the weekly standard

CRUNCH TIME IN THE MIDDLE EAST
JOHN R. BOLTON • WILLIAM KRISTOL

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Troublemaker for Tyrants

Thor Halvorssen hammers the Kims

BY MATT LABASH

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COVER: JUNG YEON-JE / AFP / GETTY IMAGES

My Kingdom for a Hearse

Readers with sharp memories will recall that, a little over two years ago, The Scrapbook was pleased to report the results of a forensic DNA test: The skeleton that had been unearthed in 2012 in a Leicester, England, parking lot, and which had been thought to be the remains of Richard III, was confirmed to be the long-lost king. The last Plantagenet monarch, and villain of Shakespeare's eponymous tragedy, had been recovered from the past—and from legend.

It was a long, and dramatic, journey. Richard had been killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field (1485) by soldiers of Henry Tudor—thereafter Henry VII—and, slung naked and mutilated over a horse, carried to nearby Leicester and hastily buried underneath the choir of the Greyfriars monastery. A half-century later, England's monasteries were suppressed (and largely destroyed) by Henry VIII, and it was widely assumed that Richard's corpse had been disinterred and flung into the nearby River Soar. Yet there were those—mostly amateur enthusiasts of Richard—who believed that his bones might never have been disturbed, and, knowing the location of the Greyfriars choir, successfully prevailed upon the authorities to let them dig.

We know the rest of the story. A skeleton was found in the precise location beneath the world's most famous car park, bearing circumstantial marks (a spine with scoliosis, violent injuries to the skull and limbs) consistent with history, and some recoverable DNA. Since Richard had no children, researchers at Leicester University found a direct descendant of his older sister—a Canadian-born cabinetmaker now resident in England—whose DNA furnished a perfect match with the skeleton's. After five centuries, Richard III had been found.

This past week, after much debate about where and how Richard should be officially laid to rest, he was buried in Leicester Cathedral. Some had argued that York would be a more appropriate location than Leicester for the onetime duke of York, and there was much back and forth about the liturgy for burying a pre-Reformation Roman Catholic monarch. But in the end, the courts decided in Leicester's favor, and the king was entombed in a hybrid Christian ceremony presided over by the (Anglican) archbishop of Canterbury, assisted by the (Catholic) archbishop of Westminster. And he was buried, incidentally, in a lead-lined wooden coffin designed and built by the same cabinetmaker whose DNA confirmed his identity.

The Scrapbook freely admits that it finds all this quite fascinating, even astonishing, and for various reasons. Richard's place in history is not likely to be affected by the discovery of his bones. He was undoubtedly not the caricature Shakespeare portrayed for his Tudor patrons, but he also remains the leading suspect in the murder of his two young nephews (and rival claimants to the throne) in the Tower of London. We may wonder how England might be different if Richard had prevailed at Bosworth; but counterfactual history, while fun, is ultimately meaningless.

No, The Scrapbook concludes that this story appeals for obvious reasons: A great historic mystery has been unexpectedly solved; some ecumenical grandeur has been accompanied by royal pageantry; we find ourselves staring at the tragic reality—a twisted skeleton shoved into the dirt—of history that had largely transmuted into myth. ♦

We Don't Need No Thought Control

The chapter of the Young America's Foundation at George Washington University is currently threatened with a loss of funding for refusing to attend mandatory LGBT sensitivity training. The student government at GWU recently made this a requirement for all student leaders, and YAF is being called hateful for objecting. According to Allied in Pride, the school's LGBT student group, this merely scratches the surface of the YAF chapter's crimes. "Their refusal to use preferred gender pronouns should be considered an act of violence and a violation of the nondiscrimination clause required in all GW student organizations' Constitutions," Allied in Pride wrote on their Facebook page.

That college leftists continue to harass conservative groups, exhibit a fondness for Maoist reeducation programs, and equate pronouns with violence is not surprising. But the degree to which campuses continue moving leftward still finds new ways to surprise. "Regardless of your views on LGBT people, LGBT people exist," student Alex Pollock told the GWU *Hatchet*. "It should be mandatory from a sensitivity perspective." What's notable about this is that Pollock happens to be the president of the GWU College Republicans, and even he favors mandatory sensitivity training. (When the revolution comes, Comrade Pollock can take some small measure of comfort in the fact he's less likely to be first up against the wall.)

