the weekly Standard

THE TRUTH ABOUT IRAQ
DICK CHENEY & LIZ CHENEY

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ANDREW FERGUSON ON

THE COMMON CORE COMMOTION

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Hillary the Careful Reader

The Scrapbook has its compassionate side, and confesses to feeling a twinge when it read the recent interview with Hillary Clinton in the *New York Times Book Review*. The *NYTBR*, it should be explained, interviews famous people about their reading habits—their recent dialogue with Lynne Cheney was surprisingly cordial—but Hillary Clinton's interview, while certainly friendly in tone and intent, cannot have done her much good.

We say that not because of substance so much as tone: Mrs. Clinton is so clearly intent, so exhaustively determined, on checking the boxes and impressing the *Times* that she comes across as almost wholly artificial, as if some programmed machine had responded to the inquiries. As indeed may have happened: It is entirely possible that the answers were provided by some cog in the Clinton apparatus—an eager intern, say, or some blue-ribbon panel assigned to the task. They certainly sound like that.

When asked, for example, to reveal what she is "reading right now," HRC doesn't hesitate a moment: *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt, *Mom & Me & Mom* by Maya Angelou, and *Missing You* by Harlan Coben. This literary trio—all safe, middlebrow, bestselling titles—not only emphasizes Clinton's status as an Average American, but with an eye to 2016, strategically waves at some demographic categories: middle-class white women, African Americans, thriller-reading males. When asked to name "favorite contemporary writers," she reels off a similarly comprehensive list of Democratic presidential primary voters: Laura Hillenbrand, Walter Isaacson, Barbara Kingsolver, John le Carré, John Grisham, Hilary Mantel, Toni Morrison, Anna Quindlen, and Alice Walker.

If any constituency is absent here, we cannot think what it is.

Indeed, this chameleon-like tendency is so patently ingrained that it ventures, at times, into self-parody. When asked to name "one book you wish all students would read," she mentions *Pride and Prejudice* (middle-class white women again), *Out of Africa* (PBS subscribers), and *Schindler's List* (Jewish Democrats). This member of the Wellesley class of 1969 lists *The Brothers Karamazov* as her "favorite novel," and confesses to reading the poetry of e.e. cummings and T.S. Eliot. She tells us that, when traveling as secretary of state, "I'd read a novel or travelogue about the places I was visiting." And lest we suspect she ever wastes a moment of time, describes her "guilty pleasures" as "cooking, decorating, diet/self-help, and gardening books." Shame on you, Hillary!

To be sure, it's the Democratic nomination she craves, so when asked to recommend books for "someone planning to move" to Washington, she chooses some contemporary left-liberal mush (*Our Divided Political Heart* by E.J. Dionne) and a defensive account of recent Democratic policy (*After the Music Stopped* by Alan Blinder). Nothing wrong here, of course; but the general tone of the response suggests that considerable thought was given to it. Or put another way, who among her friends would get the coveted plug?

Nor is Hillary Clinton anyone's fool: "If you had to name one book that made you who you are today," asks the *Times*, "what would it be?" To which she shrewdly replies, "At the risk of appearing predictable, the Bible was and remains the biggest influence on my thinking." Translation: A Republican yahoo would instantly cite the Bible so I have to qualify my answer with mild sarcasm ("at the risk of appearing predictable") while deftly reassuring Mr. and Mrs. Silent Majority that I'm just as pious as they are.

It's a long way, alas, until the primary season, so The Scrapbook awaits comparable Q&As in *Vogue*, *Essence*, and *Sports Illustrated*. ♦

'Welcome, Mr. Gandhi' —Winston Churchill

Scrapbook correspondent Richard M. Langworth, the author and longtime president of the Churchill Centre in Washington, D.C., weighs in on the new statue of Gandhi to be erected in London . . .

***

Every time you realize how badly the media mangles something you know about, you wonder how well they are interpreting what you don't know.

The announcement last week that a statue of Gandhi would be placed in Parliament Square near that of Sir Winston Churchill occasioned a farrago of ignorance. Would Churchill wish to share space with his "onetime nemesis"?

The Associated Press misquoted Churchill's "half-naked fakir" crack, and said he called Gandhi a "middling lawyer." (The term was "Middle Temple lawyer," something else entirely.)

The *Wall Street Journal* worried that Parliament Square also includes a statue of Jan Smuts, "a prime minister of South Africa in the early 20th century who favored segregation" (and, perforce, a friend of Churchill's).

Smuts was prime minister in 1939-48 and was voted out when he campaigned in favor of relaxing segregation. As a junior minister in 1906 Smuts did oppose equal rights for the Indian minority. But here he disagreed with his longtime friend Winston Churchill, then Under Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Gandhi himself remarked: "I have got a good recollection of Mr. Churchill when he was in the Colonial Office and somehow or other since then I have held the opinion that I can always rely on his sympathy and goodwill."

Gandhi said that after receiving a report from his chief lieutenant, G.D. Birla, who visited Churchill in 1935 following passage of the India Bill, a step toward independence. Churchill had

opposed this bill, and said some pretty rough things. He called Gandhi "a seditious Middle Temple lawyer, now posing as a fakir of a type well-known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the viceregal palace . . . to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor."

But Churchill was magnanimous—a quality sadly lacking among most modern politicians. "Mr. Gandhi has gone very high in my esteem since he stood up for the Untouchables," he told Birla. "I do not like the Bill but it is now on the Statute Book. . . . So make it a success."

Birla asked, "What is your test of success?" Churchill replied: "improvement in the lot of the masses. . . . I do not care whether you are more or less loyal to Great Britain. I do not mind about education, but give the masses more butter. . . . Make every tiller of the soil his own landlord. . . . Provide a good bull for every village. . . . Use the powers that are offered and make the thing a success. I did not meet Mr. Gandhi when he was in England. . . . But I should like to meet him now. I would love to go to India before I die. If I went there I would stay for six months."

Among other things, such statements suggest a better understanding of contemporary India than Churchill is said to have had by his many critics.

Churchill did have a tic about an Indian independence movement led by the Brahmin class. But before we pigeonhole him as an unrepentant imperialist, let's consider what he and Gandhi had in common. Both viewed a break-up of the subcontinent with regret and repugnance; both feared religious extremism, Hindu or Muslim; both believed in the peaceful settlement of boundary disputes; both fought tyranny. These precepts, more widely held, would be welcome today. In Parliament Square, Winston Churchill will be fine with Mohandas Gandhi. ♦

A Fish Rots from the Head

North Korea's Kim dynasty is in decay—literally. According to a report in the defector publication *Daily NK*, the founding dictator Kim Il-sung's embalmed corpse, which has been on public display for some 20 years, is starting to show its age. "Kim's skin appears to be deteriorating and his head and body are shrinking," the newspaper reports. "Party cadres, who generally visit [the mausoleum] more often than anyone else . . . say [Kim is] 'losing water like a drying pollock.'"

North Korea may be too poor to feed its own people, but it's spared no expense in maintaining Kim's carcass—blowing through a rumored $800,000 a year. The North lacks scientists with the skills to perform the duty, so it outsources the task to a team of Russian technicians. It's unsurprising that the Russians are known for their embalming skills. On a recent visit to Moscow, The Scrapbook viewed Lenin's corpse, and he looked remarkably well preserved for someone who's been dead for 90 years. Though it did look a little, er, waxy. Maybe the solution to North Korea's conundrum can be found at Madame Tussaud's. ♦

Ditto

Last week, Rep. Henry Cuellar, a Texas Democrat, lashed out at President Obama over the border crisis. Since last fall, more than 40,000 unaccompanied minors, mostly from Central America, have been caught illegally trying to enter the country. Cuellar called Obama's response

"aloof," "bizarre," and "detached." He might have added "predictable."

Naturally, Obama had asked for billions of dollars to address the problem without offering to fix his administration's lax deportation policies that created the crisis in the first place. At that point, the next move in the White House's tired playbook was all too obvious. As our friend Mary Katharine Ham tweeted: "Probably best thing to do now that O's doubled the request for funding is give a speech crapping on the people he needs to agree to it." The very next day, Obama gave a press conference on the immigration crisis, prompting perhaps the least surprising *Politico* headline ever: "Barack Obama goes after Republicans on immigration."

Just a few hours after Obama gave his speech, a train full of 1,300 migrants headed toward America derailed in southern Mexico. Obama's wreck of an immigration policy is now resulting in literal train wrecks and the best he can do is climb on his towering soapbox and insult Republican lawmakers.

This brilliant messaging strategy continued apace, and Democratic Twitter feeds were soon tweeting out a photo of Obama at his desk in the Oval Office superimposed with the quotation, "'I'm the guy doing his job. You must be the other guy.'—Barack Obama on the Republican Congress." Of course, you might be wondering why hundreds of elected representatives in Congress would be addressed as a singular "guy." The answer is that this isn't really an Obama quote, which is given away by the fact that it's vaguely memorable. It's actually a line that POTUS has appropriated from Martin Scorsese's Irish gangster film *The Departed*.

Obama later acknowledged the source in a speech in Austin, where he noted that *The Departed* was "a little violent for kids." You know what's also inappropriate for kids? Being penned up by federal authorities while the president torpedoes any solution to this crisis by pathetically trying to score points with quotes from mob movies.

Immigration is a thorny issue, and The Scrapbook doesn't pretend to know how to find common ground between Republicans and Democrats. But we are absolutely certain that if the president is serious about helping these kids, he needs to dispense with the petulant nonsense and start by acting like an adult. ♦

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The Daily Dishes

Recently I was fingerprinted for a work ID. Sitting at a little table across from a gentleman who, like many federal employees, wore his ID badge and metro card around his neck, I concentrated on rolling my right thumb just so over the scanner between us, from the leftmost edge of the nail to the flat, fleshy center before lifting straight up. Then I did it again. And again. And again.

Following his instructions, I pressed my thumb to my forehead, to pick up a dab of perspiration to help the machine take notice of those hard-to-read folds that comprise my unique skin pattern. Still the machine didn't respond. It was like one of those electronic soap dispensers that refuse to notice me standing there, with my hand out, waiting. Or perhaps my fingerprints were the problem. Had they worn off? Was that even possible?

As I continued gently rolling my fingertips over the scanner, I thought of my wife, Cynthia, our three kids, and our kitchen sink. *There* was the source of my identity crisis, I thought. If the scanner couldn't pick up my fingerprints, it was because I had finally washed too many dishes.

I happen to be a member of that distinct minority who like to wash dishes. Time allowing, I am also a member of the minority within a minority who like to dry and put away dishes once they have been washed. There are, however, limits.

As a part-time clerk at a delicatessen during my teenage years, I grew very tired of the sight of the deep metal double sink. Its brackish water always concealed animal guts—we sold a lot of rotisserie chickens—long sharp knives, and odd pieces of equipment, like the bullhorn spikes that screwed onto the rotisserie spits to hold the chickens in place.

But give me a nice little home kitchen and a large pile of food-encrusted china, and I am at peace. My nervous energy is efficiently expended while my mind wanders free. As on long drives, I seem to have a lot of amusing thoughts (amusing to me, anyway) when my body is busy and I am not trying to be witty. Also, washing dishes gets me out of a lot of other work.

DAVID CLARK

Cynthia wanted to be the family cook. Like many women of her generation, she returned to the kitchen to redress one of feminism's side effects: neglect of the culinary arts. She wouldn't put it that way, quite. But there is the fact that Cynthia, an education researcher with an advanced degree, owns about as many books on the arts of pickling and breadmaking as on statistical modeling. I do like having a wife who can explain standard deviations and make cucumbers taste tangy, but there is a price to all this self-improvement.

We have never achieved a perfect modus vivendi about who does the dishes. I don't mind doing most of the dishes, including all of the evening dishes, but I find myself doing two shifts a day: when I get home and before I leave for work. And it's getting to me.

The kinds of dishes I have to do make it all the more depressing: countless water bottles whose bottoms can only be reached with a sponge on a stick, lunchboxes whose insides are smeared with applesauce. Even pickle jars with their genteel remains of coriander seed and garlic cloves get on my nerves after minutes lost searching for the right top for my son's metal thermos.

I repeat, I do love the sight of a clean kitchen, but even that is short-lived in our house. No sooner is a counter cleaned than homework papers or a new cooking project blights its surface.

I am starting to sound like one of the women Betty Friedan quoted in *The Feminine Mystique* who complain about mysterious pains in their hands and the woebegone feeling that there must be more to life than housework. But I make a lousy feminist.

A few months after our first child was born, while my sleep-deprived wife was still nursing and doing the lion's share of parenting, her parents and sisters visited. My wife and our baby, suffice it to say, were the object of everyone's concern. Everyone normal that is.

But as our guests enjoyed a cup of coffee or something to eat, and dirty dishes began to pile up on the counter next to a six pack of used baby bottles with their several parts, my concern was for the poor sap who had to clean up. Duty called, however, so I went to the sink and turned on the faucet, apparently saying out loud, "Sometimes I feel like all I do is dishes."

"Yes," Cynthia replied, "but washing dishes is *all* you do."

David Skinner

the weekly Standard

Israel Under Attack

Last week, Hamas fired hundreds of rockets and missiles at targets throughout Israel, including the nuclear reactor at Dimona. Two of the three M-75 missiles targeting Dimona missed the mark entirely, but one had to be brought down by Iron Dome, Israel's antimissile shield. The U.N. considers an attack on a nuclear reactor an act of nuclear terrorism, which in this case might have taken a catastrophic toll on Israel's population—as well as the Palestinians.

And now Obama is offering to play honest broker and negotiate a ceasefire between this terrorist group and our ally Israel. Why not? Just last month, the Obama administration helped usher Hamas into a Palestinian unity government. It's not as if the White House didn't know whom it was dealing with. Hamas hadn't changed its stripes or its founding charter, which calls for unending war on Israel until the Jewish state is erased from the pages of history. Even as the administration was telling Jerusalem to give Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas a little time to work out all the kinks with his new unity government, Hamas was preparing for war.

While the administration was showing the PA how to get around U.S. laws that prevent American money from going to terrorists, Hamas was fortifying its tunnel network. It moves men and materiel and missiles through those tunnels, like the medium-range M-75s, and the long-range M-302s, designed by Iran and launched last week on trajectories that reached as far as Haifa, Israel's northernmost major city.

Surely the White House had intelligence about the tunnels and the missiles, both of which were clear evidence of Hamas's intentions—terror and war. The problem isn't that the administration didn't know, but that it didn't care. The White House has its own peculiar ideas about the Middle East, which is why America's regional standing, from North Africa to the Persian Gulf, is in shambles.

The Obama administration's map of the Middle East might as well be of the Hobbits' Middle Earth because it bears no relationship to reality. Every corner of the region is yet another realm of wondrous fantasy governed by magical thinking. A Fatah-Hamas unity deal? How productive! Coordination with Qassem Suleimani and the Quds Force in Iraq? That's refreshing! An agreement with the Islamic Republic over its nuclear weapons program allowing them to keep 10,000 centrifuges? This will bring the clerical regime back into the community of nations!

The White House cannot be bothered with Middle Eastern reality. Several weeks ago, the administration was warned that the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) was on the verge of taking over a strategically important Syrian city, Deir al-Zour, close to the Iraqi border. As the *Daily Beast* reported, the Syrian opposition told administration officials like U.N. ambassador Samantha Power that they were surrounded by ISIS forces and running out of ammunition. Without support, it was only a matter of time before the city and key supply routes fell into ISIS's hands. The Syrian opposition's warnings fell on deaf ears. Evidently, it does not matter to the White House that a terrorist organization with enormous reserves of cash now controls territory on both sides of the Syrian-Iraqi border, or that its leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi calls this territory the "caliphate."

Last week the White House's Middle East coordinator, Philip Gordon, visited Tel Aviv to speak at a conference where he encouraged Israel to take bold steps for peace, to "end the occupation and allow for Palestinian sovereignty, security, and dignity." Soon after his talk, the conference hall had to be vacated because the territory in Gaza that Israel ceased to occupy in 2005 allowed Palestinian militants to rain missiles on Israel's largest city. This episode, a perfect illustration of the Obama administration willfully ignoring reality, should provide a lesson, wrote David Horovitz. "Our closest friend," he wrote in the *Times of Israel*, "should be just a little less arrogant in telling us what we need and don't need to do in order to keep ourselves safe."

Meanwhile, Hamas's campaign shows no sign of ending any time soon. According to Israeli strategists, Hamas's rate of missile fire is considerably slower than it was two years ago when Israel mounted Operation Pillar of Defense to stop Hamas rockets. The rate suggests to Israeli officials that Hamas is trying to conserve its arsenal. As the *Washington Free Beacon* reported, the Israeli Air Force is targeting missile factories as well as tunnels, but that may not be sufficient.

In 2012, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu put 40,000 ground troops on the border to show Hamas how far he was willing to go to get a ceasefire. This time around he may have to go further to check a Hamas campaign that is qualitatively different from that of 2012. Some Israeli analysts, like former head of military intelligence Amos Yadlin, argue that a ground operation is "necessary, almost essential" to uncover the tunnel networks, which may prove impermeable to air attacks.

If Hamas is pacing its missile fire, it means they're in it for the long haul. If they're crossing red lines by firing missiles at Dimona as well as Ben Gurion airport, it means they're going all out. The question is why.

Some analysts point to likely Iranian involvement—indeed use of the long-range M-302, not previously in the arsenal of Hamas, underscores that suggestion. It's true that Hamas's relations with Iran have been somewhat cooler since they fell out over the Syrian civil war (Hamas sided with their Sunni co-religionists; Tehran has thrown its full weight behind the Assad regime). But the Iranians have a lot of cards to play in Gaza, including Islamic Jihad and other Palestinian factions, as well as Hamas itself. As Israeli analyst Shimon Shapira commented recently, "Iran is more than capable of going over the head of Hamas's political leadership and arming its military commanders directly."

If Iran is not in fact driving the campaign, then Hamas may be putting on a demonstration for Tehran of how helpful it can be to the Islamic Republic. With Hezbollah tied down in Syria fighting alongside Assad, Hamas is more useful to Iran than ever—especially since Hamas is now in possession of long-range missiles capable of striking anywhere inside Israel, making it another tool of Iranian deterrence should the Israelis consider striking Iran's nuclear weapons facilities.

In other words, the strategic picture of the Middle East hasn't changed one bit. As the Obama White House seeks to sign a permanent deal with Iran by July 20, the key threat not only to Israel but to American interests remains . . . Iran. Too bad the Obama administration can't come to grips with that reality.

