not include the rather important detail that the missing soldier, traveling without his weapon, was seeking the enemy.

Still, other soldiers have backed up Buetow's version of events. And a *Washington Post* report on June 4 confirmed it. Villagers told the *Post*'s Kevin Sieff that Bergdahl was looking for the Taliban. Ibrahim Mankiel, the district intelligence chief, asked the obvious question: "Why would an American want to find the Taliban?"

While it's important in the current context to avoid jumping to conclusions about Bergdahl's motivations, those working to find him in rural Afghanistan—and trying to survive—didn't have that luxury. In short order, Bergdahl had gone from fellow soldier to deserter to potential collaborator with the enemy. Did Bergdahl share valuable information with the Taliban—either voluntarily or under duress? A retired U.S. Army captain who led troops in both Afghanistan and Iraq tells THE WEEKLY STANDARD that whatever the Army eventually finds out about Bergdahl's possible cooperation with the enemy, his squad mates had to assume the worst—particularly after learning that he'd gone looking for their enemy. This officer says he would have told any soldiers who saw Bergdahl in a village to assume they were walking into an ambush.

That kind of suspicion may have been warranted. "Over the next couple of months, all the attacks were definitely far more directed," Buetow told Tapper. "Before he left, we'd have IEDs go off virtually every day, but they were going off in front of the trucks . . . on the side of the road. Following Bergdahl's disappearance, IEDs started going off directly under the trucks. They were getting perfect hits

every time." Soldiers in the region chased bogus leads on Bergdahl's whereabouts that sometimes led to traps, well-orchestrated attempts to lure Bergdahl's would-be rescuers into situations where they would be vulnerable to attack.

The results of the initial investigation into Bergdahl's disappearance remain classified, and the administration has resisted congressional calls to make them public. When top Obama administration national security officials briefed senators on June 4, they expressed frustration with the public debate around Bergdahl's departure, telling lawmakers that his fellow soldiers were more nuanced in their initial interviews than in their recent comments.

Still, it seems clear that Bergdahl, who walked away from his unit in the middle of a war and whose departure greatly increased risks to his fellow soldiers, was not "captured on the battlefield" and did not serve with "honor and distinction," as Susan Rice had said. When Buetow was asked on Fox News what he thought when he heard Rice's claim, he said, "It upset me."

The Army has launched a second investigation into Bergdahl's departure. Shortly after he was transferred to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, counter-intelligence interrogators peppered Bergdahl with questions about his disappearance and his time in captivity. What he says in those interviews—and what he doesn't—will shape the investigation.

BERGDahl's HEALTH

Shortly after Bergdahl was handed over to the Americans on May 31, a helicopter whisked him to Bagram Air Base, and then he was flown to Germany. Doctors who evaluated him have provided few details, but they listed him in "stable condition and receiving treatment for conditions requiring hospitalization." The statement cited only "attention to diet and nutrition needs" in its description of his treatment.

A National Security Council official who briefed reporters just two hours after the exchange took place said of Bergdahl: "He's in good condition and able to walk."

Susan Rice offered a similar assessment on *This Week*. Bergdahl "is said to be walking and in good physical condition."

That must have been quite a surprise. In describing the urgency of the prisoner exchange, top Obama



A Blackhawk helicopter waits as Bergdahl is handed over.

administration officials including Rice and Hagel offered descriptions of Bergdahl that made him sound as though he were near death. “We had information that his health could be deteriorating rapidly,” Hagel said on *Meet the Press*. “There was a question about his safety.”

Obama administration officials frequently used Bergdahl’s health to explain why they had decided to ignore the requirement in the National Defense Authorization Act to give Congress 30 days’ notice before transferring detainees from Guantánamo. Hagel acknowledged that the administration hadn’t given so much as a heads-up to key members of Congress until the transfers were already taking place, despite regular assurances—in public and in private—that Congress would be consulted. The withering criticism was bipartisan.

“Our views were clearly translated,” said Senator Dianne Feinstein, the Democrat from California who chairs the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, at a press availability on June 3. “So it comes with some surprise and dismay that the transfers went ahead with no consultation, totally not following the law.”

The more heat the administration received for ignoring Congress, the more dire their descriptions of Bergdahl’s health became. In a press briefing on June 2, White House spokesman Jay Carney pointed to “the state of his health” as one of the key reasons the White House had ignored the requirements of the NDAA.

But members of Congress, including top Democrats, weren’t buying it. “He was undernourished, not necessarily malnourished,” Feinstein said, pointing to a recent intelligence assessment. “Unless something catastrophic happened, I think there was no reason to believe he was in instant danger. There certainly was time to pick up the phone and call.”

On June 4, the *Wall Street Journal* published a lengthy story, sourced heavily to Obama administration officials, reporting that Bergdahl’s health was the main reason for the urgency of the exchange. “Two secret videos showing rapid deterioration in Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl’s health persuaded reluctant military and intelligence leaders to back the prisoner swap that has stoked a backlash,” the story began. According to the *Journal*, the Qatari government provided a proof-of-life video to the U.S. government in January 2014. It had been shot the month before, in December 2013.

The story did not explain why a video from late last year generated sudden urgency—six months later. Was additional intelligence gathered more recently that suggested Bergdahl might die without immediate intervention? If so, the administration has not cited it.

The *Journal* story quoted Shawn Turner, the spokesman for director of national intelligence James Clapper,

explaining why his boss, previously skeptical of the prisoner exchange, now favored it: The intelligence community, Turner said, had “evidence that Sgt. Bergdahl’s health was failing and that he was in desperate need of medical attention.”

That same morning, the Taliban released a 17-minute propaganda video of the exchange. In the video, Bergdahl looks somewhat gaunt and confused, but otherwise healthy. He walks without assistance from a pickup truck to the U.S. forces who have come to retrieve him, and then on to the helicopter that will take him to Bagram.

A video isn’t enough to permit a medical diagnosis, of course, but there’s little question that images of Bergdahl were not consistent with the administration’s descriptions of him before his release. Neither are the things that top intelligence officials were telling lawmakers in closed briefings. When Clapper, the nation’s top intelligence official, answered questions on Capitol Hill Wednesday, he was asked directly if the United States had intelligence showing that Bergdahl’s health required immediate extraction. “The intel wouldn’t support that,” Clapper responded, according to sources familiar with his testimony.

By the evening of Wednesday, June 4, when the White House dispatched top national security officials to Capitol Hill to brief an all-Senate meeting, the administration was backing away from claims that Bergdahl’s health had required that the exchange take place when it did. Although the senators were shown the December proof-of-life video, administration briefers downplayed the urgent health issues that had been a key talking point over the previous several days. “It was a subtle, but a very real shift,” said one senator who attended the briefing. Instead, the briefers recast their argument, saying that they could not have told Congress because a leak about the negotiations could have killed the deal. That was the reason—not Bergdahl’s health—that Congress was not notified.

Sources say the briefers expressed bewilderment that people thought the administration had claimed Bergdahl’s health condition was so poor it threatened his life. “That fell flat,” said an official in the briefing. “Even Democrats weren’t buying it.”

Senator Joe Manchin, a Democrat from West Virginia, expressed skepticism. “His health was not the critical factor. . . . In that one video, you can tell he had been drugged . . . and he was in a different state five months ago.”

THE WEEKLY STANDARD asked Turner, the DNI spokesman, to explain the discrepancies. He said that the *Journal* article had not used his entire statement and suggested that the edited version was misleading. In a new statement late Wednesday, Turner said: “Sgt. Bergdahl’s suspected deteriorating health was one of a number of factors that contributed to the DNI’s decision. It was not

the only factor and certainly was not the determining factor. It was a data point—one of many.”

Subsequent requests for comment—about Clapper’s testimony and any fresh evidence that Bergdahl’s life had been in jeopardy—went unanswered.

If the administration was retiring the dangerously-poor-health talking point, someone forgot to tell the president and his secretary of defense.

Hagel, in an interview with the BBC that aired Thursday, went further: “It was our judgment based on the information that we had that his life, his health were in peril.”

Obama, one day after his top intelligence official rejected claims that Bergdahl’s health had made an emergency deal necessary, made the claim yet again. “We had a prisoner of war whose health had deteriorated and we were deeply concerned about it. And we saw an opportunity and we seized it.”

GUANTÁNAMO

The other side of that opportunity was the transfer of five senior

Taliban commanders from captivity in Guantánamo to relative freedom in Qatar. The Taliban had been seeking the release of these five officials—plus another who died in prison—for more than three years. The assessments of the men conducted by Joint Task Force Guantánamo (JTF-GTMO) found that each one presented a “high risk” of returning to the battle if he were released. Other detainees had been assessed as lesser threats, and some had even been cleared for release. Not these prisoners.

“All five of those guys are exceptionally dangerous,” says Paul Rester, the former lead interrogator at Joint Task Force Guantánamo. “These are men who ran entire regions for the Taliban, they had thousands of fighters under their command. They survived the Soviets, they survived the civil war, they survived us, they survived Sam Scott’s Gitmo chicken.”

Rester and his team were responsible for the threat assessments of the detainees. An experienced interrogator, Rester got his start during the Vietnam war and first interviewed mujahedeen in the 1980s when the United States saw them as allies against the Soviet Union. Rester interrogated many of those at Guantánamo and in some cases got to know them well. He and his team rewrote their assessments every year.

“Those assessments only tell the story of how they constitute a risk to us,” he says. “They don’t tell you how they are revered in the population. They can think rings around us in that environment.”

When Obama came to Washington, he made clear that one of the immediate goals of his presidency would be to close the facility at Guantánamo. So the president set up his own team, the Guantánamo Review Task Force, made up of lawyers, military officers, intelligence analysts, and diplomats, who would make recommendations to the president about how to handle individual prisoners.

JTF-GTMO’s job was to assess each detainee’s intent and ability to harm the United States, its interests, and its allies. Its assessments were done by men and women who were chiefly concerned with prosecuting a war. The Guantánamo Review Task Force’s mandate was different. It was established simultaneously with President Obama’s order to shut

ter the facility in one year. That deadline proved impractical, but the task force was formed for the purpose of closing Guantánamo. Clearly, the task force was willing to accept more risk in detainee transfers than JTF-GTMO. Indeed, the task force recommended that dozens of detainees who were deemed “high risk” by JTF-GTMO be transferred.

But even the Obama team recommended that 48 of the remaining Guantánamo detainees be held indefinitely. All five Taliban commanders that Obama released last week were in this group.

For Rester, that’s significant. “We had the best military analysts on the planet look at these guys and recommend against transfer,” he says. “And then Obama’s team—this administration’s most knowledgeable, courageous, and liberal legal minds came to the same conclusion. They could not bring themselves to recommend these guys for transfer or release.”

Many of the intelligence officials who have worked on Guantánamo agree with them. In a hearing on June 4, Clapper was asked to assess the likelihood that these individuals would return to the fight on a scale of 1 to 10. Clapper gave one of the men an 8 and the other four a 9.