If conservatives on campus have it coming, students of any other ideological stripe will find campuses a safe and welcoming space for their ideas—including those advocating global jihad. Conservative provocateur James O'Keefe just released another undercover video, in which an assistant dean at Cornell advises an undercover journalist on how to start and

fund a pro-ISIS club on campus. After being told that they would like to bring an ISIS "freedom fighter" to campus for a "training camp," the dean calmly responds, "The university is not going to look at different groups and say you are not allowed to support that group because we don't believe in them or something like that. . . . The university wants the entire community to understand what's going on in all parts of the world."

In fact, campus culture has gotten so left-wing that mainstream liberals are concerned. On March 21, the *New York Times* published an essay by Judith Shulevitz, "In College and Hiding From Scary Ideas," recounting the number of draconian ways in which colleges are stifling debates that might be "triggering" the identity-politics-über-alles crowd. And last week, an anonymous blog post by an avowedly leftist professor made the rounds on social media. "Personally, liberal students scare the s—t out of me," the professor wrote. "All it takes is one slip—not even an outright challenging of their beliefs, but even momentarily exposing them to any uncomfortable thought or imagery—and that's it, your classroom is triggering, you are insensitive, kids are bringing mattresses to your office hours and there's a Twitter petition out demanding you chop off your hand in repentance."

That seems like hyperbole. Interested students should inquire with the dean about the possibility of an ISIS training camp. Learning to chop off hands should be a key part of this exciting opportunity for cultural exchange. ♦

All the News That's Fit to Click

Normally The Scrapbook is pleased to learn of advances in technology allowing greater numbers of people access to the news. *Ceteris paribus*, these innovations help cultivate an informed public and, we like to hope, keep our journalistic colleagues from the economic chopping block just a little while longer.

So it was with initial excitement that we heard the rumblings of Facebook's entrance into the marketplace of ideas. Last week, the *New York Times* reported that the 1.4 billion-member-strong Internet giant had been holding discreet talks with a number of media companies (the Times, BuzzFeed, National Geographic) to explore the possibility of hosting news content on the popular social site. What is seemingly at stake here are the few precious seconds (seconds that could be used cultivating deep, lasting Internet friendships!) readers expend clicking on links redirecting them to the original news site.

Per the *New York Times*: "News articles on Facebook are currently linked to the publisher's own website, and open in a web browser, typically taking about eight seconds to load. . . . [W]hen it comes to catching the roving eyeballs of readers, milliseconds matter."

Just last year, Facebook allowed psychologists to manipulate the newsfeeds of nearly 700,000 unsuspecting users. What the researchers found—after a delightful time had by all—is that filtering newsfeeds for positive or negative content produced a corresponding feeling in the user. The study, rather useless in its findings (what a surprise that negative

information affects people's emotions negatively), left many feeling unsettled about the aims of the supposedly hip, honest company. Mike Schroepfer, chief technology officer at Facebook, took pains to reassure users: "We believe in research, because it helps us build a better Facebook. Like most companies today, our products are built based on extensive research, experimentation, and testing."

With Facebook's foray into the news world, we can brace for more "experimentation and testing." The Scrapbook cannot wait for the results. ♦

Chuck Bednarik (1925-2015)

By happy accident, the city of Philadelphia has been blessed over the years with a number of sports stars who embody the city's general temperament: pugnacious, diligent, and impolitic. The town has little love for professional athletes in the movie star or gentleman mode. Instead, Philadelphians revere men such as Allen Iverson, Charles Barkley, Reggie White, Jerome Brown, John Kruk, and Bobby Clarke. The loud tough guys who care about the game.

