

**THE IRAQ
DEBACLE
MAX BOOT**

the weekly

Standard



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SURPRISE!

What the heck happened
to Eric Cantor?

FRED BARNES

JAY COST

WILLIAM KRISTOL

MICHAEL WARREN

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COVER BY THOMAS FLUHARTY

War Is a Force That Makes Us Plagiarize

Chris Hedges is a former *New York Times* foreign correspondent whose popular antiwar polemic, *War Is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* (2002), enabled him to quit the newspaper business and become a full-time prophet, left-wing division. As Hedges has grown more austere in appearance—working-class duds, haunted gaze, steel-rimmed spectacles—his rhetoric has grown steadily apocalyptic, his prose overwrought. A selection of recent Hedges titles—*American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America* (2007), *Empire of Illusion: The End of Literacy and the Triumph of Spectacle* (2009), *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt* (2012)—will give an idea of what THE SCRAPBOOK is talking about.

And, of course, it will come as no surprise to learn that Hedges has been amply rewarded for his efforts: His dystopian view of his homeland, and overripe tone, have earned him awards from Amnesty International, teaching invitations from Princeton and Columbia, and praise from Paul Krugman. Hedges claims to subsist at the edge of the American “tinder-box”—the fascist one that’s about to blow up—but in fact, he lives and works very comfortably in the media.

Until now. This week, in the *New Republic*, author Christopher Ketcham

chronicles a history of serial plagiarism by Hedges that is so detailed, so voluminous, so explicitly damning, that it is difficult to see how any but the most credulous members of the cult can ever take Hedges seriously again. Moreover,



Chris Hedges

not only does Ketcham furnish chapter and verse, he relates Hedges’s answers to fact-checking inquiries (reflexively ugly) and attempts to intimidate suspicious editors (surprisingly crude).

It turns out that Hedges has routinely stolen sources ranging from the sublime (Ernest Hemingway) to the ridiculous (Naomi Klein), and specializes in what journalism

professors call “patchwriting . . . restating a phrase, clause, or one or more sentences while staying close to the language or syntax of the source.” Ketcham was first alerted to Hedges’s plagiarism when he discovered that his own wife’s work had been pilfered, and went on to learn how a fact-checker at *Harper’s* discovered that Hedges had lifted long passages from a *Philadelphia Inquirer* story. When confronted with the facts, Hedges was characteristically evasive and bullying; but *Harper’s*, to its credit, declined to publish the piece.

More troublesome, in THE SCRAPBOOK’s view, is the fact that Hedges’s regular outlets, the left-wing websites *TruthOut* and *Truthdig*, as well as the *Nation*, seem unconcerned. It will be interesting to see if the *Times* reviews Hedges’s Pulitzer Prize-winning work.

As we have said before, plagiarism ought to be a capital offense in journalism. It is surely a kind of psychic disturbance in print. Whatever impels writers to steal language from other writers, and publish it as their own, also makes them vulnerable to discovery. Hedges’s demons, which seem so obvious on the page, clearly represent something deeper than politics. The last thing serial plagiarists need is editors willing, in the name of ideology, to ignore their plagiarism. ♦

Shut Up, They Explained

Two weeks ago, George Will wrote a column about how progressives have exaggerated the prevalence of rape on college campuses. The column was not well received by some or even, as a great many of the histrionic responses would indicate, well understood. Last week a press release landed in THE SCRAPBOOK’s inbox, headlined: “87,000 Call on The Washington Post to Address Sexism, Fire George Will.” A group called UltraViolet was touting the success of an online petition they’d

whipped up over the controversy. From the release:

The *Washington Post* should take a stand against rape—starting by firing George Will, said Nita Chaudhary, co-founder of UltraViolet. “From mocking survivors to misleading the public on demands for college sexual assault reform and blaming women for violence against them—the *Post* has left the realm of honest debate and entered the realm of hate-speech and dog whistles.”

Perhaps needless to say, nothing in Will’s column was remotely outside the lines of civil discourse. Here’s a more

interesting line of inquiry: Who is UltraViolet cofounder Nita Chaudhary, and why does she hate free speech? In 2004, she was a Democratic National Committee staffer. She is also a former campaign director at MoveOn.Org. While with MoveOn, Chaudhary aggressively defended the organization’s infamous “General Petraeus is likely to become General Betray Us” ad. What’s more, Chaudhary is the wife of Jesse Lee, the White House’s “Director of Progressive Media and Online Response.” In fact, Valerie Jarrett helped Lee propose to Chaudhary at a state dinner. In past administrations,

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positions such as the one held by Lee, charged with partisan media strategies and rapid response, were outsourced to the party organizations, so as not to politicize the presidency. Alas, this White House lacks that kind of respect for the office. Now Lee is paid to write blog posts on the White House website attacking “lies” from Fox News.

The crusade against Will did not stop with Chaudhary. The National Organization for Women is also calling for the *Post* to drop his column. And four Democratic senators—Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin, Dianne Feinstein of California, Robert Casey of Pennsylvania, and Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut—signed a letter to Will accusing him of “treating [rape] as a socially acceptable phenomenon,” a borderline libelous characterization.

Does the broader progressive movement, which encompasses some of America’s most powerful leaders, no longer believe in free speech? We’re referring to actual free speech, not the increasingly common progressive view where you point out that the First Amendment pertains to government restraint of expressions so as to deflect criticism of your own Stalinist impulses. Real free speech implies a culture where we tolerate opinions that bother us, in the understanding that this will make us a freer, more thoughtful, and, yes, tolerant people.

Washington Post editorial page editor Fred Hiatt, thankfully, stood firm. “George Will’s column was well within the bounds of legitimate debate,” Hiatt told the left-wing activist group Media Matters for America. “Rather than urge me to silence a viewpoint they disagree with, I would urge others also to join the debate, and to do so without mischaracterizing the original column.” ♦

The Bush League

THE SCRAPBOOK heartily recommends a new documentary on George H. W. Bush, *41 on 41*, that airs this month on CNN, just in time for the 90th birthday of our 41st president. Among the talking heads brought out to kibitz and remi-

I WAS
DEAD
BROKE...



nise—41 of them, as you might have guessed—the popular historian David McCullough makes a charming observation, as he often does. “I’ve known or interviewed nine presidents,” McCullough says. “And if I had to pick one of them to drive from Boston to St. Louis with, it would be him.” Argue all you want—surely Ronald Reagan would tell better stories, and wouldn’t Bill Clinton be more help cruising the roadhouses?—but after seeing *41 on 41* you’ll be likely to agree with McCullough.

If nothing else, a lingering look at George H. W. Bush reminds us of a vanished code—a long-gone approach to public life that sometimes seems,

in a raw and inelegant time, as remote as the conventions of a Victorian dinner party. The youngest man to serve as a fighter pilot in World War II, Bush carried himself throughout his career with the modesty and self-effacement that were typical of the best men of his generation. “Prudence” was famously the watchword of his presidency, mocked at the time by fools and demagogues, but it has a specially sweet sound in a day when “public servants,” drunk with power, commandeer the nation’s health care system, bind the spirit of enterprise in frivolous regulation, and betray allies and appease enemies in the name of leading from behind. If you don’t

When a New York synagogue is destroyed...

From the author of EAST WIND

Jack Winnick

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-- Lee Bender, Philadelphia Jewish Voice

Now available at Amazon.com & Kindle.com

miss the first President Bush now, just watch *41 on 41*.

We're told that President Bush saw the documentary in a private screening not long ago. It's a terrific movie, brisk and funny and touching, and he was apparently much moved by the 41 men and women who testify to their admiration, knowing, as we hope he does, that there were countless others who would happily do the same. "I'm the luckiest man alive," the president said, when the lights went up. The country that was led by such an honorable man was, for a time, pretty lucky too. ♦

Must Reading

Our friend and contributor Joseph Epstein once called himself a "serious dilettante," which he defined as "someone who feels he needs to know nearly everything, but not all that much of any one thing in particular and certainly nothing in the kind of depth that will weigh him down."

That charming—and not entirely accurate—self-description appears in Epstein's new book from Axios Press, *A Literary Education and Other Essays*. At \$24 (and even less on Amazon.com!) it is, as they say, a steal: 537 pages of essays from *Commentary*, the *New Criterion*, THE WEEKLY STANDARD, and other publications that have had sense enough to publish a man commonly regarded as one of the finest essayists in English. What Epstein deprecates as a dilettante is on closer inspection a polymath, and the range of his curiosity, as reflected in this collection, is simply astounding. The reader is borne from Bernard Berenson to Brando to Bob & Ray to Buber to Brooks Brothers, and he hasn't even left the Bs yet. There's wisdom on every page, along with excellent jokes ("Why do grandchildren and grandparents get along so well? They have a common enemy") and vast erudition served with the lightest touch. "Learning to write sound, interesting, sometimes elegant prose is the work of a lifetime," Epstein once wrote. Here's the fruit of a lifetime well spent, much weightier perhaps than the writer himself realizes. Don't leave for the beach without it! ♦

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The Snake in the Garden

Arriving home the other afternoon by car, I noticed an elongated object straddling the lawn and driveway in front of our house. “Is that a snake?” I asked my alluring wife, whose fondness for such creatures is approximately the same as my own. But before she could answer, or even focus on the spectacle, I could see that it was: an eastern ratsnake, in fact, a few feet in length, recently emerged from hibernation and probably in search of a mate.

Snakes, while hardly ubiquitous, are not uncommon where I live in Northern Virginia; and since a little more than a third of my property is woodland, bisected by a meandering stream, I have encountered my share of serpents over the years. We spread mulch around our boxwood bushes, which they seem to savor, and there are plenty of rodents, especially mice, in the vicinity to keep them nourished.

I should point out, at this juncture, that I am not one of those people whose fondness for the natural world includes a special affinity for snakes: I find them as creepy and disconcerting as the vast majority of humans seem to do. But where I live, at least, the specimens are nonvenomous and, no doubt, beneficial to the local ecology. Accordingly, I tend to observe a live-and-let-live policy with regard to the snakes on my property; in any event, they are more frightened of me than I of them, and slither away.

Still, whenever I encounter one (as I did the other day), I am invariably reminded of D.H. Lawrence’s poem “Snake.” It is set in the warm Sicilian countryside, and Lawrence is about to approach a trough to collect some water for breakfast when he

notices that a snake has beaten him to it. After observing its movements for a minute or two (*He lifted his head from his drinking, as cattle do / And looked at me vaguely, as drinking cattle do*), he reflects that

*... voices in me said, If you were a man,
You would take a stick and break him
now, and finish him off.*

I don’t think it will come as a surprise to anyone to learn that, after much observation and discussion,



Lawrence does not beat the snake; but, being Lawrence, he is torn between admiration for what he perceives to be one of nature’s noble men and self-loathing for his instinct to kill it. In frustration, he tosses a log at the snake, which beats a hasty retreat—and Lawrence is especially ashamed of responding to *the voices of my accursed human education*. He wishes the snake would return so that he might make amends: *And so, I missed my chance with one of the lords / Of life. / And I have something to expiate: / A pettiness.*

D.H. Lawrence’s train of thought is reflected in me only in the sense that, depending on the circumstances, I equivocate about what to do. As I

say, my customary habit is to leave snakes alone; but there is one mitigating factor, especially at this time of year. Our yard is full of nesting birds, with their eggs and young, and ratsnakes, which are capable of climbing trees and poles, will feed on them. That, in my considered opinion, is a capital offense.

I arrived at this conclusion some 20 years ago when my son, then about 8 years old, informed me early one evening that he had seen a snake’s head peering out from one of our birdhouses. My fury at the thought of a snake devouring some fledglings was tempered only by uncertainty about what to do: It was too late to save the wrens, and I hadn’t the slightest idea how to extricate a snake from a birdhouse.

While my wife, young son, and even younger daughter watched—at a respectful distance—I tried banging the birdhouse repeatedly from behind, dousing its interior with a garden hose, even sticking a lit sparkler inside the hole, in a vain attempt to draw the snake out. Nothing worked. Finally, after pulling the house down from the tree branch and persuading my wife to shake it from behind when I gave the signal, I armed myself with an axe and awaited what promised to be a dramatic climax to my clumsy efforts at vengeance.

Unlike D.H. Lawrence, who encountered his serpent in solitude, I assumed that this was a scene—unprecedented in our family’s history—which my children would long remember. And so, as my wife shook the birdhouse, and the snake flew wildly through the air before hitting the ground, Daddy swung his axe with one mighty heave, and decapitated it.

Which is why, when I spied that rat snake in my driveway the other day, I succumbed to “the voices of my accursed human education” and staged a preemptive strike.

PHILIP TERZIAN

Our ‘Dead Broke’ Leaders

In the largest turnout in a congressional primary in the history of Virginia politics, the voters of the Commonwealth’s 7th Congressional District last Tuesday decisively chose not to renominate their seven-term representative, now serving as House majority leader, who had massively outspent his little-known challenger.

The reaction in our nation’s capital, 90 miles away? Pretend it didn’t happen. Or if you had to acknowledge it happened, pretend it was of no significance. Or if you had to acknowledge it was of some significance, pretend it was merely a product of unique and local circumstances. Above all: Don’t draw any meaningful conclusions from what happened. And truly above all: Don’t change your behavior in any important way.

So the night after Eric Cantor’s defeat, the House Republican whip, the amiable Kevin McCarthy—the apparent frontrunner to succeed Cantor as leader because intelligent conservatives don’t want to compete for the privilege of serving as No. 2 to the amiable speaker, John Boehner—was telling a group of lobbyists pulled together by the Chamber of Commerce in a private room in a D.C. steakhouse: Don’t worry, nothing much will change, it will be business as usual in the House of Representatives.

But change was in the air. McCarthy spoke at the Capital Grille. Team Cantor had ran up a campaign tab of \$168,637—more than the total campaign spending of his challenger Dave Brat—at competing steakhouses Bobby Van’s and BLT Steak, a mile away. Who says politicians aren’t responsive to voters?

Over in the other party, its apparently prohibitive presidential frontrunner Hillary Clinton told Diane Sawyer she and her husband Bill were “dead broke” when they left the White House in 2001. Presumably her \$8 million book advance, already signed and sealed, and her husband’s \$15 million advance, shortly to come, weren’t enough as the Clintons “struggled to, you know, piece together the resources for mortgages, for houses, for Chelsea’s education. You know, it was not easy.” Undoubtedly not. Presumably after a cavalcade of \$200,000 speeches and with a net worth of about \$200 million, it’s gotten somewhat easier, a bit less burdensome, for the Queen of the Democrats.

Meanwhile, in real America, veterans are denied care. Other Americans are forced to buy insurance they don’t want at costs they can’t afford while their taxes bail out

insurance companies in league with the Obama administration. Meanwhile, in the real world, Americans are abandoned when under attack by terrorists in Benghazi, and terrorists are released from Guantánamo in return for an American who abandoned his fellow soldiers.

And now the Obama administration stands and watches as Iraq, abandoned after a noble if difficult effort on the part of American soldiers and Marines sent to Iraq with the blessing not just of George W. Bush and John McCain but of Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden, and John Kerry, falls apart under the assault of an al Qaeda army that turns out not to be “on the run.” Or at least not “on the run” in the way President Obama meant. Nor does he mean to do anything about the slaughter in Syria and Iran’s quest for nuclear weapons. *Lector, si monumentum requiris, circumspice*. If you seek Obama’s memorial, look around you.

Of course, the task of the opposition party isn’t to contemplate memorials but to change the course of the nation. The good news for Republicans is that while their D.C. leadership, such as it is, remains relatively clueless, there’s an unusual number of good Senate and House candidates who, if elected this November, might actually shake things up. Even more important than 2014 is 2016. Republicans, for a change, aren’t saddled with the prospect of an out-of-touch insider as their presidential nominee. (Is it conceivable that no populist Democrat will see Hillary Clinton’s glaring weaknesses and take her on?) The populist mantle, the reformist mantle, the Main Street and Middle America mantles, are there for the Republican taking.

The voters of the 7th District in Virginia have rendered, on behalf of their fellow Americans, a verdict of no confidence in the Republican establishment. This November, voters across America will render, we’re increasingly confident, a verdict of no confidence in the Democratic establishment. One could say that the establishments of both parties are “dead broke.”

When Arthur Greenwood rose to speak in the House of Commons on September 2, 1939, responding to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain on behalf of the opposition Labour party, the redoubtable Leo Amery called out from the Conservative back benches: “Speak for England!” Will a Republican presidential candidate, in this moment of confusion and crisis, rise to speak for America?

—William Kristol

Don't Go There

That the North Korean regime has taken another American tourist hostage—this time it's one Jeffrey Edward Fowle of Miamisburg, Ohio, who was seized in May after a Bible was reportedly discovered in his hotel room—is hardly surprising. North Korea is ferociously repressive, and, as Paul Marshall notes elsewhere in this issue, it targets Christians. What is odd is that the United States continues to allow Americans to travel to North Korea without any restrictions.

North Korea routinely kidnaps foreigners and holds them for ransom; Fowle is in fact one of three Americans held there now, the other two being tourist Matthew Todd Miller, age 24, seized in April, apparently as he entered the country, and Kenneth Bae of Washington state, accused of subversive proselytizing and now serving a 15-year sentence. In the past five years alone, at least nine Americans have been imprisoned by the Stalinist state. Six, happily, have been released. But freeing them came at great cost to the United States.

Americans rightly object to their fellow countrymen being held captive in foreign lands and support strong actions to bring them home. But doing so can have unseemly consequences. In 2009, for example, in what was a major propaganda coup for then-Dear Leader Kim Jong-il (he's now the dearly departed leader), former president Bill Clinton flew to Pyongyang to rescue two American television journalists who had been sentenced to 12 years' hard labor. In 2010, it took a plea from another former president, Jimmy Carter, and a visit from a U.S. special envoy to secure the release of a tourist who had been detained for "proselytizing." These gestures by important Americans greatly enhanced the prestige of North Korea. One can only conjecture (and shudder to think) how much money we handed over to the Kim regime to secure the release of our citizens.

Luckily, there's an elegant solution to this conundrum: The United States should ban travel to North Korea by American citizens. It's a policy that would make both strategic and moral sense.

The North Korean regime is desperate for cash. That is a good thing. The interests of the rulers are in direct conflict with the interests of their oppressed people—and the interests of the wider world. Money that dictator Kim Jong-un doesn't have is money that can't be used to run his network of labor camps or advance his nuclear weapons program.

Pyongyang's precarious financial position is not solely a result of decades of grotesque economic mismanagement; it's also a result of American and U.N. sanctions on the regime, which have greatly hampered its ability to raise cash, particularly foreign currency. Indeed, the whole point of the sanctions is to starve the regime of funding through

policies like banking sanctions, bans on cash transfers, and bans on the export of luxury goods to the country.

Tourism stands out as a glaring exception; without a travel ban, the sanctions are porous, even incoherent. The thousands of tourists who visit each year pay thousands of dollars to the Kim regime for the "privilege." In so doing, they prop up an evil despotism that threatens the United States and allies like South Korea and Japan. Not only that, they obviously put themselves at great risk; the opportunity to kidnap Americans is too tempting to resist. As the Bowe Bergdahl brouhaha reminds us, our enemies are keenly aware that we're willing to overpay to get our citizens back.