—Lee Smith

More Than a Smidgen

The facts are simple. The IRS systematically targeted conservative and Tea Party groups after their activism proved decisive in the 2010 midterm elections—Obama's famous "shellacking." The effects of this targeting were widespread. Some Tea Party groups were neutered in the months before the 2012 presidential election.

Few of the explanations or justifications of this targeting provided by IRS leaders and Obama administration officials have held up. IRS officials at first denied that any targeting had taken place. That was false. They later claimed that the targeting had involved only low-level employees in the Cincinnati office. That was false. They argued that conservative groups weren't singled out, that progressive groups were subject to the same level of scrutiny. That was false. They argued that the IRS has complied with all requests for information from Congress. That was false.

Three years ago, on June 3, 2011, Representative Dave Camp, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, wrote to the IRS requesting all information—including emails and other communication—related to the alleged targeting of conservative groups. Ten days later, Lois Lerner, the woman at the center of the targeting, reported to the IT team at the IRS that her hard drive had crashed. IRS leaders, questioned repeatedly about Lerner's emails in subsequent congressional hearings, made no mention of the hard drive crash. Earlier this summer, IRS director John Koskinen disclosed that thousands of Lerner emails—including many of those sent to executive branch agencies—were missing because of the alleged computer problems. From her first appearance before a congressional committee, back in May 2013, Lerner has exercised her right against self-incrimination and refused to testify.

Last week brought a significant new revelation: an email in which Lerner seeks advice about keeping information from Congress. On April 9, 2013, Lerner emailed Marcia Hooke, an information technology specialist at the IRS, with an inquiry about an internal IRS message system known as OCS—Office Communications Service.

Lerner writes:

> I had a question today about OCS. I was cautioning folks about email and how we have had several occasions where Congress has asked for emails and there has been an electronic search for responsive emails—so we need to be cautious about what we say in emails. Someone asked if OCS conversations were also searchable—I don't know but told them I would get back to them. Do you know?

Hooke responds that OCS conversations are not automatically saved, but adds the obvious disclaimer that the communicating parties may save them on their own. For that reason, it's possible that they could turn up in a search. But the answer to the original question? No, they're not saved.

Lerner responds: "Perfect."

The exchange raises several questions:

• Why would Lerner "caution folks about email" and urge them "to be cautious about what we say in emails" if she and her colleagues had done nothing wrong?

• What was in these OCS communications that Lerner wanted to keep from Congress?

• Why would a senior IRS bureaucrat think it appropriate to withhold any information from lawmakers elected to provide oversight of agencies like the IRS?

• Why was Lerner concerned that Congress would see these internal IRS communications?

There's actually an answer to that last question: She knew that the IRS scandal was about to explode.

At the time Lerner sent the email, IRS officials had recently learned that the Treasury inspector general would be issuing a report the following month criticizing the agency for its targeting of conservative groups. And Lerner's email came just before she planted a question in the

audience at an American Bar Association conference on May 10 in an effort to get out in front of the controversy.

These facts lead to one conclusion: Lois Lerner and other top IRS officials were desperate to keep information on the targeting of conservative groups from Congress.

It's crucial to understand why. And that will require a special prosecutor.

Congressional Democrats have repeatedly called for an end to the investigations on Capitol Hill. The Justice Department investigation—using that word loosely—is being run by an Obama contributor. And Barack Obama, who once worried that such targeting was a subversion of our democracy, has since pronounced, in the face of a steady accumulation of evidence to the contrary, that there is not a "smidgen of corruption" to the IRS targeting.

That, too, is false.

—Stephen F. Hayes

Free Elections for Hong Kong

Over half a million people filled the streets of Hong Kong on July 1, marching for democracy on the anniversary of the British colony's handover to Chinese Communist rule in 1997. On June 29, an unofficial referendum organized by democracy activists concluded with 800,000 votes cast—more than one-tenth of Hong Kong's population. The overwhelming majority supported a democratic election for Hong Kong's next chief executive.

March for democracy, July 1

Currently, Hong Kong's top official is chosen from among Beijing-approved candidates by a committee of 1,200 people, mostly allies of Beijing. Marchers on July 1 ridiculed this arrangement, holding up signs bearing the number "689," the number of votes won by the incumbent, Leung Chun-ying.

Beijing has promised that in 2017, the Hong Kong chief executive will be popularly elected. Hoping to tamp down expectations of an actual democratic election with a competitive nomination process, however, Beijing issued a white paper on June 10 that identified "loving the country" as the "basic political requirement" for civil servants, including the chief executive. For Beijing, "love" means loyalty to the Communist party, disdain for civil liberties undergirded by the rule of law, and hostility to democracy. The people of Hong Kong were not persuaded, and the massive turnout for the referendum and march delivered a huge setback to Beijing.

NEWSCOM

The international community is more easily intimidated. Foreign leaders have been mostly silent. One welcome exception is Lord Patten, the last British governor of Hong Kong, who objected to the notion that Hong Kong's judges should knuckle under to Beijing. He had words as well for Western companies that have lined up against the democracy movement, some withholding advertising from a major newspaper that takes a pro-democracy line. "I can only assume that they haven't had the agreement of their global headquarters for what they have been saying," Patten said, perhaps with a wink. "I would imagine that their global heads would have been surprised and slightly embarrassed."

There's plenty more embarrassment to go around. The Obama administration's response to the massive display of support for democracy has been more appropriate to a teenager shrugging "whatever" than a major power expressing itself on a central pillar of the president's Asia policy. Announcing the "pivot to Asia" in an address to the Australian parliament in November 2011, President Obama waxed eloquent: "History is on the side of the free—free societies, free governments, free economies, free people. And the future belongs to those who stand firm for those ideals, in this region and around the world." Yet on July 1, the deputy spokesperson for Obama's State Department, Marie Harf, said it was "not for me to say" whether Beijing should take note of the Hong Kong people's aspirations for democracy. She and more senior officials should say precisely that and much more.

So far, Congress hasn't been much better. Under the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992, America supports Hong Kong's autonomy, civil liberties, and democratization. Four original Senate cosponsors of the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act remain in office—Senator Mitch McConnell, who introduced the bill, and Senators Chuck Grassley, John McCain, and Richard Shelby. (Another, Max Baucus, then a senator from Montana, is now the U.S. ambassador in Beijing.) They should amend the law to reflect Hong Kong's surging democracy movement and Beijing's increasing interference in Hong Kong's affairs, which has made the original "one country, two systems" concept an "unsustainable illusion," in the words of Margaret Ng, a barrister and former pro-democracy member of the legislature.

Seventeen years ago, Great Britain stepped aside and the United States assumed the role of Hong Kong's chief international defender. At the time, an American diplomat said that was only natural: "It is who we are." The phrase will be familiar to anyone who has listened to President Obama's speeches about the priority America places on supporting democracy abroad. Words are fine, but meaningless without action.

—Ellen Bork

Detainees color at a federal processing facility in Brownsville, Texas, June 2014.

Disorder at the Border

What Obama wrought.

BY SCOTT W. JOHNSON

Watching the influx of unaccompanied minors crossing our southwestern border daily, a reasonable man could conclude that we are living out the fevered dreams of a dystopian novel. The United States has lost a basic aspect of sovereignty. Control over its borders is a relic of the past.

Having traversed Mexico with the help of drug cartels freely operating human trafficking networks, Central American minors are voluntarily entering the United States through the Rio Grande Valley. They're shepherded to the border, where they cross on their own and seek apprehension by Department of Homeland Security agents, believing that minors won't be deported.

According to Brian Bennett's intensely reported July 5 *Los Angeles Times* story, U.S. Customs and Border Protection figures show that officers took fewer than 4,000 unaccompanied children from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras into custody annually for most of the last decade. Then, in fiscal year 2012, officers seized 10,146 unaccompanied minors. Last fiscal year, they took 20,805; between last October and this June 15, they nabbed 39,133. The overused word "crisis" fits the numbers—indeed, "invasion" doesn't seem too strong. By July 8, however, the White House had downgraded the invasion from a "crisis" to a "situation."

Many Americans are deeply disturbed by the "situation." They resent the expenditure of resources and the appropriation of facilities for the detention of the minors. They fear the public health consequences of their dispersion, with reports reliably indicating, despite attempts to suppress the information, the presence of tuberculosis and other unwelcome conditions among them. They also suspect that the president of the United States supports the situation.

Conditions have not suddenly changed in the minors' home countries. So far as we can tell, the cartels and their customers have a sophisticated understanding of American immigration law (it prohibits the immediate deportation of minors "other than Mexican") and how the White House enforces it (President Obama, as he made clear in a 2012 executive order regarding illegal minors, would prefer not to). As a

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Cleveland immigration attorney told Bennett, "The cartels have figured out where the hole is."

On June 30, Obama sent a letter to congressional leaders addressing the crisis. The tone was not urgent; it verged on the complacent. He invoked "root causes," and they had nothing to do with his own policies. He indicated that he would seek additional statutory authority to deal with unaccompanied minors from noncontiguous countries like Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, but offered no specifics; by last week, according to sources cited by the Associated Press, he had withdrawn the suggestion.

He did, however, follow through on his warning that he would request additional funding to support the detained minors; he asked for emergency funding in the amount of $3.7 billion. It does not appear that these funds will be dedicated to securing the border itself. As Byron York commented in the *Washington Examiner*, the funding request provided as "clear an indication as any that removal of the thousands who have already come here illegally is unlikely to happen in any significant numbers."

Headed for processing in South Texas, June 11, 2014

Also on June 30, Obama met at the White House with over a dozen "immigration advocates" and promised more in the way of executive action to extend amnesty to illegal aliens. At the meeting, according to Major Garrett's July 3 *National Journal* report, Obama "became unplugged on immigration, took his temper off mute, shook up the underlying base politics of the next two elections, and turned up to boil his long-simmering feud with Republicans over the constitutional limits of executive power."

Breitbart's Brandon Darby last week revealed a leaked DHS report, dated June 3, that indicates the role the administration's nonenforcement policy has played in the crisis: It identifies "successful migration attempts" as a substantial contributing factor.

The July 6 appearance of Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson on *Meet the Press* strongly suggested that the current crisis would result in more such "successful migration attempts." Johnson's evasive responses to host David Gregory's questions were illuminating.

Gregory asked: "I know there's a process they have to go through. Will most of these children that we have seen in this desperate situation stay in America, or will they be returned to their homes in Central America?" Johnson responded: "There's a deportation proceeding that is commenced against illegal migrants, including children. We are looking at ways to create additional options for dealing with the children in particular, consistent with our laws and our values."

Gregory tried again: "I'm trying to get an answer to: Will most of them end up staying, in your judgment?" Johnson responded: "I think we need to find more efficient, effective ways to turn this tide around generally, and we've already begun to do that."

We can infer that the answer is they'll end up staying. (DHS did not return my call seeking clarification of Secretary Johnson's remarks.) The United Nations has begun demanding that the Central American minors be treated as refugees.

Scheduled to attend a couple of big-buck Democratic fundraisers last week in Dallas and Austin, within shouting distance of the border, Obama declined to take a look at what's going on with his own eyes. A White House spokesman explained that Obama already had a good grasp of the "situation," while the president himself declared, "I'm not interested in photo-ops. I'm interested in solving the problem." Even some Democrats didn't buy it. "Don't take any cameras, Mr. President, but go down there and see what we're facing," Texas congressman Henry Cuellar said on CNN, calling it Obama's "Katrina moment."

Obama was ultimately shamed into holding a couple of meetings before he flew off to a fundraiser at the home of *Machete* director Robert Rodriguez, where donors paid up to $32,400 to hobnob with the president and Hollywood celebrities. After the talks, which included Texas governor Rick Perry, Obama made a brief statement, arguing for "comprehensive immigration reform" and the $3.7 billion he's requested, and filibustered responses to two questions. He said that Governor Perry had asked him to deploy the National Guard at the border, conceded that it made sense, but opposed it as a "temporary" measure. He blamed Republicans for the crisis, deriding them as opponents of negotiation and compromise. Calling his claims straw men is an insult to straw men everywhere, but the metaphor is apt. Obama's straw men are the only force that will be deployed at the border, and they are inviting people to come on in. ♦

A Revealing Reading List

Rand Paul's book recommendations.

BY DAVID ADESNIK

Rand Paul is a man of conviction. His reputation for acting on principle is the foundation on which he has begun to build the infrastructure of a presidential campaign. It is very difficult, however, for a man of conviction to adjust his image without compromising his reputation for integrity.

In the realm of foreign policy, Senator Paul faces the challenge of dispelling perceptions that he shares the isolationist tendencies of his father, former congressman Ron Paul of Texas. He wants to convince conservative voters that he has been mislabeled and misunderstood. His approach to foreign affairs has not changed, yet Senator Paul now presents his views as applications of Ronald Reagan's firm but cautious approach to national security.

The Achilles' heel of this rebranding effort has been Paul's own candor. When speaking off the cuff, he has made observations that seem to reflect the worldview of President Reagan's left-wing and isolationist critics. In that vein, Paul suggested that the United States provoked Japan before Pearl Harbor and that Dick Cheney supported the invasion of Iraq in order to make a profit for his former employer Halliburton.

Now there is the strange case of Paul's reading list for students, which can be found on his official Senate website. The foreign policy section of the list consists entirely of works that blame the United States for the rise of Islamic extremism while offering solutions that verge on isolationism. Most of the books also express a sharp hostility toward Israel and toward those who believe that U.S. foreign policy should serve the cause of human freedom. Reagan, to put it mildly, was a friend of Israel and advocate of freedom.

Tips from Rand on your summer reading!

Encouraging young voters to read is a commendable enterprise, especially since they encounter few conservative works on America's intellectually imbalanced campuses. To Paul's credit, his list includes genuine classics such as F.A. Hayek's *Road to Serfdom* and Barry Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative*. Yet his selections on foreign and defense policy relentlessly echo the misguided notions of the left-liberal professoriate.

Noticeably absent from the list are any books about Ronald Reagan or the nearly bloodless downfall of Soviet communism. Also absent from the list are any books about the Founding Fathers, the Civil War, or World War II. All in all, there are no volumes that suggest any reason to believe that American power has been a force for good in the world.

There are, however, 3 books written by Ron Paul out of the 17 on the list. Although filial piety might explain the presence of any one of Rep. Paul's numerous works, *A Foreign Policy of Freedom* illustrates that Ron Paul is not simply an opponent of foreign interventions, but an unrepentant conspiracy theorist whose worldview could not be further from Reagan's.

Ron Paul's book consists mainly of floor speeches delivered during his long tenure in the House. "Our policy is designed to promote the military-industrial complex and world government," he asserted in the late 1990s. "Every week we must find a foreign infidel to slay, and, of course, keep the military-industrial complex humming," he noted, adding that "no one has the foggiest notion whether Kofi Annan or Bill Clinton is in charge of our foreign policy." The elder Paul often repeats the canard that Osama bin Laden was America's "close ally" to whom we gave "financial assistance, weapons and training." For Ron Paul, the ultimate cause of terrorism is precisely what Osama bin Laden says it is: "The U.S. defiles Islam with military bases on holy land in Saudi Arabia, its initiation of war against Iraq, with 12 years of persistent bombing, and its dollars and weapons being used against the Palestinians."

If Ron Paul's message isn't clear enough, the curious student may turn to another book on the list, Pat Buchanan's critique of George W. Bush's foreign policy, *Where the Right Went Wrong*. "America's huge footprint on the sacred soil of Saudi Arabia led straight to 9/11. The terrorists were over here because we were over there. Terrorism is the price of empire." Whereas Ron Paul condemns George Bush's "Christian-Zionist-oil crusade," Buchanan explains that "the Beltway Likud was plotting and propagandizing for war on Iraq long before 9/11." The distinctive trait of this clique is that it sees "U.S.

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and Israeli interests as identical."

It would be remiss to ignore the differences between Ron Paul and Buchanan, however. Buchanan is a protectionist who condemns the GOP's free trade agenda, while Paul is a strong free trader. "The Republican Party," Buchanan writes, "has signed off on economic treason." Buchanan also defines America as "a child of Europe" and frets about the impact of nonwhite immigrants on American culture.

Like Pat Buchanan and Ron Paul, another of the recommended authors, Andrew Bacevich, defines himself as a conservative. Yet in the preface to *The New American Militarism*, Bacevich notes, "my views have come to coincide with the critique long offered by the radical left." Much the same can be said for Paul, Buchanan, and others on the list.

Bacevich's book levels the accusation that American society as a whole is "infatuated with military power." More recently, Bacevich has joined the ranks of the conspiracy theorists, calling the United States a "de facto one-party state" in which democracy has been "hijacked" and replaced by a "new political elite whose members have a vested interest in perpetuating the crises that provide the source of their power." But the purpose of *The New American Militarism* is to expose the delusions of American popular culture, especially the "tendency to see military power as the truest measure of national greatness." While Bacevich demonstrates that Americans have tremendous respect for their men and women in uniform, one is hard pressed to find any evidence in the book that the United States has become a latter-day Sparta.

With his aggressive rejection of any moral constraints on foreign policy, Michael Scheuer distinguishes himself from the other authors on the list. In *Imperial Hubris*, he asks, "Can it be proven that it would make a substantive—[versus] emotional—difference to U.S. security if every Hutu killed every Tutsi, or vice versa; every Palestinian killed every Israeli, or vice versa; or if Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians exterminated each other to the last person?" Accordingly, Scheuer has no qualms about inflicting massive civilian casualties in the course of our campaign against al Qaeda. He cites the fire-bombing of Tokyo and Dresden as models for emulation. "The piles of dead," he writes, "will include as many or more civilians as combatants because our enemies wear no uniforms."

Strangely, while calling for future brutality, Scheuer attributes the rise of al Qaeda to anti-Islamic policies of the past. "The United States is hated across the Islamic world because of specific U.S. government policies and actions," Scheuer says. "I think it is fair to conclude," he writes, "that the United States of America remains bin Laden's only indispensable ally." If Washington does not want to fight an endless war against Islam, it must remove its military forces from the Arabian Peninsula, sever its ties to "apostate, corrupt" governments in the Middle East, and cease all pressure on Arab oil producers to keep oil prices low. Scheuer also asks (rhetorically), "Do we totally support Israel because it is essential to our security, or because of habit, the prowess of Israel's American lobbyists and spies, the half-true mantra that Israel is a democracy . . . and a misplaced sense of guilt over the Holocaust?"