But Obama and his team are telling the public a different story. “I will not sign off on any detainee coming out of Guantánamo unless I am assured . . . that we can sufficiently mitigate any risk to American security,” said Hagel on *Meet the Press*.

Those risks are not mitigated. They’re enhanced.

“Unless the goal is to increase the combat power of the enemy, they should have remained under U.S. government control,” says one former intelligence official who worked on Guantánamo issues. “Those five in particular should have remained at Guantánamo at least until the last U.S. military person [in Afghanistan] has been withdrawn.” ♦



Bergdahl in a 2010 video released by the Taliban



DAVE MALAN

Climate Cultists

Has the desperate global warming crusade reached its Waterloo?

BY STEVEN F. HAYWARD

The climate change crusaders, who have been at it for a quarter-century, appear to be going clinically mad. Start with the rhetorical monotony and worship of authority (“97 percent of all scientists agree!”), add the Salem witch trial-style intimidation and persecution of dissenters, and the categorical demand that debate about science or policy is *over* because the matter is *settled*, and you have the profile of a cult-like sectarianism that has descended into paranoia and reflexive bullying. Never mind the scattered and not fully suppressed findings of climate scientists that the narrative of catastrophic global warming is overstated, like nearly every previous predicted environmental apocalypse. It matters not. The recent crescendo of scary government climate reports and dutiful media alarm has paved the way for the Obama administration to throw its weight around in ways that would make Woodrow Wilson blush.

Making sense of this tiresome issue requires stepping back for the long view. If you strip away all of the noise from smaller scientific controversies that clutter the debate—arctic ice, extreme weather events, droughts, and so forth—the central issue is *climate sensitivity*: How much will average global temperature increase from adding a given level of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere? The most recent “official” estimate of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), given a doubling of greenhouse gases, is a planet 1.1 to 4.8 degrees Celsius warmer a century from now. On the low end of this range—up to as much as 2 degrees—warming would be no big deal, and possibly a net benefit. Warming on the high end of this range would present significant problems, requiring a number of responses. Narrowing the range of outcomes is therefore the most pressing climate science question. Everything else is a sideshow.

It may well be that it can't be done. Right now the IPCC can't settle on a best-guess estimate within the 1.1-4.8 degree range, though a number of scenarios for the year 2100 cluster around 2 degrees of warming. This is nearly the same

range and best guess as the previous four reports of the IPCC stretching back to 1990. More astonishing, this range differs little from that proposed by Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius in 1896. It was Arrhenius, winner of the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1903, who first supplied the basic equation that forms the basis for modern climate models. Working without a computer, he estimated a range of climate sensitivity from a doubling of greenhouse gases of 1.6 to about 5 degrees Celsius, with a best guess of about 2.1 degrees.

In other words, despite billions spent on climate research and the development of enormously complex computer models, we are no closer to predictive precision than we were 110 years ago. The computer models are still too crude and limited, especially about the crucial question of water vapor “feedbacks” (clouds in ordinary language), to spit out the answers we're looking for. We can fiddle with the models all we want, and perhaps end up with one that might produce a correct prediction, but we can never be sure so long as our understanding of water vapor behavior remains sketchy.

While climate skeptics are denounced for mentioning “uncertainty,” the terms “uncertain” and “uncertainty” appear 173 times, while “error” and “errors” appear 192 times, in the 218-page chapter on climate models in the latest IPCC report released last September. As the IPCC admits, “there remain significant errors in the model simulation of clouds. It is very likely that these errors contribute significantly to the uncertainties in estimates of cloud feedbacks and consequently in the climate change projections.” The IPCC's latest report rates the confidence of our understanding of clouds and aerosols as “low,” and allows that it is possible that clouds could cancel out most of the warming effect of greenhouse gases. If anything, our uncertainty about future climate change has *increased* with each new IPCC report.

The IPCC modeling chapter, which virtually no reporter reads, is also candid in admitting that most of the models have overpredicted recent warming. The 17-years-and-counting plateau in global average temperature, following two decades of a nearly 0.4 degree increase in temperature that boosted the warming narrative for a time, is the biggest embarrassment for a supposed scientific “consensus” since Piltown Man. The basic theory says we're supposed to continue warming at about 0.2 degrees Celsius per decade, but since the late 1990s we've stopped. In one of the infamous

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emails revealed in the East Anglia “climategate” scandal of 2009, Kevin Trenberth, a prominent climate scientist, called it a “travesty” that scientists couldn’t give a good reason for the pause. They’ve been scrambling ever since, offering a variety of explanations, but none of them can minimize the fact that nearly all of the models failed to predict a “pause” of this length, and if the “pause” continues for another 5 to 10 years, all of the models will be falsified.

Where is the missing heat? The climateers are certain it is going into the deep ocean, and while this is a plausible theory, we have very little data to substantiate the hypothesis, and still less understanding of how this might play out in the future if it is happening. If the El Niño (warmer than average surface temperatures in the Pacific) predicted for this coming year is as big as some current data suggest, we may well see a global temperature spike commensurate with the El Niño-related spike of 1998. The specific effects of high El Niño years are hard to predict, but if there is an El Niño-related spike next year, you can be sure the climate campaigners will loudly proclaim that “the pause is over!” But this would obfuscate rather than clarify the reasons for the pause. Other explanations for the pause include western Pacific wind patterns, aerosols, and solar variation. (This last explanation is ironic, since the climateers have been adamant up to now that solar variation plays very little role in climate change.) Some or all of these may be factors, but the difficulty the climate community is having provides reason to doubt their grasp of a matter we are consistently assured is “settled.”

The temperature plateau and the persistent limitations and errors of the computer models strongly suggest the kind of “anomalies” that Thomas Kuhn famously explained should constitute a crisis for dominant scientific theories. What’s more, several papers recently published in the peer-reviewed literature conclude climate sensitivity is much lower than previously thought, making the problem of climate change much less likely to be catastrophic and more likely to be easily managed. But with the notable exceptions of the *Economist* and straight-shooting *New York Times* science blogger Andrew Revkin, these heterodox findings, which have steadily eroded the catastrophic climate change narrative, have received almost no media attention.

Despite all this, there has been not even the hint of a second thought from the climateers, nor any reflection that their opinions or strategies could bear some modification. The environmental community is so deeply invested in looming catastrophe that it’s difficult to envision a

scientific result that would alter their cult-like bearing. Rather than reflect, they deflect, blaming the Koch brothers, the fossil fuel industry, and Republican “climate deniers” for their lack of political progress. Yet organized opposition to climate change fanaticism is tiny compared with the swollen staffs and huge marketing budgets of the major environmental organizations, not to mention the government agencies around the world that have thrown in with them on the issue. The main energy trade associations seldom speak up about climate science controversies. The major conservative think tanks have no climate change programs to speak of. The Cato Institute devotes just two people to the issue. The main opposition to climate fanaticism is confined to the Heartland Institute,

the London-based Global Warming Policy Foundation, the Competitive Enterprise Institute, and a scattering of relentless bloggers who have acquired surprisingly large readerships. That’s it. These are boutique operations next to the environmental establishment: The total budgets for all of these efforts would probably not add up to a month’s spending by just the Sierra Club. And yet we are to believe that this comparatively small effort has kept the climate change agenda at bay. It certainly keeps climateers in an uproar.

Instead of confronting the fact that their cause has foundered mostly of its own dead weight, the climate campaigners have steadily ratcheted up their bad-faith arguments and grasping authoritarianism.

Instead of confronting the fact that their cause has foundered mostly of its own dead weight—and the sheer fantasy of proposals for near-term replacement of hydrocarbon energy—the climate campaigners have steadily ratcheted up their bad-faith arguments and grasping authoritarianism. The result is a catalogue of exaggerated claims and appalling clichés, the most egregious being the refrain that “97 percent of scientists ‘believe in’ climate change.” This dubious talking point elides seamlessly into the implication that scientists should strive for unanimity and link arms in full support of the environmentalists’ carbon-suppression agenda.

Where did this 97 percent figure come from? When you explore the lineage of this cliché, it appears about as convincing as a North Korean election. Most footnotes point to a paper published last year by Prof. John Cook of the University of Queensland, which purported to have reviewed the abstracts of over 11,000 climate science articles. But the abstract of Cook’s paper actually refutes the talking point:

We find that 66.4% of abstracts expressed no position on AGW [anthropogenic global warming], 32.6% endorsed AGW, 0.7% rejected AGW and 0.3% were uncertain about the cause of global warming. Among abstracts expressing a position on AGW, 97.1% endorsed the consensus position that humans are causing global warming. In a second phase of this study, we invited authors to rate their own papers. Compared to abstract ratings, a smaller percentage of self-rated papers expressed no position on AGW (35.5%). Among self-rated papers expressing a position on AGW, 97.2% endorsed the consensus. [Emphasis added.]

In other words, two-thirds of the articles expressed *no opinion* about the human causation of climate change, while the one-third that did were twisted by Cook into a simpleminded tautology: Among all the scientists who agree with the “consensus” are all of the scientists who agree with the consensus. Cook, incidentally, refused to share how he and his graduate students coded the 11,000 abstracts, which is reminiscent of the East Anglia cabal and their withholding of tree ring data. But as with the East Anglia group, someone at the University of Queensland left the data on the Internet, where blogger Brandon Shollenberger came across it and starting noting its weaknesses. The predictable happened: The University of Queensland claimed that the data had been hacked, and sent Shollenberger a cease-and-desist letter. Nothing bespeaks confidence and transparency like the threat of lawsuits.

The only real surprise about Cook’s conclusion is that the number wasn’t 100 percent, since a human role in climate change is acknowledged by every single prominent climate skeptic including Pat Michaels, Roy Spencer, John Christy, Freeman Dyson, Judith Curry, and Richard Lindzen. Studies like Cook’s seek to establish something that virtually no one is arguing. The real argument is over *how much* future warming is reasonable to expect. Lindzen, Michaels, and others think that we’ve seen most of the temperature increase we’re likely to see, even with further increases in greenhouse gas levels.

The climate establishment refuses to argue the matter. Instead, it has stepped up its vilification and intimidation of any scientist who expresses the slightest deviation from their increasingly narrow orthodoxy. Nate Silver, the celebrated wunderkind who left the *New York Times* to found *FiveThirtyEight*, summoned forth the full fury of the climateers when he enlisted Roger Pielke Jr. of the University of Colorado to write about climate change and natural disasters. Pielke is no climate skeptic, but he is scrupulous about the data and rightly annoyed when the climate

establishment exaggerates data on extreme weather disasters like hurricanes for political purposes.

But Pielke’s treatment (*FiveThirtyEight* commissioned a rebuttal to his article) was mild compared with that of Lennart Bengtsson, a prominent Swedish meteorologist with a long record in climate science circles. Despite being a fixture of the climate establishment, including serving as director of Germany’s prestigious Max Planck Institute for Meteorology, Bengtsson has always been cautious and warned against “oversimplification” and politicization of climate change. As far back as 1990 Bengtsson astutely noted:

In case of the greenhouse effect there is an interaction between media, politics and science. Every group pushes the other groups. Science is under pressure because everyone wants our advice. However, we cannot give the impression that a catastrophe is imminent. The greenhouse effect is a problem that is here to stay for hundreds of years. Climate experts should have the courage to state that we are not yet sure. What is wrong with making that statement clear and loudly?