Some may point to the ban on travel to Cuba, in effect since 1962, as an example of such a policy "failing"—after all, the Castro regime endures. But the analogy is imperfect, erroneous even, because the ban on travel to Cuba is so weak. There are numerous ways into Cuba through Canada and Mexico, and millions of Americans have visited with no consequences. This wouldn't be the case with North Korea, with only a few flights a week from Beijing to Pyongyang. Moreover, the United States regularly allows tour groups to visit Cuba on "cultural exchanges," undermining the ban. And Cuban émigrés are allowed to visit every three years, as more than half a million do each year. Properly designed, a North Korea travel ban would have no such loopholes.

Of course, rather than a travel ban, the government could adopt a "Travel at Your Own Risk" policy, whereby the State Department would make it clear that it wouldn't be bailing out any citizens foolhardy enough to get trapped in North Korea. But it's doubtful that such a policy would last: If and when an American were taken hostage, it's hard to imagine the State Department simply consigning him to his fate.

For all these reasons, it's better to have a clean travel ban. The State Department did post a "travel warning" about North Korea in November 2013, but it has manifestly failed to dissuade Americans from traveling there.

A travel ban is not a policy to take lightly—it limits Americans' freedom of movement, an essential liberty. But in the case of North Korea, it's worth the cost. The interests of U.S. national security and the well-being of the North Korean people outstrip the right of "misery tourists" and Stalinist fellow travelers to visit a theme park of totalitarianism and contribute financially to the world's cruelest regime. It's not as if touring North Korea had educational benefits, either; tourists are on a tightly controlled itinerary, and the entire time they're in the country they're accompanied by minders, who ensure that no spontaneous interactions with local people occur.

Those with a genuine interest in Korean culture, meanwhile, needn't despair: Instead of visiting the living hell that is North Korea, they would remain free to travel to the thriving, beautiful, and democratic country of 50 million that lies just south of the 38th parallel. Seoul is lovely this time of year.

—Ethan Epstein

Meet the New Boss

The Cantor succession.

BY FRED BARNES

Kevin McCarthy won the race to replace Eric Cantor as House majority leader in the blink of an eye. Less than 24 hours after Cantor's defeat in a Republican primary in Virginia, McCarthy, the majority whip, had amassed enough pledges to be confident of winning the vote for a new Republican leader, short of some unforeseen late challenge.

He had met with 30 House allies at 3 P.M. the day after Cantor's unexpected loss. At 3:45 P.M., the meeting broke up and his supporters began lining up votes. By 7 P.M., when McCarthy joined a dinner with lobbyists, he was certain of winning and said so, though the official vote won't be until June 19.

How did he pull it off so swiftly? Planning and organization are lost arts in politics, often seen as less important than money, television ads, and social media. But in the small world of 233 House Republicans, they are everything. McCarthy isn't known for expertise on policy or a deep ideological commitment. On preparedness, however, he excels.

His short-lived opponent for majority leader, Pete Sessions of Texas, had no chance of catching McCarthy. They had clashed before, and their personal relationship is cool. When Republicans captured the House in the 2010 midterms, both men were eager to become majority whip, the number three position in the House

hierarchy. McCarthy locked up that post quickly, and Sessions thought better of challenging him, despite having played an important role in Republicans' gain of 63 seats when he was head of the House Republican campaign committee. Last week, 48 hours after Cantor's defeat, Sessions withdrew from the race, crushed by the McCarthy juggernaut.

McCarthy, who represents the most Republican congressional district in California, began planning his bid for majority leader months ago. It was based on the assumption that House speaker John Boehner would step down as early as 2015 and Cantor would succeed him. Now McCarthy, assuming Republicans hold the House with him as



Kevin McCarthy

leader, is in the position that Cantor would have been in.

As whip, he had an advantage over Sessions. He had an organization of deputy whips experienced in lining up votes, and he deployed them the moment Cantor lost. He also had the backing of a number of senior Republicans—the so-called establishment.

The group of 30 at the 3 P.M. meeting included committee chairmen Fred Upton of Energy and Commerce, Hal Rogers of Appropriations, and Dave Camp of Ways and Means, plus influential younger House members Patrick McHenry of North Carolina, Trey Gowdy of South Carolina, and Tom Rooney of Florida.

There was another significant factor in the success of McCarthy's blitz. Jeb Hensarling of Texas, the chairman

of the Financial Services Committee, decided against running for majority leader. Widely respected among Republicans, he would have been a more formidable candidate than Sessions. Given his differences with Boehner on issues, he concluded it would be too troublesome to be Boehner's second in command.

Besides, Hensarling is interested in the speakership, not being the party's floor leader in the House. If the expected had happened—Boehner's voluntary resignation—Hensarling would have been ready to run against Cantor for speaker. But Boehner told House Republicans last week he intends to remain speaker.

Nonetheless, a contest to succeed Boehner may still happen. Without 10 to 12 Republican pickups in November's midterm elections, Boehner may not have the votes to win. Nine Republicans declined to vote for him in 2013, and more may in 2015. Combined with Democrats, who can be counted on to vote in unison against Boehner, he may be facing defeat. If so, he may step down before a vote.

That would prompt Hensarling to step forward. Whether McCarthy would also run for speaker is unclear, since he would just be settling in as majority leader. (Cantor ceases to be leader on July 31.) Hensarling, by the way, is not inclined to challenge Boehner directly, preferring to wait until the speakership is open.

McCarthy's personality is one of his political strengths, perhaps his greatest. He's surely the best-liked Republican in the House, at least among Republicans. He was elected in 2006 along with Peter Roskam of Illinois and Michele Bachmann of Minnesota. For two decades, he worked for Bill Thomas, a brainy GOP House member, and ran his California office.

The question is, how conservative is he? He's not a Tea Party Republican, a libertarian, or a neocon. He's been called "pragmatic," but that word is so vague as to be meaningless. To me, he's a conventional conservative like most Republicans, Ronald Reagan included. He rounded up votes to pass Paul Ryan's budgets, voted against

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TARP, and won passage of free trade agreements. The *Wall Street Journal*, while urging Hensarling to run for majority leader, likened McCarthy to Boehner and said he's "known more for his political than policy chops." Nothing wrong with that.

In 2007, THE WEEKLY STANDARD dubbed McCarthy, Cantor, and Ryan "Young Guns." Ryan was the policy guy, Cantor was on the leadership track, and McCarthy was noted for his skill as a political strategist. They

were complementary. Ryan and Cantor endorsed McCarthy for majority leader last week.

Being good at strategy doesn't mean one is bereft of other skills, and McCarthy isn't. But to be an effective GOP leader in Congress, a knack for strategy—how best to sell conservative policies, big ones and small ones—is necessary. In the past few years, we haven't seen much of it. If all goes well, McCarthy can change that. ♦

say that the GOP is in the pocket of big business, that it does not care about average people, and that its policies will hurt Main Street for the sake of Wall Street.

This is hypocrisy, considering the tens of millions Democrats have collected from the likes of Goldman Sachs. But politics is no place for intellectual consistency. More important, this attack is more or less the one Dave Brat used on Eric Cantor in a *Republican* primary. One Brat campaign item read: "There are 20 million Americans who can't find a full-time job. But Eric Cantor wants to give corporations another 20 million foreign workers to hire instead."

When liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans agree on the political potency of a message, it's worth pausing to wonder if they're right. Of course, Republicans need not respond by adopting the positions of Elizabeth Warren and calling for onerous regulations on private enterprise and a Thomas Piketty-style redistribution of wealth. In fact, those leftist prescriptions are quite susceptible to capture by the very "malefactors of great wealth" whom the Democrats malign. Rather, the GOP emphasis could be on limiting the reach of government in ways that protect and advance the middle class, including stopping needless handouts to nonworkers on the one hand and special access for the well-heeled on the other.

The GOP leadership has failed to do this. Three examples come to mind. The first is the farm bill, which has been an embarrassment for generations. There is no good economic argument for this boondoggle. Even farmers do not seem to want it; the entire Kansas House delegation voted against it, yet there is no populist revolt brewing in the Sunflower State against Tim Huelskamp, who represents the rural, western half. The farm bill can't be killed because a fraction of wealthy farmers and agribusinesses profit from it, and they have high-powered lobbyists with deep connections to the Republican establishment.

The second is the Export-Import

Voters vs. Leaders

The Republican base despises the Republican apex. BY JAY COST

House majority leader Eric Cantor's stunning primary loss to Dave Brat, an underfunded, virtually unknown challenger, has a simple explanation: Republican voters don't much care for their own party's politicians these days. That's why they keep losing to amateurs and upstarts.

The poll data could not be clearer. In December 2013, Fox News asked voters what they thought of both congressional parties. The country as a whole has a negative view of both of them. Democrats, however, had a favorable impression of their own side, by a margin of 63-33 percent, and liberals supported congressional Democrats 51-43 percent. Republicans, by contrast, disliked their side in Congress 37-57 percent; among conservatives it was worse, 28-67 percent. This is no outlier, either. Fox has been getting the same answers from voters since 2010.

Obviously, not every Republican incumbent is in jeopardy. The same night Eric Cantor lost his primary by a large margin, Senator Lindsey Graham of South Carolina cruised to

victory, despite being often at odds with the conservative base. Similarly, Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell—who is at least as identified with the Republican leadership in the public mind as Cantor—easily bested a Tea Party challenger last month. What is tricky about these insurgents is that they are first-time candidates like Brat or ambitious pushers like Chris McDaniel, the Mississippi state senator who challenged Senator Thad Cochran rather than "wait his turn." It's hard to predict which ones will be effective. Much depends on the quality of the challenger's campaign and the response of the incumbent.

But there is also a larger point to the Cantor defeat and the upsets that preceded it. They are the symptom of a problem in the GOP. Political parties are majority-seeking coalitions; they either win with sufficient regularity or they go out of business, as the Whigs and the Federalists did. And a party's chances of winning are very bad indeed when its own side thinks it is doing a lousy job.

What, then, is to be done? Probably Republicans should start by considering the rhetoric of their harshest critics. When Democrats talk to voters about the Republican party, they

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Bank, which is little more than a means to funnel taxpayer money to corporate heavyweights like Boeing. There is no good reason for the Ex-Im Bank, except that it provides a hefty subsidy to industries with strong lobbying operations. The GOP-controlled House of Representatives dutifully voted to reauthorize it last year.

The third is immigration reform. Why the push for this now? Certainly, there is no clamor in the electorate. Mitt Romney failed to capture the White House because of stinging defeats in the Rust and Farm Belts, not because he lost among Latino voters allegedly concerned with immigration reform. Moreover, there is a massive supply glut in today's labor market, and the Congressional Budget Office predicted that the Senate bill would depress wages and increase unemployment. Why pursue such a measure? Dave Brat has the answer: Bigwig donors and K Street lobbyists want it.

Ask your average voter about the farm bill, the Ex-Im Bank, or the CBO scoring of the immigration bill, and you will get blank stares. Even so, the dribs and drabs that voters hear about the Republican party do accumulate, creating the widespread impression that the party stands not with the middle class, but with the wealthy and well connected.

If the GOP political class ever wants to return to a national majority, it needs to change that impression. Talking points, clever slogans, and a handful of niche issues that target middle-class voters are insufficient. The party's reputation needs to be drastically reformed. It has to cleanse itself of cronyism and clientelism, then call for a similar purification of the federal government. This process begins with the aforementioned policies, but it surely does not end with them.

Until that day, angry Republican voters will continue to use primary elections to knock off unsuspecting incumbents, and disaffected independents—the voters who so often decide general elections—will keep favoring the Democrats. ♦

The Brat Pack

Eric Cantor's disaffected constituents throw him out. **BY MICHAEL WARREN**

Nancy Russell, the chair of the Hanover County GOP, isn't shy about saying she supported Rep. Eric Cantor in his Virginia primary race last week. She expected most of her fellow Republicans in the 7th District, which stretches from the northern suburbs of Richmond north and west into the

sitting majority leader, beating Cantor by 12 percentage points and more than 7,000 votes. Cantor lost even in his supposed strongholds in the Richmond suburbs, including Hanover County, which cast the third-highest number of votes in the district, by a whopping 36 percentage points. It was all the more shocking since in 2012 Cantor sailed through his primary with 79 percent of the vote.

The raw numbers underscore just how badly Cantor was beaten. Brat won about 36,000 votes to Cantor's nearly 29,000. Had Cantor held on to the more than 37,000 votes he got in the 2012 primary, Dave Brat's name would be a footnote in the political history books. Instead, observers in Washington and elsewhere have had to scramble to figure out just who Brat is, how to pronounce his name (it rhymes with "cat"), and how he pulled off the political upset of the century.



Dave Brat and wife Laura on primary night, June 10

rural counties toward Washington, to do the same. Even so, she had heard neighbor after neighbor say they were fed up with their congressman. "I felt certain Eric was not going to take Hanover," says Russell.

Cantor, 51, was hardly in the district, they told her. He supported amnesty for illegal immigrants. He was getting too comfortable in Washington. Even some who liked the House majority leader said they planned on voting for Dave Brat, a 49-year-old professor of economics and Cantor's primary challenger, just to "send him a message."

Message received. Brat became the first primary candidate ever to defeat a

Born in Michigan, Brat attended Hope College, a conservative school with Calvinist roots near Lake Michigan. He graduated in 1986 with a degree in business administration, after which he worked for a year as a consultant for accounting giant Arthur Andersen. Brat then left the company to attend Princeton Theological Seminary, graduating with a Master of Divinity degree in 1990.

But Brat didn't go into the ministry or back to consulting. That same year, he began an economics Ph.D. at American University in Washington, D.C., which he completed in 1995. In 1996, he joined the faculty of the economics department at Randolph-Macon College, a small liberal arts school in Ashland, Va., and since

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2005, he's been the department chair. As an academic, Brat has been prolific but mostly unremarkable. His calling appears to have been as a teacher and administrator. Former students commenting on his page at RateMyProfessors.com call him a "very good teacher and straightforward," "unparalleled in his knowledge," and, interestingly, "total eye candy."

Not one of his students described him as a "liberal," but that's exactly how the Cantor campaign defined Brat in one TV ad that called him a "liberal college professor." The evidence for that claim was Brat's work in what was essentially an honorary advisory position to former Democratic governor Tim Kaine. Russell says the "liberal professor" ad was Cantor's first folly. The lame charge didn't just fall flat—it reeked of desperation. "People were mad about that," says Russell.

While hardly a liberal, Brat isn't easy to pin down ideologically. The "main thing" Brat says he's interested in is "a commitment to free markets." The *New York Times* described him in their front-page story Wednesday as a "Tea Party-backed economics professor" before acknowledging that Brat had "little help from national groups that have funded Tea Party challengers." And in his election-night appearance with Fox News host Sean Hannity, Brat downplayed the connection. "I had . . . just wonderful people in the Tea Party and grassroots helping me out, and they are clearly responsible for the win," he said. "But I ran on the Republican principles."

To Brat, though, following Republican and free-market principles doesn't necessarily mean supporting policies that benefit corporate America. In fact, his most focused attack on Cantor was that the majority leader was in the pocket of big business, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and other corporate interests—particularly on immigration reform. Cantor had been vocal in the past about his desire to pass some kind of immigration bill, one that opponents suggest would offer amnesty to illegal immigrants in the country currently and in the future.

Unlike some anti-amnesty activists,

Brat didn't go nativist in his criticisms. His vastly underfunded campaign (Cantor may have outspent him by as much as 40 to 1) sent out a simple mailer with a photo featuring a smiling Cantor standing with Silicon Valley billionaire and immigration reform advocate Mark Zuckerberg at Facebook's headquarters. "There are 20 million Americans who can't find a full-time job. But Eric Cantor wants to give corporations another 20 million foreign workers to hire instead," reads the text.

"Eric Cantor doesn't represent you," Brat wrote in an op-ed for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* published just days before the election. "He represents large corporations seeking a never-ending supply of cheap foreign labor. He doesn't care about how this will affect your livelihood, your schools, your tax bills or your kids' chances of finding a job."

It was a message of economic populism, but more broadly it was an anti-Washington message. And there are few House members more at home in

D.C. than Eric Cantor. A seven-term congressman, he rose rapidly through the ranks of GOP leadership, gaining a conservative voting record as well as a reputation as a Capitol Hill operator. Cantor was widely seen as a top pick to succeed John Boehner when the House speaker retires. He was also a dogged fundraiser for his fellow Republicans. One embarrassing detail reported after the election: Cantor had spent more of his campaign cash at D.C.-area steakhouses for fundraising events than Brat had spent on his entire primary campaign.

As majority leader, Cantor likely expected Republican voters to appreciate their congressman's proximity to the center of political power in this country. But that's not what Nancy Russell heard from her fellow Virginia Republicans. "I almost feel like they'd rather *not* have their representative in the leadership," she says. In a cautionary tale for any ambitious member of Congress, Cantor's success in Washington was, back home, his ultimate undoing. ♦

A Referendum on Earmarks

A curious challenge to a GOP incumbent.

BY MARK HEMINGWAY

Republican primary challenges are all the rage these days. The GOP is reeling from House majority leader Eric Cantor's loss last week in Virginia to David Brat, a relatively unknown economics professor who campaigned on local issues and against the GOP leadership's flirtation with immigration amnesty. Brat was outspent by as much as 40 to 1 and still beat a sitting majority leader—that hadn't happened since the position

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was created in 1899. In Mississippi, Tea Party favorite Chris McDaniel has forced Senator Thad Cochran into a runoff, despite a scandal-plagued campaign. Other Senate Republicans, such as minority leader Mitch McConnell and South Carolina's Lindsey Graham managed to fend off primary opponents, but there's little question that GOP incumbents are feeling besieged by grassroots challenges.

Then there's the primary race heating up in Kansas's 4th District, which is a quixotic role reversal—a longtime congressman, Todd Tiahrt, is trying

to take back his seat from Rep. Mike Pompeo, who was elected in the Tea Party wave of 2010. There did not appear to be any previous tensions between the two men; Pompeo did not unseat Tiahrt. After serving eight terms, Tiahrt relinquished his seat to run for the Senate. He lost in the 2010 primary to Sen. Jerry Moran. At the time, Tiahrt said he'd "sleep well at night" knowing Pompeo was replacing him. Kent Bush, a syndicated Kansas columnist, sums up the rationale behind Tiahrt's current challenge this way: "You know that guy I endorsed twice for Congress? He is terrible. You should elect me instead."

To the extent that GOP primary challenges have been successful, it's because primary opponents have run to the right of incumbents. Tiahrt's got his work cut out for him here. In May, *National Journal* rated Kansas's congressional delegation the most conservative in the country, and Pompeo isn't dragging down the delegation's average. It's also difficult to argue that Pompeo, a West Point and Harvard Law grad, is any kind of knuckle-dragger. Pompeo also has an impressive roster of supporters—Kansans for Life, the Kansas Farm Bureau, FreedomWorks, the Club for Growth, and Americans for Prosperity, to name a few.