Chalmers Johnson stands out among Senator Paul's favorite authors for his unadulterated moral relativism and thoroughgoing left-wing politics. In *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*, he observes that the 9/11 attacks "employ[ed] the strategy of the weak, they killed innocent bystanders, whose innocence is, of course, no different from that of the civilians killed by American bombs in Iraq, Serbia, Afghanistan, and elsewhere." He asserts there is no meaningful difference between the Soviet empire and the United States' network of alliances. Johnson's commitment to that false analogy is so complete that he can write, "By the 1990s Japan was the world's second-richest country, but with a government remarkably similar to that of the former East Germany." Apparently, all that's missing is a wall around Tokyo to keep its citizens from escaping to the West. Anyhow, Johnson naturally recommends that the United States dismantle its empire, which would entail bringing home all forces stationed abroad, since there is no threat that justifies a forward military presence.

The one work of genuine scholarship on Senator Paul's foreign policy list is *Silent Night*, by Stanley Weintraub, an account of the unplanned truce on the Western Front to honor Christmas in December 1914. Although not especially political, *Silent Night* portrays war as a futile enterprise, in which the machinations of uncaring governments on all sides result in the horrific death of soldier pawns. The author goes so far as to suggest that there was no reason to fear a German victory in the Great War, since "a relatively benign, German-led commonwealth of Europe might have developed decades earlier than the European Community" while sparing Europe the horrors of the Second World War.

Of course, it would be patently unfair to hold a compiler responsible for every word in every book on a list of recommended reading. Yet Rand Paul should be held responsible for the core message that is repeated again and again by each of his recommended works on foreign policy. According to the *New York Times*, Paul's "skepticism of military intervention" has made him the target of "powerful elements of the Republican base who have undertaken a campaign to portray Mr. Paul as dangerously misguided." While conservative voters may not agree with the *Times* editorial board on what constitutes being misguided, that adjective seems appropriate for the indoctrination of young minds with the belief that American perfidy is responsible for the mass murder of 9/11 and the continuing loss of innocent lives to al Qaeda and its associates. That misguided notion is already popular on campus. It does not need an advocate in the White House. ♦

Stubbornness as Governance

A president incapable of pivoting.

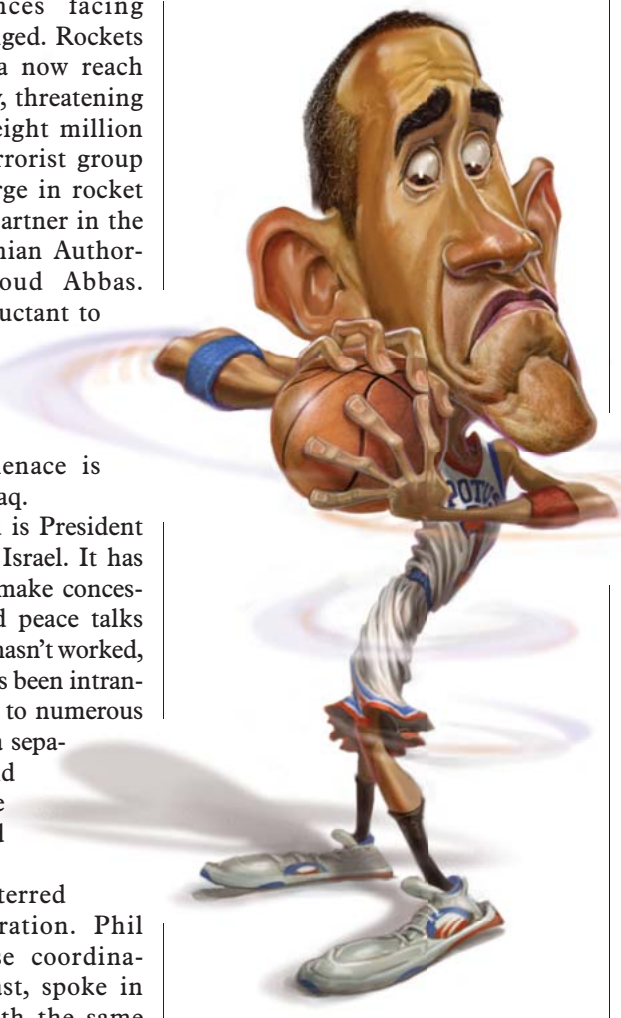
BY FRED BARNES

The circumstances facing Israel have changed. Rockets fired from Gaza now reach deeper into the country, threatening two-thirds of Israel's eight million people. Hamas, the terrorist group responsible for the surge in rocket attacks, has become a partner in the government of Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas. And Abbas appears reluctant to require Hamas to give up terrorism and its commitment to destroy Israel. Meanwhile, the jihadist menace is growing in Syria and Iraq.

What hasn't changed is President Obama's policy toward Israel. It has been to press Israel to make concessions in the stalemated peace talks with the Palestinians. It hasn't worked, but not because Israel has been intransigent. Israel has agreed to numerous concessions, including a separate Palestinian state and half of Jerusalem. The Palestinians have refused all offers.

Failure has not deterred the Obama administration. Phil Gordon, White House coordinator for the Middle East, spoke in Tel Aviv last week with the same outdated message, faulting Israel. "How will [Israel] have peace if it is unwilling to delineate a border, end the occupation, and allow for Palestinian sovereignty, security, and dignity?" he asked.

David Horovitz of the *Times of Israel* was appalled. "Parts of his oration read as though Gordon is a recent arrival from Planet Zog who has mistaken the Middle East for Finland," Horovitz wrote. Israeli concessions won't bring peace, he said. "You'd think this sad truth might have permeated the administration's mindset by now, as it surveys the dismal, terror-riven Middle East, and contemplates the abject collapse of its policies in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and the rest of the area."



GARY LOCKE

Obama himself got into the act with an article in the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*. An agreement with the Palestinians would "help turn the tide of international sentiment and sideline violent extremists," he said. Obama praised Abbas—but not Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu—as "a counterpart committed to a two-state solution and security cooperation with Israel." What about Hamas? Obama didn't mention Hamas.

Nor was the State Department eager to broach the subject. Spokesman Jen Psaki took the attitude of "believe me, not your own eyes." She insisted there's "no evidence that Hamas plays any role in the interim technocratic [Palestinian] government." The public signing of a unity document? That doesn't seem to count. The weasel word here is "technocratic." It somehow freed the administration to minimize the ability of Abbas to stop the rocketing of Israel by Hamas.

With Obama, refusing to change his mind is a habit. He sticks with policies whether they work or not. If they've become irrelevant or counterproductive, change is still out of the question. If a proposed policy will never be enacted, he sticks with it anyway. For him, stubborn adherence reflects a mindset. If he thinks he's right, as Obama invariably does, why change?

This puts Obama in a presidential class by himself. I've covered presidents going back to Gerald Ford, and none took this approach. They changed their minds when political pressure forced them to, when a policy was failing, or when they had a simple change of heart.

George W. Bush changed his strategy in Iraq in 2007 when the war was being lost. Bill Clinton signed on to a cut in the tax rate on capital gains in 1997 and did so willingly. Against his better judgment, Ronald Reagan signed a series of tax increases in his first term. Under duress, Jimmy

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Carter agreed to a military buildup. And so on.

But try to come up with a big change by Obama and not much comes to mind. Yes, he flipped on same-sex marriage and became an advocate. But does anyone think his opposition was sincere—rather than political posturing—in the first place? In the 2008 campaign, he opposed an individual mandate on health insurance. Once in office, he proposed a mandate. A genuine reversal? Probably not.

As president, Obama has stuck with a string of losers on the economy, immigration, energy, and tax reform. If they've been implemented, he counts them as successes. If not, he blames Republicans for blocking them. But change policies? Never.

Obama has presided over the slowest and weakest economic recovery in decades. Median income has stagnated, millions have dropped out of the job market, new jobs are disproportionately part-time, and business investment has lagged. Remember the heralded Recovery Summer in 2010? Didn't happen. Perhaps it will this summer, five years after the recession ended.

Yet through all this, he's clung to building more roads and bridges as his policy for boosting economic growth and jobs. (His stimulus in 2009 mostly stimulated Democratic interest groups.) Here's Obama in Denver last week: "It used to be that Republicans, Democrats, everybody said, you know what, America, it's a good thing when we build roads and bridges and get a smart grid to transmit energy—all those things are good for business, good for workers, it helps—now they can't seem to pass a bill just to fund basic projects that we know are good for our economy."

Infrastructure projects have never done much for the economy. What's needed are tax incentives for business investment in growth and jobs. Obama would rather raise business taxes than reduce them. If he could, he'd increase taxes on companies with foreign profits and use the revenue to bail out the highway trust fund. That's a nonstarter in Congress. Still, he's sticking with his policy.

Obama boasts that America has become "more energy independent" on his watch. And it's true. But it's not because of his policy of lavishly subsidizing wind and solar energy—quite the contrary. Increased oil and natural gas production, which he's tried to thwart, are responsible. If he opened federal lands to oil and gas production, we'd have a bigger energy boom. But that would necessitate a presidential change of mind. So no dice.

On immigration, Obama backs an all-or-nothing policy. It's either "comprehensive" reform or no deal. Chances are he'll get nothing. "I want to work with Democrats and Republicans," he said in Minneapolis last week. But he can't do so while attacking them.

Why doesn't the president summon Republicans to negotiate a deal on immigration or other issues? The problem is that negotiations, if all goes well, lead to compromise. And that's what Obama doesn't want. Better to do as much as he can by executive order. That way he can get exactly what he wants—without changing his mind. ♦

The Politics of Money

Go bold with gold.

BY JUDY SHELTON

Republicans are searching for big, bold ideas that will inspire voters to embrace a conservative agenda. To unite its disparate segments, the GOP needs to uphold our nation's founding principles—a key requirement for Tea Party adherents—while fostering the aspirations of those who believe the United States should play a strong leadership role in the world. A prime opportunity presents itself in the most compelling problem America faces: the need to restore confidence in its economic future.

Uncertainty over interest rates and the Federal Reserve's next policy move is discouraging private sector decision-making and hampering growth; without economic growth, we cannot tackle other pressing concerns. On the global front, the disconnect between the money-pumping actions of central banks and the lackluster performance of real economic variables, such as wages, is fueling the political tensions of income inequality.

To reinvigorate faith in democratic capitalism as the best path to liberty, opportunity, and prosperity—at home and abroad—Republicans should focus on sound money as the logical foundation. But "sound money" cannot be invoked as a mere platitude; it's time to consider profound monetary reform to establish the reliability of America's currency and help build a new international monetary system.

And yes: We should be prepared to debate the potential role of gold in our nation's monetary affairs and as an anchor for international monetary stability.

Should the soundness of the dollar be subordinated to other policy objectives, as determined by a small

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committee of Federal Reserve officials meeting in Washington, D.C., eight times a year? Would private individuals make better economic and financial decisions if they knew the value of the dollar was not slated to deteriorate annually by some unknown percentage?

Rule-of-law versus rule-of-men is a fundamental aspect of the American idea, after all. It seems an anomaly to allow the Fed to conduct monetary policy in ways that rob individuals of purchasing power, suppress returns on savings, and favor stock market investors. If the notion of self-rule based on equal rights that cannot be usurped by government is to resonate universally, as the Founders intended, America must address this glaring incongruity. How can we extol the benefits of free trade and open markets in the absence of an orderly and ethical international monetary system?

The pursuit of honest money through a gold-linked dollar remains the unfinished agenda of the late congressman Jack Kemp, a conservative Republican whose bold ideas reflected his commitment to economic opportunity and justice. For Kemp, sound money had a strong moral dimension: "People trade with each other in time because they believe they will not be defrauded by a change in the currency." An international gold standard would provide a reliable medium of exchange that would move the whole world toward liberalized trade and strong growth, he contended.

A savvy politician, Kemp thought it was possible to make the case for sound money and stable exchange rates in terms that made sense to the average citizen. "The monetary issue is anything but remote from people's experience," he told a congressional summit in November 1985. "In my experience, honest, sound, stable money is a popular, blue-collar, bread-and-butter, winning political issue."

A Columbia University economics professor gave Kemp's approach academic validation. Robert Mundell masterminded the pro-growth "supply-side revolution" carried out under President Reagan. He and Kemp co-hosted a monetary conference in May 1983 to focus attention on the negative consequences of unpredictable exchange rate fluctuations. "You will only get confidence in future monetary policy," Mundell explained, "if you have a monetary system that doesn't just depend upon pure political, practical politics, and that provides a stable monetary rule such as a gold standard in at least one country."

The good old days

Mundell—who would win the Nobel Prize for economics in 1999—emphasized the necessity of reconciling monetary policy with a unified global market for goods and capital investment to avoid the inefficiencies of distorted prices across national boundaries: "The only closed economy is the world economy."

Yet there has been no mechanism for such reconciliation since the demise of the gold-linked Bretton Woods system in August 1971. The International Monetary Fund was established in 1945 to oversee that system—to enforce the rules of fixed exchange rates among currencies and gold convertibility of the dollar—but today no global anchor exists to impose monetary discipline and curtail excess liquidity. At a Vienna conference in February, former IMF head Jacques de Larosière described the monetary setting leading up to the 2007-2008 crisis as something worse than a nonsystem: an "antisystem."

International monetary disorder continues to undermine productive growth even as the threat of reflating bubbles portends yet another financial crash—perhaps on the next American president's watch. Can anyone doubt that this would devastate the future of democratic capitalism along with the global economy?

When former World Bank chief Robert Zoellick, an intellectual heavyweight in Republican circles, suggested in November 2010 that a new global monetary system might "consider employing gold as an international reference point for gauging market expectations about inflation, deflation, and future currency values," it caused a stir but no action. Former Alaska governor Sarah Palin similarly argued for fundamental monetary reform, inveighing against "temporary, artificial economic growth" caused by the Fed's pump priming. "We want a stable dollar combined with real economic reform. It's the only way we can get our economy back on the right track."

Republicans need to expound boldly on the need for sound money; it should be a vital campaign issue, as important as fiscal responsibility and coherent foreign policy. Leadership and vision are required if America is to recover its economic strength and reassert its moral purpose. ♦

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The Common Core Commotion

Haven't we seen this movie before?

By Andrew Ferguson

It has been five years now since America got the news, or was supposed to: Henceforth our children would enjoy a revolutionary new approach to learning in the public schools, in the form of national educational standards. They're called the Common Core State Standards, or Common Core for short—or if you're in a particular hurry, CCSS. Why national standards should bear the official title "State Standards" is one of the many peculiarities that make Common Core interesting to think about. Anyway, as we enter the sixth year of this revolutionary phase in our country's history, it's not clear how many Americans know they are about to reap its benefits. Only 39 percent of us have heard of Common Core, according to a poll this spring, and those who have heard of it aren't crazy about it. In fact, the more knowledgeable people are, the less likely they are to think the whole thing is a good idea.

Too late! Forty-five states agreed to accept the Common Core standards immediately after they were introduced—in one case, even *before* they were introduced. A few states have since reneged, in response to protests from a small but passionate group of conservative parents ranged across the heartland, as well as some local unions and a handful of left-leaning educationists. But for a large majority of schools Common Core is here to stay, a done deal already—the newest of the new regimes, latest in a long line of revolutionary approaches designed to improve our public schools.

The indifference most Americans are showing to Common Core is likely a symptom of reform fatigue. Reform of an "unacceptable status quo" in public education has been going on so long that many of us can't recall what the pre-reform status quo was, or why it was unacceptable.

Common Core was announced only eight years after President George W. Bush and Sen. Edward Kennedy introduced another revolutionary approach to learning in public schools, an expensive and ambitious program called No Child Left Behind. NCLB, as it's referred to in the acronym-crazed world of education reform, forced states to raise their academic standards, which were considered too low, and to improve scores on standardized tests, which ditto.

Former 'Saturday Night Live' cast member Victoria Jackson joins Common Core opponents attending a hearing in the Tennessee legislature.

AP / ERIK SCHELZIG

NCLB itself came eight years after President Clinton thought up Goals 2000, a nationwide school reform program to enact "standards-based reforms" and thereby improve test scores. Goals 2000 was a reworking of a school reform plan called America 2000 that President George H.W. Bush launched in 1990 as a way of raising standards and getting better test scores out of America's public schools. He wanted to be called "the education president," President Bush did, and his approach, he said, was revolutionary.

And in 1983, only seven years before the ambitious launch of President Bush's America 2000, the nation received an alarming report commissioned by President Reagan, who was troubled that test scores, along with standards, were too low among public school students. The report was called "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform." It concluded that higher standards were necessary to raise test scores. "A Nation at Risk" was written by a blue-ribbon commission in an attempt to end-run the Department of Education, which had been started in 1979. The department was Jimmy Carter's idea. He worried that lax standards were destroying American public education. A federal

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department, he reasoned, might be able to oversee a revolutionary new approach that would set things right.

For nearly 40 years, it's pretty much been all reform, all the time for the nation's public school students, teachers, and parents. Many of the children whose schools were supposed to be revolutionized by America 2000 in 1990 now have the chance to see their own children's education revolutionized by Common Core. Nothing can stop the impulse to reform our nation's public schools. For professional policymakers, it is the itch they just can't scratch.

There are at least three reasons for this. First, whenever a new education reform program is introduced, a nice effusion of private and public money follows, and while the reformers always insist that the sum is scandalously inadequate, it is always just large enough to keep the appetite whetted for reform.

Second, and more important, the reforms never seem to work. This makes the need for reform all the more urgent. The country now spends more than $650 billion on primary and secondary education every year, far more than on our national defense, and nearly three times what it spent when Jimmy Carter decided we needed the Department of Education to encourage and guide education spending. Over the last three decades, increases in education funding have outstripped inflation by 20 percent. For many years now the United States has spent more money per-student than any other country in the world.

Educational reforms never seem to work. The country spends more than $650 billion on primary and secondary education every year. For many years now the United States has spent more money per-student than any other country in the world.

During that time, from what anybody can figure, there has been no overall improvement in the acquisition of skills and knowledge among American students, except among the very poor. But even at the economic bottom, where room for improvement was greatest, the numbers remain dismal: At present trends, only 9 out of 100 poor children who enter kindergarten today will grow up to hold a college degree. As a whole, the country's educational attainments rest in the mediocre middle of international rankings—well below Canada, but above Mexico, just like on the map.

We can assume that if Goals 2000 or NCLB or any of the other reform programs had been effective, the reformers could congratulate themselves for a job well done and go off to find another line of work. They haven't, which brings us to the third reason that educational reform is an enterprise without end.