Last year he wrote online:

In the very emotional climate debate today is it hardly possible to have a sensible and balanced exchange of views. If you do not support climate catastrophes . . . you are placed into a deniers box and accused to support the interest of the oil industry or alternatively that you are a man in a senior age and therefore unable to understand the concerns of the younger generations. Some of our colleagues are exposed to a powerful group pressure or that of a politically correct boss. The real genuine interest in climate and climate processes is fading away.

That much dissent might have been tolerated, but when Bengtsson agreed early last month to join the academic advisory board of the Global Warming Policy Foundation (GWPF), it was a step too far. His affiliation lasted barely a week. The news of his joining the GWPF generated a firestorm of attacks. Bengtsson wrote on May 14 to GWPF chairman David Henderson to withdraw his affiliation:

I have been put under such an enormous group pressure in recent days from all over the world that has become virtually unbearable to me. If this is going to continue I will be unable to conduct my normal work and will even start to worry about my health and safety. I see therefore no other way out therefore than resigning from GWPF. I had not expecting such an enormous world-wide pressure put at me from a community that I have been close to all my active life. Colleagues are withdrawing their support, other colleagues are withdrawing from joint authorship etc.

I see no limit and end to what will happen. It is a situation that reminds me about the time of McCarthy. I would



Lennart Bengtsson

never have expecting anything similar in such an original peaceful community as meteorology. Apparently it has been transformed in recent years.

In response to a query about the pressure campaign, Bengtsson declined to offer more detail, emailing only that “the field of climate change has been politically distorted to a degree that I was not aware of. I very much regret this, as I am afraid that this is harming the scientific independence of climate research and perhaps for science in general.”

It is clear that the climate establishment has become as narrowly intolerant as any department of gender studies on a college campus, and for much the same reason. The frenetic publicity campaigns of recent months—the hyped reports of imminent climate catastrophe and the serial exaggerations of the prognosis of the West Antarctic ice sheet, polar bear numbers, extreme weather events, and so forth—were designed to provide unstoppable momentum behind the Obama administration’s remarkable assertion of executive power unveiled on June 2: regulations aimed at putting coal-fired electricity in the course of ultimate extinction in the United States.

Using the authority of the Clean Air Act improvidently granted by the Supreme Court in 2007, the EPA is proposing a 30 percent cut in carbon dioxide emissions from power plants by the year 2030. But the proposal masks a lot of mischief. In a remarkable scheme of indirect regulation, the EPA doesn’t plan to restrict emissions from any individual coal plant, because such an approach might be open to a legal challenge. In fact, EPA administrator Gina McCarthy went out of her way to emphasize that coal-fired power would still constitute a major source of energy in 2030. States are promised “flexibility,” which could include setting up their own cap and trade system or joining an existing regime, such as the northeast’s Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative or California’s cap and trade program.

The EPA has taken great care to construct a complicated scheme that provides plausible deniability that they are targeting coal, even though everyone knows that is the object of the exercise. The centerpiece of the scheme is a different carbon-intensity standard for each state based on its current energy profile. In this way, coal-dependent states such as Indiana and Ohio, both of which get more than 80 percent of their electricity from coal, don’t appear to be disproportionately hit. The EPA’s “flexibility” consists of leaving states and electric utilities with a “menu” of options to reach the targets, such as higher plant efficiency, conservation, and more renewable power. But the EPA strategy will constrict the economic prospects of coal-fired power such that utilities will simply shut down coal plants on their own. And if states like Indiana and Ohio calculate that the easiest way

to reach their targets is to buy emissions credits from other states through a cap and trade scheme, it will amount to a wealth transfer mostly from red states to the blue states that have gone whole hog for renewable energy subsidies.

What will it all cost? The U.S. Chamber of Commerce puts the price tag at more than \$50 billion a year, while the EPA and environmentalists preposterously claim the scheme will actually reduce energy costs for consumers, even though they can’t point to a single state where their vaunted renewables have reduced energy costs. To the contrary, most states with aggressive renewable energy plans have higher than average electricity rates. One half-expected Gina McCarthy to say on June 2, “If you like your utility rates, you can keep your utility rates.” But the truth is, it will be very expensive. As Obama himself admitted in a rare moment of candor to the *San Francisco Chronicle* in early 2008, “Under my plan of a cap and trade system, electricity rates would necessarily skyrocket. Coal-powered plants . . . would have to retrofit their operations. That will cost money. They will pass that money on to consumers.”

The EPA’s is a clever and devious approach, and once again it is necessary to step back and take the wide view. Back when a cap and trade bill was pending before Congress in 2009 and 2010, the EPA and environmental organizations all said that cap and trade was by far preferable to trying to regulate greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act, which was designed for very different kinds of conventional air pollution problems. The Clean Air Act was too slow and cumbersome, it was said, to use for climate change. In retrospect, this appears to have been a “please don’t throw me into that briar patch” argument. The ambitious and complicated EPA rule announced last week essentially establishes the EPA as the master-regulator of the electricity sector of the entire nation, and it clearly intends to use its newly asserted power. One of the EPA’s fact sheets says it expects “extensive and very rapid changes in the structure of the power sector.” In practice, state public utility commissions will now be under the detailed supervision of the EPA, and the case-by-case “flexibility” the EPA stresses today will become the arbitrary dictates of tomorrow.

This overriding fact can be deduced from two aspects of the 645-page rule that largely escaped media notice. First, the rule chooses 2005 as the baseline year from which to reduce emissions 30 percent. But power sector emissions are already more than 10 percent below 2005 levels, the result chiefly of the recession of the last half-decade and the emergence of cheap natural gas-fired power that has displaced some coal plants purely for market reasons. In other words, the 30 percent target is less than meets the eye. Why are environmentalists so giddy

over the EPA's slow and indirect strategy, which is modest compared with the emissions cut they say is necessary (their cherished 2009 Waxman-Markey cap and trade bill, killed in the Senate, had an 80 percent target)?

This puzzle deepens when a second odd aspect of the EPA proposal is brought to light. The EPA touts enormous health benefits from its emissions targets, all of them from reducing conventional air pollution such as ozone smog and fine particles. But there is one benefit conspicuously missing: *There is no claim that the regulations will affect climate change.* If anyone bothers to run full compliance with the new regulations through one of the computer climate models, the temperature difference in the year 2100 would be perhaps .02 degrees Celsius. It would be novel if a reporter had the wit to ask the White House how much warming will be prevented in the year 2100 by the full implementation of the new EPA policy, and then sit back and enjoy the tap dancing.

Anyone who seriously thinks climate change is an imminent crisis threatening humanity will scoff at the EPA's proposed policy, but there has been barely a peep from the climate establishment. Al Gore gave away the game when he used the term "symbolic" to describe the EPA proposal. But the environmental movement is nothing if not persistent and patient. Environmentalists surely hope that once the EPA's authority is firmly established and the regulations are up and running, a 30 percent reduction can be ratcheted up to 50 percent, then 75 percent, and so forth, reaching 100 percent at some point—all on the authority of the EPA alone. Congress can be completely bypassed. (By the way, the natural gas sector shouldn't celebrate that the EPA scheme will increase demand for gas-fired electricity because they will be next on the EPA chopping block.) But although this would be a devastating blow to the U.S. economy, it still won't make much difference to the planet's prospects according to climate orthodoxy, unless the rest of the world achieves a similar reduction.

Given that Congress would never approve such a regulatory scheme were it proposed as legislation, has the Obama administration finally gone too far with its aggressive assertion of unilateral executive power? Could this step prove to be the Waterloo of the climate campaign? Coming on top of the commandeering of the states by Obamacare, this energy plan is likely to excite serious blowback from states. Demanding that the EPA's plan be put to a vote of Congress might be a shrewd campaign

theme in states with close House and Senate races this fall.

After all the sound and fury of the last few months, where does the issue of climate change stand? The cruel irony for the climateers is that the more they hype the apocalypse of future climate change, the more farcically inadequate are their proposed remedies. Global primary energy demand is going to double over the next generation, and there is no one who thinks hydrocarbons—especially coal—aren't going to play a large role in providing this energy, especially in developing nations. While the EPA tries to shut down most or all of our more than 500 remaining coal plants, there are currently more than 1,000 coal plants under construction elsewhere in the world. If catastrophic climate change is somewhere in our future, the only serious remedy is to

deploy new sources of affordable and abundant non- or low-carbon energy. The EPA plan does little in service of a serious energy transition; to the contrary, to the extent that it props up the inferior current renewable technologies such as wind, solar, and biomass, it will retard serious efforts to develop breakthrough energy sources.

The real "deniers" today are the climateers who refuse to consider that their case for catastrophe has weakened even as they promote unserious solutions that do little or nothing to stimulate the genuine energy

transition they say they want. Their default position continues to be simpleminded exaggeration or distortion of every possible angle for political gain.

The best opinion polls from Pew and Gallup show that the public doesn't buy it and is suffering from a case of "apocalypse fatigue." The rank politicization of the issue and the relentless demonization of any critics within the scientific community are a catastrophe for science and debilitating for serious deliberation about policy. But the left is so far gone into climate madness, and the Democratic party so beholden to its green faction, that they are likely to persist in their inordinate fear of the Keystone pipeline, natural gas fracking, and the extraordinary revival of American oil production, all of which, in a relatively unmolested market, would tend to displace coal. Absent an unusual level of political resolve from Congress, the climate campaign may yet succeed in hobbling the electric power sector in America. That would be a high price to pay for indulging a fanatical movement that in every other respect must be reckoned a pernicious failure. ♦

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce puts the price tag of the EPA's recent proposal—a 30 percent cut in carbon dioxide emissions from power plants by the year 2030—at more than \$50 billion a year, while the EPA and environmentalists preposterously claim the scheme will actually reduce costs for consumers.

Dangerous Unity

*The perils of the Palestinian Authority's
new Fatah-Hamas government*

BY ELLIOTT ABRAMS

The creation of a new Palestinian “national unity” government has raised a slew of questions in the United States. What should our policy be toward a government that has the support not only of the Fatah party but of the terrorist group Hamas as well? Should all aid to the Palestinians be suspended?

The new government, in the words of the *New York Times*, “led by Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah, a linguist and former university president who has held the top post in the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority for the past year, is made up largely of lawyers, businessmen and academics who are not formally tied to either Fatah or Hamas.” The lack of such formal ties separates the current situation from the one the Bush administration faced in 2006, when Hamas won parliamentary elections.

Hamas was then in power, with the ability to use its parliamentary majority to pass legislation and control the ministries. Today, the parliament does not meet, and power resides with Palestinian Authority (PA) president Mahmoud Abbas and with the cabinet just formed. In 2006, U.S. government lawyers made it clear immediately that aid had to be cut off from any part of the Palestinian government that was controlled by parliament. Aid could flow to parts that reported to the president, who was independently elected, and it did: to the office of the president, the security forces the president controlled, and other independent

parts of the Palestinian government such as elected mayors.