So why is Tiahrt running? "There are a number of things happening in the local economy which are devastating to the 4th District of Kansas. When Mr. Tiahrt was in office before, one of the main things he did [was support] the aviation and aerospace industries here in the 4th District—Wichita in particular," Robert Noland, Tiahrt's campaign manager, tells THE WEEKLY STANDARD. "Half our aviation companies have left in the past couple years. They've moved on to other places. And when Todd was in office he did a lot of work to try to keep jobs here, keep people going, and help the local economy. The current congressman hasn't paid as much attention to those things." In particular, Noland notes that on May 30, Pompeo introduced an amendment to shut down the federal Economic Development Administration—a day after the same agency

announced southern Kansas was being labeled a manufacturing zone and was thus eligible for federal largesse that might help preserve jobs.

There's a thin line, however, between watching out for your district's economic interests and the temptation to gorge on pork. Tiahrt's career in Congress saw him weaving all over that line. "You know he talks openly about the need to bring back earmarks," says Jim Richardson, Pompeo's campaign manager—who also spent six years working for Tiahrt. The House Republican Conference instituted an earmark ban shortly after the GOP's historic victory in 2010, just as Tiahrt was on his way out. His last two years in office, Tiahrt

doled out \$33 million in earmarks to aviation companies alone. In 2010, the House Ethics Committee opened an investigation into Tiahrt's ties to the PMA Group, a lobbying firm raided by the FBI that was arranging hefty campaign donations for defense appropriators in exchange for earmarks. Later that year, it was reported that interests receiving earmarks from Tiahrt had given him \$46,000 in campaign donations—the second-highest total in Congress. During Tiahrt's unsuccessful Senate bid, Moran made an issue of Tiahrt's earmarks. Even then, he continued to defend the practice to the *Wichita Eagle*. "Everybody in Kansas asks for earmarks," he said. "Everybody."

By contrast, Pompeo has been a fierce critic of earmarking. In his press release announcing his amendment to shutter the Economic Development Administration, he refers to it as the "Earmark Distribution Agency." This opposition is not without political costs—the economic problems in Pompeo's district are real. "Boeing and Beechcraft are no longer in business in Wichita," Tiahrt wrote in a letter announcing his candidacy. "Many will remember the fight I led to overturn the largest defense contract in history when the U.S. government sought to outsource the purchase of air refueling

tankers from a French aerospace company. I was saddened when more recently the government outsourced other aviation contracts to Brazil."

For his part, Pompeo's office notes that the congressman previously worked in the aviation industry and emphatically rejects the insinuation that he doesn't care. Pompeo introduced the Small Airplane Revitalization Act, which passed the House last year. The bill would direct the FAA to streamline the process for aircraft safety approval, as well as improve the regulatory framework to encourage innovation in the aviation industry. That's a tangible initiative, even if it's yet to bear fruit. "The two bills

that [Tiahrt] passed in his entire 16 years in Congress were to rename post offices," says Richardson. But Pompeo still must contend with the reality that the aviation industry in his district hasn't flourished on his watch. Tiahrt's betting that conservative primary voters will place anxiety about losing their jobs over

a more principled desire to reject federal influence.

It's certainly a novel approach in the Tea Party era for a GOP candidate to signal they intend to bring home the federal bacon. But Tiahrt's also trying to outflank Pompeo on the right on some key issues. He accuses Pompeo of "support for numerous bills funding Obamacare," which is a tendentious spin on routine budget votes. It's also a hollow criticism considering Tiahrt recently told the Butler County *Times-Gazette*, "Some provisions in Obamacare should remain." Pompeo is also a strong supporter of the military and intelligence communities, and has defended the NSA as "doing important work." Accordingly, Tiahrt criticizes Pompeo's "support of NSA surveillance of American citizens." But Tiahrt was formerly a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. A cached copy of ToddTiahrt.com brags that "his experience from working for an aerospace company was beneficial to the committee in policy



Todd Tiahrt

development addressing our nation's information gathering hardware decisions." While still in office, Tiahrt was in a prime position to do something about NSA overreach. Raising the objection now seems opportunistic.

Tiahrt is "clearly just lost in terms of what to attack Mike on so he's trying these different attack lines," says Richardson. Pompeo's camp also suggests there may be more to Tiahrt's motivations than is readily apparent. Pompeo's staff notes that a few days after Tiahrt announced, an independent expenditure group made a \$15,500 ad buy on his behalf. The name on the FEC paperwork? "Willis Hartman," aka Wink Hartman, the same man who ran against Pompeo in the 2010 primary and might be nursing a grudge. Hartman, whose family owns Hartman Oil, burned through \$2 million of his considerable fortune in his unsuccessful bid against Pompeo. After his loss, Hartman floated the idea of running as a Libertarian in the general election to defeat

Pompeo. Since leaving Congress, the offices for Tiahrt's consulting operation have been housed in a building owned by Hartman. Might more Hartman money appear to support the Tiahrt campaign?

It may simply be that Tiahrt sees an opportunity to get his old job back because he's intimately familiar with the electoral landscape and thinks Pompeo is out of touch. "When Todd was in Congress, he was in the district a lot. Every chance he could, he came back to Kansas," says Noland. "This is where he wanted to be, meeting with people, having meetings. We've visited with folks who tell us they don't hear from Mike unless it's election time."

However, there are no outward signs this is a potent charge. In just two terms in Congress, Pompeo has already proven himself a formidable politician with a modest national profile. Nor is Pompeo just resting on his laurels—unusually for an incumbent, he's challenged Tiahrt to five debates between now and the August 5 primary. ♦

work of identifying and eliminating structural obstacles to economic dynamism. That work is uncomfortable, as it forces conservatives to come to terms with claims made more often by the left than the right about our political and economic systems. But it is necessary, and not just as a corrective to the left's misguided arguments; it will also lead to sounder public policy.

Left-wing populists like Elizabeth Warren argue that the American vision of democratic capitalism is incapable of living up to its ideal, a society of upward mobility, widespread prosperity, and opportunity for all. "The game right now in America is rigged," Warren says. "It is rigged so that those at the top keep doing better and better, and everyone else is under increasing pressure, is under increasing economic strain. The rules don't get better for America's middle class. The rules are getting better for those who are a thin slice at the top."

Republican political professionals might prefer to dismiss such assertions, but most Americans—conservatives included—are indeed frustrated with a political economy that increasingly seems to benefit the well-connected. Tea Partiers have as much trouble as Occupy protesters identifying with bailed-out mortgage lenders and Washington lobbyists. Elizabeth Warren's policy prescriptions may be unwise, but the critique of American capitalism underlying them has more resonance than we conservatives like to admit. Until we begin to address the tension between the interests of K Street's clients and the interests of most Americans, many voters who might be inclined to agree with us will stay home.

Conservatives should recognize, moreover, that there is nothing conservative about the status quo that has engendered such cynicism in so many Americans. Where the left errs is not in its frustration with our current system but in its diagnosis that the problem is the free market itself. The truth of the matter is perfectly compatible with conservatism: Many of big business's greatest advantages over small competitors stem not from scale

The Crony Capital

Capitalism, Washington, D.C., style.

BY JIM DEMINT & MIKE NEEDHAM

This year's turbulent primary season, which hit a crescendo this month with David Brat's upset victory over House majority leader Eric Cantor in the Republican primary for Virginia's 7th Congressional District, is an opportunity for conservatives to reflect. Why have our political leaders struggled so much to capture the enthusiasm of the conservative grassroots? Why did Republicans fail to win power in the last national election, despite wide distaste for the

president's signature legislation? Is the Tea Party's agenda the solution to that failure or the problem? To many observers, the answers are both obvious and discouraging: The messages most appealing to the conservative base do not resonate with the general public, and the messages most likely to sway swing voters do little to energize conservatives. The movement is trapped in a double-bind.

This view is wrong. Not all of the concerns of today's grassroots are fundamentally about left versus right, and not all political appeals to the center are bound to alienate conservatives.

For too long, conservatives have lazily substituted rhetoric about free markets and lower taxes for the hard

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achieved through success in the free market but from success in capturing the levers of political power.

Sometimes, the means employed by politicians to protect big business are clear: subsidies and bailouts delivered to political allies, for example. Others are less obvious: licensing requirements easily overcome by large-scale enterprises but especially onerous for small-staff operations; tax loopholes available only to those who can afford savvy tax lawyers; complex regulations comprehensible only to experts in administrative procedure.

These decrees kill competition, and in so doing, they don't merely hurt small business; everyone in the market suffers. There's a reason most Americans are struggling to keep up with essential expenses such as housing and health care. Government policy directly insulates entrenched players in these industries from competition while providing them taxpayer-funded financial support. This nexus of big business and big government is a recipe for greater costs for most Americans, through higher prices and higher taxes.

Five and a half years into the Obama era, a healthy conservative movement would be well positioned to highlight the link between big government and corporate cronyism. President Obama's stimulus package, supposedly passed to address unemployment, functioned primarily to line the pockets of well-connected unions and firms like Solyn-dra rather than to build a foundation for a broad-based recovery. Obamacare, professedly designed to reduce costs, has served instead to increase premiums, limit choice, and guarantee insurers a steady stream of revenue. The Dodd-Frank reform, billed as a measure that would protect consumers from future financial collapses, has only exacerbated the problem of too-big-to-fail, and Wall Street profits have soared in subsequent years. Corporate friends of the Obama administration and the Democratic party have done quite well in the Obama era, even as the economy has stagnated. Being well-connected does wonders.

There's nothing wrong with soaring profits, as long as they don't come

at the expense of the public weal. Irving Kristol once observed that big business "straddles, uncomfortably and uncertainly, both the private and public sectors of our 'mixed economy.'" The discomfort is disappearing. In the Obama era, big business seems to prefer sure profits guaranteed by government to the risks of competition.

Unfortunately, because many voters still perceive Republicans as pro-business rather than pro-market, the party is poorly positioned to articulate this critique. Congressional leadership's obsession of late with amnesty for illegal immigrants—a priority for big business that remains anathema to Main Street—has done the conservative movement no favors in this regard. Perceptions can change, but only if political leaders claiming the mantle of Reagan make some difficult decisions. Congressional leaders have numerous opportunities to break with the politics of crony capitalism this year, but only if they are willing to upset powerful corporate interests in the process.

Consider the Export-Import Bank, up for congressional reauthorization this year. A New Deal program created to make loans to the Soviet Union, it has been used for the last 70 years to make loan guarantees that help some American exporters compete in foreign markets. The operative word here is "some." Only 2 percent of American exports receive taxpayer-backed guarantees. In 2012, one corporation, Boeing, took 80 percent of the guarantees—\$12.2 billion. Conservatives seeking to draw a contrast with the left would allow the bank to expire and leave the defense of cronyism and corporate welfare to the opposition. They must be ready, however, for backlash from its beneficiaries.

The same is true of the broken "tax extender" process. Each year, Congress extends a block of short-term tax provisions in ostensibly temporary legislation. Included are minor, obscure tax breaks—tax credits for railroad track maintenance and mine rescue team training, for example—as well as major provisions, such as the research and development tax credit. Because

the extenders tend to be considered as a group rather than separately, many schemes that would never survive individual scrutiny are propelled on the popularity of bigger provisions with larger constituencies. Like the now-dead earmarks, extenders are a way of doing business that encourages favor-trading and rent-seeking. Unsurprisingly, the annual extender package attracts more than its fair share of attention from lobbyists and other influence peddlers. Conservatives should recognize such processes as detrimental to the long-term interests of our movement and make an ultimatum: Congress allows each extender to rise or fall on its own merits through individual votes or lets the entire package die.

Housing finance represents another area in which fealty to special interests has prevented right-leaning politicians from taking the high ground. In the wake of the financial crisis of 2008, few Americans are sympathetic to the government-sponsored entities whose conduct triggered the collapse. Yet Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac remain, and the hedge funds that bet big on their taxpayer-backed recovery are emboldened. They are running advertisements opposing reform in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* and threatening behind the scenes to withhold campaign contributions from noncompliant members of Congress. National realtor lobbies have been no less active on the issue, and lawmakers who should know better have shielded Fannie and Freddie from the extinction they deserve. A conservative House leadership would advance to a floor vote House Financial Services Committee chairman Jeb Hensarling's PATH (Protecting American Taxpayers and Homeowners) Act, which would wind down Fannie and Freddie in five years. It would send a powerful message that the Republican party will not be intimidated from reforming the system that brought about the greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression.

Obamacare, of course, remains the centerpiece issue of 2014, and conservatives cannot afford to ignore it. Even here, joined with the effort

to repeal the law and enact reforms that empower patients and doctors, conservatives have an opportunity to draw a contrast with the left's favoritism for big business: They can work to eliminate the "risk corridor" insurance company bailout program designed to insulate insurers from the market dysfunction introduced by the law's other provisions.

Candidates of any stripe looking toward November would be remiss in ignoring such a rare overlap in partisan interests. Most rank-and-file liberals despise the perceived soullessness and impunity of "big business," and most conservatives despise government handouts in any form—to say nothing of the constitutional issues involved. The only people remaining

to oppose reform are the leadership of both parties, who rarely enjoy rocking a boat full of campaign contributions. But even they can be shamed into action if inaction is made too politically expensive an option.

Whether it's ending Ex-Im, killing subsidies, or preventing further bailouts, conservatives have a sterling opportunity at this moment of uncertainty to reintroduce themselves to their countrymen as their legitimate advocates in Washington. They can hold the feet of faux-populist progressives to the fire, exposing them as the real shills for corporate interests.

We know that the conservative movement is for real capitalism and against the Crony Capital. Now is the time to prove it. ♦

vote. UKIP may have been assisted by a low turnout (34 percent), but it nonetheless became the first party other than Labour or Conservative to win a national election in over a century. Labour had to make do with regaining (and more) the ground it had lost in 2009 (a Labour government had been presiding over Britain's slice of the financial crisis), boosting its score from 15.7 percent to 25.4 percent. The Conservatives slumped from first to third place with 23.9 percent. Their coalition partners, the hopelessly Europhile Liberal Democrats, saw their vote cut by roughly half and their team of EU parliament members reduced from 11 to 1, a richly deserved fate marred only by its incompleteness.

But a few days later UKIP ran into a reminder that one barrier remains unbroken. On June 5, it failed yet again to win a seat in the House of Commons. On paper, the constituency—Newark, a pleasant Conservative-voting market town unlikely to be confused with its namesake in New Jersey—looked promising. UKIP had done well there in local elections in 2013 and had headed the poll in that part of Britain in the EU vote. Helping still further, Newark's (robustly right-wing) Tory MP had just resigned following a lobbying scandal that fit neatly into the UKIP narrative of establishment misrule. Typically, UKIP did not make the most of its opportunity. Perhaps tellingly, Farage opted not to run. Instead the party chose as its candidate a (robustly right-wing) septuagenarian member of the European parliament all too easy to caricature as UKIP at its most primitive.

The result was far from disgraceful: UKIP took over a quarter of the vote, up from the 3 percent or so its candidate managed in 2010. This was despite a concentrated Tory blitz (party workers, activists, and MPs by the hundred were shipped into Newark) that a hollowed-out Conservative party could not hope to reproduce on the national scale that a general election would require. Nevertheless UKIP's second place (the Tory candidate romped home) meant that the party still had no MPs, a failing frequently cited as a

Cameron Cornered

Are the Tories already doomed?

BY ANDREW STUTTAFORD

A time bomb does not have to be elegant; it just has to be lethal, primed, and in the right place when the moment comes. Britain's next general election is set for May 7, 2015. That is likely the day when David Cameron will pay the full price for failing to have defused the revolt on his right.

Britain's Euroskeptic U.K. Independence party (UKIP) is a poorly run protean mess, unhealthily dependent on the wit, zest, and charisma of its leader, Nigel Farage. And yet in the spirit of Farage (who has survived a plane crash, cancer, and being hit by a VW Beetle), UKIP keeps confounding those who so eagerly draft and redraft its obituary.

The run-up to the election to the European parliament in May was not the party's most glorious stretch. Sustained battering by mainstream media

and mainstream parties—much of it galvanized by UKIP's heretical emphasis on immigration control—took a toll, and was reinforced by campaign missteps (Google "steel band," "Croydon," and "UKIP" for one notably ludicrous instance), including a pre-election radio interview of Farage that went so badly that his spin doctor tried—on air—to bring it to a close.

Less than a week after that interview, Britons went to the ballot box, voting both in the EU poll and, in some regions, local elections too. Results for the latter were counted first. UKIP took 16.5 percent of the popular vote, down from the remarkable 23 percent the party had scored the preceding year, but a reasonable tally considering that these elections were held in less UKIP-friendly territory than in 2013.

The election for the European parliament, however, involved the whole country, and UKIP topped the poll with 27.5 percent, well up from the 16.5 percent it secured in the 2009 EU

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mark of UKIP's fundamental lack of seriousness. This was only underlined by the convivial Farage's decision to spend the day before the Newark vote at a tourism conference in Malta. And, yes, he was photographed there in the early hours with a blonde who was not Mrs. Farage. There was a respectable explanation, but . . .

Bellowing at Brussels and, for that matter, 10 Downing Street is an unsurprising response to both EU overreach and the metropolitan liberalism of David Cameron's government. There are numerous infuriated traditionally Conservative supporters who are prepared to "lend" a vote to UKIP in European and, increasingly, local elections, but will balk at doing anything that risks helping "Red Ed" Miliband's unsettlingly left-wing Labour party into government.

As they fully understand, voting for UKIP could easily do just that. Under Britain's first-past-the-post voting system, a protest vote can prove expensive. There's good evidence to suggest that UKIP ballots (around 3 percent of the total) cost the Tories an absolute majority in the 2010 general election. With UKIP now attracting growing numbers of former Labour voters, the math is trickier than it was, but a higher UKIP percentage would undoubtedly do even greater damage to the Conservatives in 2015.

Making the choice sharper still, David Cameron has committed to an in/out referendum on Britain's EU membership if he is reelected. Euroskeptics ought to remain, well, skeptical about this, not least because Cameron (a politician too unimaginative to contemplate a breach with Brussels) will try to gull Brits into the pro-EU camp with largely meaningless "concessions" allegedly wrung from the U.K.'s European partners. And he will probably succeed, meaning that Britain's long European nightmare will continue. On the other hand, Cameron's referendum would represent a chance, however remote, of a withdrawal, which is better than what Brussels-friendly Labour has on offer: nothing.

And right-of-center voters have another reason to be wary of voting for UKIP next year. "Europe" has evolved as an encapsulation of the broader discontent that many Tories (or former Tories) feel for Cameron's mushy brand of conservatism, a discontent brilliantly exploited by Farage, playing Mrs. Thatcher's finest tunes and meaning it. That has taken him a long way. The UKIP leader's conundrum now is somewhat similar, ironically, to that faced by Cameron



a little under a decade ago. Modern Britain is no longer the country that voted (often grudgingly) for the Iron Lady. Cameron tried to deal with that change by dragging the Conservative party to the center, calculating that the Tory right had nowhere else to go. Had it not been for Nigel Farage he might have gotten away with it.