Last week one of the great Philadelphia tough guys passed away. "Concrete Charlie" Bednarik was 89 years old and Philly through and through. A local boy, he was raised in nearby Bethlehem and after high school went into the Army Air Force, where he served as the waist-gunner in a B-24 Liberator and flew 30 combat missions over Germany. After the war he came home to attend the University of Pennsylvania, where he played both center and linebacker, was a three-time All-American, and was generally considered the best defensive player in the country. After demolishing the Ivy League, he was signed by the Philadelphia Eagles, for whom he played from 1949 to 1962.

Bednarik was one of the last professional football players to play both ways, as a center and a linebacker. And he played with an unapologetic abandon. In 1960 he hit the New York Giants running back Frank Gifford so hard that the insufferable Gifford didn't play again until 1962. (There is a photo of Bednarik standing over Gifford's body pumping a fist; Bednarik insists he was just happy that he'd caused a fumble and that the Eagles had recovered it.)

In the championship game that year (the first Super Bowl didn't take place until 1967), Bednarik made the game-winning tackle on the nine-yard line when he took down Green Bay's Jim Taylor and refused to let him off the ground until the final few seconds had expired. "Everybody reminds me of [that moment]," Bednarik once said. "And I'm happy they remind me of it. I'm proud and delighted to have played in that game." That's high-grade Philadelphia.

Concrete Charlie played 60 minutes a game and missed just 3 games in his 14-year career. As the saying goes, they don't make them like they used to. ♦

The Dark Side of Cage-Free

When shopping for eggs, you'll notice the cartons often tout being cage-free, free-range, or pasture-raised. The move towards giving hens more space has been gaining ground for some time. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, 17 million hens (6 percent of the U.S. egg-laying flock) now roam free. Others, however, argue the way to go is larger cages. But isn't freedom a good thing?

"All that freedom typically means a higher percentage of hens die prematurely," writes the *Journal*'s David Kesmodel, "sometimes from injuries suffered in flight or from pecking by other chickens, according to animal scientists and farmers."

Pecking by other chickens? What is this? A farm or a prison yard? In fact, sources tell The Scrapbook that the majority of chickens found pecked to death had been accused of being stool pigeons. (Rimshot!) ♦

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Skin in the Game

I got married on April Fool's Day, but not to make some kind of point, ironic or otherwise. It was just one of the Saturdays on the calendar when my fiancée Cynthia and I were trying to schedule our wedding.

It would be, I initially thought, inconvenient that our anniversary would forever hold another, not necessarily complementary, meaning. But, perhaps for that very reason, other soon-to-be-wed couples avoided the day and made it easier for us to book a church and reception hall.

But if you thought it an odd choice to wed on the corniest day of the year, we didn't want to hear it. Any caterer or flower seller who made an "Are you serious?" face was off the list. The decision to marry on April Fool's Day became a rallying point for us, a trivial thing that took on greater meaning the more we had to defend it.

From there it was a short mental skip to embracing April 1 as an excellent day for playing practical jokes on one's spouse. As a wedding gift, I gave Cynthia a book on housekeeping. "Happy April Fool's," it said inside. And then I gave her a much less memorable piece of jewelry to cover my bases.

Before this I was never much for April Fool's jokes. I am not the kind of person who can look you in the eye and announce a total fabrication like, "Oh, your uncle with the bad breath and the drinking problem called. He's left his vulgar wife, but I told him he could stay with us while he figures things out."

I need a lie to have some context, maybe a moving part or two.

As it happens, my wife is dubious about tattoos, especially on men over 30. Why? Oh, you know: the vanity, the ginned-up sexuality, the false advertisement of hidden depths. I can't blame her, but my own feeling on this is not as strong. I have even wondered once or twice about the great question of tattoos: how to find the words or imagery that, once emblazoned on your skin, will not seem ridiculous in time. Which gave me an idea.

Another thing you need to know is my wife loves the movie *Working Girl* starring Melanie Griffith. It's a movie with many great lines, and among Cynthia's favorites is "I have a head for business and a body for sin."

HENNA, MADELEINE CHALK; PHOTO, JAMES ALLEN

I began by researching fonts. Then I called tattoo shops to see if they had any advice on how to fake a tattoo. Strangely, they did not seem interested in helping me make fun of their work.