The situation today is not yet clear, but it appears that Hamas, as a party and terrorist group, will not control any parts of the Palestinian Authority in this new “technocratic” government. That should mean that aid projects—for example, work on sewage or water systems or schools or hospitals—can continue. If it appears that a particular minister actually takes orders from Hamas, that ministry should be cut off. Security assistance should be continued, for it benefits Israelis as much as Palestinians—as long as

the recent levels of security cooperation between the PA forces and Israel continue. The greatest immediate risk is that the security forces in the West Bank, which have been vigilant and active against Hamas and other terrorist groups, might now dial down their activity in order to avoid confrontations. That would allow Hamas to gain ground in the West Bank and is the most serious danger from the unity deal. American

officials should be warning the PA against this now and threatening aid cutoffs if such a trend appears.

But much of the aid the United States gives to the PA is cash—and that money should not be delivered until the situation is much better understood than it is today. Who will run what? What will Hamas’s influence be? How much freedom will it have to agitate, organize, and conduct acts of terror? Until we know more, handing over large amounts of cash—\$200 million this year—would be foolish.

But to focus on aid deliveries at all is to overlook the tougher and more consequential question just down the road: Palestinian elections. The whole purpose of the new government, which is meant to be temporary, is to organize new elections. On June 2, Abbas announced that



Rami Hamdallah, right, is sworn in as prime minister before President Mahmoud Abbas and a new cabinet.

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“the government’s task is to facilitate the issue of elections, which will take place within six months as agreed [between Fatah and Hamas].” In other words, new elections this year. Abbas has many times in the past announced new elections that never took place, but he may actually be serious this time: He is 79 and seems desirous of retiring.

The last parliamentary elections were held in 2006, and there was a major dispute about whether Hamas should be allowed to run. Abbas then argued strongly and successfully (in that he persuaded Washington to back off) that an election without Hamas would be illegitimate: He would be barring his only real opponent, in the manner of all Arab dictators. We in the Bush administration made the wrong call and sided with Abbas, over Israeli objections. As Condoleezza Rice wrote in her memoirs, “In retrospect, we should have insisted that every party disarm as a condition for participating in the vote.” She was right, for several reasons.

For one thing, the Oslo peace accords clearly and intentionally barred terrorist groups like Hamas from participating in elections until they disarmed. Yossi Beilin, the leftist Israeli politician who had been one of the participants in Oslo, said at the time, “There can be no doubt that participation by Hamas in elections held in the Palestinian Authority in January 2006 is a gross violation of the Israeli-Palestinian interim agreement. . . . That this military organization, appearing as a political party, is allowed to abuse democracy is a prize for terror and violence.” And this was not simply a matter of principle and of fealty to Oslo: Beilin and others on the left feared that if Hamas and other terrorist groups found a place in the PA political system, all hopes of future peace negotiations were gone. As Beilin put it, “Hamas’s entrance into PA institutions is liable to cast a veto on future peace moves, without eliminating the option of violence.”

Moreover, the Palestinian case is not unique: There have been, are, and will be other cases in which an armed terrorist group seeks a political role. Such groups always have an advantage when they wield bullets as well as ballots. Hezbollah is an example: Its political weight in Lebanon is vastly greater than its share of the votes because it can (and does) also threaten and kill opponents. To legitimize Hamas’s role is to strike at the principle that competition in a fair election and in democratic politics must be peaceful. In fact, Hamas appears to be adopting the Hezbollah model, transplanting it from Lebanon to Palestine, as Ehud Yaari of the Washington Institute perfectly described it: “integrating into the general political system while retaining independent, well-equipped armed forces.”

In 2005 and 2006 the Bush administration tried to finesse this issue by arguing that an armed group could participate in elections as a step toward eventual

disarmament. There had to be an expectation that they would lay down their weapons at some point. Rice tried to explain this view in 2005, before the PA election, in a Q&A session at Princeton:

There are periods of time of transition in which one has to give some space to the participants, in this case the Palestinians, to begin to come to a new national compact. But I cannot imagine, in the final analysis, a new national compact that leaves an armed resistance group within the political space. You cannot simultaneously keep an option open on politics and an option on violence. There simply isn’t a case that I can think of internationally where that’s been permitted to happen. . . . It is absolutely the case that you cannot have armed groups ultimately participating in politics with no expectation that they’re going to disarm.

The then-secretary general of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, said something similar prior to the election:

The Palestinian Authority leadership has condemned violence and has sought to encourage Palestinian groups who have engaged in terrorism to abandon this course and engage in the democratic process. Ultimately, those who want to be part of the political process should not engage in armed group or militia activities, for there is a fundamental contradiction between such activities and the building of a democratic state.

But “ultimately”—the key word in Rice’s statement and Annan’s—can be a very long time. I suppose Hamas would be willing to agree it will disarm “ultimately”—when the Zionist enemy is vanquished, for example.

There is another reason particular to Hamas for excluding it from the elections and the political system until it disarms: the very nature of this terrorist group. It is worth recalling not only the terrorism Hamas practices but just what Hamas stands for, in the words of its charter, adopted in 1988. Genocidal anti-Semitism and the elimination of the State of Israel are themes that permeate the document.

The Hamas has been looking forward to implement Allah’s promise whatever time it might take. The prophet, prayer and peace be upon him, said: The time will not come until Muslims will fight the Jews (and kill them); until the Jews hide behind rocks and trees, which will cry: O Muslim! there is a Jew hiding behind me, come on and kill him!

The Islamic Resistance Movement believes that the land of Palestine has been an Islamic Waqf throughout the generations and until the Day of Resurrection, no one can renounce it or part of it, or abandon it or part of it.

Initiatives, and so-called peaceful solutions and international conferences, are in contradiction to the principles of the Islamic Resistance Movement.

There is no solution to the Palestinian problem except by Jihad.

The enemies have been scheming for a long time. . . . They stood behind the French and the Communist Revolutions. . . . They also used the money to establish clandestine organizations which are spreading around the world, in order to destroy societies and carry out Zionist interests.

Such organizations are: the Freemasons, Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, B'nai B'rith and the like. . . . They obtained the Balfour Declaration and established the League of Nations in order to rule the world by means of that organization. They also stood behind World War II, where they collected immense benefits from trading with war materials and prepared for the establishment of their state. They inspired the establishment of the United Nations and the Security Council to replace the League of Nations, in order to rule the world by their intermediary.

Their scheme has been laid out in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.

Not a word of this charter has been changed, nor has any part of it been renounced by Hamas leadership. In 2006, after it won the elections, Hamas was urged by the Russians and by EU diplomats to bend toward some recognition of the three “Quartet Principles”: recognize Israel’s right to exist, agree to abide by all previous Palestinian agreements with Israel, and agree to renounce violence. The unity of the Middle East Quartet (the United States, the EU, Russia, and the U.N.) on how to deal with the new Hamas-led government would have been destroyed instantly had they done so. The organization simply refused. Why? Because Hamas is neither a political party nor even a national liberation movement; it is a religious movement permeated by anti-Semitism not even disguised as anti-Zionism, opposed entirely to the existence of the State of Israel, and convinced that in its struggle terrorism is a legitimate weapon. There is no “moderate strain” in Hamas arguing that terrorism is morally wrong, and nothing that Hamas leaders are saying now—with the election and possible participation in a Palestinian government before them—suggests one iota of change in the organization’s core beliefs.

The time for the United States to state its position, and to correct the error made in 2006, is right now. American law seems clear, but the Obama administration often enough ignores inconvenient laws, so it should make its own views known: Hamas should not be permitted to participate in the elections unless and until it renounces terrorism and begins to give up its weapons—not “ultimately” but now. The participation of Hamas in the Palestinian political system cannot be a move toward peace, because Hamas does not believe in

peace or seek it. It cannot be easier to negotiate a peace agreement with Israel if on the Palestinian side one of the key factions in parliament and in the government is a terrorist group dedicated to Israel’s extinction. The notion that pulling Hamas into the political system will somehow moderate it and its beliefs and practices is given the lie by experience in Gaza, where Hamas has ruled since 2007. The need to pick up the garbage and worry about employment has in these seven years had zero impact on the group’s extremism. Similarly, participation in the Lebanese parliament for years has not moderated Hezbollah’s views or reduced its terrorist operations.

The Northern Ireland experience should teach the same lesson. The disarmament of the IRA was always a key goal; that goal was stated in the Belfast Agreement of 1998; the IRA agreed on a method of “decommissioning” its arsenal in 2001; and although the process took the better part of a decade to complete, it achieved its goal. There was no thought of a political process or peace agreement leading to power sharing that did not achieve the disarmament of terrorist groups. So it should be for the Palestinians.

Given the complete lack of reform of the Fatah party (and the increase in corruption since former prime minister Salam Fayyad was forced out last year), it is reasonable to think Hamas will make a decent showing in any elections that take place this year. In 2006 pollsters and all sorts of experts assured the United States that Hamas could not possibly win. The actual result in the popular vote was 44 percent for Hamas and 41 percent for Fatah. Perhaps Hamas’s misrule of Gaza has made it less popular now, but assuming that it does not gain a majority, it will certainly gain some representation in the Palestinian parliament. Equally bad, indeed perhaps even worse, the new Palestinian deal will give Hamas a role in the PLO for the first time—and the PLO is viewed by the U.N. and most of its members as the “sole legitimate voice of the Palestinian people.” It is the PLO that is charged with negotiations with Israel, and Hamas has been trying to get into it, and ultimately take it over, for decades.

In 2006, we in the Bush administration thought we had made our view clear by election day: Hamas would be allowed to field candidates but not to participate in the government unless it complied with the Quartet Principles and began to disarm. When Hamas won, however,



Armed Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip, May 29, 2014

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our refusal to deal with it and with the new Palestinian government was seen as hypocritical: “You say you’re for democracy, but when the wrong guys win you won’t deal with them.” So the time to make the American view clear is now, not on election eve or after the results are in.

The Obama administration should flatly state that we oppose Hamas participation in elections unless Hamas makes a clear commitment to the three Quartet Principles and to disarmament. We should add that if Hamas is allowed to participate in the election, we will not press Israel to permit Palestinian voters living in Jerusalem to participate in it (something Prime Minister Netanyahu has said Israel will not permit). We should state now that if Hamas wins seats, American officials will not meet with Hamas members of parliament or ministers, because they are representatives of a terrorist group; we will not give any aid to any ministry under Hamas control or influence (for example, with a Hamas deputy minister); we will not assist any Palestinian security force unless it is not only beyond Hamas control or influence, but also actively fighting terrorism. We will not press Israel to negotiate a peace agreement with a half-terrorist Palestinian government or make concessions to it. We will give no budget support to the PA if Hamas is a part of its governing structures.