The not unrelated difficulty for Farage is that he has harvested about as much of the right as he can, and thanks to the brutal math of first-past-the-post, that will not be enough to deliver the MPs to make the breakthrough he needs. So UKIP's leader has attempted to widen his support by reaching out to what he has described as "patriotic old

Labour" (put less diplomatically, the white working class), using immigration (Britain has received huge numbers of immigrants from elsewhere in the EU, immigrants that under EU law it is powerless to turn away) as the bridge to get there.

This has been a success, but it has involved downplaying UKIP's earlier free market vim. The evolution of "red UKIP" is less of a problem for the party's Conservative refugees than some of UKIP's intellectual cheerleaders might imagine: Standing up for socialized medicine and generous state pensions plays pretty well with an older, often far from affluent crowd. But throw in some other leftish sub-currents, add the harsher edge to the party's immigration rhetoric, and subtract some Thatcherite grace notes (talk of a flat tax has, for example, disappeared), and it becomes easy to suspect that a good number (especially on the upscale side of the social divide) of UKIP's once-Conservative or libertarian-inclined voters will return to the Tory fold, particularly with Ed dread to push them there.

But neither this, nor the unappealing Miliband's failure to click with the wider British electorate, nor the U.K.'s improving economic performance is likely to save Cameron.

Britain's embarrassingly outdated constituency boundaries favor Labour, which only has to win some 35 percent of the national vote to prevail. With the Liberal Democrats floundering, that modest target ought to be one Labour can hit despite recent stumbles in the opinion polls. UKIP meanwhile can expect to win few (if any) actual MPs once the general election comes round, but the party's share of the poll will not sink back to that 3 percent grabbed by UKIP in 2010: UKIP—and the loyalty it can expect—is now entrenched too deep for that. And it is still the Conservative party that will miss its defectors most. At this late stage, it's not clear what the Tories can do to entice enough of them back in time. ♦

Their 9/11 Role

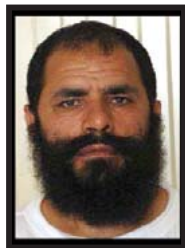
The Taliban Five are even worse than you've heard. **BY THOMAS JOSCELYN**

One of the five senior Taliban leaders transferred to Qatar in exchange for Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl played a key role in al Qaeda's plans leading up to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Mohammad Fazl, who served as the Taliban's army chief of staff and deputy defense minister prior to his detention at Guantánamo, did not have a hand in planning the actual 9/11 hijackings. Along with a notorious al Qaeda leader, however, Fazl did help coordinate a military offensive against the enemies of the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan the day before. And Osama bin Laden viewed that September 10 offensive as an essential part of al Qaeda's 9/11 plot.

The 9/11 Commission found that the hijackings in the United States on September 11, 2001, were the culmination of al Qaeda's three-step plan. First, on September 9, 2001, al Qaeda assassinated Northern Alliance commander Ahmed Shah Massoud in a suicide bombing. Massoud's death was a major gift to the Taliban because he was their chief rival and still controlled parts of the country. The assassination was also intended to weaken opposition to the Taliban and al Qaeda within Afghanistan before the United States could plan its retaliation for the most devastating terrorist attack in history. The Northern Alliance did, in fact, play a role in America's response.

The following day, September 10, al Qaeda and the Taliban took their second step. A "delayed Taliban offensive against the Northern Alliance was apparently coordinated to begin

as soon as [Massoud] was killed," the 9/11 Commission found. Fazl and one of bin Laden's chief lieutenants, Abdul Hadi al Iraqi, played key roles in this setup for 9/11. At the time, al Iraqi oversaw what al Qaeda called the Arab 55th Brigade, which was Osama bin Laden's chief fighting force inside Afghanistan and fought side by side with Mullah Omar's forces.



Mohammad Fazl

According to a leaked Joint Task Force Guantánamo (JTF-GTMO) threat assessment of Fazl, al Iraqi met with Fazl "on several occasions to include immediately following the assassination of [Massoud] in September 2001." Al Iraqi "stated the Northern Alliance was demoralized after the assassination and [he] met with [Fazl] to immediately coordinate an attack with the Taliban against the Northern Alliance."

Al Qaeda viewed both the assassination of Massoud and the offensive launched the following day as necessary components of the 9/11 plot. At first, Mullah Omar and other Taliban leaders were said to be wary of any spectacular attack against the United States, as it would likely draw fierce retaliation from the world's lone superpower. (The 9/11 Commission did find "some scant indications" that Omar "may have been reconciled to the 9/11 attacks by the time they occurred.") The plan to attack the United States was controversial even within al Qaeda, with some senior leaders objecting to the idea.

But Osama bin Laden and other al Qaeda leaders believed, correctly, that the first two steps of their plan would ensure the Taliban's continuing support. The 9/11 Commission found that as Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda's military chief at the time, Mohammed

Atef, "deliberated" the 9/11 hijackings "earlier in the year," they "would likely have remembered that Mullah Omar was dependent on them for the Massoud assassination and for vital support in the Taliban military operations." And, while the commission's sources were "not privy to the full scope of al Qaeda and Taliban planning," bin Laden and Atef "probably would have known, at least," that the "general Taliban offensive against the Northern Alliance" on September 10 "would rely on al Qaeda military support."

The 9/11 Commission's final report goes on to say that Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM), the mastermind of 9/11, remembers Atef "telling him that al Qaeda had an agreement with the Taliban to eliminate Massoud, after which the Taliban would begin an offensive to take over [all of] Afghanistan."

Mohammad Fazl's cooperation with al Iraqi was, therefore, part of the plan KSM remembered.

As controversy over the deal for Sgt. Bergdahl has continued to swirl, current and former Obama administration officials have sought to draw a sharp distinction between the threat posed by the Taliban Five and al Qaeda.

"These five guys are not a threat to the United States," former secretary of state Hillary Clinton said during an interview on NBC News last week. "They are a threat to the safety and security of Afghanistan and Pakistan. It's up to those two countries to make the decision once and for all that these are threats to them. So I think we may be kind of missing the bigger picture here. We want to get an American home, whether they fell off the ship because they were drunk or they were pushed or they jumped, we try to rescue everybody."

State Department deputy spokesperson Marie Harf relied on this same talking point during a press conference on June 5. "Look, these were not good guys. I am in no way defending these men," Harf said. "But being mid- to high-level officials in a regime that's grotesque and horrific

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also doesn't mean they themselves directly pose a threat to the United States." During testimony before the House Armed Services Committee on June 11, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel insisted that "we had no direct evidence of any direct involvement in their direct attacks on the United States on any of our troops." (Under questioning, Hagel conceded that the Taliban Five were, in fact, involved in planning operations against U.S.-led coalition forces in late 2001.) Behind closed doors, other key Obama administration officials have similarly stressed that the Taliban Five don't directly threaten the United States. The *Daily Beast* reported that John Brennan, director of the CIA and previously President Obama's chief counterterrorism adviser, has "argued that the Taliban Five were primarily focused on fighting against other Afghans and never had a record of attacking Americans outside of their own country."

The Obama administration's argument misses the point. It is true that Fazl and his Taliban colleagues have not directly planned 9/11-style attacks on the United States. But according to this logic, most of al Qaeda wasn't a threat on 9/11 and isn't today. Most al Qaeda operatives are not involved in spectacular terrorist plots against the West. (The 9/11 attacks, for instance, were highly compartmentalized.) Regardless, the Taliban's relationship with al Qaeda made it considerably easier for Osama bin Laden and his lieutenants to plan their war against the United States, and this nexus remains a threat.

The Taliban's Afghanistan "was the incubator for al Qaeda and the 9/11 attacks," the 9/11 Commission found. Another passage from the commission's final report reads: "The alliance with the Taliban provided al Qaeda a sanctuary in which to train and indoctrinate fighters and terrorists, import weapons, forge ties with other jihad groups and leaders, and plot and staff terrorist schemes."

In addition to Fazl, each of the other four members of the Taliban Five contributed to this alliance.

According to leaked JTF-GTMO files and court documents, the U.S. government believes that Khairullah Khairkhwa was tied to Osama bin Laden and oversaw one of the deceased al Qaeda master's training camps in western Afghanistan.

According to the United Nations, Abdul Haq Wassiq served as the deputy director of intelligence for the Taliban, and in this role he "was in charge of handling relations with Al-Qaida-related foreign fighters and their training camps in Afghanistan." It was in these same camps that al Qaeda trained terrorists for its plots against the United States.

Like Fazl, Norullah Noori was a Taliban military commander, and in this capacity he coordinated operations with al Qaeda's paramilitary forces.

And, finally, JTF-GTMO concluded that Mohammad Nabi Omari planned anticoalition attacks with al Qaeda and other affiliated forces.

The Taliban Five may not plan any direct attacks against the United

States in the future. But they have already strengthened the hand of al Qaeda terrorists who have planned such attacks in the past. Why should we assume, as the Obama administration asks us to, that they will not do so again in the future?

The administration once recognized the true nature of the Taliban-al Qaeda alliance. In December 2009, President Obama announced a surge of forces in Afghanistan to reverse the Taliban's "momentum" and "defeat" al Qaeda. "We must deny al Qaeda a safe haven," Obama said. And he reminded his listeners that prior to 9/11, "al Qaeda's base of operations was in Afghanistan, where they were harbored by the Taliban—a ruthless, repressive, and radical movement that seized control of that country after it was ravaged by years of Soviet occupation and civil war, and after the attention of America and our friends had turned elsewhere."

America is once again turning elsewhere. The Taliban is still allied with al Qaeda. ♦

Insiders' Outsider

Elise Stefanik's bid for Congress.

BY JOHN McCORMACK

Our health care coverage was canceled as a result of Obamacare. Our premiums have increased 30 percent. We have higher deductibles and less choice." It's a story that could be told by millions of Americans and a story that surely will be told in hundreds of campaign ads this fall. What makes these words remarkable is that they aren't spoken by an average voter, but by a candidate for the House of Representatives.

Elise Stefanik hopes the story of how her family's plywood distribution business lost their insurance

because of Obamacare—and her desire to repeal and replace the law—will help propel her to victory in New York's 21st Congressional District. The House seat was held by Republicans for decades, but since Obama picked the district's GOP congressman John McHugh to serve as his Army secretary in 2009, Democrats have won three consecutive elections as Republicans fought among themselves.

Stefanik is running as the contender who can break the curse. "I'm the only candidate who can unite the Republican and Conservative parties, which is the only way we're going to win back this district," she says. The 29-year-old, who would be the

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youngest woman ever to serve in Congress if elected, has already won a spot on the November ballot on the Conservative party line. But to present a united front, she'll need to win the Republican nomination in the June 24 primary against multimillionaire investor Matt Doheny, the moderate Republican nominee who narrowly lost in 2010 and 2012 to Democrat Bill Owens. Doheny declared his latest campaign after Owens announced his retirement this spring.

Stefanik is a rare candidate who garners support from both the Tea Party and the GOP establishment. "I think she's a terrific candidate," said Doug Hoffman, the district's Conservative party congressional nominee in 2009 and 2010. Hoffman's endorsement carries weight among conservatives because his 2009 race against liberal Republican Dede Scozzafava and Democrat Bill Owens marked the first electoral contest pitting the Tea Party against the GOP establishment. Hoffman narrowly lost after the Republican dropped out and endorsed the Democrat. But his campaign sent a powerful message to the Republican establishment that conservatives could only be pushed so far.



Elise Stefanik

Now, Hoffman is trying to use his clout to rally supporters behind Stefanik. "She's a commonsense conservative Reagan Republican. I think she's going to be a candidate that can unify the Republicans, the conservatives, and the independents," Hoffman told me. "I think her confidence and her poise are very compelling, and at the same time she's a very personable person."

What Stefanik lacks is her Republican opponent's name recognition and millions of dollars. But she's been able to compensate by relying on a number of prominent Republicans at the national level to help boost her profile and fill her campaign coffers. In May, Mitt Romney endorsed her candidacy, and Paul Ryan attended a fundraiser in the district in June.

Meanwhile, American Crossroads, the super-PAC founded by Karl Rove, aired a television ad tagging her primary opponent Doheny as a loser who was charged twice for boating under the influence.

There's little doubt that national Republicans have taken a keen interest in Stefanik because she spent several years working in politics and public policy. After graduating from Harvard, Stefanik worked in the George W. Bush White House and then at the Foreign Policy Initiative (a think tank on whose board the editor of this magazine serves). She later worked on the presidential campaigns of first Tim Pawlenty and then Mitt Romney, where she was in charge of debate preparation for vice presidential nominee Paul Ryan. In a way, Stefanik is following in Ryan's footsteps. Ryan worked at a series of jobs at Washington think tanks and on Capitol Hill before returning home to Wisconsin to run for Congress at the age of 28.

Stefanik embraces her experience in Washington as an asset and says it will help her "hit the ground running on day one." But Doheny is working hard to turn her time in the

capital into a liability. Doheny has attacked her as a "D.C. insider" who grew up outside of the district, in nearby Albany. Doheny even blamed Stefanik in a campaign mailer for the 2008 Troubled Asset Relief Program, aka the Wall Street bailout, because she worked at the White House at the time. "I oppose government bailouts in general," she says. "I think it's a mistake for my primary opponent, who was on Wall Street at the time, to point fingers at me for causing the financial crisis and being responsible for the federal government's response to the financial crisis."

Stefanik has also distanced herself from some legislation sponsored by Paul Ryan. Though she supports the kinds of entitlement reforms Ryan has proposed, she opposes Ryan's budget in its current form and has attacked Doheny for saying he'd vote for the 2013 Ryan-Murray budget compromise. "That budget deal cuts benefits for military veterans," she said at the May 27 debate. (The 21st District is home to Fort Drum.)

Few other substantive disagreements emerged at the debate. When asked about abortion, Stefanik highlighted the fact that she's the "only pro-life candidate" in the race. Doheny said he's pro-choice, but would have a "100 percent pro-life voting record in Congress." On taxes, both candidates pledged they would not vote to raise them, but Doheny attacked Stefanik for refusing to sign a specific tax pledge written by Americans for Tax Reform.

Stefanik has incorporated her youth as a selling point of her campaign. "My generation's going to have to foot the bill, whether it's cleaning up the debt, whether it's absorbing the increased costs resulting from Obamacare. I've put forth solutions to preserve and protect Medicare and Social Security for future generations," she tells me. "I think people are looking for a new generation of leadership." It's not a bad message for a party that has struggled badly to win the votes of young people and women. Whether it's a winning message is something we'll find out on June 24. ♦

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More Unraveling

Hagel's pathetic testimony on the Bergdahl swap.

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

As the Obama administration's case for the Bowe Bergdahl-Taliban prisoner exchange further unraveled last week, the geopolitical implications of the deal became clearer. They're not pretty.

In the hours before Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel clicked on the microphone to testify about the swap on June 11, Obama administration officials told reporters to expect a forceful defense of the exchange and an aggressive refutation of the criticism that has attended it.

That didn't happen. Instead, Hagel walked members of the House Armed Services Committee through the administration's well-worn talking points, which had already failed to satisfy many members of Congress. And on several occasions he contradicted explanations administration officials had offered over the previous 10 days—including some arguments that Hagel himself had made.

In the early stages of the controversy, the administration defended the decision, and its choice not to inform Congress as required by law, by pointing to the failing health of Bowe Bergdahl. The captive soldier's "health was deteriorating," Hagel said during a June 1 interview on *Meet the Press*. "This was essentially an operation to save the life of Sgt. Bergdahl."

Administration officials had pressed this case aggressively in the days following the swap, culminating in a front-page article in the *Wall Street Journal* reporting that the final proof-of-life video provided by the Taliban showed Bergdahl looking frail. "Rapid

deterioration of soldier's health persuaded leaders to back exchange," the paper reported. A spokesman for Director of National Intelligence James Clapper pointed to Bergdahl's condition as a key reason for the urgency of the exchange, telling the *Journal* that the intelligence community had "evidence that Sgt. Bergdahl's health was failing and that he was in desperate need of medical attention."



Chuck Hagel

But 10 days later, after several news outlets noted that the video was shot in December and that intelligence officials had privately disclaimed any such evidence, the administration backed off. In his June 11 testimony, Hagel sounded almost like an administration critic. "We didn't know what kind of health Bergdahl was in," he said. "All we had was a six-month [old] video."

Another problem for the administration is its insistence, simultaneously, that the war in Afghanistan is just like other wars that the United States has engaged in, and that it is unlike any other war we've ever fought.

Hagel spent much of his testimony insisting that the Obama administration had not, technically, negotiated with terrorists. The United States negotiated this deal with the Qataris, he argued, who merely served as an intermediary for the Taliban, who merely spoke on behalf of the actual terrorists of the Haqqani network, who had held Bergdahl for much of his captivity in Pakistan. Despite the fact that he was held by terrorists, who were represented by the Taliban, a nongoverning nonstate actor, Hagel insisted that Bergdahl was "not a hostage; he was a prisoner of war."

And yet, when Republicans pressed

Stephen Preston, the Pentagon's top lawyer, on whether members of the Taliban could be held legally after the conflict ended, he acknowledged that the "Taliban [could be] held as associates of al Qaeda."

Hagel also continued to insist that the U.S. government had "substantially mitigated" the threat that the freed Taliban commanders would pose to the United States despite two additional reports confirming that senior U.S. intelligence officials believe they will return to the fight.

While much of the focus at home remained on the Obama administration's shifting justifications for the swap, the potential damage the deal has done overseas is significant. The Afghan government publicly embraced the exchange, but it had little choice. With the dramatic drawdown of U.S. troops well underway and a full departure of combat troops scheduled to take place by 2016, Hamid Karzai and other Afghan leaders are racing to find some reconciliation with the Taliban—or at least with segments of the Taliban, however small, that may be reconcilable.

Administration officials have gone out of their way to say that they hope this deal revives those efforts. The opposite seems more likely. Hamid Karzai has been a challenging and uneven ally. But by cutting his government out of these talks and dealing directly with the Taliban (and later indirectly through the Qataris), the Obama administration has badly undermined the government in Kabul.

Transferring five commanders sought by the Taliban was a bad idea—particularly these five commanders. But if the administration was going to get into the business of prisoner swaps, the elected government in Afghanistan needed to be involved. Excluding them sent a clear message—to Afghans, to the Taliban, and to potential troublemakers in the region: The Kabul government is weak.

To do this at all was unwise. To do it immediately after announcing the departure of all U.S. troops in 2016 was counterproductive. And to do it in the midst of the Afghan presidential campaign was malpractice.

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Obama's Iraq

Mosul has fallen, and al Qaeda is on the march towards Baghdad

BY MAX BOOT

Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, has long been hard for the central government to control because of its combustible mix of Arabs and Kurds. The first time I visited Mosul was in August 2003 when a tenuous calm was maintained by the 101st Airborne Division. Its commander, a then-obscure two-star general named David Petraeus, had on his own initiative opened the Syrian border to trade, struck deals with Syria and Turkey to provide badly needed electricity, restored telephone service, and held elections to elect local leaders. Along the way he also managed to kill Saddam Hussein's poisonous offspring Uday and Qusay.