On the Internet, I found a henna tattoo artist in Annapolis who said she could make a tattoo that looked pretty close to the real thing, but traveling there and back would have to be done in advance and probably require just the kind of lie I have trouble telling. What I needed was to get the tattoo on April Fool's Day and come home with it.

Fortunately, I found another henna tattoo artist closer by who could meet me in the afternoon. On the way I bought a bandage and medical tape.

Now, it is typical for me to shower the moment I get home, because I commute by bicycle and always arrive sweaty. When I was dressed, in jeans and a sleeveless shirt, I called to my wife.

She came into our bedroom and was taken aback by the bandage on my arm. "Don't be nervous," I said, "I have something I want to show you. For this, our anniversary, I was looking for a new way to express my love."

As I peeled off the medical tape, I could see Cynthia was becoming almost physically ill at the thought of what was about to happen. She turned her eyes to the wall.

"It's not quite finished," I said, "but I am so proud of the words. It says, 'Body 4 Cyn'—get it?"

"Really?" she asked as she peeked back at me, her voice squeaking with fear. I sat down next to her on the bed and continued to remove the bandage, explaining that what she was about to see was only an outline. "Tomorrow," I continued, "I am going back to have the color filled in."

She looked at my reddened arm and her face said it all: She was aghast.

Then, after a few more painful seconds, I let her off the hook: "April Fool's, babe. It's a fake."

Folding over with nervous relief, she could hardly speak. I began to worry that she was not going to forgive me. But after a couple minutes she demanded a closer look at my arm, saying she couldn't believe she had fallen for this or that I had gone this far and, hey, what is this stuff on your arm anyway?

David Skinner

the weekly Standard

A Nuclear Iran?

Jerusalem

On Tuesday I spent some time with the reelected prime minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu. I think he was happy to take a short break from his Herculean labors of putting together a government and dealing with controversies galore. So we engaged in some small talk and exchanged compliments and stories about our parents. I particularly enjoyed his fascinating account of his father's work with the great Zionist leader Ze'ev Jabotinsky in the last year of Jabotinsky's life, and his father's subsequent efforts to rally support in the United States during World War II for European Jewry and for the creation of the state of Israel. His failure on the first front and his success in the second is a useful reminder of the extent to which, in politics, tragedy and triumph are not alternatives but cousins.

Speaking of triumphs, I did of course congratulate the prime minister on his reelection victory. But he had no interest in dwelling on that, and, indeed, his manner was in no way triumphalist or even exuberant. The prime minister was sober, and he was alarmed.

The main cause of his alarm wasn't the host of attacks that have recently been launched against Israel by the administration in Washington. He simply expressed confidence in the underlying strength of the U.S.-Israel relationship and refused to engage, even in this private setting, in any reciprocal attacks on his American counterparts.

No, what alarmed the prime minister was Iran. The progress of the Iranian regime toward nuclear weapons is *the* threat, as he sees it, to the well-being of Israel, the overall success of American foreign policy, and any hopes for peace and stability in the Middle East. The nuclear arms deal the Obama administration seeks with Iran would secure Iran's path to nuclear weapons capability and would strengthen a regime that not only proclaims death to Israel and death to America but shows by its behavior that it means both statements. And this is to say nothing of the likelihood of a nuclear arms race in the Middle East to follow.

The prime minister made his points without hyperbole or bravado. None of them was new, as he himself stressed. After all, he has been as clear and outspoken as anyone could be about the threat of a bad deal, including in his remarks earlier this month to the United States Congress. His private arguments very much reflected his public ones, and the arguments other critics of the deal have been making. Indeed, on a couple of occasions the prime minister interrupted himself to say, "but of course you understand this point, you've published these arguments." And so we and others have. It's not as if scholars at the American Enterprise Institute and the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and the Council on Foreign Relations and the Hudson Institute—to say nothing of senators and congressmen and former secretaries of state—haven't explained that we are heading towards a bad deal with a bad regime.