There may be no Palestinian elections this year; Hamas and Fatah may go back to shooting at each other, and not just verbally. But the voting may come off. As noted, Abbas seems ready to retire (and according to widespread rumors, will not have to live on his official pension). And Hamas is now feeling considerable pressure from the Egyptian Army, which treats Hamas like an enemy and has largely closed the smuggling tunnels that helped Hamas keep Gaza’s economy afloat. So both Fatah and Hamas may conclude that now is the time to take a risk and go to the polls.

But the risks are not just in who wins what seats. For the United States, the participation of Hamas in the elections risks destroying any hope of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and any hope of movement toward peace or even toward a more beneficial and secure accommodation on the ground between Israelis and Palestinians. It risks legitimizing the vicious anti-Semitism and the terrorism that lie at the core of Hamas as an organization. And it risks teaching the broader lesson that terrorist groups can fight for power with both guns and ballots—and with American approval. The mistake the United States made in 2006 should not be repeated, and the moment for the Obama administration to say this is right now. ♦

Welcoming Small Businesses to Washington

By Thomas J. Donohue

President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

When the U.S. Chamber of Commerce held its first small business summit 10 years ago, we knew that entrepreneurs and small companies all over the country were already making huge contributions to their local economies by creating jobs, driving growth, and extending opportunities to others.

But we believed that by coming to Washington, small businesses could not only amplify their voices in the nation’s capital but also return to their communities with new resources and fresh energy to make an even more significant impact. And so the summit was born.

Ten years later, America’s Small Business Summit, the Chamber’s signature event, is bigger than ever, drawing more than 700 employers and entrepreneurs from 39 states and the District of Columbia. This year participants will hear from nationally recognized leaders, network with peers, and

draw inspiration from the achievements of other small businesses through the DREAM BIG Small Business of the Year Award program. They will also have the opportunity to lend their voices to the debate and advocate for the issues that are important to them and their businesses by meeting with their representatives on Capitol Hill. When small businesses speak, our leaders listen.

The voices—and contributions—of America’s small businesses are needed more than ever. Small business is the engine of America’s economy. We’ve got to fire it up and accelerate growth. If small businesses across America are given the freedom, flexibility, and certainty to expand and hire, they can be the difference between a so-so recovery and a strong one. They can help drive down unemployment and put more jobs and opportunities within reach of a greater number of Americans.

The Chamber’s mission is to help businesses of every size succeed. To that end, we’re all over Washington, across

the country, and around the world advocating for policies that will allow business to lead the recovery. We’re urging our leaders to seize opportunities in trade, energy, and immigration. We’re putting forward solutions on challenges ranging from education and health care to regulatory and legal reform. We’re pushing for principled leadership on fiscal issues and calling for urgently needed reforms to our entitlement system and tax code. And we’re involved in the 2014 elections—because the best way to ensure good policy is to elect good policymakers!

The Chamber relies on the support and engagement of America’s small businesses. Because of their impact in their communities and their contributions to our economy, they have real influence in Washington. We look forward to welcoming them to the nation’s capital this week.



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
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'The Coronation of King Edward VII' by Edwin Austin Abbey (ca. 1904)

Bertie the Good

The royal antidote to Victorian austerity. BY EDWARD SHORT

In 1871, when Albert Edward Prince of Wales (1841-1910) and his wife Alexandra lost their youngest child after a premature birth, Queen Victoria advised that they go into prolonged mourning. Bertie's response exhibited one of the great differences between him and his notoriously woeful mother:

Want of feeling I never could show, but I think it's one's duty not to nurse one's sorrow, however much one may feel it. . . . You have no conception of the quantity of applications we

Edward Short is the author, most recently, of *Newman and His Family*.

The Heir Apparent

A Life of Edward VII, the Playboy Prince
by Jane Ridley
Random House, 752 pp., \$35

get . . . to open this place, lay a stone, public dinners, luncheons, fetes without end . . . and all these things have increased tenfold in the last 10 years. . . . It is however gratifying that this wish exists in these Democratic days, as one must show oneself in public.

If Victoria, after the death of her husband Prince Albert, secluded her-

self, Bertie was ubiquitous, making the rounds not only of country houses and ceremonial dinners but theaters, operas, and music halls. As Jane Ridley shows in this superb biography, Bertie's gregarious delight in people uniquely fitted him for his royal role, which he played with enthusiasm.

Although sent to Oxbridge for his education, Bertie was the reverse of studious. After being found with a prostitute, he so scandalized his father that Victoria believed his "fall" had actually killed Albert. She never forgave her son, and for the rest of her life made sure that he received no government dispatches. Bertie

ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST / HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

responded by giving himself up to a life of pleasure—eating, drinking, shooting, and fornicating on a truly Olympian scale.

Paying for this sybaritic life, which he led for 60 years before ascending the throne, required continual loans, but Bertie could always tap rich financiers, most of whom never required their loans to be repaid. Whenever he needed urgent rescue, he would write his friend Nathaniel Rothschild, beginning his begging letters “My dear Natty . . .”

When he became king, he could boast to Parliament that “for the first time in history the heir apparent comes to you without a single penny of debt.”

There have been two full-dress biographies of Bertie, an unduly reticent one (1964) by Gladstone’s biographer, Sir Philip Magnus, and a far superior one (1979) by a onetime Eton history master, Giles St. Aubyn, which takes stock of not only Bertie’s political and diplomatic achievements but the peculiar moral character of Victorian England. In one memorable passage, which Ridley substantiates again and again in her own biography, St. Aubyn observes:

There can be no advantage in pretending to virtue unless society values it. Hypocrisy only flourishes where standards are high. In permissive ages, where few things are unacceptable, there is little to hide. Because the Victorians made such strenuous moral demands they did not always practice what they preached. The dominating idea of English society was not to cultivate virtue but to avoid scandal. “Everything was all right,” claimed Lady Warwick, “if only it was kept quiet, hushed up, covered.”

However excellent a biography, though, St. Aubyn’s life lacks the richness and panache of Ridley’s magisterial work. Her command of her sources is masterly; she holds up the folly of her characters with patient tongues, and she re-creates their plutocratic world with gusto. About Sandringham, Bertie’s country residence, for example, she writes:

It was hardly a normal country house. . . . Lunch at two thirty (the

clocks were half an hour fast) was followed by tea, when the King scoffed poached eggs, petits fours, cakes and shortbread. A twelve-course dinner followed at nine, and the King would cheerfully swallow several oysters in minutes, and then devour at high speed course after course of pheasant stuffed with truffles, chicken in aspic, sole poached in Chablis, or quails and boned snipe packed with *foie gras*, the richer and creamier the sauce the better.

Together with good food, good cigars, and impeccably cut clothes, Bertie reveled in the society of beautiful women. Ridley vividly recaptures his affairs with Lillie Langtry, Jennie Churchill, Daisy Warwick, Alice Keppel, and many others, all of whom prized their royal inamorato. Still, as Ridley points out, the prince did not have as many affairs as he was rumored to have had: One of the revelations of this book is the extent to which the prurience of 19th-century England required Bertie to be more debauched than he was. As Ridley nicely puts it, Bertie was popular with his compatriots precisely because he stood for “an ideal of illustrious misbehavior absolutely beyond their reach.”

Still, Ridley has no illusions about the real character of adultery. The Countess of Warwick might claim that society made too much of sexual infidelity, but Ridley does not skirt the issue of how the countess’s own infidelities damaged both her children and other people’s marriages. Nor is she quiet on how destructive Bertie’s philandering was. Lady Harriet Mordaunt, whose dalliance with the prince led to her husband’s taking the unusual step of suing her for divorce after she gave birth to a child of dubious paternity, actually went insane as a result of the opprobrium she suffered at the hands of a society that might relish scandal but was often unmerciful to those caught out in it. (As for Sir Charles Mordaunt, Ridley is surely right to blame him for neglecting the good advice that Rosa Lewis always gave to litigious cuckolds: “No letters, no lawyers and kiss the baby’s bottom.”)

Something of Ridley’s wit, as well as the charm of her style, is apparent in her description of Queen Alexandra at Bertie’s coronation: “She was fifty-six, heavily made up, allegedly bald, and almost stone deaf, but she seemed like a queen from a fairy tale.” For this demure Danish princess, Bertie could be forgiven every offense. Indeed, she met her husband’s chronic infidelity with regal unflappability. After Bertie’s death, however, she “metamorphosed into a monster,” as Ridley notes, becoming “a spoiled and willful child” who turned her unmarried daughter Victoria into a “glorified maid”—the same daughter to whom the soon-to-be-prime minister Lord Rosebery had proposed before Alexandra refused to give her consent.

As king, Bertie broke with his mother’s example by refusing to allow family life to become the focus of his reign. He made pageantry its centerpiece. His affairs might be public knowledge, but their details would always remain sketchy. Bertie also differed from his mother, and indeed from the Hanoverians, by never quarrelling with his heir. As Ridley remarks, “An obsession with punctuality, an addiction to smoking, a passion for uniforms, and a devotion to the competitive slaughter of game birds” were as characteristic of Bertie as of his son, George V.

Another of Bertie’s virtues was his flair for diplomacy. According to Harold Nicolson, Bertie was a “supreme diplomatist.” His profound understanding of the German, French, and Russian courts, acquired during his time as prince of Wales, as well as his gift for languages, gave him great insight into those elusive subtleties that make comity possible. It may be argued, however, that his greatest diplomatic achievement, the *Entente Cordiale*, struck with France in 1904 after Britain had become isolated during the Boer War, was also his greatest liability, since it exacerbated the estrangement of Wilhelm II and Germany, which led to the First World War.

The specter of the Great War hovers over nearly every page here. After

Wilhelm dealt Bertie a deliberate diplomatic snub by refusing to meet him in Vienna in 1888, Alexandra—thinking, perhaps, of Denmark’s loss of Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia in 1864—wrote her son of his German uncle:

Oh he is mad and a conceited ass—who also says Papa and Grandmamma don’t treat him with proper respect as the Emperor of all and mighty Germany! But my hope is that pride will have a fall someday!! Won’t we rejoice then.

One corollary of Bertie’s continental *savoir-faire* was his marked distaste for many of his compatriots’ prejudices, especially their anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism. At the same time, he was adamant about respecting the different traditions of his subjects: When his first sea lord, Admiral Fisher, marveled at his concern for the health of the socialist firebrand Keir Hardie, Bertie responded, “You don’t understand me. I am the King of *all* the people.”

Proof of this can be seen in the many charitable institutions he founded, including the Royal Society of Arts, the Royal College of Music, the Imperial Institute, St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, and the Putney Hospital for Incurables. He was often criticized for honoring millionaires such as the tea merchant Thomas Lipton, but, as Ridley sensibly observes, “The social sovereignty of wealth was not unconditional; the plutocrat must be validated by charitable works before he was rewarded at court.” In Lipton’s case, he gave £25,000 to Queen Alexandra’s fund to feed the London poor in 1897, and then another £100,000 to her restaurant for the poor. Another of Bertie’s rich friends, Sir Ernest Cassel, donated a good deal of his vast fortune to build the London Underground. Edwardian plutocracy produced more than self-indulgence and frivolity.