It has to do with the old rule that supply creates its own demand. Over the last two generations, as the problem became unignorable and as vast freshets of money poured from governments and nonprofit foundations, an army of experts emerged to fix America's schools. From trade unions and think tanks they came, from graduate schools of education and nonprofit foundations, from state education departments and for-profit corporations, from legislative offices and university psych labs and model schools and experimental classrooms, trailing spreadsheets and PowerPoints and grant proposals; they found work as lobbyists, statisticians, developmental psychologists, neurological researchers, education theorists, entrepreneurs, administrators, marketers, think tank fellows, textbook writers—even teachers! So great a mass of specialists cannot be kept idle. If they find themselves with nothing to do, they will find something to do.

And so, after 40 years of signal failure, the educationists have brought us the Common Core State Standards. It is a totemic example of policy-making in the age of the well-funded expert.

NCLB LEFT BEHIND

It didn't take long—three or four years—before the weaknesses of NCLB, our last great reform, became undeniable. Its most daring innovation was to offer large piles of federal money for local schools on two conditions: They had to test their students to prove the kids were learning something, and they had to hold teachers responsible for the test results. In support of this revolutionary approach, and as evidence that this time they really meant it, our nation's army of educationists introduced a new collection of insta-clichés: transparency, accountability, stakeholders, proficiency, high-stakes . . . like so: *A school's proficiency will be transparent when stakeholders are held accountable through high-stakes testing.* At the same time, the politicians who approved NCLB were constrained by the American public's traditional, and reasonable, fear of centralization, particularly from Washington and particularly in the field of education, historically a matter for local authorities.

Politics and principle thus required that NCLB leave each state free to devise its own standards and tests of how much its students were learning. What happened as a result could surprise only an expert. Many states adjusted—this is a politer word than "rigged"—their tests to make their schools look good enough to keep federal money flowing. Children were declared "proficient" in math and reading skills with which, in truth, they had scarcely a nodding acquaintance. Tennessee's state tests declared that

87 percent of its fourth graders were "proficient" in math. A more disinterested national test put Tennessee's figure at 28 percent. In some states a student could score in the bottom 10 percent of test-takers and still be pronounced "proficient" in math or reading. Meanwhile, teachers' unions denounced evaluations that held their members responsible for the mess, leaving NCLB with no mechanism to clean it up. NCLB didn't invent America's many illiterate high schoolers, but it didn't catch them either.

The logic of education reform always points to more education reform. With experts having shown they didn't really know how to improve education on a broad scale, and with state school officials having proved themselves in many cases to be cheats and bunco artists, the solution was clear to every educationist: State school officials should get together with experts to come up with a new reform. Except this time it would work.

At least since the heady days of "A Nation at Risk," the world of education reform has been a cozy fraternity. Foundation directors sit on one another's boards, think tankers beehive with other think tankers in the lounges of convention hotels, academics peer-review the work of academics who will soon peer-review their reviewers' work. One foundation will give a grant to another foundation to study the work of the first foundation. In the last decade the fraternity has increasingly become a creature of the fabulously wealthy Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Gates has spent more than a billion dollars studying primary and secondary education. Few institutions dedicated to education reform have escaped Gates funding. Recipients range from trade groups like the American Federation of Teachers (more than $10 million since 2010) and Council of Chief State School Officers (nearly $5 million last year alone) to think tanks of the left (Center for American Progress) and the right (Thomas B. Fordham Institute).

Melinda and Bill Gates

The Gates Foundation has tunneled into the federal bureaucracy, too, at levels low and high. Several Gates officials and recipients worked in the Education Department under the second Bush, back when NCLB was the thing. Now, under President Obama, they are clustered at the top. Lyndsey Layton of the *Washington Post*, one of the few beat reporters who brings a gimlet eye to the work of educationists, points out that Obama's secretary of education, Arne Duncan, oversaw a $20 million Gates grant when he was CEO of Chicago Public Schools. Duncan's chief of staff is a Gates protégé, as are the officials who designed the administration's "Race to the Top" funding initiative in 2009. As we'll see, the initiative was indispensable to enlisting states into Common Core.

THROUGH THE NARROW GATES

The foundation's generosity seems indiscriminate, reflecting the milky centrism of its founder. Evidently Bill Gates doesn't have a political bone in his body. His intellectual loyalty lies instead with the ideology of expertise. His faith is technocratic and materialist: In the end he believes the ability of highly credentialed observers to identify and solve problems through the social sciences is theoretically limitless. "Studies" and "research" unlock the human secret. This is the animating faith of most educationists, too. All human interactions can be dispassionately observed and their separate parts identified, isolated, analyzed, and quantified according to some version of the scientific method. The resulting data will yield reliable information about how and why we behave as we do, and from this process can be derived formulas that will be universally applicable and repeatable.

"One size fits all" may be a term of mockery used by people who disdain the top-down solutions of centralized power; in the technocratic vision, "one size fits all" describes the ideal.

A good illustration of the Gates technocratic approach to education reform is an initiative called "Measures of Effective Teaching" or MET. (DUH.) The effectiveness of a truly gifted teacher was once considered mysterious or ineffable, a personal transaction rooted in intuition, concern, intelligence, wisdom, knowledge, and professional ardor, combined in a way that defies precise description or replication. Such an old-fashioned notion is an affront to the technocratic mind, which assumes no human phenomenon can be, at bottom, mysterious; nothing is resistant to reduction and measurement. "Eff the Ineffable" is the technocrat's motto.

To demystify teaching, MET researchers designed experiments involving more than 3,000 teachers, easily recruited after a layering of Gates money. They were monitored, either in person or by video, by highly

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trained observers who coded their every move according to one of five "instruments" of measurement that were also designed by highly trained professionals—the Classroom Assessment Scoring System, the Mathematical Quality of Instruction, and so on. So far, MET has cost Gates $335 million, spent on statisticians and psychologists from education schools, teachers' unions, and not-for-profit companies with names like "Teachscape" and "Empirical Education."

So what's the answer? How do you build a good teacher? The findings produced by MET experts are choked with charts, graphs, and algorithms—intimidating to the layman, consoling to the educationist. Their research has uncovered the 22 components, or "competencies," that are exhibited to one degree or another by effective teachers everywhere. Non-educationists will find some of these components frivolous or predictably trendy ("attention to access, equity, and diversity"). Others are banal ("teacher knowledge and fluency," "intellectual engagement in key ideas"). Still others are redundant, and many more are simply too poorly defined to qualify as distinct human traits. Yet the Gates reformers believe that their method—rigorous, empirical, scientific—can instill competencies in America's teachers if the same MET process of observation and evaluation is duplicated in local classrooms. "The goal," says Gates, "is for them to become standard practice."

Whether this is even possible is a question that doesn't take up much room in the MET literature; technocrats are seldom preoccupied with bridging the theoretical and the actual. Yet the researchers themselves give off occasional hints that the process they've invented won't travel very far. The observers used in the MET experiments had undergone training far too elaborate, time-consuming, and expensive for any but the richest school districts to afford. The observers were usually strangers to the teachers they evaluated in the experiments; in actual practice, in real schools, observers and teachers would be acquainted with each other, with the social and personal complications any such relationship entails. No consequences were attached to the ratings the observers came up with—no raises or job security influenced the experimental evaluations, as they would in real life. And even then, researchers found, evaluations of the same teacher often differed radically from one observer to the next, and depending on which "instrument" was used.

Exciting as it undoubtedly is for the educationist, MET research tells us nothing about how to improve the world that students and teachers inhabit. It is an exercise by educationists for educationists to ponder and argue over. Three hundred and thirty five million dollars can keep a lot of them busy.

CCSSO + NGA + CCSS = SMDH

The Common Core State Standards are a product of the same intellectual ecosystem that gave us MET: the same earnest good will, the same cult of expertise, the same tendency to overthink, the same bottomless pot of money. Common Core would not exist without the Gates Foundation.

When it became clear that NCLB wasn't working, a Gates-funded trade group called Council of Chief State School Officers (yes: CCSSO) summoned a conclave of educationists, including officials from 48 states. They agreed that the embarrassing muddle of test results delivered by the varied state tests under NCLB sho uld be cleaned up. The way to do it was through a single set of standards that would explicitly list the things a properly educated American child should know and be able to do as he rose from one grade level to the next, no matter what state he lived in. Even Tennessee.

Here the sequence of events in the story of Common Core grows murky. Official histories say only that "committees of educators" and "subject matter experts" were deputized by the National Governors Association (NGA, ahem) to develop the Standards. The Gates Foundation was generous as always. It kicked up a whirlwind of working groups, feedback committees, workshops, forums, advisory groups, development teams, and expert panels—a Full Employment Act for educationists. But how the experts who wrote the Standards were chosen, and which expert wrote what standard and why, are questions that are hard to get answers to. More than 10,000 educators commented on the Standards after they were developed, according to Common Core's publicists. But the attention of the general public or press was never aroused, and the impression of a mysterious elite gathering secretly to impose a New Educational Order has been hard to shake.

The committees worked fast. In less than a year, in June 2010, their handiwork was unveiled at a little-noticed event in Suwanee, Georgia. Kentucky agreed to the Standards days before they were made public. Five months later, 41 states had agreed to "fully implement" the Standards by the end of 2014. More states signed on within another year, bringing the total to 46. (Alaska, Texas, Virginia, and Nebraska were the holdouts.)

All of this activity at the state level has allowed advocates to say, correctly, that the federal Department of Education did not produce the Standards. Our nation's educationists, working together, produced the Standards. But it is a distinction without much difference. When the Ed Department found itself flush with cash from the 2009 Obama stimulus, it came up with "Race to the Top," a $4.35 billion program that allocated federal money to

states based in part on how closely they embraced "common standards" for "college and career readiness." Department officials, especially Secretary Duncan, have been tireless in promoting the cause, and the revolving door of the Gates Foundation has made it hard to tell the difference between state and federal, public and private.

Once the states fell into line, the department paid another $330 million for two state consortiums to hire educationists to devise Common Core tests. These will measure how well students are rising to the Standards, and those results, in turn, will be used to evaluate how well individual teachers are teaching them. The new tests will replace tests that each state had to develop over the last few years in response to NCLB. Those tests cost a lot of money too—money down the drain. In fact, many school districts were still introducing the NCLB tests when word came down that Common Core would require new tests to replace the old tests. Educationists are always on the go.

State senator Angela Burks Hill calls for Mississippi to halt its Common Core participation, January 7, 2014.

AP / ROGELIO V. SOLIS

ABSTRACTING PERSON C

Only half the Common Core states say they will have the program up and running by the 2015 deadline. The Standards, with thousands of pages of experimental research to support them, are proving difficult to put in practice. If you read them, you get hints why. I've spent many hours pinching myself awake as I read through the hundreds of thousands of words that make up the Standards for Language Arts and Social Studies. Their length is intimately involved in their ambition. "The Standards," reads a preamble, "lay out a vision for what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century." Students who meet the Standards are "engaged and open-minded—but discerning—readers and listeners. They work diligently to understand precisely what an author or speaker is saying. . . . They use relevant evidence . . . making their reasoning clear . . . and they constructively evaluate others' use of evidence."

This is a lofty notion of a high school senior, and rare even among accomplished adults—I can think of several columnists for the *New York Times* who would fail to qualify. It is also notably abstract. The Standards are this way from necessity. The experts who wrote them had to insist on a distinction between a national curriculum, which the federal government is forbidden by statute to enact, and national standards, which any state or local curriculum must meet. Advocates try to draw a bright line between these two, curriculum and standards, without much success. According to the authors, the Standards "do not—indeed cannot—enumerate all or even most of the content that students should learn."

"Decisions about what content is to be taught," they insist, "are made at the state and local levels." At the same time, we read that Common Core's "educational standards are the learning goals for what students should know." Is *what students should know* different from *content*?

This distinction between content and learning—between what a student is supposed to learn and how he is supposed to learn it—has been a premise of educationist philosophy for a generation or more. Before schools fell under the sway of modern educational theory, it was assumed that a student would learn how to weigh and judge knowledge in the act of acquiring it; the best way to get a kid thinking, in other words, was to make him learn something. The educationist bisects the process. The act of learning is somehow to be separated from what's being learned and then taught independently of it. The *what* of learning is much less important than the *how*. This is why such airy concepts as "critical thinking" and "problem solving" and "higher-order thinking skills" are the linchpins of modern education. As one disgruntled teacher put it: Rather than learning something in particular, students learn nothing in general.

Teacher training has developed accordingly. In the schools of education where most primary and secondary teachers learn the trade, the method is not to train teachers in the subjects they'll teach but to train them in theories about teaching. The adage that those who can, do, and those who can't, teach has been topped off: Those who can't teach, teach teachers. The technocrats in social sciences produce a limitless supply of theories to study and argue over—enough to amuse education majors and keep an entire academic discipline busy. Education schools are now understood to be the easy mark of higher education: Anyone can get an education degree. The paradoxical effect is that some college students are drawn to become teachers precisely because they don't have to know much to be one.

In the confusion between content and learning, the Standards often show the telltale verbal inflation that educationists use to make a simple idea complicated. The Standards for Reading offer a typical example. They come

in groups of three—making a wonderful, if suspicious, symmetry. Unfortunately, many of the triplets are essentially identical. According to the rubric Key Ideas and Details, a student should "read closely to determine what the text says explicitly." Where one standard says the student must be able to "analyze the development of central ideas," the next standard says the student should be able to "analyze" "how ideas develop." One "key detail" is to "learn details." Under Craft and Structure, the student should be able to "analyze" how "portions of text" "relate to each other or the whole." Another says he "should cite specific textual evidence" and still another that he should "summarize the key supporting details." All of this collapses into a single unwritten standard: "Learn to read with care and to explain what you've read." But no educationist would be so simple-minded.

There are standards only an educationist could love, or understand. It took me a while to realize that "scaffolding" is an ed-school term for "help." *Associate* is another recurring term of art with a flexible meaning, from *spell* to *match*, as when third graders are expected to "associate the long and short sounds with the common spellings (graphemes) for the five major vowels." This seems like students are being asked to spell vowels, but that can't be right, can it? And when state and local teachers have to embody such confusing standards in classroom exercises, you're likely to wind up with more confusion. In a teacher's guide to the Standards from Kentucky, I found this problem for tenth graders, who will be asked to decide "which person demonstrates more admirable qualities":

> Aristotle describes three different types of people. He points out that Person A gets pleasure from doing good things. Other people get pleasure from doing bad things. Of these people, Aristotle mentions two types. [So there are four types?]
>
> Person B eats too much food because he gets pleasure from it. Person C would also get pleasure from eating too much food. However, this person controls himself and eats the right amount of food even though he would prefer to eat more. [Then Person C is doing a good thing?]
>
> In Aristotle's system, both Person A and Person B eat the right amount of food. [Don't you mean Person C?] Person A eats the right amount of food by nature. Person B eats the right amount of food by choice. [Wait. He does?]

By the end Person C has vanished altogether apparently, leaving many unhappy tenth graders in his wake.

THE RISE OF THE RIGHT

Most of the criticism of the Standards has come from the populist right, and the revolt of conservative parents against the pet project of a national educationist elite is genuine, spontaneous, and probably inevitable. But if you move beyond the clouds of jargon, and the compulsory gestures toward "critical thinking" and "metacognitive skills," you will begin to spy something more interesting. There's much in the Standards to reassure an educational traditionalist—a vein of subversion. At several points, Common Core is clearly intended as a stay against the runaway enthusiasms of educationist dogma.

The Standards insist schools' (unspecified) curriculums be "content-rich"—meaning that they should teach something rather than nothing. They even go so far as to require students to read Shakespeare, the Preamble and First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and works of Greek mythology. Phonics is the chief means of teaching reading in Common Core, rejecting the notorious "whole language" method first taken up in the 1970s and—research shows!—a likely culprit in the decline in reading scores. The Standards discourage the use of calculators, particularly in early grades where it has become a popular substitute for acquiring basic math. The Standards require memorization of multiplication tables as an important step in learning arithmetic, striking a blow against "fuzzy math." Faddish notions like "visual literacy" are nowhere to be found.

Perhaps most impressively, at least in language arts, the Standards require students to read and write ever larger amounts of nonfiction as they move toward their high school diploma. Anyone familiar with the soupy "young adult" novels fed to middle- and high-school students should be delighted. Writing assignments, in tandem with more rigorous reading, move away from mere self-expression—commonly the focus of writing all the way through high school—to the accumulation of evidence and detail in the service of arguments. The architect of the Language Arts Standards, an educationist called David Coleman, explained this shift in a speech in 2011. He lamented that the most common form of writing in high school these days is "personal writing."

> It is either the exposition of a personal opinion or it is the presentation of a personal matter. The only problem, forgive me for saying this so bluntly, the only problem with those two forms of writing is as you grow up in this world you realize people really don't give a shit about what you feel or what you think.

Now, it is hard to imagine a more traditionalist sentiment than that. Yet conservative Common Core activists single out Coleman as a particularly sinister adversary, perhaps for his potty mouth. The populist campaign against the Standards has been scattershot: Sometimes they are criticized for being unrealistically demanding, at other times for being too soft. Even Common Core's insistence on making the Constitution part of any sound curriculum has been attacked as insidious. Recall that students will be

required to read only the Preamble and the First Amendment. That is, they will stop reading before they reach the Second Amendment and the guarantee of gun rights.

Coincidence? Many activists think not.

The conservative case, as seen in videos and blogs posted on countless websites, relies heavily on misinformation—tall tales and urban legends advanced by people who should know better. Revulsion at the educationist project predates Common Core by many decades. It is grounded in countless genuine examples of faddish textbooks and politicized curriculums. For the last few years, however, Common Core has been blamed for all of them. Textbook marketers and lesson-plan designers are happy to help. Their market, after all, isn't parents but fellow educationists on state and local school boards that control purchasing budgets. Once Common Core was established as the future (for now) of education, the marketers knew the phrase was catnip. Every educational product imaginable now bears the label "common core," whether it's inspired by the Standards or not. A search of books for sale on Amazon.com shows more than 12,000 bearing the words "common core" in their titles. Many were produced long before the Standards were even a twinkle in an educationist's eye.

And so, from a popular conservative blog, we get lists of horribles like this, attributed to Common Core:

> Would you be okay with your 4th grader learning how to masturbate from his school textbook? Would you think it's a good idea to teach kids that the correct answer to 72 + 81 is 150, not 153? What about cutting *Tom Sawyer* from the curriculum, and replacing it with articles about the imminent dangers of man-made global warming?