It's a bad deal for all the reasons experts have pointed out. It won't disassemble Iran's nuclear infrastructure, while it does disassemble the sanctions regime that finally had started to bite and that holds the best hope of peacefully stopping Iran's nuclear program. It doesn't deal with Iran's weapons programs or force Iran to come clean about its military agenda. It has limits on inspections and verification, and a time limit on the restrictions on Iran's capabilities to boot. It demands no promise of any change in Iranian behavior. So it's a bad deal with a bad regime, one that is a leading sponsor of terror, an aggressor in the region, an enemy of the United States, and committed to the destruction of Israel. And it's a bad deal that will strengthen a bad regime, that will encourage bad regimes elsewhere in the world to redouble their murderous pursuits, and thus will make war—no, wars—more likely.

I walked back to my hotel after the hour-and-a-half discussion thinking this was perhaps the most soberly alarming conversation I have ever had with a political leader in a position of responsibility. And in pondering the path of the Obama administration, I couldn't get out of my mind Winston Churchill's admonition to Neville Chamberlain after Munich: "You were given the choice between war and dishonor. You chose dishonor and you will have war."

The next day, in my hotel room in Jerusalem taking a break from preparing the class I was here to teach, I read about Tuesday night's Simon Wiesenthal Center annual gala tribute dinner at the Beverly Hilton hotel. The news from the dinner was the speech by Harvey Weinstein, recipient of the Center's Humanitarian Award.

Weinstein spoke colorfully about the need to fight anti-Semitism: "We're gonna have to get as organized as the mafia. We better stand up and kick these guys in the ass. . . . We just can't take it anymore [from] these crazy bastards." He went on:

> I think it's time that we, as Jews, get together with the Muslims who are honorable and peaceful—but we [also] have to go and protect ourselves. . . . There's gotta be a way to fight back. While we must be understanding of our Arab brothers and our Islamic brothers, we also have to understand that these crazy bastards [Arab and Islamic extremists] are also killing their own—they're killing neighbors, they're killing people from all sorts of different races.

These seemed to me perhaps useful things to be said to a Hollywood audience—especially when said by a liberal who was a strong and vocal supporter of President Obama in both 2008 and 2012.

But reading about these remarks in Jerusalem, one couldn't help but be put off, even embarrassed, by the bravado and tough talk. Fighting anti-Semitism is of course a good thing. But all the deplorable kinds of anti-Semitism Weinstein is going to spend time fighting pale in importance next to the prospect of an anti-Semitic Iranian regime getting nuclear weapons with the acquiescence of the United States. And about that, Weinstein has been, so far as I know, silent. And Weinstein's friends in American politics have mostly been silent.

Perhaps Weinstein will call Hillary Clinton and Chuck Schumer and Harry Reid, and persuade them to act to block a bad deal with the Iranian regime. Perhaps Weinstein will call his friend President Obama and ask him to stop participating in the delegitimization of Israel as he contributes to the legitimization of Iran. Perhaps Weinstein will even ask him to put the threat of military force back on the table.

But counting on prominent and wealthy Jewish liberals to speak up against their friends in the face of existential threats to the Jewish people has never been a good bet. Benzion Netanyahu saw this up close in June 1940, when mainstream American Jewish leaders boycotted his mentor Ze'ev Jabotinsky's speech in New York when Jabotinsky sounded the alarm about what was happening in Europe.

Now his son, Benjamin Netanyahu, is sounding the alarm about what is happening today. He has made the case, in my view irrefutably, that no friend of Israel can support the forthcoming deal with the Iranian regime. Nor is such a deal in any way in the broader American national interest. Yet a misguided American administration is on a path to choosing dishonor and setting the stage for future wars. It is up to American leaders in both parties and all walks of life to do their best to avert this outcome. And if it is left to Israel to act, the least Americans can do is support our democratic ally, just as the least Americans could honorably do in 1940 was support Britain as, in her finest hour, she stood and fought alone.

—William Kristol

Mischief at the U.N.