Although Bertie worked well with his ministers, who appreciated his businesslike efficiency, he often found them a trial. When the

absent-minded marquess of Salisbury showed up for an official function improperly dressed, Bertie exploded, asking his courtiers, “What can the Europeans think of a premier who can’t put his clothes on?” The aforementioned Lord Rosebery often struck Bertie as an inscrutable eccentric; Winston Churchill was a crude radical. H. H. Asquith was clever but vulgar; Arthur Balfour was clever but arrogant. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman annoyed him by sup-



The Prince of Wales (1870)

porting the suffragettes. And as for Lloyd George’s fabled oratory, Bertie dubbed it “Celtic gas.”

“Few kings have come to the throne amid lower expectations,” Ridley writes. Queen Victoria certainly had no high hopes, confiding to her daughter Vicky, “I often pray he may never survive me, for I know not what would happen.” Yet Edward VII confounded his critics by proving an exemplary king. In rediscovering the tradition of monarchy, he reformed and modernized it.

He was also deeply appreciative of the obligations of constitutional monarchy. Unlike his mother, who sided with the Tory Benjamin Disraeli

against the liberal William Gladstone, Bertie was punctiliously impartial. Once, in response to a letter from Churchill, he wrote, “His Majesty is glad to see that you are becoming a reliable Minister and above all a serious politician which can only be attained by putting country above party.” In his own dealings with successive governments, Bertie always put country before party, as he proved in 1909 in his even-handed response to Lloyd George’s Finance Bill, which ruffled so many of his friends among the landed aristocracy.

If Bertie’s inner circle consisted of the *roués* and financiers associated with Marlborough House, he came to personify the life of his people as a whole, even though the middle classes did not always know what to make of him. The poet Wilfrid Scawen Blunt recognized this when he wrote of the newly crowned king: “He has certain good qualities of amiability and of philistine tolerance of other people’s sins and vulgarities, which endear him to rich and poor, to Stock Exchange Jews, to the Turf bookmen and to the Man in the Street.” The equerry Sir Frederick Ponsonby agreed, recalling that Bertie “was intensely human and . . . a great enough man to show his friends his true self with all the weaknesses of a human being. He never posed and never pretended

to be any better than he was. The upper and lower classes loved him.”

When Edward VII died, the British mourned him in unprecedented numbers. And for all of his cosmopolitanism, Ridley shows, Bertie certainly had a very English sense of humor, which always endeared him to his compatriots. At the Paris Opera one evening, the French police asked him if they should remove a brazen courtesan who made no bones about her familiarity with the playboy king.

“Not at all,” replied Bertie. The Parisians should never think it necessary, he explained, “to ignore the laws of gallantry in order to avoid offending my well-known taste for austerity.” ♦

POPPERFOTO / GETTY IMAGES

Back to Basics

The right way, and the wrong way, to begin the journey. BY KELLY JANE TORRANCE

Charles Murray was invited to speak in April at Azusa Pacific University about this, his latest book. The event had been scheduled for months, but two days before Murray's appearance the president of Azusa Pacific canceled it, writing to the American Enterprise Institute (where Murray is the W.H. Brady scholar) that "I realized we needed more time to prepare for a visit." What had frightened the president? Advice to work hard, eschew the allures of fame and fortune, cover any visible tattoos? Perhaps this admonition: "Excise the word *like* from your spoken English." Of course, it wasn't the actual topic of his graduation-season talk that made Charles Murray the latest victim of academic intolerance: Just two of the 22 chapters in his 1994 study *The Bell Curve* (written with Richard Herrnstein) dealt with race, but those were the two that got the most attention.

The Curmudgeon's Guide to Getting Ahead is a small, chatty volume offering advice about starting adult life on the right foot; it won't garner the controversy *The Bell Curve* did. But as befits a product from one of our most astute social scientists, *The Curmudgeon's Guide* is no token graduation gift along the lines of, say, Dr. Seuss's *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* In telling the young how *not* to act, Murray explains why so many need his advice. Bad behavior often shares origins with wider social ills.

Take one passage from the first section, "On the Presentation of Self in the Workplace." Murray notes that "too many of you think doing routine office tasks is beneath you, and your supervisors are insufficiently sensitive to your

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The Curmudgeon's Guide to Getting Ahead

Dos and Don'ts of Right Behavior, Tough Thinking, Clear Writing, and Living a Good Life
by Charles Murray

Crown Business, 144 pp., \$17.95

needs." He warns readers to "be advised that curmudgeons are hypersensitive to any vibe that you give off when you're told to go pick up something in the mailroom. You don't have to say anything, or even roll your eyes. The slightest of sighs will lodge in their memory like their first kiss, only in a bad way."

Wise words, and Murray could have ended them there. But he goes on to unravel why that sense of entitlement has become so widespread. It began with the baby boomers—the original Me Generation—and was furthered by post-war prosperity.

More young adults now have grown up as the only child in the family, never having had to share their parents' attention and get along with siblings. Increasing affluence has meant that adolescents with siblings often reach college without ever having shared a bedroom with another person, maybe not even a bathroom.

With the increasing ability to conduct life electronically—from ordering food to finding a spouse—manners are likely only to get worse.

Murray might be a curmudgeon, but he hasn't lost touch with his youth, or his youthful missteps. An amusing anecdote from his own career illustrates the pitfalls of the modern dress code. "A few decades ago," he writes, "I had dashed into the office just to pick up something and leave. I wasn't going to be in the building more than ten min-

utes, so I arrived wearing a flannel shirt and jeans." As the elevator door opened, "out stepped Irving Kristol, AEI's most revered scholar. Irving was a warm and unpretentious person and a good friend. But there was no warmth in his eyes as he deliberately looked me up and down; said, 'Well, what have we here?'; and walked away without another word." From then on, "I never arrived at AEI in anything except a coat and tie."

Such guidance for the workplace makes up the first half of the book. "Internships are affirmative action for the advantaged," he declares. (They also don't expose you to anyone outside your own caste.) "What to do if you have a bad boss" is especially helpful, its counsel often missing from this sort of book. But more important than getting ahead—and more useful than his "bare-bones usage primer"—is getting to the good life. "Two accomplishments will, if you pull them off, almost surely produce happiness: Find work that you enjoy, and find your soul mate."

The "easy part," he says, is "finding your vocation." For the harder task, he offers some unexpectedly specific advice: When, for example, should one give up on a potential partner? "Do you sometimes pick at each other's sore spots? You have fun together, the sex is great, but one of you is controlling, or nags the other, or won't let a difference of opinion go." Forget the twenty-somethings: This is an insight that many don't begin to fathom until they're older, and some never do, to their misfortune. Murray offered this more succinct summary in a recent talk: "How do I define 'soul mate'? Your soul mate is someone you really, really, really like and to whom you also feel some sexual attraction."

And he leaves those in search of a good and happy life with one final tip: Read Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* carefully and/or watch *Groundhog Day* repeatedly. The combination of the serious and the silly makes that particular movie "a profound moral fable" worth seeing over and over again. That same combination makes *The Curmudgeon's Guide* worth examining long after you've learned the difference between "which" and "that." ♦

An Uncommon Reader

Erich Auerbach and the understanding of literature.

BY JOSEPH EPSTEIN

T.S. Eliot thought that the first requisite for being a literary critic is to be very intelligent. The second, I should say, is to have a well-stocked mind, which means having knowledge of literatures and literary traditions other than that into which one was born; possessing several languages; and acquiring a more than nodding acquaintance with history, philosophy, and theology—to be, in brief, learned. To be both highly intelligent and learned is not all that common. Eliot claimed for himself—and this by implication, for he was a modest man—only the former.

Erich Auerbach (1892-1957) had both great intelligence and great learning. Born in Germany, Auerbach, along with other Jewish scholars of his time, was another of Adolf Hitler's intellectual gifts to the United States. After being expelled from his academic post as professor of Romance philology at the University of Marburg during the Nazi purges, he spent 11 years, between 1935 and 1946, at the University of Istanbul. Arriving in the United States in 1947, he first taught at Penn State, was briefly at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, and ended his career at Yale.

While in Istanbul, Auerbach wrote *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, which is the greatest single work of literary criticism of the 20th century. Auerbach worked on the book between 1942 and 1945, and it was first published in 1946. Part of the mythos of *Mimesis* has been that he wrote it without the aid of a serious library. This is some-

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Time, History, and Literature

Selected Essays of Erich Auerbach

edited by James I. Porter

translated by Jane O. Newman

Princeton, 336 pp., \$39.50



Erich Auerbach

what exaggerated. The University of Istanbul was far from academically primitive, and Auerbach was in touch with friends who could send him such literary materials as he required.

That he didn't have access to a library that stocked scholarly periodicals probably worked in his book's favor. *Mimesis* is a scholarly work unencumbered by footnotes or other critical apparatus. At the close of the penultimate paragraph of the epilogue, Auerbach writes, "[I]t is quite possible that the book owes its existence to just this lack of a rich and specialized library. If it had been possible for me to acquaint myself with all the work that has been done on so many subjects, I might never have reached the point of writing."

Erich Auerbach was a philologist. Once a standard academic discipline,

philology is no longer in currency, let alone in vogue. In its traditional form, philology dealt with the structure—the grammar, syntax, and semantics—of language and its historical development. Philology has always seemed a more Continental than English or American enterprise. In America, scholars who in an earlier era might have taught philology taught, instead, what became known as comparative literature. In time, comparative literature fizzled out, taken over by literary theorists who turned out to be not all that much interested in literature in any language.

What distinguished philologists and comparativists was their polyglotism. They knew multiple languages, and an article of belief among them was that literary works can only be truly comprehended in the languages in which they were composed. If you read works in translation, you are, from the philological standpoint, a *schmooser*, a *potzer*, a *kibbitzer*, and fundamentally unserious. In the prologue to his recent *Musings on Mortality: From Tolstoy to Primo Levi*, Victor Brombert, who for many years taught comparative literature at Princeton, notes that "in all cases, I have discussed only authors whose works I have read in the original."

Erich Auerbach read eight languages: Greek, Latin, German, Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Hebrew. In *Mimesis* he remarks that he scanted a detailed discussion of the rise of realism in Russian literature because "this is impossible when one cannot read the works in their original language." (I, the reader should know, read *Mimesis* in the excellent English translation from the German by Willard R. Trask.)

In his 1952 essay "Philology and World History," Auerbach asserted that "the intellectual and spiritual history of the last several millennia is the history of the human race as it has achieved self-expression. It is with this history that philology concerns itself as a historical discipline." The task of philology, he held, was to evaluate literature and language in such a way that it might contribute to that history, "and thus to realization of a unified vision

of the human race in all its variety.” Auerbach felt this task all the more pressing given “the impoverishment of understanding associated with a concept of education that has no sense of the past”—an impoverishment, he added, that threatens to become “hegemonic.” He also accepted as “inevitable that world culture is in the process of becoming standardized.” About this, at a time when people are claiming the nation-state an anachronism, he was surely correct. Every time I hear the word “globalization,” I reach for my copy of *Mimesis*.