This kept militants at bay, but they returned with a vengeance after the 101st pulled out in 2004, to be replaced by a smaller American unit whose officers were less attuned to the demands of civic action. Mosul became a hotbed of Saddamist and Islamist militants, as I saw for myself in February 2008 when, during another visit, the U.S. Army convoy in which I was riding was hit by a "complex ambush": The Humvee in front of mine hit a bomb concealed in a big puddle, and insurgents opened machine gun fire from the left. Luckily no one in our unit was hurt, but a bystander had his arm sliced off by a flying piece of the Humvee's engine.

Mosul was the last major city to be pacified by the successful "surge." It took until at least 2010 before it was secure. But now that achievement has been undone. Black-clad fighters from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), as Al Qaeda in Iraq has rebranded itself, stormed into

Mosul last week and seized control. Dispirited Iraqi soldiers ran away rather than fight. Many were so eager to escape that their discarded uniforms littered the streets. ISIS freed more than 2,000 of its fighters from prisons and seized copious stocks of money, ammunition, and weapons—many of the latter provided by the United States to Iraqi forces.

This was only the latest and most alarming advance for this extremist group, which has risen out of its grave to display dismaying strength in recent years. In January, ISIS seized Fallujah and holds it still—a loss that, like Mosul, is particularly painful to American veterans who sacrificed so much to wrest control of those cities from militants. Following up on their success in Mosul, ISIS fighters advanced south to seize, at least temporarily, Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's hometown, and Baiji, home to Iraq's largest oil refinery, which supplies Baghdad with much of its electricity. Their next targets are certain to be Baqubah and Baghdad. In the capital, ISIS has already inflicted devastating casualties with a



Uniforms reportedly abandoned by Iraqi security forces fleeing Mosul, June 10, 2014

series of car bombings. Iraq Body Count calculates that some 9,500 people were killed in Iraq last year, the highest total since 2008. Worse is surely yet to come as Shiite militant organizations such as Asaib Ahl al-Haq and Kataib Hezbollah respond to Sunni atrocities with atrocities of their own.

This is not just a problem for Iraq. ISIS, as the name implies, has spread across the border into Syria, where it has been showing increasing strength amid the chaos of the Syrian civil war, in no small part because the United States has done so little to aid the non-jihadist opposition to Bashar al-Assad. ISIS is well on its way to carving out a fundamentalist caliphate that stretches from Aleppo in northern Syria to Mosul in northern Iraq. The post-World War I borders of the Middle East seem to be unraveling. Syria is being split into two entities, one controlled by Sunni Islamists, the other by Hezbollah and the Iranian Quds Force and their Alawite proxies. Iraq is being split into three, with

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a prosperous and stable Kurdish state, a fundamentalist Sunni Triangle state controlled by ISIS, and the Shiite portions of the country under the sway of militants backed by Iran. Iran is directly involved in the fighting in both countries: It has already sent Quds Force troops to Syria and now reportedly to Iraq as well. The only thing that remains to be determined is whether Shiite or Sunni extremists will control the capital—the new battle for Baghdad, which has already begun, is likely to be even bloodier than the previous installment from 2003 to 2008.

It is hard to exaggerate how much of a disaster this is, not only for Syria and Iraq and their neighbors, but for the United States. Rising oil prices (crude oil rose to over \$112 a barrel last week), which could torpedo a weak economic recovery, are just the start of it. Senior intelligence officials have testified recently that they fear Syria could become a launching ground for attacks against the United States.

Similar concerns now must extend to Iraq. Certainly, the track record of Islamist militants suggests that whenever they control a piece of terrain—whether Afghanistan before 2001 or Mali in 2013—they immediately set up training camps for foreign jihadists, some of whom then filter back to their home countries to commit atrocities. At the least, neighboring states such as Jordan and Saudi Arabia will be destabilized by the growing strength of ISIS; at the worst, the American homeland and Americans overseas will be threatened.

How did this disaster come about and what can be done about it? Critics of the Iraq war affix blame to President George W. Bush's decision to invade in 2003. But there is no guarantee that, even absent American intervention, Saddam Hussein would have had any more luck staying in power than other Arab despots. A civil war might well have broken out in Iraq anyway, as has been the case in Syria and Libya. It is true that Bush's mismanagement from 2003 to 2007 aggravated the situation, especially his foolish decisions to disband the Iraqi Army without sending enough U.S. troops to fill the vacuum and to purge Baathists from the government in a process that was hijacked by Shiite militants such as Ahmad Chalabi. This created the lawless conditions out of which both Sunni and Shiite extremists arose.

The "surge," however, turned the tide and created an opening for a more stable and democratic Iraq. Al Qaeda in Iraq was decimated in 2007-08. As a result Shiite militias such as Moktada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army lost their rationale of protecting Shiites from Sunni terrorism. Violence fell by more than 90 percent, and Iraqi politics began to function. But that tenuous calm started to unravel the minute that U.S. troops pulled out at the end of 2011.

Freed of effective American oversight, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki gave full vent to his Shiite sectarian tendencies by persecuting senior Sunni politicians and many of the Sunni commanders who, as part of the American-backed Sons of Iraq, had once fought against al Qaeda. Fearing that they no longer had a place in Iraqi politics, many Sunnis welcomed back ISIS as their defenders. The Iraqi military, in turn, was unable to effectively combat the growing terrorist threat because it had been deprived of



ISIS fighters pose with the trademark Islamist flag after seizing an Iraqi Army checkpoint in northern Iraq.

American military support and because Maliki stuffed its senior ranks with incompetent party hacks beholden to him. The prime minister further politicized the military, and thus made it less effective, by circumventing the normal chain of command to issue dubious orders to lower-ranking officers. Many soldiers now lack the confidence that they are fighting for Iraqi national interests rather than for a

sectarian Shiite agenda. That helps to explain why many of them, especially Sunnis, are so willing to run from a fight against enemies who are fanatically dedicated.

It is hard to know for sure, but odds are Iraq would have continued making progress if at least 10,000 American military advisers were still present. They would not have had to take part in combat, but they would have allowed American diplomats and generals to exert pressure on Maliki to curb his sectarian tendencies, and they would have assisted the Iraqi forces to better find, fix, and finish the insurgents without causing lots of collateral damage.

So why aren't U.S. troops still there? Obama's supporters blame Maliki and other Iraqi politicians for not agreeing to give U.S. troops legal immunity from prosecution. They also blame George W. Bush for negotiating a previous Status of Forces Agreement in 2008 that expired at the end of 2011, even though there was a widespread expectation in both Iraq and the United States that a renewal would occur

when the time came. But the truth is, as *New York Times* correspondent Michael Gordon and retired Marine general Bernard Trainor make clear in their definitive book, *The Endgame*, Obama did not try very hard to achieve a Status of Forces Agreement. He waited to start the negotiations until the middle of 2011 even though the last round of talks in 2008 took a year; he leaked word that, even if an agreement were reached, the United States would send only a tiny force of fewer than 5,000 soldiers that was hardly worth the trouble; he insisted that the Iraqi parliament would have to approve the accord even though Iraqi leaders told their American counterparts this was unlikely and unnecessary; he refused to get directly involved in the negotiations; and then he pulled the plug on the talks when they hit their first major obstacle. Obama's heart just wasn't in it. He had won the presidency largely because of his opposition to the Iraq war, and he saw no good reason to prolong America's troop presence.

Obama tried hard to sell the troop pullout as a victory. On December 14, 2011, at Fort Bragg, he said: "Everything that American troops have done in Iraq—all the fighting and all the dying, the bleeding and the building, and the training and the partnering—all of it has led to this moment of success. Now, Iraq is not a perfect place. It has many challenges ahead. But we're leaving behind a sovereign, stable, and self-reliant Iraq, with a representative government that was elected by its people."

Sovereign, stable, and self-reliant? Not quite. More like deeply divided, violent, dysfunctional, and chaotic. Iraq does have an elected government but one that roughly half of the population—Sunnis and Kurds—feels doesn't represent them.

In hindsight, the pullout from Iraq looks increasingly like the pullout from Vietnam a generation before. "We want a decent interval," Henry Kissinger told Chinese leaders, implying that Washington would be okay with the conquest of South Vietnam by North Vietnam as long as it didn't occur immediately after American troops left. A "decent interval" is what Obama got in Iraq—the country stayed quiet long enough to allow him to run for reelection in 2012 as the president who "ended the war." In truth, however, Obama has helped restart the war.

Is there anything that can be done at this late date to rescue the situation? Sending more arms to the Iraqi military won't do the trick. After the fall of Fallujah, the United States rushed Hellfire missiles and ScanEagle drones to Iraq. Soon the U.S. will deliver F-16 fighters and Apache gunships. Now Maliki is even said to be asking for American air strikes. None of them will do any good

as long as Maliki continues to alienate Sunnis. In fact, heavier weapons may aggravate the situation by allowing Maliki's men to kill more Sunnis.

To break this worsening cycle of violence, the Obama administration needs to do something it has never done before—get fully engaged in Iraq from the president on down. It needs to see if Iraq might be willing to accept the return of U.S. military advisers, intelligence personnel, Predators, and Special Operations Forces, along with enhanced military aid, in return for political reforms designed to bring Shiites and Sunnis closer together and thus eliminate ISIS's base of popular support.

There is actually a point of leverage that Obama could employ if he chose to do so. On April 30 Iraq held a parliamentary election in which Maliki's Rule of Law slate emerged on top with 92 seats. But that's not enough to form a government, which requires 165 seats. To win a third term in office, Maliki needs the support of other parties, especially the Kurds and other Shiite factions.

His reelection looked like a foregone conclusion before the fall of Mosul, but the collapse of the Iraqi security forces in the north is a major embarrassment that Maliki will have trouble

explaining away. If Washington were to throw whatever weight it has on the side of Maliki's opponents, there might just be an opportunity to select a new prime minister who would be less identified with Shiite sectarian causes—someone who could begin to heal Iraq's divisions rather than exacerbate them as Maliki has done.

This would need to be combined with action in Syria to roll back Islamist advances there, meaning principally providing more arms and training to the nonjihadist opposition to Bashar al-Assad. This could be coupled with American airstrikes directed not only against Assad's forces but also those of ISIS and other Islamist organizations such as the Nusra Front.

This is all a long shot because it presumes (a) that the United States still has leverage that it can employ in Iraq after years of neglect, (b) that the moderate opposition in Syria can still act effectively after years of similar neglect, and (c) that Obama is willing to act strongly and decisively in the Middle East instead of abandoning the region as he seems intent on doing. But it's the only chance to stop Iraq's descent further into the abyss. If Obama doesn't act now, the loss of Syria and Iraq will hover like a dark cloud over his presidency just as the early losses in the Iraq war loomed over his predecessor's presidency. ♦

In hindsight, the pullout from Iraq looks increasingly like the pullout from Vietnam a generation before.

Maidan Voyage

*Uprisings in the East, corruption in the West—
Ukraine emerges from elections divided and weakened*

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

Kiev

Replacing a corrupt oligarchy with a reformist democracy is such a good idea that Ukraine does it every couple of years. You might call it a balanced constitution: Democracy ensures change, oligarchy continuity. This May's elections, which brought to power the billionaire chocolatier and television magnate Petro Poroshenko, were occasioned by a winter of urban protest in the capital of Kiev, to which the United States and much of the European Union lent moral support. After dozens were killed on Kiev's main square, the Maidan, in February, Viktor Yanukovich, the corrupt but elected president, fled the country. Russian president Vladimir Putin, Yanukovich's ally and sponsor, declared the historically Russian and strategically indispensable Crimean peninsula Russian territory again, after a hasty referendum. And a war was launched by Russian-sympathizing Ukrainians in three eastern provinces.

President Obama, who has been taunting Putin for months, now finds himself in a pickle. For Putin, events in Ukraine are a matter of national survival. Ukraine is right next-door. It has 45 million people in it. It has long been the home of Russia's warm-water navy. But Obama and the leaders of the 28-nation European Union are, diplomatically as well as geographically, all over the map—from Poland, which sees countering Russian power as its top foreign-policy priority, to Bulgaria, which depends on Russia for close to 100 percent of its oil and gas.

The United States and the EU passed pro forma sanctions in March, after Russia annexed Crimea. But in the flurry of European summits on the eve of the seventieth anniversary of D-Day, Obama had a hard time rallying allies. London-based BP has just signed a big shale-oil deal with Russia's state oil company, Rosneft. France spent the winter boasting about its willingness to cancel the sale of two advanced Mistral warships to Russia, contrasting

its principled stance with Britain's indulgence of Russia's oligarchic elites in London. But then French president François Hollande took a look at his country's economic statistics and decided to make the deal anyway. (Before D-Day, Hollande had separate state dinners for Putin and Obama on the same night.) Since Angela Merkel's decision in 2011 to phase out nuclear power, Germany has grown more dependent on Russian energy. These considerations have gone over the head of Washington, which has constructed its diplomacy as if the West were still united, confident, and economically invulnerable.

In the quarter-century since the breakup of the Soviet Union, corruption has been, as one Western diplomat puts it, the “alpha and omega” of Ukrainian politics. An oligarchy was born out of communism's fall, much as it was in Russia. Insiders took advantage of “privatization” to corner natural resources, industrial plants, and the networks that went with them. The mineral- and coal-rich Donbass region (named after the basin of the river Donets) became the main center of the country's magnates, who have succeeded in befouling national politics. According to Transparency International, Ukraine is the most corrupt place in Europe, ranking 144th of 177 countries in the world. State authorities often do not meter the flow of gas through Ukrainian territory, making siphoning and overcharging possible. Ukraine's government estimates \$70 billion has been stolen from state coffers over the past three years.

By the time Viktor Yanukovich was chased from power four months ago, his Party of the Regions was seen as the party of one region—the Donbass—and the symbol of the corruption that went on there. But things were more complicated than that, because corruption was national, and Yanukovich had a genuine power base. The “Orange Revolution” of 2004 happened when a court ruled Yanukovich's election victory over reformer Viktor Yushchenko had been fraudulent. Into the bargain, someone had poisoned the handsome Yushchenko in the course of the campaign, horribly disfiguring him. A re-vote produced an 8-point margin for Yushchenko, but he could not do without Yanukovich. Eventually Yushchenko made Yanukovich prime minister. Yushchenko's Orange

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Revolution ally and rival, the charismatic Yulia Tymoshenko, lost to Yanukovich in the 2010 elections, which international observers have called free and fair. Tymoshenko, who began as a reformer, herself sought out political contact with oligarchs in both Ukraine and Russia.

Yanukovich was friendly to Russia. He carried on the post-Cold War tradition of accepting rock-bottom rates on Russian gas and oil as payment in kind for Russia's continued use of its naval base at Sebastopol on the Crimean peninsula, first built for the czars in the 18th century. Yet Yanukovich was not categorically opposed to Westernization, nor can he be dismissed as a post-Soviet stooge. He called for Ukraine to enter NATO. He favored closer ties to the European Union, despite a manifest unwillingness on the part of the EU to offer him full membership. And last fall he came *this* close to signing an "association agreement" that would have harmonized Ukrainian trade rules with the EU's (and thus disharmonized them with Russia's). Only when Vladimir Putin offered a similar deal that included \$15 billion in incentives did Yanukovich reject the EU deal. That is what brought everybody into the Maidan Nezalezhnosti, or "Independence Square."

Protesters spent all of last winter there, and by the time they were done, the Maidan had given its name to a new revolution. The Maidan has brought opportunities and risks for everyone: Ukrainians, obviously, but also the Russians who wound up gaining territory from it and the Americans who hope to use it as a springboard to a new European security architecture. The Maidan was not a movement of civil disobedience. It was at least in part an armed uprising. On February 18, on the eve of Yanukovich's hurried departure by helicopter from his tacky palace, 26 people were killed in the Maidan, 10 of them police. Even in late May, armed irregulars were walking among the tourists, the kvass carts, and the still-standing barricades of tires and sandbags.

What triumphed was a new regime better disposed to the European Union and the United States than that of the ambivalent Yanukovich. Westerners can applaud it on these grounds. But they should not applaud it on grounds of principle. The *Wall Street Journal* editorialized in the wake of Poroshenko's win that "Ukrainians gave Europe a democracy lesson." That is, to put it politely, inattentive. The Maidan Revolution overthrew a democracy. Yanukovich was corrupt—though not more so than most Ukrainian leaders since the Cold War ended. He was unpopular—though

not more so than France's François Hollande, or even Barack Obama in certain parts of the United States. And if, according to the *New York Times*, he left the treasury "bare," it is hard to point to any Western treasuries that are flush.

It is good that, under international pressure, the Ukrainian caretaker government chose to hold elections. Ukraine has held mostly democratic elections since 1991—but it has not done much else democratic. Until Ukraine can remove governments democratically as well as install them, we should reset to zero the dial on its status as a democratic nation. The late-May elections only put a fresh oligarchic face on the presidency and the Kiev mayor's office. They did not

replace the legislature, and legislative elections have not been scheduled, even though that was one of the uprising's demands. The government that has run Ukraine for the past three months is dominated by forces associated with the Batkivshchyna party, led by the flaxen-haired firebrand Tymoshenko, whom Yanukovich defeated at the polls in 2010 and then jailed. The prime minister who led these Tymoshenkoite forces was Arseny Yatsenyuk, one of three leaders to come out of the Maidan.

The most popular of the three was Vitali Klitschko, the boxer, who renounced his WBC heavyweight championship in December and won the Kiev mayor's race. The old system had not been kind to Klitschko: His

father, who died of cancer in 2011, was a Soviet Air Force colonel assigned to help clean up the Chernobyl nuclear meltdown in 1986. The most voluble of the three was the nationalist hothead Oleh Tyahnybok, whose Svoboda (formerly Social-National) party holds 37 seats in parliament. Tyahnybok was booted from Yushchenko's Our Ukraine bloc during the 2004 election for his allusions to a "Moscow-Jewish mafia" and other such oratory. The present government has also relied on a brand-new nationalist movement called the Right Sector, bulletproof-vest-wearing representatives of which were hanging around a polling station in the city of Irbin on election day. They said they were providing security.

It is a staple of post-Maidan opinion that, once unshackled from corruption, Ukrainian society will naturally align itself with the West. David Ignatius of the *Washington Post* wrote in May that "Ukraine was set to join this movement toward the European Union last November when Yanukovich suddenly suspended trade and financial talks with the EU and accepted what



Near Pravy Sektor headquarters, the Maidan

amounted to a \$15 billion bribe from Putin to stay in Russia's camp." This is the usual view—anything Europe offers Ukraine is a welcome invitation, and anything Russia offers is a corrupting bribe. In April, the West found itself matching Putin's "bribe" in the form of a \$17 billion IMF loan. As for NATO, in 2008, when Russia had just invaded Georgia, only 22 percent of Ukrainians favored membership in the Western alliance, while 53 percent opposed it, according to the Razumkov Center in Kiev.

It might seem obvious to Americans which world a reasonable Ukrainian would rather find himself in, but it has not been obvious to Ukrainians. Crimea was overwhelmingly Russian in both culture and allegiance even before Russia laid claim to it in February. Nikita Khrushchev handed its population over to Ukraine in 1954 in hopes of doing a good turn to (and appeasing) a country in which millions had starved under Stalin. Even if Russia's redrawing of borders sets a destabilizing precedent, it also undoes one of the crimes of communism. It is a geopolitical absurdity to believe that Russia would ever allow Crimea to fall into the hands of a Ukrainian government sympathetic to a hostile West. The bulk of Russia's naval power is based there. Poroshenko announced on taking office that Crimea would always be Ukrainian, but it is rare to meet a Ukrainian who will say in private that he believes this.