All these were evidently drawn from textbooks that sell themselves to educationists as being "aligned" with the Standards. Of course, if you live in the kind of school district that buys a textbook that teaches your fourth grader how to masturbate, that's most likely the kind of textbook you'll get. But Common Core has nothing to do with it. The Standards are agnostic on the onanism question at every grade level. Activist literature commonly confuses the Standards with the National Sexuality Educational Standards, a fringe concoction of left-wing "sexuality educators" that apes the Common Core but has no official or unofficial relation to it. The fact that the Common Core Standards can be plausibly linked to such enterprises is a testament to the neutrality of their content—their intentional blandness. Indeed, it might be an argument for making the Standards more demanding rather than for doing away with them altogether.

Conservative hostility to the Common Core is also entangled with hostility to President Obama and his administration. Joy Pullman, an editor and writer who is perhaps the most eloquent and responsible public critic of Common Core, wrote recently in thefederalist.com: "I wager that 90 percent of the debate over Common Core would instantly dissipate if states adopted the top-rated standards from, say, Massachusetts or Indiana and dropped the Obama administration tests."

Conservative hostility to the Common Core is entangled with hostility to President Obama and his administration. One eloquent and responsible critic of Common Core wrote recently that '90 percent of the debate over Common Core would instantly dissipate if states adopted the top-rated standards from, say, Massachusetts or Indiana and dropped the Obama administration tests.'

While the personal hostility to Obama might be overwrought, the administration's campaign on behalf of the Standards has borne all the marks of the president's other efforts at national persuasion. There is the hysterical overstatement—Secretary Duncan calls Common Core "the single greatest thing to happen to public education in America since *Brown* v. *Board of Education*." (Has he forgotten Goals 2000?) There are the same sly elisions, the buried assumptions and question begging, the drawing of Jesuitical distinctions. Here are Secretary Duncan's remarks last year to a group of newspaper editors: "The federal government didn't write [the Standards], didn't approve them, and doesn't mandate them, and we never will. Anyone who says otherwise is either misinformed or willfully misleading."

This is willfully misleading. The federal government doesn't mandate Common Core, but when Duncan and his department made lots of federal funds contingent on a state's embrace of "common standards," the Common Core was no longer "voluntary" for most revenue-hungry state officials. At the same time, for all practical purposes, the department assumed oversight of the program. Only a federal bureaucrat can say when a state has satisfied its obligation to produce materials appropriate to the Standards. And as implementation of Common Core begins in earnest, with confusion about which tests comply with which standards, the federal role will only grow.

Common Core does not impose a national curriculum,

Duncan often insists, correctly; such an explicit move would not only be illegal but would face insurmountable resistance. Yet, in other venues where it is helpful to do so, he speaks of the program as if it had all the conveniences of a national curriculum: "Literally for the first time in American history . . . a fourth grade teacher in New Mexico can develop a lesson plan at night and, the very next day, a fourth grade teacher in New York can use it and share it with others if she wants to." This assertion isn't willfully misleading. To the extent it concerns the Common Core, it is nakedly untrue.

THUNDER ON THE LEFT

The administration's bullying and dishonesty might be reason enough to reject the Standards. The campaign has even begun to worry its natural allies, who are losing trust in assurances that the Common Core is an advance for progressive education. Educationists on the leftward edge point to its insistence that teachers be judged on how much their students learn. This bears an unappealing resemblance to NCLB requirements, and they worry it will inject high-pressure competition into the collegial environment that most educationists prefer. Worse, it could be a Trojan horse for a reactionary agenda, a return to the long-ago era when students really had to, you know, learn stuff.

"The purpose of education," says Paul Horton, a Common Core critic at the University of Chicago Laboratory School, "is for a person . . . to discover who they are, to grow as an individual. . . . I think current policymakers unfortunately see the purpose of education as being training people to acquire the minimum level of skills that are required to work in a technical workplace."

The nation's two largest teachers' unions, the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, supported Common Core in its earliest stages, and were happy to accept very large grants to assist Gates and other pro-Standards institutions in their work. But as the deadline for implementation in 2015 approaches, the support among teachers shows signs of softening. Last month a group of nearly 200 local teachers marched on the Gates Foundation headquarters in Seattle protesting its role in Common Core. Gates's attitude, one protester told the local public radio station, "is, 'It's the teachers that need to change, and it's the standards and the testing that really will improve [schools].' . . . Really, the issue is class size, support for teachers, and poverty."

In May, one of the AFT's largest subsidiaries, the Chicago Teachers Union, passed a resolution condemning Common Core. "Common Core eliminates creativity in the classroom and impedes collaboration," said a spokesman. "We also know that high-stakes standardized testing is designed to rank and sort our children and it contributes significantly to racial discrimination and the achievement gap among students in America's schools."

Already last year, the president of the AFT called for a delay of at least two years in using Common Core-related tests for teacher evaluations; states would test students, in other words, but teachers would not be judged on the students' scores. The Gates Foundation has agreed, and several states have already announced a moratorium on teacher evaluations. In perhaps the most dramatic development of all, *Politico* reported, the AFT's Innovation Fund announced it would no longer accept its annual $1 million grant from the Gates Foundation. The "level of distrust" of Gates among its members was too great. Of course, distrust has its limits. The union itself will continue to accept Gates money for its general fund. And AFT leadership holds out the possibility that even the Innovation Fund will once again accept Gates money in the future, according to a union spokesman. "We don't want to say never, never, ever, ever."

THE UNREALITY CHECK

The delays and distancing suggest a cloudy future for the Common Core. Even its advocates say that the best possible outcome for now involves a great deal more unpleasantness: The tests will be given to many students beginning next spring, and the results will demonstrate the catastrophic state of learning in American schools. Of course, we knew that, but still. "Maybe this will be a reality check," one booster told me the other day. "People will take a look at the results and say, 'Aha! So this is what they've been talking about!' It will send a very strong signal."

It would indeed, but a signal to do what? Educationists don't like unpleasantness; it's not what they signed up for when they became reformers. We already know what happened when NCLB state tests exposed the reality of American public schools. It was time for a new reform.

In that case, Common Core would survive, but only as NCLB survives—as a velleity, a whiff of a hint of a memory of a gesture toward an aspiration for excellence. And the educationists will grow restless. Someone somewhere will come up with a new reform program, a whole new approach—one with teeth, and high-stakes consequences for stakeholders. Bill Gates will get wind of it. He will be intrigued. His researchers will design experiments to make sure the program is scientifically sound. Data will be released at seminars, and union leadership will lend tentative support. The president will declare a crisis and make reform a national priority. She will want to be called an education president too. ♦

The Truth About Iraq

And why it matters

By Dick Cheney & Liz Cheney

As the jihadists of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) capture territory and establish a caliphate stretching across the now-eradicated Syria-Iraq border, hard-won gains secured with American blood and treasure are being lost. We are watching the rise of potentially the gravest threat to our national security in a generation, one that surpasses even the threat we faced on 9/11. Against this backdrop, as we debate what our response should be, it has become fashionable in some quarters to say, "Let's not relitigate Iraq." It's not politically expedient, this line of argument goes, to discuss why we invaded Iraq in the first place, or the lessons we learned. This view is wrong on the history, misguided on the politics, and dangerous as a matter of policy.

The larger war, of which the liberation of Iraq was part, is still ongoing. Winning it requires that we understand the truth about the liberation of Iraq, the challenges America faced in the aftermath of the invasion, how we overcame them with the 2007-08 surge, how we defeated Al Qaeda in Iraq and established a stable, functioning nation allied with America in the heart of the Middle East. We must understand how President Obama squandered it all, creating a vacuum in which ISIS, the richest terrorist organization in history, now thrives.

Those who say the invasion of Iraq in 2003 was a mistake are essentially saying we would be better off if Saddam Hussein were still in power. That's a difficult position to sustain. It is undisputed, and has been confirmed repeatedly in Iraqi government documents captured after the invasion, that Saddam had deep, longstanding, far-reaching relationships with terrorist organizations, including al Qaeda and its affiliates. It is undisputed that Saddam's Iraq was a state based on terror, overseeing a coordinated program to support global jihadist terrorist organizations. Ansar al Islam, an al Qaeda-linked organization, operated training camps in northern Iraq before the invasion. Abu Musab al Zarqawi, the future leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq, funneled weapons and fighters into these camps, before the invasion, from his location in Baghdad. We also know, again confirmed in documents captured after the war, that Saddam provided funding, training, and other support to numerous terrorist organizations and individuals over decades, including to Ayman al Zawahiri, the man who leads al Qaeda today.

It is also undisputed that Saddam Hussein had the technology, equipment, facilities, and scientists in place to construct the world's worst weapons. We know he intended to reconstitute these programs as soon as the international sanctions regime collapsed. He had an advanced nuclear program in place prior to Operation Desert Storm in 1991. In 1998, he kicked the international weapons inspectors out of Iraq. He violated every one of the 17 U.N. Security Council Resolutions passed against him.

Anyone pining for the days of Saddam would do well to read the accounts of his 1988 chemical weapons attack on Halabja, Iraq. Listen to the survivors talk about the babies and children who died slow, painful deaths in bomb shelters where they had sought refuge with their families. The shelters became, as Saddam knew they would, gas chambers. The lesson of Halabja is that Saddam had no compunction, no moral compass, no hesitation to *use* the world's worst weapons, including against his own people.

Saddam's was a reign of terror characterized by torture, rape rooms, the murder of parents in front of their children and children in front of their parents, and the oppression and slaughter of Kurds, Marsh Arabs, and Shiites. George W. Bush captured it well when he wrote that Saddam was a homicidal dictator pursuing WMD and supporting terror at the heart of the Middle East.

Leaving Saddam in power after 9/11, in light of the threat he posed, would have been, as Tony Blair has noted, an act of political cowardice. We are not saying Saddam was responsible for 9/11. What we are saying is that in the aftermath of 9/11, when we saw thousands of our fellow citizens slaughtered by terrorists armed with airline tickets and box cutters, our leaders had an obligation to do everything possible to prevent terrorists from gaining access to even worse weapons. Saddam's Iraq was the most likely nexus for such an exchange.

Against the weight of historical evidence, some critics claim the Bush administration manufactured or exaggerated the intelligence about Saddam's weapons programs.

Dick Cheney was vice president from 2001-09. Liz Cheney was the deputy assistant secretary of state for near eastern affairs from 2002-04 and 2005-06.

The charge doesn't stand up against the facts. Both the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the Robb-Silberman Commission issued bipartisan reports concluding there was no politicization of the intelligence or pressure on analysts to change their judgements about Iraq's WMD.

In fact, the intelligence assessments about Saddam's weapons programs stretched back at least a decade:

■ A 1993 National Intelligence Estimate found that international support for sanctions was eroding but judged that even if they remained in place, Saddam Hussein would "continue reconstituting Iraq's conventional military forces" and "will take steps to re-establish Iraq's WMD programs."

■ A 1994 Joint Atomic Energy Intelligence Committee report assessed that "the Iraqi government is determined to covertly reconstitute its nuclear weapons program."

■ In 2000, a National Intelligence Estimate judged, "Despite a decade-long international effort to disarm Iraq, new information suggests that Baghdad has continued and expanded its offensive BW [biological weapons] program by establishing a large scale, redundant and concealed BW agent production capability. We judge that Iraq maintains the capability to produce previously declared agents and probably is pursuing development of additional bacterial and toxin agents. Moreover, we judge that Iraq has BW delivery systems available that could be used to threaten US and Allied forces in the Persian Gulf region."

Two of some 5,000 Kurds killed in Halabja in an Iraqi chemical attack on the city in 1988

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■ In late 2000, one of the first intelligence reports that George Bush and I received after our election was entitled "Iraq: Steadily Pursuing WMD Capabilities."

We weren't the only ones who read the intelligence. Others who did, going back to 1998, recognized the danger Saddam posed, urged action, and later changed their views when the going got tough. Some of these included:

■ **John Kerry**: (2003) "When I vote to give the president of the United States the authority to use force, if necessary, to disarm Saddam Hussein, it is because I believe that a deadly arsenal of weapons of mass destruction in his hands is a threat, and a grave threat to our security."

■ **Hillary Clinton**: (2003) "Saddam Hussein is a tyrant who has tortured and killed his own people" and "used chemical weapons on Iraqi Kurds and Iranians. . . . Intelligence reports show that Saddam Hussein has worked to rebuild his chemical and biological weapons stock, his missile delivery capability, and his nuclear program," and Saddam "has also given aid, comfort, and sanctuary to terrorists including al Qaeda members."

■ **Joe Biden**: (1998) "Ultimately, as long as Saddam Hussein is at the helm, no inspectors can guarantee that they have rooted out the entirety of [his] weapons program," and "the only way to remove Saddam is a massive military effort, led by the United States."

■ **Nancy Pelosi**: (1998) "Saddam Hussein has been engaged in the development of weapons of mass destruction technology which is a threat to countries in the region," and "he has made a mockery of the weapons inspections process."

■ **Bill Clinton**: (1998) "Heavy as they are, the costs of action must be weighed against the price of inaction. If Saddam defies the world, and we fail to respond, we will face a far greater threat in the future. . . . Mark my words, he will develop weapons of mass destruction. He will deploy them, and he will use them."

In 1998, Congress passed, and Bill Clinton signed into law, the Iraq Liberation Act, making regime change in Iraq the policy of the United States. A few months later, President Clinton launched airstrikes against Saddam's WMD capabilities.

As we know now, Saddam did not have stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction. However, it requires a willing suspension of disbelief and a desire to put politics above safety to assert that the absence of stockpiles meant the absence of a threat to the United States. David Kay, who led the international Iraq Survey Group tasked with finding Saddam's stockpiles, said this: "I actually think that what we learned during the inspections made Iraq a more dangerous place, potentially, than in fact we had thought before the war."

Saddam's support for terrorists, his willingness to use the world's worst weapons, his intent to reconstitute his own programs, including with scientists, technology, equipment, and facilities he kept on hand, his nuclear ambitions, and his thwarting of the international community for over a decade and 17 U.N. Security Council Resolutions combined to form the toxic mix that made Saddam a grave threat to the United States. We were right to invade and remove him from power.

America's invasion of Iraq also sent a clear message to others in the region that America would take action if necessary. Within a few days of our capture of Saddam, Libyan

leader Muammar Qaddafi announced he would like to turn over his nuclear program. He feared he would suffer the same fate as Saddam. Shortly after that, A.Q. Khan, Qaddafi's supplier of nuclear technology, was also put out of business and placed under house arrest in Pakistan.

Those who say we should not have taken action in Iraq should spend a moment contemplating what the Arab Spring might have looked like with a nuclear-armed Qaddafi in power in Tripoli.

The war to liberate Iraq was indisputably difficult. It included tragedy and challenges we did not foresee. Every war does, but these challenges do not detract from the rightness of our cause. The question is what do you do in the face of setbacks. History has proven that President Bush's decision to surge forces into Iraq and adopt a counterinsurgency strategy under the command of Generals David Petraeus and Ray Odierno worked.

Success in Iraq was also secured by the skill of people like Ambassador Ryan Crocker and General Stan McChrystal. The methods McChrystal and our special operators developed in Iraq—taking down a terrorist target, exploiting the information found at the site, moving immediately to act on the leads and take down other terrorists—were honed over a number of years. In April 2004, McChrystal writes, they ran a total of 10 operations in Iraq. That August they conducted 18. By 2006, his teams had improved their methods to the point where they could average more than 300 operations per month, "against a faster, smarter enemy and with greater precision and intelligence yield."

These types of operations are a critical tool in the war on terror. They stand in stark contrast to this administration's actions in Benghazi, for example. Rather than move quickly to uncover critical intelligence and capture or kill those behind the attacks, the Obama team spent 18 months building a legal case before they moved to capture Ahmed Abu Khattala. He has now been read Miranda rights.

The real proof that things were in good shape in Iraq when President Obama took office is that his administration set about claiming credit for the situation. Vice President Biden memorably predicted in 2010 that Iraq "will be one of the great achievements of this administration." President Obama repeatedly asserted, "We are leaving behind a sovereign, stable, and self-reliant Iraq."

President Obama spent a good deal of time during his reelection campaign in 2012 claiming to have fulfilled his 2008 promise to "end" the war. His campaign speeches included lines like: "I told you I'd end the war in Iraq and I did"; and "Four years ago, I promised to end the war in Iraq and we did"; and "We've succeeded in our strategy to end the war." With the rise of ISIS in Iraq, that strategy isn't looking so good.

White House credit-taking has predictably morphed into blame-shifting. In a move that must be uncomfortable even for a president unburdened by a strong allegiance to fact, the administration now claims President Obama was simply implementing George Bush's policy when he withdrew all U.S. forces.

When President Obama isn't blaming George Bush for forcing him to remove the troops, he is blaming Nuri al-Maliki for the lack of a stay-behind agreement. Maliki certainly shares the blame for the disaster in Iraq today, but the fact is our commanders on the ground asked for a stay-behind force of nearly 20,000. President Obama said no. They came back and asked for 10,000. President Obama said no. He was willing to leave no more than 3,500 troops in place, a force too small to carry out the mission. Then, just to be sure Maliki wouldn't accept our terms, President Obama insisted any stay-behind agreement would have to be submitted to the Iraqi parliament for approval. He made sure Maliki, al Qaeda, Iran, and the rest of the world knew we weren't serious about defending the gains we had won at such a high cost of American lives and treasure.

In spite of all we have seen, President Obama stubbornly clings to the quaint notion that wars end because he says they do. And even as tragedy and terror engulf Iraq, he insists he will follow exactly the same course of action in Afghanistan.

The rise of ISIS and the resurgence of radical Islamic terror groups across the Middle East present a grave threat to the national security of the United States. The situation is dire, and defeating this threat requires immediate, sustained action across multiple fronts.

In Iraq, we should provide military support in the form of trainers, special operations forces, an intelligence architecture, and airpower to aid the Iraqi military in its counteroffensive against ISIS. ISIS does not recognize the border between Syria and Iraq, and we can't either. We have to strike ISIS in their sanctuaries, staging areas, command centers, and lines of communication on both sides of the border. We also need to do everything possible to defend Jordan against ISIS.

The Iraqi government is flawed in critical ways, which must be addressed once ISIS is on the ropes. We cannot allow the need for political reconciliation to prevent us from doing what is necessary now to defeat the threat to the United States. By insisting on political reconciliation as a precondition to significant U.S. support for the defeat of ISIS, the Obama administration is ensuring the threat to America will grow. Each day we dither is another day ISIS is able to solidify its gains. The longer it operates with impunity, the more effective its recruitment. ISIS is using its success on the battlefield to rally thousands of

foreign fighters to join the effort in Iraq. Every day we wait means the battle that must eventually be fought will be harder and more costly.