The publication of *Time, History, and Literature: Selected Essays of Erich Auerbach* provides an excellent opportunity to witness a master philologist at work. This book includes: five essays on Giambattista Vico, the philosopher of history and an important influence on Auerbach, who translated Vico’s *Scienza Nuova* (1725); four essays on Dante, the subject of Auerbach’s first book (*Dante: Poet of the Secular World*, 1929); and essays on Montaigne, Pascal, Racine, Rousseau, and Proust. Two of the essays, “*Figura*” (1938) and “*Passio* as *Passion*” (1941), are more traditionally philological in subject matter and treatment.

In the first of these essays, Auerbach considers the meaning of the word “*figura*,” its history, and its import in medieval Christian literature, where it denoted foreshadowing and prophecy. The Old Testament, in this regard, was thought to prophesy the New Testament, and Virgil to prophesy Dante. This essay shows, as Auerbach writes, “how a word branches out from its semantic meaning and into a world-historical situation and how the structures that emerge out of this situation can remain effective for many centuries.”

In his essay on the word “*passio*,” Auerbach demonstrates how, over the centuries, it elided into the word “passion.” At its inception, *passio* denoted passiveness and suffering, which is how it was understood in its religious sense—hence, the Passion of Christ—and went on to become associated with erotic passion, or “a heightening of human existence

worth pursuing.” In a brilliant essay not in this book titled “*La Cour et La Ville*” (1951), Auerbach does a similar workup of the changing meaning of the word “public,” setting out its differing meanings at different times.

Serious scholar though he was, Auerbach was no less impressive as a literary critic. In fewer than six pages, he places, describes, and explains the power of Marcel Proust’s great novel *À la recherche du temps perdu* (*In Search of Lost Time*). “Next to it,” writes Auerbach, “all the other works we know seem to be no more than novellas.” Better than anyone I have read, Auerbach is able to convey the experience of reading Proust’s novel:

No story of the centuries past seems so overwhelmingly historical, so covered with patina, so finally and irrevocably over, so mummified, antique, and eternal as the one he gives to us in his representation of Parisian society around 1900 and of the intelligent and sickly young man who inhabits it.

Although Auerbach finds the novel’s astonishing cast of characters ultimately beyond description, he writes: “This chronicle of the inner life flows along with a kind of epic uniformity, for it is only memory and self-examination. The novel is the authentic epic of the soul; truth itself ensnares the reader in a long, sweet dream in which he suffers a great deal, to be sure, but in which he also enjoys a release and sense of calm.” *In Search of Lost Time* is, in short, a work of “ever-flowing pathos that at once oppresses us and sustains us without end.”

Auerbach’s knowledge of the historical circumstances under which literary works were written allowed him exceptional insights into how these works came into being. He characterizes Rousseau, for example, by stating that “of the men who are well known in European intellectual history, [he] is the first who, despite a thoroughly Christian constitution, was no longer able to be a Christian.” In intellectual circles, the Enlightenment of the second half of the 18th century had scotched the notion of original sin, and with it the belief in evil, thus free-

ing writers of the time to believe in the more preposterous notion of the perfectibility of human beings. Rousseau, Auerbach notes, “could no longer find a place in any Christian church, and also failed to found a new one.”

Michel de Montaigne was, for Auerbach, the first generalist in literature, and next to him every other important figure in the 16th century was “a mere specialist.” Montaigne claimed to write for himself; yet in doing so, he created an educated public: It was Montaigne, Auerbach writes, who “created a community of laypeople and his book became the lay book par excellence.” The pleasure one takes in reading Montaigne is unique; his work is neither aesthetic nor didactic, nor always logical in direction, but is nevertheless always compelling. It is the pleasure of witnessing a man beholden to no one, never lapsing into cliché or bromide, writing truthfully about life, and never forgetting its ineluctable conclusion. Auerbach formulates the message of Montaigne thus:

I am alone, I have to die. This world is not my home, I am only passing through, but where I have come from and where I am headed—I do not know. What is the only thing that is mine? My self.

Montaigne also gets a chapter in the center of *Mimesis*. The book is divided into 20 chapters, each illustrating the advance of literature as it finds ways of capturing more and more of the actuality of life. Auerbach averred that his “purpose is always to write history,” but literary history usually confines itself to a period or is conducted within national borders. In *Mimesis*, Auerbach covers nearly 3,000 years and vast stretches of Western literature. English literature tends to get short shrift, and American literature isn’t even mentioned; yet somehow one scarcely notices.

While realism is Auerbach’s subject, he doesn’t provide an elaborate or exact definition of it. In traditional literary studies, realism comes down to works of literature that deal with common, often even inarticulate, people and their struggles and inchoate desires.

One thinks of Frank Norris or Theodore Dreiser. Auerbach's idea of realism is simultaneously much more widely gauged and cuts much deeper. Realism, for him, stresses the actuality of peoples' lives and the way in which literature, through the art of mimesis, raised man (as Auerbach writes in his book on Dante) "out of the two-dimensional unreality of a remote dreamland or philosophical abstraction, and moved him into the historical area in which he really lives."

In *Mimesis*, Auerbach demonstrates why, at certain periods, writers were not able to deal with many social questions and psychological problems that later became central to literature. They weren't able to, in part, because they didn't have the stylistic resources to do so; in part, because entire sectors of the population were considered out-of-bounds to literature. One of Auerbach's most suggestive chapters is on the rise of Christianity, with its emphasis on the drama of salvation that included kings and peasants and everyone in between. Before Christianity, literature was the equivalent of a chess game played only among kings, queens, and knights.

Literature, unlike science, does not operate on a script of progress, every day in every way getting better and better. Yet history is far from negligible in literature. Auerbach understood that precursors made the existence of great works possible, and that great works, in their turn, extended the literary possibilities for successors. *Mimesis* is a dazzling exercise in tracing this phenomenon.

The first of Auerbach's 20 chapters, "Odysseus' Scar," takes up two passages, one from *The Odyssey*, the second from the Old Testament, through which he demonstrates that, unlike characters in the Old Testament, characters in Homer do not develop. Hector remains Hector and Achilles remains Achilles; but Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob undergo radical changes over their lengthy lives.

Classical literature, for all its strength and beauty, excluded social or historical explanations for the behavior of its characters. Classical historians—

Tacitus, for example, whom Auerbach rightly considers "a great artist"—were much more interested in vice and virtue than in political forces and general ideas. Like kings, classical poets and dramatists, writing from on high, looked down upon their subjects. Their ethical and rhetorical approach, Auerbach writes, is "incompatible with a conception in which reality is a development of forces" acting upon individuals. In classical literature, order, clarity, and dramatic impact take precedence over the sometimes scruffy, but often interesting, details of



'Next to [Proust] all the other works we know seem to be no more than novellas.'

quotidian life. The elevation inherent in classical style, the words available to classical writers, and the syntactical limitations on their deployment made it impossible to write about everyday things in a natural way.

Auerbach's method in *Mimesis* is to choose a passage a paragraph or two long from an important or representative literary work and examine how it is made. An example is Emma Bovary's discomfort, bordering on disgust, regarding her husband's slow and methodical eating habits. These are passages that, Auerbach writes, "contain the whole." With his customary brilliance at comparison and making connections, Auerbach denotes how these passages signify the expansion or retardation of literary sensibility.

Mimesis recounts the story of how literature went from Priam to Proust, from an invocation to the gods to Mrs. Ramsay's stream of consciousness while darning a pair of brown socks.

Making literary judgments in an authoritative yet never dogmatic way, Auerbach does riff-like analyses of the boundaries that history, at different times, set on literary works. "Augustine," he writes, "masters the stylistic contrast of classical and Christian worldview." Gregory of Tours's language "is but imperfectly equipped to organize facts ... but things come to Gregory directly; he no longer need force them into the straitjacket of an elevated style." Of the figures in the *Chanson de Roland*, he notes that they "have no reality; they have only signification." Francis of Assisi, along with being a saint, was "a great poet ... an instinctive master of the art of acting out his own being, [who] was the first to awaken the dramatic powers of Italian feeling and of the Italian language." Voltaire's genius is for tempo. The Duc de Saint-Simon, in his all-inclusive method, his "synthesis of a human being which is so entirely free from traditional harmonizing, which presses so unswervingly on from the random data of the phenomenon itself to the ultimate depths of existence," is a writer at least a century ahead of his time.

After *Don Quixote*, Auerbach writes, "so universal and multilayered, so noncritical and nonproblematical gaiety in the portrayal of everyday reality has not been attempted again in European letters." The tradition of knightly adventure and chivalric romance, which Cervantes devastatingly satirized in his great novel, had exerted "a restrictive influence upon literary realism, ... [for] courtly culture was decidedly unfavorable to the development of a literary art which should apprehend reality in its full breadth and depth." Once *Don Quixote* came into the world, the genre of courtly romance could no longer be written with a straight face.

Dante is the key figure in *Mimesis*, because Auerbach felt his stylistic advances were such that "we come to the conclusion that this man used his

language to discover the world anew.” Dante was the great bridge between the medieval and modern worlds: He gave us,” Auerbach writes, “for the first time in literature, the history of man’s inner life and unfolding.” His presuppositions may have been Christian, harking back to Thomas Aquinas, but his poetry was thoroughly modern.

Dante was a writer of the highest skill: His language was precise, his metaphors were elegantly concrete, and his masterly syntax allowed him to form sentences of sublime construction. Here is Auerbach, not in *Mimesis* but in *Dante: Poet of the Secular World*, describing what the poet achieved in the *Divine Comedy*:

Nearly every line of the *Comedy* reveals enormous exertion; the language writhes and rebels in the hard fetters of rhyme and meter; the form of certain lines and sentences suggests a man frozen or petrified in a peculiarly unnatural position: they are monumentally clear and expressive, but strange, terrifying and superhuman. That is why Dante is associated with Michelangelo in the popular mind.

Cervantes and Dante were literary geniuses, and no one, not even so brilliant a critic and scholar as Erich Auerbach, can account for genius. Cervantes and Dante greatly advanced the history of realism in literature; other literary geniuses—Marcel Proust, James Joyce—did not. Shakespeare’s genius is admitted, but being *sui generis*, his influence on realism was less than significant—so much the worse for realism, some might say. Auerbach avers that “Shakespeare embraces reality but he transcends it.”

Modern realism sets in for Auerbach in 19th-century France, with Stendhal and Balzac, both of whom used “contemporary political and social conditions as the context” for their novels: “Insofar as the serious realism of modern times cannot represent man otherwise than as embedded in a total reality, political, social, and economic, which is concrete and constantly evolving—as is the case today in any novel or film—Stendhal is its founder.” Auerbach favors the realism of Stendhal and Balzac

over that of Victor Hugo and Gustave Flaubert. Of the novels of Flaubert and the Goncourt brothers, Auerbach writes that they exhibit “something narrow, something oppressively close.” The novels of Émile Zola, “one of the very few authors . . . who created their work out of problems of the age,” in Auerbach’s mind, marks the apogee of realism for the 19th century. Auerbach is, perhaps, too high on Zola, and predicts (thus far mistakenly) that “his stature will increase as we attain distance from his age and its problems—the more so because he was the last of the great French realists.”