Russophones have always been a majority not just in the Donbass but also in the country's biggest cities. Ukraine's greatest writers—Vasily Grossman, Mikhail Bulgakov, Nikolai Gogol—wrote in Russian. Most radio, TV, and newspapers, almost all literary culture, and 90 percent of college courses are in Russian. Prominent Ukrainian politicians, including its second post-Cold War president, Leonid Kuchma, and Tymoshenko herself, have had to brush up on their Ukrainian or learn it from scratch, and many members of the parliament don't speak it at all. You can say that, despite a common language and culture, Ukrainians have their own governing traditions, as Canadians do with respect to the United States. But that would not really be true. Ukraine is not Poland or Serbia. It endured the rule of the czars, suffered under the Communists, and since the end of the Cold War has been Europe's laggard. That doesn't give Moscow a right to rule Ukraine, but it gives Moscow a strong incentive not to see the place used as a base for those who wish Russia ill.

Poroshenko has a lot of strengths. He actually does speak Ukrainian. He made his fortune in chocolate, not natural resources, and has kept a relative distance from the Donbass power brokers, though he has connections to all of them. He served as a minister under both Tymoshenko and Yanukovich. He has weaknesses, too. He lacks a political party, although he is making use of UDAR, the

reform-oriented force of which Klitschko is the most prominent member. Questions have been raised about Poroshenko's integrity—he used to be called "Yushchenko's wallet."

Poroshenko's options in fending off Russia are unclear. The Russophile rebels in the three eastern provinces are sophisticated, much better motivated than the central government, well enough armed to have neutralized Kiev's air superiority, and probably aided by Moscow. Whatever the West may proclaim *de jure*, these three provinces are opting *de facto* for an alignment with Moscow, and thus far Kiev has managed to do little. The Ukrainian interior ministry is funding "national guard" units who have been seen in irregular combat garb. Pravy Sektor and Tyahnybok's Svoboda party are sending volunteers there all the time. Tyahnybok claimed in an interview that his party had lost 19 dead and 193 wounded as of late May. But these men are not well enough trained or disciplined to counter the rebels along the Russian border. As one Ukrainian strategic expert put it in late May, "It is easy to say 'I want to fight the Russians' in the middle of Kiev." The situation is in flux. Poroshenko has been shelling the stubborn Russophile city of Slavyansk, people have been fleeing, and the Ukrainian interior ministry announced on June 12 that three Russian tanks had crossed the border.

Of course, the West could aid Ukraine against the Russophile forces through shipments of arms or provision of military advisers. That would be reckless. Only if Putin had wide ambitions for territory, using the three eastern provinces as a beachhead, would such a move be worth the risk of escalation. One does not want to underestimate Putin, but he probably lacks the military resources for any larger imperial reconquest. His moves in Ukraine can be understood as defensive reactions to what he sees as an existential military threat on his country's periphery, in a context of Western hostility. President Obama's use of gay rights to rally the world against Russia during the Sochi Olympics was not a *casus belli*, of course. But it was surely taken as a declaration of contempt and enmity. World leaders do not often traffic in petty snubs.

There is always a nobility in the story of a plucky little nation striving to break free of a big one, but a number of illusions mar Ukrainian thinking. These illusions are widespread even inside the Ukrainian government. One is the idea that Ukraine's role as a buffer state is not a misfortune of geography but a service to the world community for which, in a globalized economy, it deserves rent. A related idea is that Ukraine is owed a security guarantee in perpetuity for having given up "its" nuclear weapons under a much-alluded-to Budapest Memorandum, signed after the fall of communism. Of course, Ukraine as a political unit did not have nukes. It is where, under communism, the Soviet empire kept its nukes.

Modern-day Russia is not so fearsome as the old USSR. But there is one resource that Putin has in larger quantities than most of his interlocutors. This is legitimacy—which, of course, is not to be confused with liberality or punctiliousness or respect for international law. Putin is popular. When he speaks in the name of Russia, he does so confident of Russians’ backing. This doesn’t make him right. But Westerners should bear in mind that Russia is, politically speaking, a more unified and resolute place than the countries they usually tangle with. They should also bear in mind that there have been moments in the past decade when Putin has been the most popular politician in Ukraine.

Another Ukrainian misconception is that Western Europe is a charitable institution and that Ukraine’s misfortunes will now goad the West to reward it for years of kleptocracy and political chicanery with membership in NATO, the European Union, or both. True, favors were lavished on Albania after NATO finished its Kosovo war in 1999. But it is a different world now, and Ukrainians are building castles in the air. They point to a 2004 memo called the European Neighborhood Policy, which held out the prospect of visa-free travel to the EU if Ukraine’s government cleaned up its act. Although their country never made much progress on reforms, many Ukrainians assume

that, under the circumstances, Europe will simply look the other way. But a rapprochement is farther off than ever, no matter what happens on trade. The recent EU elections gave big victories to parties up in arms about the influx of Eastern Europeans to Western Europe, most of them from Poland and the Baltic and Balkan countries. Ukraine is bigger and economically worse off than any of those places.

Ukraine has wound up on a fault line of an international system in which countries’ sovereignty extends only so far as they abide with the “values” of the “international community.” From a U.S. perspective, this community constitutes civilization and freedom. A Western diplomat in Kiev was heartened by the way Poroshenko had been “echoing [Joe] Biden’s talking points,” adding, “The first principle is to stay in lockstep with Europe.” From a Russian perspective, the international community consists of the demands of Western elites dressed up as neutral ground rules. Ukraine is caught between Western interlocutors who are seductive but untrustworthy and Russian ones who are rude but nearby. The country has few options and has poorly played the ones it has. It will not have much sovereignty, no matter which bloc it falls into. Ahead of it lies a choice between two post-Cold War ways of being what used to be called a “captive nation.” ♦

Small Businesses Can Beat Cybercrime

By Thomas J. Donohue

President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Many cybersecurity experts say that there are two types of businesses today—those that have been hacked and know it, and those that have been hacked and don’t know it. As large businesses strengthen their cyber protections, small and medium-size ones are increasingly the targets of online criminals.

When small and midsize businesses realize that they may be vulnerable to attack, many automatically conclude that they don’t have the resources to adequately protect their networks and data. But there are, in fact, a number of innovative, cost-effective actions that all businesses can take to assess and improve their cybersecurity over time.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce worked closely with industry partners and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to come up with

a framework of existing standards and best practices to help companies start a cybersecurity program or improve an existing one. By adopting the practices outlined in the *Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Security*, all businesses can reduce network and system weaknesses and take steps to deter cyberattacks.

For starters, businesses can improve their cyber risk management by understanding common online threats that often lead to cybercrime, such as malicious software (also known as malware), computer viruses, spam, and phishing schemes. The framework and similar risk-management tools, such as the Chamber’s *Internet Security Essentials for Business 2.0* guidebook, explain the risks and provide tips for preventing or detecting them.

Cyber experts generally agree that businesses can stop the vast majority of unsophisticated or untargeted malicious activity by implementing the elements of the framework. But companies must be realistic about their risks and continually

improve their security efforts.

Small businesses can’t assume that they’ll fly under the radar. And large businesses can’t assume that they’ll be safe by only adopting robust cybersecurity practices at the corporate level. Precautions must be taken at every step in the supply chain, which is often where criminals find points of vulnerability. So corporations that contract or work with small businesses should help inform their partners of threats and urge them to adopt forward-leaning cyber practices.

To get the word out, the Chamber has launched a nationwide campaign to make businesses aware of cybercrime and explain the framework for enhanced Internet security. Learn more about the Chamber’s efforts to equip businesses with cybersecurity tools and pursue meaningful policy solutions at www.cybersecurityadvocacy.com.



U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
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The War on Christians

*From Africa, to Asia, to the Middle East,
they're the world's most persecuted religious group*

BY PAUL MARSHALL

For at least three reasons, the contemporary persecution of Christians demands attention: It is occurring on a massive scale, it is under-reported, and in many parts of the world it is rapidly growing.

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life finds that Christians are suffering persecution in more places today than any other religious group; between 2006 and 2012, Pew says, they were targeted for harassment in 151 countries—three-quarters of the world's states. Similar findings are reported by the Vatican, *Newsweek*, the *Economist*, and the 60-year-old Christian support group Open Doors. Most people in the West are unaware of these facts, though that may be changing.

A few cases do get press coverage—the desperate plight of Meriam Ibrahim, for instance, who gave birth in a Sudanese prison just the other day. She was raised a Christian, but after officials learned that her long-absent father was a Muslim, she was sentenced to death for apostasy—for leaving Islam. And since in Sudan a Muslim woman may not be married to a Christian, her marriage to her American husband was declared void, and she was convicted of adultery and sentenced to 100 lashes to be administered before her execution. These punishments will be dropped if she renounces her Christian faith, which she steadfastly refuses to do.

Another case receiving attention is North Korea's sentencing of a South Korean missionary, Kim Jong-uk, to life with hard labor. On May 30, he was convicted of espionage and trying to start a church. North Korea also still holds Kenneth Bae, an American sentenced to 15 years' hard labor on charges of trying to use religion to overthrow the political system.

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The Chinese government's demolition of the 3,000-member Sanjiang church in Wenzhou on April 28 was newsworthy partly because of the church's size, but also because Sanjiang was not an "underground" church but an official, approved, government-registered "Three-Self" church. Some 20 other official churches in the area have had all or parts of their buildings removed or demolished, and hundreds more are threatened with destruction.

And, most notorious, the abduction into slavery of hundreds of schoolgirls in Nigeria on April 14 by the al Qaeda-linked Boko Haram led news cycles and tweets for a time, though the religious dimensions of the story were often played down. While the kidnapped girls include Muslims (Boko Haram regards them as apostates because of their Western education), most are Christians, seized in a predominantly Christian area and now subjected to forced conversion.

These events get media attention because they are particularly poignant, or dramatic, or involve foreigners, but our media miss countless other stories. Since the kidnappings, Boko Haram has killed—not kidnapped, killed—hundreds of people, many in the predominantly Christian Gwoza area of Borno State, destroyed 36 churches, and kidnapped at least 8 more girls. On June 1, it attacked a Christian area in neighboring Adamawa state, killing 48 people. In Sudan, a second woman, Faiza Abdalla, has been arrested on suspicion of converting to

Christianity, and on April 8 a court terminated her marriage to a Catholic. Iran is imprisoning and torturing pastors from the rapidly growing house church movement, including an American citizen, Pastor Saeed Abedini. Vietnam has imprisoned over 60 Christian leaders. Eritrea holds more than 1,000 Christians in conditions so inhumane that prisoners die or are permanently crippled. In Somalia, in an ignored religious genocide, Al-Shabaab systematically hunts Christians and kills those it finds.



Meriam Ibrahim



Kim Jong-uk

Of course, people of all religions suffer persecution for their faith or lack thereof—the situations of Baha'is and Jews in Iran, Ahmadis and Hindus in Pakistan, Tibetan Buddhists and Falun Gong in China, independent Buddhists in Vietnam, and Rohingya Muslims in Burma are particularly dire. Traditionally, the United States has been regarded as the country that advocates religious freedom for all, often to the disdain of other Westerners. In recent years, however, that has changed. Now America is quieter, while others speak up.

British prime minister David Cameron said recently that “our religion is now the most persecuted religion around the world” and “We should stand up against persecution of Christians and other religious groups wherever and whenever we can, and should be unashamed in doing so.” German chancellor Angela Merkel has repeatedly stressed that Christians are the world’s most widely persecuted religious group. Probably most outspoken of all is Vladimir Putin; no doubt this reflects geopolitical calculation, but the fact remains that he is stressing the matter.

The Italian Foreign Ministry has established an “Observatory on Religious Freedom.” Quite properly, it is concerned with all religions, but its genesis was the upsurge in killings of Christians. Two years ago it hosted a conference on “Stopping the Massacre of Christians in Nigeria.” Former French foreign minister Bernard Kouchner established a similar agency in the Quai d’Orsay, and later the ministry gave financial backing to an “Observatory of Cultural and Religious Pluralism” devoted to monitoring “attacks on freedom of conscience, on freedom of expression, and freedom of religion around the world,” particularly with respect to the Arab Spring. Canada now has an ambassador-at-large for religious freedom, a title borrowed from the United States.

In the United States, meanwhile, the position of U.S. ambassador-at-large for religious freedom is vacant, as it has been for over half of President Barack Obama’s tenure. Even when the position has been filled, in the last decade it has usually been marginalized. President Obama gave a great speech on religious freedom at the National Prayer Breakfast, but little action followed.

The United States has marginalized the issue in other ways, too.

After the massacre of 25 Copts by the Egyptian military on October 9, 2011, the White House lamented the “tragic loss of life among demonstrators *and security forces*”

(emphasis added) and called for “restraint on all sides.” As my colleague Sam Tadros commented, “I call upon the security forces to refrain from killing Christians, and upon Christians to refrain from dying.”

On Easter morning in 2012, a church in Kaduna, Nigeria, was the target of a Boko Haram suicide car bombing that killed 39 and wounded dozens. (The previous Christmas, Boko Haram had bombed St. Theresa’s Catholic Church outside the capital, Abuja, killing 44 worshipers, and also attacked churches in the towns of Jos, Kano, Gadaka, and Damaturu.) There was no official comment from the Obama administration about the Kaduna massacre on Christians’ holiest day.

Instead, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton issued a press release celebrating the Romani people and demanding that Europe become more inclusive of them.

At the beginning of the State Department’s annual report on international religious freedom for 2013, Secretary of State John Kerry stated, “While Christians were a leading target of societal discrimination, abuse, and violence in some parts of the world, members of other religions, particularly Muslims, suffered as well.” The assertion is incontrovertible, yet the wording elides the truth: Christians are not just “a leading target,” they are *the* leading target.

American officials seem so scared of being accused of selectively defending Christians that they consistently overcompensate and minimize what is happening.

The Catholic and Orthodox churches are more outspoken now than they were in the past, partly because the plight of their brethren, especially in the Middle East, is so stark. Pope Benedict XVI raised the issue many times. Pope Francis, speaking three days after the September 22, 2013, suicide bombing of All Saints Church in Peshawar, Pakistan, in which over 80 congregants were killed, urged Christians to examine their consciences about their response to anti-Christian persecution: “Am I indifferent to that, or does it affect me like it’s a member of the family? . . . Does it touch my heart, or doesn’t it really affect me, [to know that] so many brothers and sisters in the family are giving their lives for Jesus Christ?”

Cardinal Timothy Dolan, in his November 11, 2013, address as he stepped down from chairing the U.S.



A survivor of the bombing at All Saints Church in Peshawar, which killed 80, September 22, 2013

Conference of Catholic Bishops, spoke of the “*Via Crucis* currently being walked by so many of our Christian brothers and sisters in other parts of the world, who are experiencing lethal persecution on a scale that defies belief.”

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I of Constantinople has observed that “even the simple admission of Christian identity places the very existence of [the] faithful in daily threat,” and Metropolitan Hilarion, chairman of the Russian Orthodox Church’s Department for External Church Relations, has been raising the issue with American churches for several years.

Happily, there are signs that some Americans are again paying attention to the issue. Last month on Capitol Hill, a wide coalition of Christian leaders was convened by the co-chairs of the Religious Minorities in the Middle East Caucus, representatives Frank Wolf of Virginia, a Republican, and Anna Eshoo of California, a Democrat. They committed themselves to a “Pledge of Solidarity and Call to Action for Religious Freedom in the Middle East.”

Although the persecution of Christians is widespread—Nigeria is where most are actually being killed, North Korea is the most repressive, China represses the largest number—the Pledge of Solidarity focuses on the Middle East and specifically on Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. These are countries where the situation has deteriorated rapidly to the point where Christian communities—along with smaller religious minorities such as Mandeans, Yezidis, Baha’is, and Ahmadis—now face “an existential threat to their presence in the lands where Christianity has its roots.”

In the last decade, half of Iraq’s Christians have fled the country, and many others have fled to the Kurdish region. In three days last August, Egypt’s Coptic Christians experienced the worst single attack against their churches in 700 years—with 40 churches utterly destroyed and over 100 other sites severely damaged. Tens of thousands of Copts are estimated to have fled their homeland. Syria’s Christians, like all Syrians, are caught in the middle of a brutal war, but, according to the pledge, they “are also victims of beheadings, summary executions, kidnappings, and forcible conversions, in deliberate efforts to suppress or eradicate their religious faith.”

Too often these communities in the ancient heartland of Christianity have been forgotten. Speaking in Rome in December, Baghdad’s Catholic Chaldean patriarch,

Louis Sako, lamented, “We feel forgotten and isolated. We sometimes wonder, if they kill us all, what would be the reaction of Christians in the West? Would they do something then?”

In Washington, pledges like this new one tend to have about as much staying power as campaign promises. Still, there are reasons to believe that the Pledge of Solidarity will have an effect.

For one thing, the breadth of the coalition behind it is remarkable. Speakers included Cardinal Donald Wuerl, archbishop of Washington, Archbishop Oshagan Cholyan of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of

Evangelicals, and Greek Orthodox metropolitan Methodios of Boston. Pledge signers include Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission president Russell D. Moore, Sojourners’ Jim Wallis, Episcopal Church presiding bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, Anglican Church in North America archbishop Robert Duncan, Samaritan’s Purse president Franklin Graham, Robert George of Princeton University, chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, and George Marlin, chair of Aid to the Church in Need-USA.

Also promising is the fact that the Pledge of Solidarity sets forth focused goals—the appointment of

a special envoy on Middle East religious minorities (legislation to create this position has passed the House but is stalled in the Senate, reportedly by a hold placed by Republican Tom Coburn of Oklahoma), a review of foreign aid to ensure it upholds principles of religious freedom, and an effort to see that refugee and reconstruction assistance reaches all religious communities.

But the pledge will have its greatest effect if, rather than falling on deaf ears, it awakens rank-and-file Americans and others to the religious diversity of the Middle East and the plight of Christians there and elsewhere. When Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I met in Jerusalem in May, their joint communiqué echoed the pledge, singling out “the Churches in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, which have suffered most grievously due to recent events.” The concern expressed by these religious leaders and a handful of politicians is abundantly justified. Still missing is any large-scale mobilization of free people on behalf of persecuted Christians around the world.



Copts protest at the U.N., January 2010.



After signing the Civil Rights Act, Lyndon Johnson hands a pen to Martin Luther King, July 2, 1964.

Civil Rights and Wrongs

The stalemate was ended, but the debate goes on. BY GERARD ALEXANDER

In the long, tortured history of race in America, there are few bright spots shinier than the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Democratic and Republican reformers from across the country overcame the resistance, mainly of Southern segregationists, to pass legislation that broke the back of Jim Crow. In time for the landmark law's 50th anniversary, Todd Purdum offers a capable, sometimes exciting, account of the twists and turns of the bill as it was crafted

Gerard Alexander, associate professor of politics at the University of Virginia, is writing a book about race and conservative politics.