As we work to defeat ISIS in Iraq and prevent the growth of a terrorist state in the heart of the Middle East, we must also move globally to get back on offense in the war on terror. This means, first, recognizing and admitting the size and scope of the threat we face. Al Qaeda is not "diminished," nor is "the tide of war receding." We remain at war, and law enforcement mechanisms will not keep us safe.

Second, we need to reverse the dramatic decline in defense spending we've seen in the last six years. A nation at war cannot hope to prevail if only 4 of its 42 Army brigades are combat ready. We need to make restoration of our military and a reversal of the disastrous defense budget cuts one of our top priorities.

Third, we need to halt the drawdown of our troops in Afghanistan. The tragedy, terror, and chaos in Iraq will be repeated in Afghanistan if we abandon the fight there. Pulling out all U.S. troops without regard to conditions on the ground or the recommendations of our commanders will ensure a victory for America's enemies.

Fourth, we need to reassure our friends and allies in the Middle East that America will not abandon them. We need to demonstrate through increased intelligence cooperation, military assistance, training, joint exercises, and economic support that we know they are on the front lines of the war on terror. We should immediately provide the Apache helicopters and other military support the government of Egypt needs to fight the al Qaeda insurgency in the Sinai.

Fifth, we should be clear that we recognize a nuclear-armed Iran is an existential threat to Israel and to other nations in the region, as well. We should refuse to accept any "deal" with the Iranians that allows them to continue to spin centrifuges and enrich uranium. In the cauldron of the Middle East today, accepting a false deal—as the Obama administration seems inclined to do—will only ensure Iran attains a nuclear weapon and spark a nuclear arms race across the region. The Iranians should know without a doubt that we will not allow that to happen, and that we will take military action if necessary to stop it.

America must win this war. We won't defeat our enemies by retreating. We won't win if we adopt a false narrative about the past, fail to learn the lessons of history, or seek security in disengagement and isolationism. We will only defeat our enemies if we are clear-eyed about the threat and have the will to do what it takes for as long as it takes—until the war is won. ♦

Cool Istanbul

Bright young things of the Bosphorus

By Kate Havard

Istanbul

Demet Muftuoglu-Eseli is standing perilously close to the fire. The Turkish fashion mogul turned gallerist is hosting a gala dinner for "Istancool," the annual arts and culture festival she founded with her husband in 2009. The proceedings begin with a "fire poem" by the Scottish artist Robert Montgomery. On a giant scaffold overlooking the Bosphorus, Montgomery mounts wooden letters on pikes:

> Everything in the city is perfect
> The voices in the streets are
> sacred music and the streets
> belong to no one

With an enormous torch he sets the letters ablaze and the posh crowd of a hundred or so black-tied guests collectively oohs as the sentiments burn against the night sky and reflect off the water. Enter our hostess.

The gorgeous and gracious woman smiles for the riot of flashbulbs and embraces the artist, who is still clutching a giant torch. Embers drift past her face and graze her hair, landing near the hem of her white silk dress. If she's concerned about going up like a sleek Roman candle, she doesn't show it. The letters soon burn out, filling the pavilion with smoke, and we are shuffled in to dinner.

Perhaps Demet Muftuoglu-Eseli has simply come to regard the proximity of beauty to danger as a given in Istanbul. Later, lounging on a bed in her sprawling home, Demet tells me that she started the festival because she wanted to bring the energy she felt while studying in New York City in the late '90s back to her native city.

Bringing Western things to Turkey is something at which she excels. Fourteen years ago, she opened a store that soon became the only place where Istanbul's disposable income set could get the newest American and European labels. She wants Istancool, more formally known as the IST. Festival, to do the same thing for culture. It's an ambitious goal, she admits. But she finds the contradictions between East and West, old and new, inspiring.

They're certainly provocative. The same week that IST. Festival 2014 launched in a haze of sparks and champagne, Hassan Rouhani came to Ankara, the first Iranian president to visit Turkey in 18 years. Meanwhile, a clothing store in Istanbul has put up billboards featuring women in bikinis, with a large pink band blocking out their legs. Elsewhere ads for shaving cream show a beautiful, smiling woman in a towel—but you can't see that she's shaving her legs because the billboard cuts her off at the waist.

It's a constant back and forth. As people like Demet seek to foster Istanbul's reputation as a cosmopolitan, Western-leaning city, the government, led by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is shaping Turkey into a more radical Islamic state.

This shift has become a source of friction in what has long been a proudly secular, moderate Islamic country. Among Turkey's liberals, anger at Erdogan started to build last year over bans on alcohol advertising and restrictions on abortion. Last summer, rising discontent erupted into near-revolt.

A small group of environmentalists staged a peaceful protest in Gezi Park, a green space in the heart of Taksim Square slated by the Erdogan government to be turned into a shopping mall. Erdogan's police ejected the protesters with grossly disproportionate force. In less than a week, mass protests calling for the prime minister's resignation had broken out—and not just in Istanbul, but in the more conservative regions of Anatolia, too.

For two weeks, Turkey was convulsed with violent protests that left eight people dead and thousands injured. Back in the United States, the White House issued statements of concern and requests for restraint. The protesters went home. Erdogan stayed.

As the country's local elections approached in March, it was unclear how long his party would remain in power. In the run-up to the elections, Erdogan took an increasingly paranoid, hard line against dissenters. He blocked Twitter in March, before relenting after an intense outcry. He blocked YouTube for two months and backed off only after the country's highest court ruled the ban a human-rights violation.

Then came election day. Erdogan's Justice and Development party (AKP) wasn't voted out—instead, it strengthened its majority. The *Wall Street Journal* aptly called it "The Turkish Ballot-Box Revolt That Wasn't."

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Erdogan has in fact presided over a long period of economic growth, but that's not all that keeps him afloat. His conservative politics have also given a voice to many outside the big cities who are more traditional, more pious, and more skeptical of the West.

For the last decade, Turkey seemed able to insulate itself from the chaos in the region, but that security is now collapsing. According to *Hurriyet*, more than one million refugees from the Syrian civil war have flooded into Turkey since 2011. In theory, the government that grants them asylum also offers education and medical care. But in Istanbul, the streets are full of Syrian beggars, knocking on car windows and crying for basic needs. A woman approached me and asked not for money but for my water bottle. The refugees are mostly women with small children, and reports of sexual assaults, rapes, and forced prostitution are increasing.

The Syrian war isn't the only destabilizing factor for Turkey. Some 600,000-700,000 Iraqis have fled since Mosul fell to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). According to Turkish deputy prime minister Besir Atalay, Turkey is planning to set up a refugee camp for Turkmens, Iraqis who share Turkish ancestry.

All of this points to a deeper problem: As the United States retreats from the region, Turkey is turning away from the policies of its NATO allies and increasingly going its own way—encouraging and financing terrorist activities and cozying up to its longtime rival, Iran. A February report from the Foundation for Defense of Democracies outlines the many ways in which Turkey has participated in the financing of terror, from backing al Qaeda affiliates in Syria, to sheltering Hamas official Saleh al-Arouri in Ankara. (Arouri is believed by the Israeli government to have orchestrated the kidnapping and murder of the three Israeli teenagers in June.)

The Syrian civil war was on some level a proxy war between Iran and Turkey: Iran backed Assad, and Turkey backed the Syrian opposition. Turkey has lost that war, so Ankara's overtures to Tehran may seem to Erdogan like a necessary capitulation to an ascendant power in an increasingly disordered region.

Against this onslaught of radicalism and instability, Istancool stands as the pinnacle of the modern Turkey that many of its people still wish it to be—staunchly secular, European, and free.

The festival comprises three days of artists, fashion designers, models, filmmakers, and other creative types hobnobbing with their Turkish counterparts—"engaging in intercultural dialogue," as Demet likes to say.

During the day there are discussions and screenings, open to the public and filled with young, stylish, Turkish students. On Saturday, supermodel Liya Kebede promotes a charity that supports new mothers in Africa. On Sunday, Shirley Manson, frontwoman for the band Garbage, gives a sort of punk-rock "Lean In" talk to an audience of young women and indie kids.

At night, the panelists enjoy opulent dinners (chocolate mousse flaked with gold) and drink cocktails on a yacht before returning to the Pera Palace, a Gilded Age hotel built to be a pit stop on the Orient Express, a place where Agatha Christie slept and Greta Garbo *vent* to be alone.

It is a celebration of Western culture fitting for a country that embraces women's rights and democracy and is tolerant of gay rights. Perhaps surprisingly, the largest financial supporter of Istanbul'74, the parent group sponsoring the festival, is the Turkish government, via the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism (which also covers the flights and room and board for the journalists).

If Islamism remains ascendant in Turkey, though, one wonders how long such a joyful, if decadent, bright spot of freedom will be indulged.

Although Turkey's future is little discussed by Demet's guests, the uncertainty lends to the festivities a kind of doomed glamour. The first night of the festival, Demet hosts us at the Ciragan Palace, a former Ottoman palace that's now a luxury hotel, all marble arches and palm trees and dramatic staircases.

As we mingle before dinner, though, there is mention of the 49 Turks seized by ISIS from the consulate in Mosul and still being held hostage. Some of the guests are speculating wildly about the probability of a war between Turkey and Iraq ("It could be by the end of the week!"). One Western journalist, in a plaid blazer and Ray-Bans, even though it is dark, wonders if he shouldn't be filing something about the hostages, too. (He won't.)

The discussion takes on a familiar tune: The United States shouldn't get involved, he says. "This is not our war." The crisis, I'm told, is about a complicated web of interconnected historical conflicts, about forces beyond our control—and, naturally, George W. Bush.

"Istanbul today is like Tehran in the seventies," he says.

Last year Istancool was canceled because of the Gezi Park conflict. This year, the Gezi kids are staffing the festival, serving us cocktails and driving guests around in private cars. At first, our drivers are polite and monosyllabic. But ask them, "Were you at Gezi?" and they light up, whipping out phones to show pictures: Here I am in a gas mask, here's the barricade I helped build. One shows me a picture of some graffiti. "Do you know the *Game of Thrones*?" he asks. The graffiti says: "Tayyip! Winter is coming," referencing the hit fantasy series's tagline.

They point to their arms and chests, where they were shot with "spicy gas" canisters and rubber bullets. Another

one emails me a link to a short film he had made of the protests: In one shot, a police helicopter soars low overhead and a sea of hands rise up to give it the finger.

"Gezi was the greatest thing to happen to me," says one. "It was better than any nightclub."

But a year after the protests, these young men have gone from rock-throwing idealists to resentful pessimists. AKP's reelection was especially disappointing. At first, they'll say that Erdogan stole the election, or that he won by relying on the votes of grateful Syrian refugees (which doesn't make sense because they can't vote).

Eventually, though, they admit that a lot of people are happy with Erdogan's economy and his more conservative policies, and that the opposition—the Republican People's party (CHP)—is too disorganized.

That leaves these young leftist Turks with few options. At one panel, the Turkish writer Murat Mentes criticizes the Gezi generation, telling them to leave "Occupy" tactics behind: "Turkish people cannot be famous for protesting," he says. "It is like being famous for preparing meals. Eventually you have to eat something." But no one seems to know what they should do instead.

While the older secular liberal Turks (the ones who sit next to me at Demet's fancy dinners) express anger at Erdogan, they don't believe that Turkey's increasingly Islamist streak will last. Turkey, they assure me, is a moderate, secular democracy. What's happening elsewhere could never happen here, they say. "Erdogan is just one man."

The young are not so optimistic: They see Erdogan emboldened by his victories, increasingly confident, and tightening his grip on power.

Although Erdogan is about to be term-limited out of office as prime minister, he's unlikely to go away. On July 1, he stole a move from the Putin playbook and announced that he would be running for president in August. Traditionally, Turkey's president has been chosen by parliament and has held mostly a ceremonial role. But for the first time, Turkish voters will elect the president directly, a fact that may give Erdogan room to dramatically change the scope of the office. "He wants to be an Ottoman," one driver says.

The kids don't talk about starting up Gezi again—they talk about leaving. One tells me his dream is to go to San Diego. Another doesn't know, maybe New York. "I would be sad to leave my home, of course. Wouldn't you be? But talking about the government makes me so, uh, anxious, no, nervous—" he pauses, tugs at his hair, searches for the word. "Angry," he says. "Apologies. I get so mad, my English stop."

The anniversary of the protests fell about two weeks before I arrived in Istanbul. On May 31, police surrounded Gezi, anticipating trouble and renewed protests. They got it. A CNN correspondent was detained live on the air. Crowds were tear-gassed. Close to 100 people were arrested and beaten by police. But the protests did not evolve into a massive collective force as they had done the year before.

A few weeks later, I visit Gezi Park at 1 A.M. It's mostly empty, except for a drunk girl vomiting behind a tree. The only indication that something happened here is a lonely graffito scrawled on the wall that translates literally as "Gezi, I'm glad you happened." It also means "Happy Birthday."

In 312 A.D., the history of Turkey—and the world—was forever changed by a burning sign. On the eve of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, Emperor Constantine is said to have seen a cross of light in the sky, just above the sun, which read: UNDER THIS YOU SHALL CONQUER. He won the battle and converted to Christianity.

The burning sign Demet stands in front of isn't going to alter the course of history. But the festival she has created serves as a kind of bellwether for Turkey's attitude towards the West. Like the Gezi protests, the fire poem is arresting and dangerous, powerful but fleeting. The sign is mostly right. Many things in Istanbul are perfect. It is a perfectly beautiful city, where the ancient and the modern coexist—there's a 500-year-old Turkish bath hidden in a strip mall next to a French-fry stand. But it is also a city torn between the lure of cosmopolitan society and the coercion of an Islamist regime.

The jazzy techno music piped into Demet's parties sometimes has to compete with the plaintive evening calls to prayer, a different kind of sacred music than the author of the fire poem had in mind. For now, the mix is a beautiful one. But as Erdogan flirts with terror and shuts off avenues for dissent, it may not last.

It's clear that Erdogan has his own idea of perfection, and he's not shy about enforcing it. The streets increasingly belong to him, to a government that silences dissident voices online and in the press, to those who cover up pictures of women's legs and censor pictures of beer.

The kids from Gezi Park keep telling stories about when the streets belonged to them. Their obsession with showing evidence—in pictures and videos—is more than the bluster of youth. It's about documentation. They want to prove that their triumphant moment really happened, that something tangible from that time has endured.

They can't help but see that Gezi is slipping into history. In the end, the streets will belong to one side or the other.

The bourgeois elite milling about at Istancool know this too. Yet as long as the city still funds their galas, they're not so alarmed.

These joyful celebrations of free expression are indeed reassuring. But look behind you, Demet. Trouble's burning bright. ♦

David Niven and Shirley MacLaine in 'Around the World in Eighty Days' (1956)

Fantastic Voyage

The literary (?) career of Jules Verne. BY ALGIS VALIUNAS

Certain amusements appropriate to childhood or adolescence have established a beachhead in adulthood, or its 21st-century American simulacrum. Grown men and women indulge, with or without shame, in video games, fantasy football leagues, sitcoms, online porn, comic books, and movies based on comic books—or that involve Las Vegas, 33 shots of tequila, and waking up athwart two female Sumo wrestlers and a chimpanzee.

And of course, for those who still feel obliged to read something semi-respectable but prefer not to trouble themselves with heavy lifting, there is science fiction, as well as the fantastic adventure tales that don't quite fit into that genre but are the next best thing.

Three Novels
Journey to the Center of the Earth, Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, Round the World in Eighty Days
by Jules Verne
Everyman's Library, 744 pp., $30

This literature has its own canon, and some of its eminences are familiar, if only by name, to all who read books, even heavy and troublesome ones. The early masters are the most famous: H.G. Wells, H. Rider Haggard, Arthur Conan Doyle, Edgar Rice Burroughs. And everyone knows the founding father, Frenchman Jules Verne (1828-1905).

William Butcher, the foremost English Verne scholar, boasts that his man is "the world's most translated writer, the best-seller of all time, the only popular writer to have increased in popularity over more than a century." Yet in the next breath the enthusiast bleats that too few know that Verne, in fact, reigns supreme in worldwide popularity and that all too few serious persons realize

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how serious Verne really is. The raging scandal is that he "remains the opposite of a classic: a household name from Taipo to Tucson, but absent from the school curricula and histories of literature." Simply to read Verne is not enough. His greatness demands that he be studied.

Certain masters of science fiction suggest that their work is best taken less seriously. Haggard dedicated *King Solomon's Mines* (1885) "To All the Big and Little Boys Who Read It." Conan Doyle introduces *The Lost World* (1912) with a snappy epigraph in a similar vein: *I have wrought my simple plan / If I give one hour of joy / To the boy who's half a man, / Or the man who's half a boy.*

What, then, is the proper angle of approach if one is to do justice to Jules Verne? In *New Maps of Hell: A Survey of Science Fiction* (1960), Kingsley Amis got the essentials right that the earnest Verne specialists get wrong:

> With Verne we reach the first great progenitor of modern science fiction. In its literary aspect his work is, of course, of poor quality, a feature certainly reproduced with great fidelity by most of his successors.

Amis does not go on at length, but points the way in.

Verne may be a master of sorts, but he is not a master of high art. A casual reader, even in English translation, can see that Verne's prose is rarely more than serviceable and that it gets overheated when he presumes to court eloquence. This Everyman edition of three Verne novels uses some of the first English versions, from the 1870s, and they read well enough. But even the editor acknowledges that William Butcher improved on the earlier translations in his renditions for Oxford World's Classics in the 1990s.

Each of Verne's heroes is a nonpareil, the most remarkable man in the world—as long as the reader is immersed in his particular story. Only in other Verne novels—and in television commercials for a Mexican beer—can one find his equals. And the ideas in the novels are of interest chiefly for being indicative of the thinking done by persons of that time who are no longer esteemed for their thought.

The literary critic with traditional aesthetic concerns, Amis declares, will find less to engage him than will "the cultural diagnostician, or trend-hound." Amis was born sneering and couldn't resist the chance to mint such a taunt; but he quickly takes pains to point out that an approach to science fiction by way of the history of ideas is "worthy enough, or even praiseworthy."

Verne's tales of adventure beyond the limits of the known world customarily require a visionary savant and explorer, prodigious in his knowledge of natural history and of what used to be called natural philosophy but also versed in the practical survival skills of an engineer, outdoorsman, and high-end handyman. And while a man thus equipped might still know fear, he must possess the will to overcome it. Such are the virtues of Dr. Samuel Fergusson in *Five Weeks in a Balloon* (1863); Professor Otto Lidenbrock in *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864); Impey Barbicane in *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865) and *Around the Moon* (1870); Captain Nemo in *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1869); and Captain Cyrus Smith in *The Mysterious Island* (1874).