Moving into the modern—really, the modernist—era: Proust, Joyce, and Virginia Woolf may not be realists in the strict sense of the term, but the development of realism made it possible for these authors to concen-

trate in the richest possible detail on the interior lives of the narrator of *In Search of Lost Time*, Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom, and Mesdames Ramsay and Dalloway.

Mimesis is a book by a man with little interest in theory, setting out definitions, or laying down laws. Yet so suggestive, so rich in understanding and insight, so useful in teaching one how to read more deeply and appreciatively is the book that it is difficult to believe that anyone will ever again have the intellectual resources to write another book about literature anywhere near as powerful. Written while the Nazis were marching across Europe, *Mimesis* is a strong reminder of the glory of Western literature, and by extension of Western civilization, and of what is at stake in the battle against those who would simplify, politicize, or otherwise degrade it. ♦



The Other Mrs. Adams

A view from the front row of the young republic.

BY EDWARD ACHORN

When Abigail Adams first met her daughter-in-law Louisa, wife of future president John Quincy Adams, she was not greatly impressed. Even before the marriage, Abigail “was troubled by the fear that Louisa might not be made of stuff stern enough, or brought up in conditions severe enough, to suit a New England climate, or to make a sufficient wife for her paragon son, and Abigail was right on that point,” wrote Louisa’s grandson, Henry Adams. Louisa was often sick, depressed, and weak with worry—

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A Traveled First Lady
Writings of Louisa Catherine Adams
edited by Margaret A. Hogan
and C. James Taylor
Belknap Press, 416 pp., \$35

surely a burden on John Quincy at times when he needed a pillar of support.

But John Adams, our pugnacious second president, adored Louisa from the start. He “never said an unkind word to me,” she recalled, “but ever to the hour of his death, treated me with the utmost tenderness, and distinction most flattering.” The cranky old president must have recognized a kindred soul in the sharp-eyed and often savagely witty Louisa, who wrote him letters from Washington frankly revealing that she did *not*



Louisa Catherine Adams by Charles Robert Leslie (1816)

subscribe to the view that the American politicians of the early 19th century made an exceedingly strong case for the virtues of representative democracy.

Both in-laws had a point about this complex woman, as this collection of her writings amply demonstrates. *A Traveled First Lady* presents her opinionated take on a remarkably rich life near the center of political power.

In some ways, the life recounted here is a fairy tale—infused, like many fairy tales, with the elements of nightmare. She was raised in luxury in London and France by a beloved merchant-father who went bankrupt, staining the family name after John Quincy Adams had pledged himself to her. Adams, as a diplomat, took her to the glittering courts of Europe, where she hobnobbed

with royalty—and felt a haunting sense of loneliness and inferiority, in part because she could not, on a republican's salary, keep up with the lifestyles and personal adornment of the other diplomats. There is nothing here about being the wife of a president, but much about the difficulties of being married to a loving, honorable, and reserved man who is a leading aspirant for the presidency and is pilloried in the press for failing to be the typical gladhanding pol in the age of Andrew Jackson. Throughout, she struggles to understand God's will, as the blows of life strike her brutally: She suffers repeated illnesses and miscarriages; she must leave behind her 1-year-old daughter in a Russian grave; she lives to see her oldest son die of an apparent suicide and

her second-oldest descend into alcoholism and an early death.

At times, her writings seem rambling and obtuse. She confesses that “as I know nothing of style, or composition, those who may read this memento mori, must endeavor to extract light from the chaos which lies before them.” For the most part, editors Margaret A. Hogan and C. James Taylor stand back and give Louisa the spotlight, correcting no spelling, offering limited guidance, and leaving the reader to tease out the meaning and decipher the references.

Yet her writings glow with passion, insights, and character sketches that flirt with character assassination. She writes of Thomas Jefferson: “His countenance indicated strongly the hypocrisy of his nature and all about him his smile and his actions indicated a sort of tricky cunning, the sure attendant of a sophisticated mind devoid of a strong basis of substantial principle.” She paints a memorable portrait of a self-absorbed Jefferson keeping the White House fires low, forcing his guests at a state dinner to clamp their jaws shut lest their teeth chatter, “while the gallant President drew his Chair close to the centre of the hearth, and seemed impatiently to await our exit.”

Henry Clay, the Great Pacificator and Abraham Lincoln's hero, is a “man made up of shreds and patches and formed”—here she crosses out “in a Brothel”—“and polished in a gaming house and whose chief talent consists in working on the weaker or baser passions of mankind.” Proud and dignified, she is not always an admirer of post-Federalist democracy: She laments that the House of Representatives is turning into a “Bear garden” and defiantly observes that “for my part I am very willing to show that I am the publick *Servant* but I will never be the *Publicks Slave*.”

On May 18, 1852, Congress adjourned for the funeral of Louisa Catherine Adams, an honor never previously bestowed on a first lady, much less a former first lady. She is largely forgotten today, but this volume may help readers understand why she was worthy of being treated with “distinction most flattering.” ♦

'Saddles' Revisited

A parody of a spoof of a well-worn formula.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The much-maligned new comedy *A Million Ways to Die in the West* is actually pretty funny in spots. But it's very strange. It's an affectionate western homage, a mash-up western, a western pastiche. That's not odd. What's odd is that it's an homage to a *parody*, and paying tribute to a spoof is just weird.

The film that cowriter/director Seth MacFarlane is evoking and celebrating here is Mel Brooks's 1974 *Blazing Saddles*—the first full-length genre spoof, a kind of potty-mouthed extension of a skit from the then-popular *Carol Burnett Show* (complete with Burnett's signature male farceur, Harvey Korman, in a key role).

It is little noted, but still true, that *Blazing Saddles* was one of those movies that changed the way Hollywood worked. It was, at the time, far and away the most successful comedy ever made, with a staggering \$120 million gross (\$550 million in present-day dollars). Adjusted for inflation, only two comedies since—*Ghostbusters* and *Home Alone*—have made more.

The full-length spoof has since become a Hollywood genre of its own. If there had been no *Blazing Saddles*, there would have been no *Airplane!* (1980), which in turn begat scores of other such parodies. An astounding 26 such movies have been released since 2010 alone, among them two of the five pictures in the *Scary Movie* franchise.

Perhaps even more important, *Blazing Saddles* paved the way for the blockbuster R-rated comedy. It remains the fourth-most successful R-rated film of all time (again, adjusted for inflation).

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A Million Ways to Die in the West

Directed by Seth MacFarlane



Together with *Animal House* (1978) and the movies it spawned, *Blazing Saddles* steered the American motion-picture comedy away from depicting the sophisticated foibles of adults toward celebrating the sophomoric misbehavior of kids.

It therefore makes sense that MacFarlane would worship *Blazing Saddles*. It is, in some respects, a live-action cartoon, and MacFarlane adopted its slapdash, devil-may-care, anything-for-a-laugh style for his wildly successful animated TV shows, *Family Guy* and *American Dad*.

And Brooks's decision to cast himself in *Blazing Saddles* (in two roles, as the randy Governor William LePetomane and as a Yiddish-speaking Native American) probably gave MacFarlane psychic permission to cast himself as the lead in *A Million Ways to Die in the West*, notwithstanding the fact that his previous work on screen had all been in voice-over. This was not a wise choice, though he's perfectly fine in it, because it opened him up to critical evisceration on grounds of vanity. He should have manned up and hired another actor to kiss Charlize Theron.

The nominal plot: MacFarlane plays a sheep farmer named Albert in 1882 Oklahoma whose girlfriend dumps him. He is befriended by Theron, who decides to help him win his girl back. What Albert doesn't know is that she is secretly the wife of the most vicious outlaw in the territory (Liam Neeson).

Blazing Saddles has a plot too—about a railroad company trying to steal the land that sits underneath a frontier

village called Rock Ridge and the government's effort to help the railroad company by sending a black convict to serve as the town's sheriff. But in both films, the story is merely a clothesline on which to hang gags involving people who have entirely contemporary sensibilities (the sheriff in *Saddles*, MacFarlane and Theron here) being forced to confront a premodern world of casual violence and injustice.

The bright bits here involve the fact that "everything that isn't you wants to kill you": It's more dangerous to visit the frontier doctor than just to lie there; every newfangled device has the potential to burn or maim.

There are inspired anachronistic conversations about how kids are destroying their brains by playing with rolling wheels, thus affecting their ability to concentrate. Albert's rival for his girlfriend's affections (Neil Patrick Harris) humiliates him by pointing out that he can afford "wrapped candies. Can you give her wrapped candies, Albert?"

A Million Ways is as ribald and scatological as *Blazing Saddles*, but nowhere near as daring. Not that *Blazing Saddles* is all that good a movie; it hits you over the head with its jokes, a lot of them old vaudeville routines that seemed tired in 1974. But it has its one spicy kick—its matter-of-fact, and therefore hilarious, depiction of casual racism, undercut and turned on its head by the fact that the black man at the center is smarter and cooler than anyone else on screen.

MacFarlane has no idea how to bring Brooks's genuinely shocking sensibility up to date—recall that only six years before *Blazing Saddles*, Brooks came up with the jaw-dropping concept for the "Springtime for Hitler" number in *The Producers*—because he is far too conventionally minded. His idea of shock value is singing at the Oscars about actresses who have done nude scenes. Back in 1974, when Brooks showed some cowboys sitting around a campfire eating beans and then letting loose, the scene was hilarious because it was so unexpected. Today, you'd be arrested for making a comedy without a scene in which someone passes gas.

Let's face it—these days, fart jokes just don't cut it. ♦

FELLOW TRAVELER
OFFICE SUPPLIES

Serving Today's Expanding State

2014 Democratic Congressional Campaign
Slogan Brainstorming Session #12 (Hope this goes better than last time!)

Present at meeting: Jim Clyburn, Steve Israel, Steny Hoyer,
and moi—Nancy Pelosi

CLYBURN'S IDEAS

- We've fallen, but we will get up (no)
- We take a waxin', and keep on taxin'! (Seriously, Jim?)
- ~~Vote with what's inside you~~ (yuck!)
- Let's America Together (kind of abstract, but growing on me)

STEVE'S IDEAS

- Be an American — not an AmericanT (not bad)
- Plop, plop, fizz, fizz — oh, what a relief it is to have Obamacare!
(too long)
- Democrats: Now with Less Hope (oy!)
- Let's Make America Amazeballs Again (maybe, youth vote)

STENY

- Just Do It (love it, though sounds kinda familiar)
- Think Different (love it)
- Have It Your Way (love it)
- You're In Good Hands (love it)
- Live Más (love it, Hispanic outreach)
- ~~15 Minutes Could Save You 15% or More on Car Insurance~~ (?????)