An Idea Whose Time Has Come
Two Presidents, Two Parties, and the Battle for the Civil Rights Act of 1964
 by Todd S. Purdum
 Henry Holt, 416 pp., \$30

and re-crafted, navigating the tangled politics of two administrations and both houses of Congress. In 1963-64, passage of the law appeared as complicated as it seems inevitable to us in hindsight.

For activists and lawmakers determined to shatter the enduring injustices of racial discrimination in the South, the first challenge was getting whites

outside the South to care enough to support strong new laws. "Northerners" were hard to stir for several reasons. Many were simply indifferent. Presidents shied from antagonizing powerful Southern members of Congress. Even would-be reformers had to grapple with the trade-offs inevitably posed by specific civil rights measures. Did the federal government have the authority to meddle in state education policies? Didn't the Constitution assign states the power to determine voting rules? Should Washington really be in the business of instructing private restaurant owners who to serve?

Presidents eventually cared. Harry

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Truman offered modest proposals and began desegregating the armed forces. Dwight Eisenhower pushed the 1957 and 1960 Civil Rights Acts, which were weakened in the Senate. John Kennedy initially made civil rights a low priority, but it moved up his agenda thanks to the growing civil rights movement, which appears mainly in the wings of Purdum's account. That movement's marches, sit-ins, and boycotts, and the violent repression they sometimes provoked, persuaded many hesitant white Northerners that something had to be done to resolve the South's terrible tensions. At Kennedy's urging, administration officials, congressional staffers, and civil rights activists pulled together a list of possible measures. In the wake of Kennedy's assassination, Lyndon Johnson took up the cause. Johnson, a supremely complicated person, championed the bill as a tribute to his fallen predecessor.

The bill's main features proposed to ensure the universal right to vote in federal elections; allow the attorney general to initiate lawsuits to desegregate public schools; allow Washington to cut federal funding to local programs that discriminated; and outlaw racial discrimination in private-sector employment and in access to "public accommodations" such as hotels, restaurants, and theaters.

The trick was to push a bill that was strong enough to satisfy reformers but able to survive a Senate that was often hamstrung by its vocal Southern minority. Purdum concludes that "the unsung hero of the tale" is William McCulloch, the ranking minority member of the House Judiciary Committee. This conservative Republican represented an Ohio district with few black residents and many voters who cared little about civil rights. But McCulloch believed equal treatment followed from a straightforward and faithful understanding of the Constitution. He brought along many House Republicans who respected him, helped craft a strong bill with pro-civil rights Democrats, and sent it off with a warning that he would oppose any substantially weaker version that might return from the Senate.

This is only one example of the complicated game of perceptions and calculations that shaped the bill's prospects. McCulloch, in threatening to block any watered-down Senate version, was trying to convince weak-kneed senators that their only choice was to accept a strong bill or risk blame for failing to pass a law at all. The bill's promoters in the Senate, organized by Hubert Humphrey, worked hard to give the impression that passage was inevitable in order to carry along senators who were otherwise skeptical of this or that provision. A sense of inevitability also undermined the flagging energies and morale of Richard Russell's aging band



Everett Dirksen: 'unscrew the inscrutable'

of segregationists. And reform proponents had to calculate how much support they might lose from civil rights advocates if they offered concessions to Northern conservatives who had concerns about property rights and relentlessly growing federal power.

The Senate Republican chief Everett Dirksen joked that the bill's supporters, in managing all these moving parts, were trying to "unscrew the inscrutable." He was in a position to know: It was Dirksen's own demand for several changes to the bill—changes that Humphrey, McCulloch, and others were smart enough to accept—that swung enough Republicans to overcome the Southern filibuster. LBJ even gamed the question of whether to sign the bill on the Fourth of July. (Purdum says that Attorney General

Robert Kennedy favored a brief delay so that overenthusiastic Southern blacks would not go on a weekend campaign of provocatively entering business establishments.)

Purdum's account is tightly focused on this story of politicians and pressure-group lobbyists. He tells it ably, breathing life into a number of protagonists and relating the suspense that somehow accompanied the dragged-out filibuster. He colorfully describes LBJ telling Robert Kennedy that opinion had moved in favor of the law: "Johnson summarized the favorable drift of the White House mail about the bill in Texas-sized, mathematically impossible percentages. 'It runs about 70-50,' he said."

But Purdum's focus on high politics in a narrow time period comes at a price. For instance, his epilogue mentions only in passing the remarkable fact that the desegregation of almost all public accommodations, which some feared would take years, happened almost immediately and virtually without incident, constituting a revolution in Southern daily life. And the act's provision for cutting off federal funds helped desegregate Southern K-12 education once those funds became sizable later in the 1960s.

Just as important, his account leaves out a larger story about the 1964 law's limitations. Purdum recognizes this when he notes, in a few swift pages, that progress toward racial equality only got so far after the heyday of the 1960s. He cites durable racial disparities in income and in other life opportunities, and he alludes to the Republican party's turn to the politics of white backlash, rising opposition to affirmative action, and the current menace of voter ID laws. This is a conventional liberal narrative: It implies that if only bipartisan comity had lasted, other laws would have followed, ones that might have solved deep-running problems.

That is an easy thing to say; but for some time now, it has been a more difficult thing to believe. The 1964 act was a bundle of provisions because it was the product of sprawling conversations that were well underway in the early 1960s

and have been continuing ever since. Those conversations recognize that African Americans have gotten the shaft in American history, and remain badly off in many ways, but do not propose how exactly to repair the effects of that history and overcome today's challenges. Some reformers in 1963-64 thought progress would best be achieved by African Americans pursuing their own goals through the democratic process. So they emphasized voting rights. Others believed it more important to overcome the corrosive resentments that were institutionalized in the daily indignities of Southern segregation; they hoped that desegregating public accommodations could send a powerful signal about equality and inclusion. Yet others thought it would be more valuable to help blacks advance economically, motivating an emphasis on nondiscrimination in employment.

These and other measures were mutually compatible and ended up in the 1964 act. But that did not necessarily mean that such provisions were the most effective means to achieving equality.

More important, the 1964 law neither acknowledged other possible obstacles to racial equality nor offered means to address them. It was in these same years that Daniel Patrick Moynihan first warned that family structure could impact social mobility; liberals ran from the issue. If Purdue calls the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts "the most important laws of the twentieth century," should we call the breakdown of the two-parent family the most neglected social catastrophe of the postwar period? Crime and drug use went on to devastate inner cities, but civil rights advocates seemed to spend less time proposing possible solutions to these problems than parsing whether conservative commentators were "blaming the victims."

What about durable differences in credentials and skills? LBJ, Richard Nixon, and others tried to address such discrepancies with affirmative action hiring. Nixon also increased funds for historically black colleges. But decades later, important disparities in academic performance are still

with us, confounding easy explanation or prescription. It turns out that affirmative action admissions practices that "mismatch" students and schools may have resulted in fewer, not more, minority lawyers, doctors, engineers, and scientists. Yet, in some circles, it remains taboo to discuss these perverse effects.

In retrospect, the 1964 Civil Rights Act was a long-overdue measure empowering federal efforts to smash daily segregation. That mission, while not easy, was straightforward. Other obstacles to progress have proved much more perplexing. It is remarkable, and depressing, to think that, starting from the

founding of the United States, it took Americans 87 years to decide that slavery was unacceptable, another 100 years to debate whether equal treatment was called for, and now another 50 paralyzed over how best to achieve more equal outcomes. Some of the same figures and forces that most urgently pushed for basic civil rights went on to ill serve the national debate by attributing the basest of motives to political adversaries and interpreting every disagreement over means as a difference over ends.

Nineteen sixty-four may have been a high-water mark not only for civil rights legislation but also for good-faith discussion on the subject. ♦

BCA

Flesh Is Weak

*The science and philosophy of putting on/
taking off weight.* BY KEVIN R. KOSAR

Reports have surfaced of a professor with a mania for self-examination. His line of inquiry, however, is not of the Socratic philosophical sort. An expert in computer science, he is collecting data on his bodily functions. To improve his diet (and reduce his weight) he tracks what he eats down to the calorie. He straps sensors to his body to measure his caloric burn while exercising. Unsettlingly, it has been reported, the professor "is deep into the biochemistry of his feces ... [keeping] detailed charts of their microbial contents [and has] been known to haul carefully boxed samples out of his kitchen refrigerator to show incautious visitors."

It would be easy to wave off this news as nothing more than another sideshow in the human carnival. But after reading *The Metamorphoses of Fat*, the case of the coprological computer scientist seems less strange. Indeed,

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The Metamorphoses of Fat

A History of Obesity
by Georges Vigarello
translated by C. Jon Delogu
Columbia, 296 pp., \$29.50

instances of eggheads obsessing over their bodily inputs and outputs go way back. Sanctorius, a professor at Padua during 1611-24, erected a "weighing chair" and, for 30 years, used the room-sized contraption to tabulate his weight and attribute the fluctuations to what he consumed and excreted. The research methods may be peculiar, but the topic of study is not idiosyncratic: Who among us has not counted calories or tried a diet (South Beach, Atkins, paleo, etc.) in the hopes of improving one's appearance, elevating one's energy, lengthening one's life? The quest to comprehend the relationship between eating and health is commonplace.

George Vigarello shows, often amusingly, that the Western world has always drawn associations between

human constitution and the size and weight of the body. Whether being fat or thin or somewhere in between was desirable has depended on the basis for the judgment. The dearth of real knowledge as to the operations of the body invited conclusions based on a variety of factors.

At the dawn of the second millennium, for example, overweight men were derided as womanly or weak. Thus, William the Conqueror was mocked for being so fat that he looked pregnant. The French King Louis VI (“the Fat”) was ridiculed in 1135 for being too portly to mount a horse. Very different conceptions of fitness came to the fore in the 14th and 15th centuries: Europe was a world of “hunger, severe restrictions, and food shortages.” Failed harvests, the plague, and other pestilences, as well as crushing poverty, generally contributed to “raising the accumulation of calories into an ideal.” Paradise was imagined as a place where “beer and wine flow like rivers [and] stews and roasts seem to pop out of the soil.” For men, a big belly was a sign of vitality. Long before Rubens, artists celebrated corpulent women. The 14th-century *Parisian’s Household Manual* (known in English as *The Good Wife’s Guide*) states that both horses and women should have “beautiful loins and big bottoms.” The fat woman was the fertile woman; the thin one was imagined to be barren.

The aesthetics of body shape varied widely for the next few centuries. The stout were sometimes considered mighty and at other times sick. The scrawny were never considered powerful and were sometimes thought feeble or diseased. Words were invented to distinguish between desirable and undesirable amounts of fat. The French term *rondelet*, for example, appeared in the “middle of the 16th century to designate a moderate, entirely ‘natural’ roundness.” Meanwhile, *lourd* conveys an undesirable thickness and torpor.

Notions of virtue and vice entered the mix. Fatness became associated with greediness. Rolls of heft indicated insatiability, an “infinity of oral desire” that demonstrated moral

degradation and slovenliness. Class also became a consideration. Fatness went from being a trait of the wealthy to a characteristic of “fieldworkers and mule drivers.” The image of the lower class as obese, ham-fisted brutes became popular by the 17th century: “Beautiful Alison,” a sardonic song from 1633, mocks Alison for having “chubby arms like a mustard barrel” and “a stomach [like] a frozen cabbage.” Not long after, depictions of potbellied bankers and plutocrats flooded paintings and cartoons.



*Bacchus depicted by Peter Paul Rubens
(ca. 1640)*

The insight that food digested was converted into energy, which the body then could expend or store, was not widely held until the 20th century. In the meantime, hypotheses about the causes of weight gain and loss were based upon metaphors, and ancient notions dominated. Fatness was said to be related to blood, phlegm, and humors; other scientists attributed it to the types of food ingested, an excess of bodily fluids, or a preponderance of internal “winds.” Thirty years of data collection did not get Sanctorius very far: He continually found that the weight of the food he consumed exceeded the weight of his

urine and feces, yet his own weight remained steady. In the equivalent of an intellectual tossing-up of the hands, he attributed the difference to “insensible perspiration.”

Over time, Vigarello demonstrates, eating a lot was viewed less as a sign of vigor and robust health than a condition worthy of abuse. Shakespeare’s *Henry IV* has Prince Henry unleash a quiver of anti-fat barbs against Falstaff in Part One, Act II: “whoreson round man,” “horseback-breaker,” “huge hill of flesh,” and “swollen parcel of dropsies.” Fat, then, became increasingly stigmatized with the passage of time.

Combined with ignorance about digestion, the stigmatization of fat fostered a market for tinkerers, quacks, and just about everyone else to peddle remedies. One eminent man of knowledge in the 16th century directed that fat people reduce the pain of swollen legs by cutting their toenails so low that blood flowed. This would, he postulated, lesson the excess of fluids responsible for the swelling. A physician, C.J.A Schwilgué, “proposed a cold bath” with an electrical current running through it to tighten the body and force out excess fluids. Women were sold corsets and men used leather straps to depress their bellies. One 17th-century actor took the stage with a “cerclage made of wide and rigid iron” that flattened his girth.

Mercifully, science finally began to get matters right. Settled systems of weights and measurements enabled the collection of data on body shapes and sizes. These data were aggregated over time to develop averages, which could be used to create a baseline for “normal” heights and weights for every age. Industrialization helped make the scale a household item.

Tracking one’s weight became democratized. Sometime after 1830 Adolphe Quetelet developed a formula for finding the ratio of weight to height that we know today as the Body Mass Index. Thanks to numerical precision, the present-day stout individual who visits a physician’s office might learn that he is “obese,” “severely obese,” or “morbidly obese.” The accumulation of scientific studies has

re-centered the popular discussion of excess weight on medical conceptions. Nary a week passes without the press reporting on the latest study showing the increased probability of diabetes, impotence, and/or cardiac arrest from excess heft. The scrawny, meanwhile, might become centenarians.

Still, despite the march of science, old notions about body weight remain. Depictions of obese people as jovial and lazy live on, and the words “fat”

and “slob” are often heard together. Whether these critical notions will ever depart is difficult to say. We all know people who have lost weight through exercise and diet changes, and we tend to attribute weight loss to force of will, to individual choice. The basic calculus of fatness strikes us as self-evident: Consume more calories than you burn and you become fat. Eat less, exercise more.

What could be simpler? ♦



Spanish Upheaval

Republicans, nationalists, and the crucible of modern Spain. BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

The virtues of Stanley Payne, the outstanding living historian of the Spanish Civil War, are on gratifying display in this comprehensive volume. He writes with appropriate sweep: “[C]ivil war in Spain was not a complete anomaly, but rather the only massive internal conflict to break out in Western Europe during the 1930s. It would reflect all the tensions, hatreds, and ideologies found in these other conflicts, while adding further features of its own, characteristic of Spain and to some extent of Europe as a whole during the decade before World War II.” Still, Payne concentrates on the domestic history that produced the convulsion.

He begins with the decline of Spain’s empire, once the world’s greatest in geographical extent, controlling territories from North Africa across the Western Hemisphere and the Pacific to the Philippines. He notes that, early in the 19th century, the invasion of Spain by Napoleon’s armies and the ensuing defeat of the French fostered local constitutionalism resulting in a “Spanish contradiction.” That is, the country adopted an

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The Spanish Civil War

by Stanley G. Payne
Cambridge, 280 pp., \$28.99

advanced, modernizing political system but maintained an undeveloped society and economy, a traditional culture, and weak educational resources.

Payne also offers a reliable account of the main episodes of 20th-century Spain’s armed torment. These begin with the fall of the dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera in 1930 and the abdication of King Alfonso XIII in the next year. A republic was then proclaimed and a liberal and social-democratic coalition was elected, followed by the eruption of leftist extremism. That last was evidenced by ferocious anticlericalism, the growth of an anarchist labor movement uniquely strong in Europe, and a shift of Socialists toward revolutionism, alongside which the Moscow-controlled Spanish Communist party was an alien force without significant roots.

The emergence of a radical-right alternative soon followed. While it was identified most notoriously with the Falange Española, or Spanish Phalanx, which was inspired by Italian and Ger-

man fascism, the counter-movement to Spain’s radical left was represented more widely by conservative Roman Catholic politicians and traditional monarchists—the latter known as Carlists for their support of a slighted pretender to the throne, Prince Carlos, passed over by the predecessors of the ill-fated Alfonso XIII.

In 1934, the most important of several failed leftist insurrections occurred. That rehearsal for a full-fledged civil war was organized (as Payne shows) with considerable preparation and thoroughness by the radicalized Socialists. But it was defeated—and enabled the victory at the polls of a rightist government, which aggravated the crisis.

Elections in 1936 brought the liberals, leftists, and Communists of the People’s Front to power, but the revolutionary tide ran ahead of them. The People’s Front won the balloting in part because of incidents of leftist violence that skewed voting results, but also thanks to the numerous votes of the anarcho-syndicalists and Socialists, neither of whom were willing to participate in the new administration. Revolution had seized the minds of the radical left, but a major opposing offensive was about to begin. It would come under the leadership of General Francisco Franco, and it would prevail.

In the summer of 1936, the anti-revolutionary faction in the Spanish Army rose in defiance of the new government and was dubbed “the nationalists.” The armed forces had been divided no less deeply than the rest of the country: Franco admitted that leaders were badly split inside the military establishment and supported no common position other than “law and order.” That is why, in Franco’s view, no military intervention against the left had been organized successfully between 1934 and 1936. The electoral triumph of the People’s Front, however, provoked further violent confrontations between the two ideological poles, dramatizing the disintegration of the state.

Franco began his uprising from Spanish Morocco. The nationalists quickly seized most of the Spanish north (which was sympathetic to them) with

the support of Falangist cadres and Carlist militias. But Franco himself was stuck in Morocco, as the Spanish Navy remained loyal to the Republic. Franco and his colleagues went to Germany and Italy for airplanes and pilots, along with weapons, to evade the Republican closure of the Strait of Gibraltar. Hitler and Mussolini obliged, sending their own combat personnel to assist the nationalists in beating the naval blockade. Franco ferried thousands of soldiers and Moroccan mercenaries onto the mainland.

The nationalist coup failed, however, to subdue the main Spanish cities: Madrid, the capital; Barcelona, the main industrial center; and others. According to Payne, without the swift capture of Madrid, the nationalists lost the initiative and condemned Spain to a war of attrition. He deems the Battle of Madrid “the first turning point” in that war; indeed, Madrid became a global publicity symbol for the Republican cause. The city was defended with the help of Russian arms and officers: Stalin chose to back the Republic, but Moscow’s obvious desire to impose Communist dictation on the Spanish left made it the equivalent of the interfering fascist powers rather than a firm ally of the Republic.

In Barcelona, where the anarcho-syndicalist union movement was a leading force, a distinct outcome emerged with the defeat of the military plot. The social demands of the left took precedence over the preservation of the Republican system. The Catalan nationalist president Lluís Companys and his regional government submitted to a system of dual rule alongside the labor revolutionaries. In Payne’s words, the anarchists “accepted a limited semi-pluralism,” in contrast to Communist totalitarianism. Following the Barcelona model, “multiparty committees and councils of revolutionary power . . . sprang up in towns, provinces, and sometimes entire regions

throughout the Republican zone.”