The Verne hero is a walking encyclopedia, an immensely resourceful toolmaker, a stargazer who intends to reach the stars. True human majesty comes from an intellect capable in every useful matter. Recalcitrant Nature cannot but yield before this paragon of pragmatic brainpower. Thus, Impey Barbicane commands the first successful moonshot:

> There was no limit to the invention of his practical mind. For him there were no obstacles, no difficulties, no embarrassments. He was as much a miner, a mason or a mechanician, as an artillerist. He had answers to every question, and solutions for every problem.

Likewise, Professor Lidenbrock, who leads two dutiful followers into the crater of a dormant Icelandic volcano, taking the underground expedition nearly 3,000 miles from the starting point, confronts the fear that there is no way up and out:

> The very elements are against me. The air, the fire, the water conspire to bar my passage. Well! they shall know what my will can accomplish! I will not yield: I will not go back a step, and we shall see whether man or nature will win.

The 19th century marked the coming-of-age of the Philistine, as worldly philosophers and political men proclaimed the New Dispensation of Never-Ending Progress and the Gospel of Work, and the legions of technicians, inventors, entrepreneurs, and manufacturers undertook to bend matter to their will, reshape reality to human advantage. In his essay "Francis Bacon" (1837), Thomas Babington Macaulay rejoiced in the obsolescence of the ancient philosophy of Socrates, Aristotle, and all that lot, which had been "meanly proud of its own unprofitableness," and cheered on the ascendancy of the sovereign belief in "Utility and Progress," the practical wisdom "which adds to the comforts or alleviates the calamities of the human race."

Everybody got in on this act. Here was the newly founded realm of thought devoted to action in which Verne's heroes were conceived. Yet while these heroes display the markings peculiar to modern scientists and technical experts, these wonder workers also epitomize the supreme virtues that most modern men pride themselves on having outgrown—but which, in fact, they have grown too small to appreciate and to cultivate. The intellectual passions of Verne's best men encompass not only the impulse to master Nature that drives the modern scientific project, but also the pure desire to know that made men such as Aristotle god-like.

In his extraordinary voyagers, Jules Verne reveres the intellectual beauty of the knowledge-seeker and the moral excellence of the warrior. In these new exemplars, the philosopher's and the fighter's courage are of a piece. Impelled to search the world by the ardent desire to touch and

understand all that it holds, Verne's seeker withstands every physical ordeal and outfaces every terror that he encounters—and the adventurer's world of wonders is replete with trial and frightfulness. These heroes embody the best of ancient wisdom and of modern know-how.

Yet even boldness secured by expertise can come up against overwhelming perils—at which point the most formidable men turn to a power greater than their own and resort to prayer. In the classics that enchanted Verne as a boy and helped direct his creative mind, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Johann Wyss's *The Swiss Family Robinson* (1812), the courage, industry, adaptability, and innovation that enable victims of shipwreck to survive on remote, uninhabited islands are the natural gifts bestowed by God on pious minds and hearts. To thank Him and to accept His guidance, especially when it comes as chastisement, are indispensable parts of wisdom. The Lord helps those who help themselves, and He is also known to come to the aid of those beyond human help.

When violent winds whip Verne's balloonists this way and that over a remorseless African desert, Professor Fergusson instructs his right-hand man in the need for faith: "I was wrong to doubt; Providence knows better than we what is best for us." The wind bloweth where it listeth, and men must surrender their mastery to a will superior to their own. In *The Mysterious Island*, the eminently adroit engineer Cyrus Smith invokes Providence again and again, and while Captain Nemo, in his supreme technical skill and benevolence, largely takes the role of local divinity, in the end even *he* is mortal, and the island he had effectively ruled like a techno-wizard Prospero is obliterated in a volcanic explosion.

Nature is not so readily mastered. Even macrocephalic heroes must accept their limitations.

Verne recognizes that human presumption abetted by burgeoning scientific knowledge can plunge mankind into the abyss. The same energetic minds that launch men into the heavens have created weaponry destructive of life on earth. Verne's moon expedition is the brainchild of the most accomplished members of the Gun Club, an American institution led by Civil War veterans susceptible to warlike outbursts. The biggest cannon ever built fires these astronauts into space.

Jules Verne

In *Five Weeks in a Balloon*, a vista from on high of pristine African beauty inspires Dr. Fergusson to predict a radiant, productive future with the aid of the most advanced agricultural machinery. But his sidekick Dick Kennedy fears human industry carried too far: "If men go on inventing machinery they'll end by being swallowed up by their own machines. I've always thought that the last day will be brought about by some colossal boiler heated to three thousand atmospheres blowing up the world." Dr. Fergusson replies that it is best to admire the virgin magnificence of the land while they have the chance.

One work, in particular, stands out as a warning against infatuation with technological advancement and the annihilation of much that once made human life beautiful: *Paris in the Twentieth Century*, the second novel Verne wrote, depicts the world of 1960 with fantastic luxury, engineering wonders, life conducted at breakneck speed, and a virtuous citizenry still Parisian in name but all American at heart—which is to say, all business, driven under the merciless flail of "the demon of wealth." Genuine art is defunct, the very names of Balzac, Hugo, Baudelaire erased from public memory. Schlock, kitsch, and dreck are all produced by teams of writers for consumption by multitudes who need diversion and have no idea that something finer might once have existed. Love is out of the question; one marries for money, comfort, respectability. The novel's poet-hero is doomed to ridicule, penury, loneliness, heartbreak, and early death.

Verne's publisher told his young writer that this novel would never sell: It was too far out, too depressing, and had the wrong attitude toward the glorious future that science would bring about. Verne took this advice and got his mind right, producing thereafter some 60 novels that sold big-time.

In 1989, his great-grandson uncovered the handwritten manuscript of this youthful fiasco in a safe. It was first published in 1994, and after being translated into English in 1996, it became the bestselling French book ever in the United States. Jules Verne had achieved more than fame: He was a brand name. Isn't that the success that Verne really wanted? Isn't that the success that every popular adventure writer wants, to found a literary empire for the pleasure of boys who are not quite men and men who are still boys? But of course that needn't mean that Verne's books hold no interest for readers who customarily aren't interested in such things. ♦

B&A

L'État, C'est Moi

With the stroke of a pen, the executive branch reigns supreme. BY ILAN WURMAN

The administrative state is a modern invention. It was, and remains, a necessity in our complex modern age. Or so goes the argument.

"The trouble in early times was almost altogether about the constitution of government; and consequently that was what engrossed men's thoughts," wrote Woodrow Wilson in his *Study of Administration* (1887). "The functions of government were simple, because life itself was simple. . . . No one who possessed power was long at a loss how to use it." That all changed—apparently in Wilson's generation—when "present complexities of trade and perplexities of commercial speculation" posed new challenges for government.

"In brief," Wilson wrote, "if difficulties of governmental action are to be seen gathering in other centuries, they are to be seen culminating in our own." So we need experts: "[W]e have reached a time when administrative study and creation are imperatively necessary to the well-being of our governments saddled with the habits of a long period of constitution-making."

Necessary; there is no alternative. As the Supreme Court has declared, "[I]n our increasingly complex society, replete with ever changing and more technical problems, Congress simply cannot do its job absent an ability to delegate power under broad general directives."

That is a convenient narrative for the defenders of the administrative state. But it is fanciful. It is not historically accurate. And the justifications—especially the claim of necessity—are not new. Neither are the powers of the administrative state. Indeed, Philip Hamburger, professor of law at Columbia, argues here that it was precisely these justifications and powers that English and American constitutional law developed to protect us against. Not only is the modern administrative state unconstitutional, it is the very thing our Constitution sought to prevent.

Is Administrative Law Unlawful?
by Philip Hamburger
Chicago, 648 pp., $55

There used to be terms to describe the conduct and powers of the modern administrative state. When the Obama administration issues waivers to favored companies excusing them from some health care regulations, our English ancestors would have called it the dispensing power. When the administration decides that it will no longer enforce certain immigration laws, our ancestors would have called that the suspending power. When the president issues executive orders that make law—or more commonly, when his administration promulgates rules that bind individuals—they would have called that prerogative lawmaking.

When administrative agencies, which are not courts of law, issue binding orders to appear and testify; when they command homes, businesses, and records to be kept open for inspection; when they require businesses to self-report regulatory violations; when they bind subjects without juries or independent judges—there were terms for such actions, too. They were general warrants and writs of assistance. They were self-incrimination and ex officio proceedings. They were Star Chamber and the High Commission.

They were tyranny.

"The history of administrative law," writes Hamburger, "reaches back many centuries."

> It is thus not a coincidence that administrative law looks remarkably similar to the sort of governance that thrived long ago in medieval and early modern England under the name of "prerogative." . . . Administrative law thus turns out to be not a uniquely modern response to modern circumstances, but the most recent expression of an old and worrisome development.

Hamburger meticulously (and sometimes laboriously) demonstrates how the modern administrative state revives all the attributes of the royal prerogative and absolute power. Even in the details, modern administrative law is shockingly reminiscent of 16th- and 17th-century royal conduct.

Today, for example, administrative agencies claim statutory authority to create rules—that is, to make law—where constitutionally enacted statutes are ambiguous. Agencies "interpret" their own statutes, and courts give those interpretations deference. King James I argued that he had the same powers as his common law judges to interpret law and that they must defer to his interpretation.

What has changed?

The similarity is important in its more general contours. Hamburger explains that administrative power is a power exercised outside the law: It is created outside the established constitutional procedures. It is also a power exercised above the law: It excuses both the executive and subjects from following law, as with the dispensing power (i.e., waivers). And finally, it is a consolidated power: The otherwise-separate legislative, judicial, and executive powers are combined—which, Hamburger writes, is the traditional understanding of absolute power.

It is also unconstitutional. There is no constitutional provision granting the president power to dispense with particular health care regulations for certain companies. The Constitution establishes only three powers: the legislative power to make the law, the judicial power to adjudicate cases in accord

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with the law, and the executive power to execute the law. "None of these powers includes any authority to excuse persons from law," Hamburger writes. "The power to exclude from law was the old dispensing power, and it simply does not exist in the Constitution."

Administrative adjudications that bind the parties are also unconstitutional. When Parliament abolished the Star Chamber during the English Civil War, it declared that the property of the subject "ought to be tried and determined in the ordinary courts of justice and by the ordinary course of the law." Our Constitution "even more clearly located judicial power in the courts," writes Hamburger, and the Framers thereby "emphatically reiterated the constitutional bar to any extralegal adjudication." And yet today, the executive branch—"like the Crown in the early 17th century"—enforces its own rules in its own tribunals.

The arguments for administrative power always rely on necessity. But no one has ever proved that, somehow, society is too complex for judicial warrants and lawmaking by constitutional means. Do we really need experts to create regulations? Does Congress not have the expertise to tackle "ever changing and more technical problems" in an "increasingly complex" society? Maybe so.

But there is an easy solution. If experts are needed, there is no dearth of them. Why not have these experts in administrative agencies propose their regulations as legislation for Congress to enact? That would be no different from the current process of administrative rulemaking—except that it would be democratic. It would require political will and popular support. And that is precisely why many liberals would oppose such a modest proposal.

But there is something even more fundamental about "necessity" and social "complexity." The administrative state is a poor way to handle the complexity that has justified its existence all along. The administrative state assumes that it has reached answers to questions that ultimately might not have scientific conclusions. Federal agencies, thus, "have difficulty keeping up to date with science," because their particularized controls for particularized problems are inflexible and cannot adapt to technological change.

Administrative law depends on epistemological arrogance, assuming that there is one right answer to a given problem. But our entire society (like all free-market societies) presupposes that there exists a diversity of opinions, objectives, and needs. It is precisely in an "increasingly complex" society that there is no one-size-fits-all answer.

> If the tendency of modernized society is toward freedom or at least social fragmentation, then continual direction by the federal government may actually be inconsistent with modernity.

Maybe humility—and constitutional government—are better after all. ♦

B&A

Natural Design

The birds and the bees and the engineering instinct.

BY TEMMA EHRENFELD

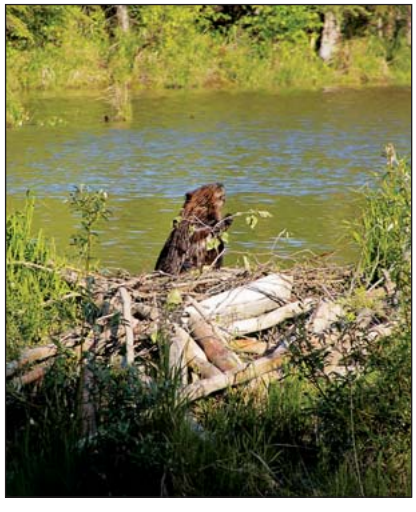
Louis Sullivan, an early advocate of office towers, called rooms "cells," meaning the cells of plants, not those of monks or prisoners. Plants inspire architecture, as do structures built by animals and insects. Call them nests, hills, reefs, hives, or something else—homes in nature efficiently use the materials at hand to meet idiosyncratic needs. For the 120 color photographs here, the German wildlife photographer Ingo Arndt spent two years seeking out in-situ shots, as well as subjects for studio compositions. The close-up photography, and the concise text by biologist Jürgen Tautz, make this an unpretentious, intimate tour of inhabited homes.

Only some of the photos are beautiful. Some are just odd or touching; a few are faintly disturbing. Tightly woven from poplar and willow seeds, the nest of the penduline tit looks like a Dr. Seuss mash-up of a pig snout and scrotum (hence "penduline," for hanging). The shape invites curiosity as to the mysteries inside the bag. Ten scary pages show Australia's tomblike termite towers—alongside nauseating shots of the glassy bugs.

Animal architecture may be large, but is never grand. It is free of Howard Roark egos and history: For once, the words "organic" and "timeless" are truthful. Form *does* follow function. The fanciest structures are meant for seduction: While female bowerbirds of Australia and New Guinea build simple bowl nests where they hatch their young and feed them, the males are busy making bowers to impress

Temma Ehrenfeld is a writer in New York.

Animal Architecture
photographs by Ingo Arndt
text by Jürgen Tautz
Harry N. Abrams, 160 pp., $29.95



MARCIN KLAPCZYNSKI

Beaver at work

the females. They first clean a patch of ground, then form a tunnel-shaped bower from parallel rows of small branches. They decorate the inside walls with feathers, berries, and blossoms—or, serendipitously, with bottle caps, glass shards, and plastic bottles—keeping the colors neatly separate. The bower is the backdrop when the male sings and dances to prove his worth.

Male weaverbirds have a harder job: Their nests must also be functional from the maternal point of view. Tying and twisting strands of grass with their claws and beaks, they leave the knots loose until the female makes her decision; she may choose a male as a mate but reject his nest, requiring him to start over. Sometimes the female will help finish up a preliminary nest. The weave is surprisingly strong: A baya weaver's nest can survive severe tropical storms. Some weavers link as many as 100 nests into a fortress that may last generations. Long tubes allow the birds to enter but keep out tree snakes and other predators.

Colonizing insects famously create complex worlds, but they can also maintain narrow bands of temperatures. Wasps often build nests under brick roofs, which can hit 120 degrees in the summer, but protect themselves with insulating layers of air between roughly hexagonal combs made of wood-based paper. Several hundreds of thousands of red wood ants, each the size of a centimeter, live together in one hill. Those that go outside absorb the sun and return home, closing up the entrance behind them, to act like heaters underground. In winter, the ants withdraw into the earth far below the frost, traveling paths laid out so as not to be flooded. The flat sides of the compass termite's towers are hit by morning and evening light, providing warmth when needed, while the angle of the towers avoids the hot midday sun.

Tautz, best known for *The Buzz about Bees* (2009), does not go into great detail about hives here. We learn that worker bees have glands that secrete wax that flakes off their bodies, providing the material for their precisely hexagonal cells, and that there's just enough space between the combs for the bees to move.

Mammals, to whom we come after birds and bees, generally aren't masters of home-building. The exceptions are mice, who can build nests in high grass that protect pups from storms, and beavers, who regulate water levels in flowing waters with their dams and lodges. Humans go unmentioned.

Shell mollusks, like snails, create mobile homes that seem to be studies of geometry in lime, an important building material for human houses that comes from ancient sea creatures. Coral reefs are created by polyps no bigger than a centimeter forming gigantic colonies that share tissue and organs. Mounting on the seabed, they produce a skeleton of lime that grows a few inches a year and creates a protected habitat for plants, fish, and sea animals, which can hide in its crevices, attracting hordes of scuba divers. ♦

B&A

Red Dawn

The best-laid plans of Lenin and Trotsky are thwarted.

BY **J. P. O'MALLEY**

On November 8, 1917, Vladimir Lenin gave a rousing speech at the Smolny Institute in Petrograd calling for permanent revolution across all Western democracies. Afterwards, his fellow Bolshevik and founder of the Red Army, Leon Trotsky, stood at the podium, warning that "the Russian revolution will [either] create a revolutionary movement in Europe, or the European powers will destroy the Russian revolution." Both Lenin and Trotsky knew that if communism did not become global, it would slowly disintegrate. And so they began thinking of ways to export their revolution.

There were whispers of Communist revolutions in Germany, Hungary, and Italy during this period. But these amounted to a few skirmishes rather than a true power grab. So Lenin came up with another strategy: If communism was to achieve global dominance, it would need to strike immediately at the heart of the world's leading empire, Great Britain.

Lenin's first attempt to dismantle imperial power began when he tore up the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907. This was an agreement that protected British India's northern frontiers from a Russian assault. Lenin claimed that Britain was now the Soviet Union's greatest enemy; furthermore, he intended to stir up a Soviet-backed/Islamic-led revolution within the British Raj. For Trotsky and Lenin, the plan was a no-brainer: If Britain lost its largest imperial production outpost in India—with her access to cheap labor and endless amounts of raw materials—then revolution in the mother country would follow suit. This, the Bolsheviks believed, would ignite revolutionary fervor throughout Western Europe, and eventually reach North America. Global capitalism would collapse and a utopian, classless world—as envisioned by Marx and Engels—would prevail forever. Or so they thought.

Lenin and his Soviet comrades would be prevented from turning this plan into reality by a vast network of spies working tirelessly for MI6 across Russia and Central Asia from 1917 to 1921. This subject is explored with great aplomb here, and Giles Milton's narrative contains a cast of characters that wouldn't be

Russian Roulette
How British Spies Thwarted Lenin's Plot for Global Revolution
by Giles Milton
Bloomsbury, 400 pp., $28

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out of place in an Ian Fleming novel. In fact, many of these Oxbridge-educated, highly sophisticated alpha males—with their penchant for expensive brandy, voluptuous aristocratic women, forged passports, ready-made disguises, and multiple identities—inspired Fleming to write his series of James Bond novels.

We now know that the central hero here is Robert Bruce Lockhart, who was in charge of British espionage activities in Russia during this period and who became a close friend to Fleming after World War II. In *Russian Roulette*, Milton recalls how Lockhart attempted to topple the entire Bolshevik regime in August 1918. Other players in this escapade included a Latvian nationalist called Colonel Berzin and two British spies, George Hill and Sidney Reilly. Reilly handed the Latvian a fee of 700,000 rubles, nearly a quarter of which had come from the French and American consuls in Moscow. The British Secret Service had no knowledge whatsoever of the planned coup d'état, which was to place Lenin and Trotsky under arrest and march them through the streets of Petrograd, where a provisional government was to be set up.

The plan failed miserably, however, mainly because Lenin and the head of the Petrograd secret police, Moisei Uritsky, were both shot around the time the coup was to take place. Lenin survived—and the Soviet authorities arrested Lockhart, charging him with the attempt on Lenin's life. (Lockhart would later be released by the Soviets when the British government arranged for him to be exchanged for several Soviet diplomats detained in England.)

Milton gives the Russians their due when they deserve it: The Soviet secret police, the Cheka, was ruthlessly efficient—and bloodthirsty—at penetrating British spy rings working in Moscow and Petrograd. He also points out that economic power was what ultimately cost the Soviets the information war: At the height of this global espionage operation, the British Treasury was coughing up a staggering £80,000 a month (nearly £3 million in today's money) to keep the information flowing back to London. When it came to this vast network of intelligence, stretching from the Finnish border to Central Asia, the Soviets couldn't compete on the same cost scale. And so they lost.

Milton also describes Lenin's plan, masterminded with the Indian revolutionary Manabendra Roy, to lead an army of Indian nationalists to fight a proxy war in Tashkent.

The revolutionaries, fighting a Communist war masquerading as a nationalist one, would then be led through Afghanistan and across the frontier into British India. Yet it was a small network of enormously capable British spies, placed in the bleak, remote mountain ranges of Russian Central Asia, that prevented the plan from materializing into a reality.

Milton's strength as a storyteller lies in his ability to whisk the reader along at the pace of a thriller. But it can be a dangerous game when the historian is on the outlook for drama. When Milton tells us that "there was no other option but to rest the fate of the Western world upon the shoulders of a small but highly trained group of secret agents," the reader feels instantly patronized. Still, this is a valuable contribution to the history of the Russian revolution—and a welcome revival of interest in a largely forgotten episode. ♦

B&A

Lazarus Rising

One poem, one statue, and a cast of characters from Gilded Age America. **BY DIANE SCHARPER**

The New Colossus
by Marshall Goldberg
Diversion, 300 pp., $14.99

Did the United States really need a French statue, especially one of colossal proportions? The visionary French sculptor Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi thought that it did. And if it weren't for Bartholdi and his generous nature—to say nothing of his creative idealism—there would be no Statue of Liberty. Nor would there be "The New Colossus," the poem by Emma Lazarus that is engraved on the statue's pedestal. The poem serves as the linchpin of this novel, which charts the arduous course from its conception to the act of engraving—and proves, if nothing else, that there's more than one way to make something right.

In 1865, Bartholdi conceived of a gigantic statue to be given as a gift to the United States for its upcoming centennial. As Bartholdi saw it, the French would fund the building of the statue and the Americans would fund the pedestal on which it would stand. Bartholdi even visited the United States in 1871 and found what he considered the perfect spot to display the monument he thought of as "Liberty Enlightening the World": Bedloe's Island, just outside New York Harbor.

Emma Lazarus

NEWSCOM

Diane Scharper teaches English at Towson University.

Many Americans, including many in Congress, weren't so sure that we needed a gigantic French statue and didn't feel like paying for its pedestal. In 1883, Congress voted down an attempt to provide $100,000 toward the construction of the pedestal; New York was also less than forthcoming with money. This infuriated Joseph Pulitzer, who, along with his star reporter Nellie Bly, is one of the major players in this engaging novel, which is ultimately about getting the words of Lazarus's poem onto the statue's pedestal by hook or by crook, or a little of both.

Pulitzer, a Hungarian-Jewish immigrant, was disgusted by the penuriousness of the American public and tried to raise money to build the pedestal through his newspaper, the *New York World*. Pulitzer's fundraising simultaneously helped to build readership for the *World*, whose few thousand readers had grown to 100,000 by the time the statue was safely ensconced on Bedloe's (now Liberty) Island in 1886. His efforts included a competition in which important poets contributed a poem addressing the statue and the liberty it symbolized.

One of those poets, Emma Lazarus, was a Jewish-American activist and Zionist who fought against the anti-Semitism of the time. Her actions aroused the anger of powerful men who would do anything to those who tried to interfere with their plans—perhaps even murder them. Lazarus also drew the ire of her sisters, who disapproved of her Zionism and her crusade on behalf of Eastern European Jewish immigrants, whom they considered to be of inferior stock. After Lazarus's premature death, they tried to keep some of her poems, including "The New Colossus," from publication. But would they have tried to harm Lazarus, or hasten her death?

Interestingly, when Lazarus was asked to contribute a poem to the statue fund, she at first refused, explaining that she didn't write commemorative poems. Yet when she thought about the mistreatment of immigrants—especially Jews from Eastern Europe—she changed her mind, and in 1883 she produced "The New Colossus," whose lines would become an integral part of the statue and would arguably be read by more people than any other American poem.

Marshall Goldberg's story zigzags through this era, running from murder to blackmail to fraud to passion, even to lesbian intrigue—most of it involving the sleuthing efforts of Nellie Bly, known for her exposé of conditions at the Bellevue Asylum for Women and her reporting trip around the world in imitation of Phileas Fogg.

In Goldberg's story, Pulitzer, before approving Bly's around-the-world trip, wants her to find out if Emma Lazarus has been murdered—not to prove murder, but to blackmail Lazarus's sisters in order to get at her poem "The New Colossus." When Bly is first given the assignment, she, like everyone, believes that Lazarus died from cancer in 1887. She soon learns, however, that some think Lazarus was poisoned—and after dealing with the likes of Henry Hilton, Jay Gould, and other Gilded Age magnates, Bly begins to agree with the poisoning theory. Goldberg sets Bly on a merry chase, during which she even falls in love with a Dr. Frank Ingram, a real person who may or may not have saved her from the depredations of Bellevue.

While many of the efforts of Pulitzer and Bly recorded here are factual, not all elements of the plot are true: *The New Colossus* ends with historical notes that help to flesh out the era but don't distinguish between the actual and invented parts of the story. Some readers may wish to consult Esther Schor's *Emma Lazarus* (2006) and Brooke Kroeger's *Nellie Bly* (1994) in order to ground Goldberg's blend of history and invention. ♦

B&A

Shut Up, Please

One man's approach to a problem of modern music.

BY JOE QUEENAN

A few years ago, I was offered two very good tickets to a New York Knicks game at Madison Square Garden. I invited my daughter to the game, but almost immediately my wife complained, "Why don't you ever let me go?" So I gave them the two tickets and went to see the legendary pianist Alfred Brendel at Carnegie Hall instead.

Even though my wife and daughter were rooting for the visiting Philadelphia 76ers that night, Knicks fans were very nice to them, and they came home saying that they had had a wonderful time. Nobody spilled beer on them, nobody swore at them, nobody in any way detracted from their fun. Which was awfully nice of them, considering that the Sixers won by 30 points. Meanwhile, 25 blocks north at Carnegie Hall, I was having an entirely different experience.

From the time the geriatric-but-nimble Brendel began tickling the ivories, the three tourists seated in front of me started running their mouths. In German. That was bad enough. Worse was when one of them lifted his right arm and began playing air piano right along with the virtuoso on stage. He did this straight through the Haydn and straight through the Mozart. He did it in languorous, theatrical, ostentatious fashion. At intermission, I leaned forward and asked the woman if she and her friends were from the House of Annoyingness.

"No," she said. "Does such a thing exist?"

When the second half of the concert

Joe Queenan is the author, most recently, of One for the Books.

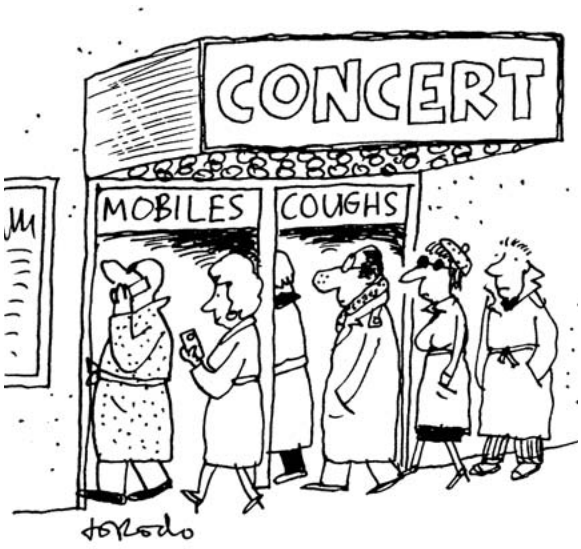
began, she and one of the men were gone, but Herr Air Piano was back. Worse still, he was now seated directly in front of me. The first time he lifted his arm to simulate a luxuriant *glissando* I tapped him on the shoulder and told him to stop. The second time he did it, I grabbed him by the forearm, forcefully yanked it down and said, "If you do that one more time, I'll break your arm off at the shoulder. I swear to God."

Other patrons found this distracting, so when the ensuing Beethoven sonata concluded, I left my seat and watched the rest of the concert from the landing. But straight through the encores, I kept staring up at the troublesome Teuton: "It's on, bitch," my expression seemed to say. "After the concert, I'm going to punch your lights out." When the concert ended, he scurried away, perhaps out a side entrance. A wise decision. I would have clocked that little putz.

Though it embarrasses me to say it, this was by no means an isolated incident. Over the course of my lifetime I have attended roughly a thousand classical music concerts. More often than I care to admit, trouble was a-brewing. You expect to get into it with drunks at a Stones or a Ramones concert, yet in a surprisingly large number of instances, I have crossed swords with aficionados of Liszt, Charpentier, even Rameau. Last year, the fat guy sitting next to me at the Metropolitan Opera suddenly opened up his iPad to check his email while the valkyries were belting out their signature number. I covered the gleaming device with my hand: "This is the Metropolitan Opera," I said. "We don't do that here." He left at intermission. Several times I have yanked baseball caps off the heads of scruffy music lovers at Carnegie Hall. "This is Carnegie Hall," I tell them. "We don't do that here." The de-cap-inated always look angry but are ultimately cowed by my harsh demeanor and never put their hats back on.

For the record, I only confront people who are eminently confrontable. I do this because I believe that slobs should always be confronted by patrons big enough and nasty enough to bash their faces in; otherwise, society goes largely unpoliced and the miscreants' swinish behavior goes on forever. But if you are 6-foot-8 and weigh 290 pounds and you want to wear a filthy White Sox cap at Carnegie Hall, be my guest.

Fans of classical music are widely perceived as cultured and sophisticated and unfailingly polite, but this is an urban myth. The savage, conscienceless, blue-haired ladies who attend the afternoon concerts at Avery Fisher Hall will break your legs in the mad stampede for the exits at the end of Handel's *Messiah*. People routinely bring sandwiches and soda and coffee into the concert hall, fan themselves with their programs, crinkle paper bags, and take an hour to unwrap the foil-entwined lozenges they should have popped into their mouths at intermission. They giggle and whisper and refuse to turn off their cell phones and just generally behave like slobs; but if they are sitting anywhere near me, I let them have it. Both barrels. Right between the eyes.



CARTOONSTOCK

"How about we let Brahms handle this?" I once snapped at an addled patriarch sitting behind me when he insisted on humming throughout the composer's uncharacteristically delicate Third Symphony. The symphony is in the key of F; he was humming it in X-flat. "Just Brahms and the orchestra. You keep out of it." Another time, a woman complained to her husband that she had trouble seeing the violin soloist on center stage because the man seated directly in front of her had a "ridiculously big head." The man she was referring to was me.

"You have a ridiculously big mouth," I told her. "We are as God made us."

Two years ago, I was attending a New York Philharmonic concert that featured Emmanuel Ax hammering away on the 88s. He did a superb job with Debussy's *Pagodes*, but I couldn't really enjoy the performance because the grizzled old coot sitting a few seats to the left in the row directly behind me was snoring. I poked him with my program after the piece ended and told him to shape up—but he snored through the next piece, too. After intermission, the industrious but not especially scintillating Alan Gilbert launched into Mahler's Fifth Symphony. More sawing logs could be heard to my rear. In the interval between the third and fourth movements, I turned around and stuck my finger into the man's chest.

"As you know," I said, "this is the slow movement that was played by the Philharmonic at Bobby Kennedy's funeral. Leonard Bernstein was the conductor that day. The service was held at St. Patrick's Cathedral, a temple sacred to Irish-Americans for sociopolitical reasons I will not go into at this juncture. My name is Queenan. I am Irish-American. I cannot overestimate the displeasure I will feel if you don't stay awake during this movement. I simply cannot."

The movement was played with exquisite precision and deep sensitivity by the orchestra. Maestro Gilbert was at his very best. The Mahler, as always, was sublime. And for the rest of the concert, nary a snore was heard anywhere in my vicinity. Thus ended another eventful night at the concert hall. ♦

B&A

The Comfort Zone

Latest trends in the modern moviegoing experience.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

AMC theater, La Jolla, California

Something interesting happened a year ago: The movie theater a few blocks from my house was radically redesigned. This came as a surprise, for the AMC 84th Street wasn't failing in any way. Indeed, from its opening in 1985 to the present day, it has been one of the most successful theaters in America (for a decade, the highest-grossing).

But the 84th Street certainly had gotten ragged around the edges. Its success meant it had hard use, especially given that it specialized in fare for kids and teenagers. So when the Alamo Cinema and Drafthouse chain, universally considered the best in the country, announced it was building a fancy complex less than a mile away, AMC decided it had to upgrade fast.

Alas for us Upper-West-Siders, Alamo canceled its plans. But the blessings of capitalism rained down upon us nonetheless, for the threat of competition alone proved to be enough to transform our neighborhood theater—and the results were staggering enough to suggest that there might be transformations in your neighborhood theater as well over the next few years.

What was most surprising was the nature of the change: The number of seats in each of the theater's six auditoriums was reduced by nearly two-thirds. Hundreds of conventional seats were removed so that AMC could install new ones twice as large—seats that required a great deal of space in front and behind. They are plush, thick recliners that, at the push of a button, can go almost horizontal. And every seat is reserved, as though the audience were attending a live theatrical production. When you buy your ticket, either beforehand online or at a theater credit-card kiosk, you must select your specific seat.

AMC has found, to its amazement, that this combination of extreme comfort and choice of seat placement has been a financial boon. For even though the number of seats is only a third of what it was before, attendance is up 80 percent—and audiences are not balking at paying significantly higher ticket prices. (The top seat at the 84th Street is $16.50; 16 blocks downtown, at another AMC multiplex, the top seat is $14.50.)

Now, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, "The company plans to spend about $600 million over the next five years to 'reseat' 1,800 of its nearly 5,000 screens. The renovations typically cost $350,000 to $500,000 per auditorium." This is a necessary concession to reality. The improvements in home entertainment options—HDTV, good sound, access to streaming programming from Netflix and Amazon—are threatening to make a night out at the movies an anachronism. Ticket sales have not grown in a decade (indeed, they've fallen over the past year), even as the population has increased by 30 million nationwide.

This is reminiscent of a comparable moment in the 1980s, when the VCR revolution and the advent of cable television made staying home an attractive option. These joint disruptions forced theater owners to end the practice of smooshing people into small, often oddly shaped triplex theaters in strip malls and office buildings. In 1987, I wrote an article for *U.S. News & World Report* on the National Amusements chain, which actually pioneered the use of the term "multiplex." It built gigantic boxes with 12 or 14 theaters on the sites of former drive-ins, put video games in the lobbies, and invested in cushy new chairs that rocked.

For the first time in decades, the National Amusements people reported to me at the time, people went to the theater *without knowing or caring what movie they were going to see*. They found the experience of seeing something there so much more innately pleasurable than at any other local venue that they would just show up and pick something. That is exactly what the 84th Street is like, with the added dollop that if you decide to go the day before, you can make sure your seat is where you want it—and you can show up without having to get there early and see 11 trailers you've already seen.

Moviegoing is not the default form of high-level entertainment, which is what it was for almost 80 years; it is now just a choice among many—an expensive choice, and a choice that all too often brings you into excessive proximity with ill-mannered staff and rude fellow patrons who have the power to ruin your evening and make the money you spent a waste.

AMC has figured out that moviegoing is now a luxury product, and it will have to do everything in its power to give its audiences a luxurious experience if it wants its business to survive. National Amusements showed the way to survival when cable and VCRs threatened extinction. I'm not sure anything is going to save conventional moviegoing in the long run from these technological changes. But in the meantime, you have to love those recliners. ♦

AMC THEATRES

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

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ASU professor encourages students to defy body hair norms

Posted: July 03, 2014

To shave or not to shave?

That's the question confronting students in classes taught by Breanne Fahs, associate professor of women and gender studies in Arizona State University's New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences. Since 2010 Fahs has offered students the chance to participate in an extra-credit exercise related to body hair.

Female student participants stop shaving their legs and underarms for 10 weeks during the semester while keeping a journal to document their experiences. For male students, the assignment is to shave all body hair from the neck down.

"There's no better way to learn about societal norms than to violate them and see how people react," said Fahs. "There's really no reason why the choice to shave, or not, should be a big deal. But it is, as the students tend to find out quickly."

Students (left to right) Kurt Keller, Emily Dysart, KC Lindley and Grace Scale show the results of their body hair shaving project in a women and gender studies course taught by Breanne Fahs.
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Stephanie Robinson declined to participate in the project during the first two classes she took with Fahs, but took the plunge during her third opportunity. "It really was a life-changing experience," she said.

"Many of my friends didn't want to work out next to me or hear about the assignment, and my mother was distraught at the idea that I would be getting married in a white dress with armpit hair," Robinson said. "I also noticed the looks on faces of strangers and people around campus who seemed utterly disgusted by my body hair. It definitely made me realize that if you're not strictly adhering to socially prescribed gender roles, your body becomes a site for contestation and public opinion."

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