Payne judges that the social revolution in leftist-controlled territory was “proportionately the most extensive, and also the most nearly spontaneous, worker revolution in a European country. It was carried out by genuine worker organizations on the local level . . . from the bottom up, rather than being organized from the top down by a political party of middle-class intellectuals and activists”—like the Bolsheviks in Russia. Payne appears to agree with Andreu Nin, leader of the anti-Stalinist Workers’ Party of Marxist Unification (POUM)



Francisco Franco (center) and colleagues (1938)

and in whose militia George Orwell served. Nin called events in Spain “a more profound proletarian revolution than the Russian Revolution,” and he had a certain expertise in the subject: Nin had been a functionary of the Communist International in Moscow from 1921 to 1930 before fleeing Russia as a Trotskyist.

Stalin’s Russia frowned on Spanish revolutionary ambitions. With the Communists weak at the outbreak of the war, but represented in the People’s Front, Stalin faced a “dilemma [he] never fully resolved,” according to Payne.

For nearly two decades, the Soviet Union had preached revolution and civil war. Suddenly—and paradoxically, against Soviet wishes—civil war and violent revolution had broken out in Spain, but it was an anarchist and Socialist revolution.

Challenged by the limited influence of the Spanish Communists, Moscow turned to infiltration of existing Republican institutions. The Russian foreign minister warned Stalin that support for Spanish radicalism might prevent Russia from securing allies in the West. For these and other reasons, Soviet aid to the Spanish Republic diminished considerably as the war continued, leading Republican leaders to accuse Stalin of abandoning them. Payne argues that, at the beginning, Russian assistance to the Spanish left far exceeded what Franco received from Hitler and Mussolini, who responded by escalating their involvement.

Soviet deceit in Spain led to a “second counter-revolution” by Communists against their leftist rivals. Soviet agents murdered the POUM leader Nin. Meanwhile, as months went by, General Franco and his colleagues carried out a patient strategy of political consolidation within their movement and a successful campaign to break Catalonia (as the center of resistance) away from the rest of Republican-held territory. In April 1939, 75 years ago, the Spanish Republic capitulated.

In this rich panorama of ideology and politics, Stanley Payne has included an argument that deserves emphasis. The anti-Stalinist POUM and, in the 1960s, the Spanish Communist party’s “Eurocommunist” leadership came to agree that, with Soviet intervention on the anti-Franco side, the Republic embodied the first example of a “people’s democracy,” the political model imposed by Stalin in Eastern Europe after World War II. But as Payne affirms, “The [Spanish] Republic was a sovereign state, not a satellite of the Soviet Union, and there were definite limits to Communist hegemony.” This invaluable contribution reminds us that the Spanish revolution and civil war of 1936-39 remain relevant and worthy of study. ♦

Designs for Power

Three Western visions on the Indian subcontinent.

BY PAULA DEITZ



Louis Kahn's National Assembly building, Dhaka

In the final scene of *My Architect*, Nathaniel Kahn's 2003 documentary about discovering his father Louis I. Kahn (1901-74) through his architecture, Nathaniel stands in the National Assembly building in Dhaka, Bangladesh, speaking to Shamsul Wares, a local architect who knew Kahn and claims that the building gave his country democracy. No one who watches as the camera pans over the massive concrete drums and cubes reflected in shimmering water can be left without an urgent desire to be there.

And so, years later, I traveled to Dhaka, including visits to two other capital cities on the subcontinent whose main structures I knew well, but only graphically, from exhibitions at London's Hayward Gallery: New Delhi from "Lutyens"; and Chandigarh from "Le Corbusier: Architect of the Century." Seeing these buildings

Paula Deitz is editor of the Hudson Review.

today, in an urban context, with their accumulated history and cultural overtones, has revealed to me how, beyond style and grandeur, this architecture has become symbolically integrated into each community. Being there made all the difference.

In his effort to preserve the troubled union of East and West Pakistan that followed the 1947 partition of India, Ayub Khan, the military ruler of Pakistan, sought to create two equal capitals with alternating parliamentary sessions. Dhaka, the provincial capital of the east, was already fomenting under pressure to adopt Urdu as the official language and from military skirmishes aimed at crushing a growing nationalism. A projected National Assembly building gave them hope for independence.

After being turned down by Le Corbusier and Alvar Aalto, the Public Works Department contacted Louis Kahn, suggested by the Bengali architect Muzharul Islam, who had

met Kahn during his studies at Yale and who was already one of Dhaka's prominent Modernists with his College of Arts and Crafts. In 1962, Kahn accepted, and he came to Dhaka from Philadelphia for the first time the following year. While a more extensive plan was initially envisioned, the built elements consist of the octagonal concrete parliamentary citadel separated by calm waters from massive, fortress-like brick hostels, originally intended for traveling MPs, and a hospital. The complex, which possesses the richness of ancient marble and sandstone monuments, was completed in 1983—but not without interruption. The 1971 civil war that created Bangladesh halted construction temporarily, and after Kahn's death in 1974, his associates oversaw the completion of the work.

Dhaka, with a current population of 15 million, is teeming with markets in the old quarters along the Buriganga River. The streets, permanently congested, resound with a cacophony of horns and bells as thousands of green auto-rickshaws shoot in and out like threads weaving a jacquard pattern. At its calm center rises the National Assembly building at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar (The Tiger of Bengal City), in a park Kahn designed with avenues of trees bordering the water and parterres of marigolds, the ubiquitous flower of the subcontinent.

The symmetrical array of round and cubic towers, with their vertical slits and triangular, circular, and square apertures that admit shaded light to the interiors, recall the simplicity of forms Kahn collected in his 1950s travel sketches—of, say, the Acropolis walls—that served to suffuse his Modernism with classical humanism. The central cluster of four cylindrical forms containing the prayer hall is set slightly askew in order to face Mecca. On closer inspection, one can see how each five-foot segment of reinforced concrete (the predetermined limit) is separated from the next by a thin slab of white marble alternating between a flush edge and a narrow ledge to articulate a small shadow effect.

This monumental structure was handmade by workers, including women, who carried baskets of concrete on their heads to pour into forms. As I walked through the building with Shamsul Wares, he told me that Kahn would find irregularities in the workmanship but accepted them in good spirit.

As a master of layering light, Kahn draws it through seven layers of interior walls through additional circular and crescent openings bridged by Piranesi-style crisscrossing staircases. As the once-crisp outside light is drawn through the building and its cavernous circular corridors 11-stories high, it becomes more diffuse at the same time that the eye adjusts to its new level. In the assembly hall itself, where the two major parties debate, natural light from clerestory windows above is modulated by a concrete parasol stretched over the octagonal oculus.

A small group viewing the chamber with me was suddenly moved to sing the Bengali national anthem, written by the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. It was a sacred moment.

Soon after landing in Delhi, one experiences the effects of the plans laid down by Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869-1944)—tree-lined streets shielding white bungalows set back in luxuriant grounds. George V proclaimed Delhi the new capital at his Indian coronation in 1911, in order to remove the government from escalating religious strife in Calcutta. In 1912, Lutyens arrived with a planning commission to design New Delhi, succeeding the seven sequential historic cities, now mostly ruins, that comprised Old Delhi. One is reminded that, in the earlier Mughal period, Shah Jahan gave up Agra for Delhi when he built the Red Fort (1638-48) as the centerpiece of his empire. He lost Shahjahanabad, as it was called, only 10 years later when his son imprisoned him. The British retained New Delhi for only 16 years after completing it in 1931.

By 1920, the story goes, the viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, and French prime

minister Georges Clemenceau were looking up King's Way (now Rajpath) to the dome of the Lutyens-designed Viceroy's House when Chelmsford asked Clemenceau what he thought of the structure. "This will be the finest ruin of them all," Clemenceau replied. But to the contrary, the house (as well as Herbert Baker's twin Secretariat buildings and Parliament) are flourishing in use under the Indian government, even as they show their age.

end of the roof were in perfect harmony with the dome based on the Great Stupa at Sanchi. The stone Hindu bells decorating the Corinthian-inspired capitals of the central colonnade drew on yet another culture.

Inside, the reception rooms for dining and entertaining had conserved all their refinements with marble patterned floors and long windows and mirrors. And then there are surprises, such as the staircase that takes visi-



Sir Edwin Lutyens's Viceroy's House, New Delhi

I stood in the parliamentary chamber where, at midnight on August 15, 1947, Lord Mountbatten handed over the government of India to Jawaharlal Nehru. Then, as I walked up Rajpath to the Viceroy's House, as if in celebration, two military marching bands passed by in preparation for Republic Day.

Having already visited several ancient ruins in India—many of which, like Fatehpur Sikri, had been seen by Lutyens himself—I found the two-tone sandstone exterior of the Viceroy's House (now Rashtrapati Bhavan) a tailored and not-too-exuberant mixture of motifs of the embellished Palladian style. Not obvious from photographs is the shadow effect of the *chajja*, a thin, projecting stone cornice that overhangs the entire structure. I had just noted one on the small, elegant 16th-century tomb of Imam Zamin at the Qutb Complex in Delhi; the Mughal pavilions or *chattris* at either

tors suddenly outside to a high loggia under an open sky. The best surprise of all, however, is the 10-acre Mughal garden beautifully maintained behind the house. Designed in the traditional four-rivers style, the garden's rectangular greenswards, including floral parterres and rose gardens, appear to float on the waterways. With fountains of tiered, sandstone lotus leaves, pergolas, and clipped maulsari trees, the structures bring a fantasy element to abundant seasonal plantings.

Following partition, the northern Indian state of Punjab lost its capital, the great cultural center Lahore, to Pakistan and subsequently founded at the foothills of the Himalayas the first new city in India since Jaipur in 1728. Where once only scattered villages existed is now the thriving garden city of Chandigarh, the capital of Punjab and Haryana, 180 miles



Le Corbusier's Palace of Assembly, Chandigarh

north of Delhi. While some preliminary plans had existed, Le Corbusier (1887-1965) was finally selected as the chief designer on a team that included his cousin Pierre Jeanneret and the British architects Jane Drew and Maxwell Fry, who brought an eclectic Modernism to the city's residential and public buildings.

Shiv Datt Sharma, now 82, was a young architect when he was engaged to work locally with Le Corbusier, and he recalls how he would transpose the metric drawings into inches: "Le Corbusier taught us that architecture serves society," he reminisced, "and he sought, through his mathematical Modular system, to maintain the human scale everywhere in creating Chandigarh as a city that enhanced the quality of life even for the poorest of the poor."

The new city was divided into a grid of sectors, each one providing local services and amenities to the neighborhood: markets, schools, health facilities, and parks. Sector 17 is the town center, including hotels and other commercial buildings of limited height, facing north to profit from the cross breezes. In a walk through the streets of Sector 22, the two-room terrace houses with linked façades and walled front gardens may

have been modest, but they provided homes near open parks in a neighborly environment—not unlike the villages where some of these families might have lived.

Built in the 1950s and '60s, Sector One is the Capitol Complex, and nothing could be developed between it and the mountain ranges to the north. In creating a tropical architecture, Le Corbusier's dramatic reinforced concrete forms are calculated to protect the interiors from heat and sunlight. In every case, the grandeur of the buildings is enlivened with accents from his personal palette and his mural-sized tapestries, woven in Kashmir and with scattered symbols that lend a magnificence along with acoustical qualities to the legislative chambers and courtrooms.

The Capitol Complex is composed of three buildings on a vast plaza with reflecting pools. A planned fourth, the Governor's Palace, was originally sited at midpoint but was forbidden by Nehru, who was against the glorification practices of previous regimes. Although there are plans to re-create this building in a slightly altered form as a Museum of Knowledge, nothing has yet materialized. But rising from a square contemplation pit at the edge of the complex is the famous symbol

of Chandigarh, the welcome Open Hand revolving in the wind.

What a privilege to live every day in Chandigarh—if only to view in various gradations of light that massive curved porch over the Palace of Assembly, advancing like the horns of the taureau in Le Corbusier's iconography. With the cooling, tower-like, hyperbolic drum—and the glass-sided pyramid intended to bring shafts of light from the roof to the assembly rooms—this building possesses the soaring forms that instantly uplift the spirit. The High Court's parasol roof, supported by colorful pylons, soars as well, and the syncopated pattern of *brises soleils* on the Secretariat façade delineates interior functions, from ministerial offices to those of general workers. Inside, systems of colorful ramps lead to the rooftops, where once there were planted terraces.

Looking back on experiencing all these structures within their particular societies, I thought again of the Kahn building that prompted this pilgrimage. I had asked Shamsul Wares whether, as a frequent visitor to the National Assembly building, he had become accustomed to its innovative forms. "Actually," he responded, "it is like attending a Shakespeare play; each time you leave with a new message." ♦

DUNJOD

Edge of Oblivion

For Tom Cruise, from top gun to second fiddle?

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Movie stars go cold. It's part of the way popular culture works. For a long time, people just love watching them. People can't get enough of them. And then, after they go to the well once too often with a formula that has gone flat, or after their messy personal lives get all mixed up in the characters they're playing, stars become even slightly distasteful.

Just in the past year, it's become clear that Will Smith, for a decade the biggest star in the world, has lost it. And after two enormous flops, Johnny Depp—who single-handedly earned Disney nearly \$3 billion in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies—can't get anyone to see him in anything else. Adam Sandler, an incredibly reliable money-maker in his self-produced fare for the better part of two decades, can't get audiences to the theaters. And this past week has shown that Tom Cruise has now indisputably fallen into the also-ran category as well. His latest vehicle, a \$175 million futuristic war epic called *Edge of Tomorrow*, was a major box-office disappointment in its opening days.

The Cruise case is especially interesting because, of all the A-list Hollywood actors over the 30 years he's been a star, he has distinguished himself in his effort to make the best movies he can—not good little movies or indie-film character studies, but high-quality fare intended to reach large audiences. That is particularly true of *Edge of Tomorrow*, which—until a dull climactic sequence and a stupid coda—is a genuinely inventive and thrillingly clever picture.

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

Edge of Tomorrow
Directed by Doug Liman



Tom Cruise

I expected very little from *Edge of Tomorrow*, whose previews suggested it was a humorless ripoff of *Groundhog Day* (1993), which may well be the best American film of the past quarter-century. But the director, Doug Liman, working off of a script by a rather large number of credited writers, takes the *Groundhog Day* inspiration—one day, relived endlessly—and manages to take it in new directions.

The movie works almost exclusively because of Cruise, playing a slick PR executive who finds himself, untrained and unprepared, among the first wave of soldiers in a D-Day-like invasion force—a force that is almost instantly decimated. Cruise deploys his famous smile in the movie's opening scenes, but rather than making him seem winning and attractive, the grin exposes the hollowness of his character.

Even the way he moves is a marvel; as we watch him repeat the day, we see him slowly grow in physical confidence. He is trapped in a metal body suit with weaponry built into it that he does not know how to manipulate. In

the first couple of scenes, he waddles and stumbles and is almost haplessly comic. Then he begins to get it. Then he gets it some more. Eventually, he becomes almost supernaturally able.

Edge of Tomorrow is a potent reminder of just how good a movie actor Tom Cruise can be. He has limits, to be sure: There is nothing of the chameleon in him, save for his indelible and unrecognizable turn as a foul-mouthed studio executive in the hilarious *Tropic Thunder* (2008). Still, he roots himself in the characters he can play as deeply as anyone: Think of him as the flaky pool hustler in *The Color of Money* (1986), the con-man car salesman in *Rain Man* (1988), the sybaritic Lestat in *Interview with the Vampire* (1994), the self-help guru in *Magnolia* (1999), the mysterious tough guy in *Jack Reacher* (2012)—and, most notably, the sports agent with a conscience in *Jerry Maguire* (1996). These are all terrific performances.

Cruise cooled off not because his movies went sour but because *he* did. In 2005, he went on Oprah Winfrey's talk show and professed his love for his (now ex-) wife Katie Holmes by jumping up and down on Oprah's couch in a display of heterosexual exuberance so false you might say that, to many, it seemed he was growing a beard right there on the air. Later, he appeared on the *Today* show and got into a bizarre fight with host Matt Lauer about the wisdom of Brooke Shields taking an antidepressant—of a piece with his fundamentalist belief in the Scientology cult.

These images of the real Cruise, jumping on a couch and yelling about Paxil, have been superimposed on Cruise the movie star. You can't really see the latter without remembering the former, and those memories are uncomfortable ones. Outside the United States, where audiences either don't know or don't care about all that, Cruise remains a potent draw, and it's possible that *Edge of Tomorrow* will end up doing all right because of the foreign box office.

Still, Cruise provides an important cautionary lesson for every would-be movie star in the age of YouTube: Keep some mystery about you. Which means, basically: Shut up. ♦

The Chicago Maroon

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The student newspaper of The University of Chicago since 1892.

Comments at IOP spark controversy

A PETITION CALLING ON THE IOP TO APOLOGIZE FOR THE USE OF A TRANSPHOBIC SLUR AT AN EVENT HAS GARNERED OVER 1,100 SIGNATURES.

BY CHRISTINE SCHMIDT

After a terse exchange about the use of a transphobic slur between a guest speaker and student at an Institute of Politics (IOP) event last week, students in the LGBTQ community have started circulating a petition calling for a formal apology from the IOP. At press time, the petition had more than 1,100 signatures.

The event was an off-the-record Fellows seminar held by Ana Marie Cox, a political columnist on U.S. politics for *The Guardian*. It featured Dan Savage, a relationship and sex advice columnist and founder of the It Gets Better project, as a guest speaker.

The incident occurred when, according to several sources, Savage and Cox began discussing his personal history as a gay man. According to a first-year student and member of the LGBTQ community who asked to

be identified as Hex, Savage used the slur *t—* as an example in an anecdote about reclaiming words. Cox then added, “I used to make jokes about *t—ies*,” audience members recounted.

“That was one of the most hurtful parts,” Hex said, explaining the perceived insult was that Cox used the slur to refer to the group of people she joked about. “In that context, it was like being applied to all transgender people,” it said. (“It” is Hex’s chosen pronoun.)

In a statement, the IOP said, “A guest used language that provoked a spirited debate. The speaker was discussing how hurtful words can be repurposed and used to empower; at no point did he direct any slurs at anyone.”

Hex asked Savage and Cox to use the term “T-slur” instead of the actual word. According to second-year Sara Rubinstein, an executive director of QUIP

(Queers United in Power), and Hex, Savage then named other slurs, asking if they were suitable to use instead. “Obviously [he attempted] to threaten me and make me feel uncomfortable in that space, which was pretty successful,” Hex said.

A dialogue about the usage of the slur between Cox, Savage, and Hex ensued, creating a tense atmosphere in the room, according to several audience members. Hex ultimately apologized to Savage for misdirecting the conversation, but was further upset when Cox started talking about gender identification and left the room in tears. Following Hex’s exit, members of the staff and the dean on call, who had been asked to attend as a precaution due to Savage’s controversial history, quickly left to comfort it, according to Hex and a staff member

(CONTINUED)