Obama toys with cutting Israel adrift in the Security Council. BY JOHN R. BOLTON

Netanyahu and Obama share a warm moment, May 20, 2011.

Immediately after Israel's March 17 election, Obama administration officials threatened to allow (or even encourage) the U.N. Security Council to recognize a Palestinian state and confine Israel to its pre-1967 borders. Within days, the president himself joined in, publicly criticizing not just Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, with whom Obama has had notoriously bad relations, but sectors of Israeli opinion and even Israel itself.

The administration leaks suggesting that Israel be cut adrift in the Security Council in effect threatened "collective punishment" as a weapon in U.S.-Israel relations. This is especially ironic coming from "progressives" who have repeatedly accused Israel of "collective punishment" by forcefully retaliating against terrorist attacks. But more important, exposing Israel to the tender mercies of its Security Council opponents harms not only Israel's interests, but America's in equal measure. Roughly half of Washington's Security Council vetoes have been cast against draft resolutions contrary to our Middle East interests.

America's consistent view since Council Resolution 242 concluded the 1967 Arab-Israeli war is that only the parties themselves can structure a lasting peace. Deviating from that formula would be a radical departure by Obama from a bipartisan Middle East policy nearly half a century old.

In fact, Israel's "1967 borders" are basically only the 1949 cease-fire lines, but its critics shrink from admitting this tedious reality. The indeterminate status of Israel's borders from its 1948 creation is in fact a powerful argument why only negotiation with relevant Arab parties can ultimately fix the lines with certainty.

That is why Resolution 242's "land for peace" formula, vague and elastic though it is, was acceptable to everyone in 1967: There were no hard and fast boundaries to fall back on, no longstanding historical precedents. Prior U.N. resolutions from the 1940s, for example, had all been overtaken by events. Only negotiation, if anything, could leave the parties content; externally imposed terms could only sow future conflicts. Hence, Resolution 242 does *not* call for a return to the prewar boundaries, but instead affirms the right of "every State in the area" to "secure and recognized boundaries." Ignoring this fundamental reality is fantasy.

So what drives Obama to conjure his Security Council threat? Obviously, deep antipathy for Netanyahu is one reason. Obama didn't like Netanyahu before Israel's recent election, and liked him even less after Bibi's speech to a joint session of Congress. Hoping to motivate lukewarm or indifferent Likud voters to pump up his election-day support, Netanyahu emphasized his opponents' efforts to turn out anti-Likud Arab voters, and Obama flayed him for it. Obama also opposed Netanyahu's preelection criticism of the "two-state solution" and disdained Netanyahu's efforts to clarify his comments after he won.

So Obama's list of complaints about Netanyahu is long and getting longer. But if the criticisms were really about Netanyahu's campaign tactics, threatening to let slip the dogs of political war in the Security Council would hardly be an appropriate response. Obama's punishment would simply not fit Netanyahu's crime.

Far more disturbing, Obama's postelection statements demonstrate something much deeper than just animosity toward Netanyahu. Obama said that "Israeli democracy has been premised on everybody in the country being treated equally and fairly. If that is lost, then I think that not only does it give ammunition to folks who don't believe in a Jewish state, but it also, I think, starts to erode the meaning of democracy in the country."

NEWSCOM

John R. Bolton, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations in 2005-06.

With these comments, Obama is criticizing not just Netanyahu, but the very legitimacy of Israel's democracy, giving an implicit green light to those prepared to act violently against it. Obama's remarks are substantially more egregious than Secretary of State John Kerry's 2014 criticism that Israel's unwillingness to follow the White House lead in the Palestinian negotiations made it understandable if there were another Palestinian intifada or further efforts by the international "boycotts, sanctions, and divestiture" movement against Israel.

Obama is thus going well beyond acting unpresidential or even immature. Whether one takes his or Netanyahu's side, the administration's approach is now squarely contrary to America's larger strategic interests. And the global harm that will be done to common U.S. and Israeli interests through Security Council resolutions if Washington stands aside (or worse, joins in) will extend far beyond the terms of one prime minister and one president.

Consider the inevitable damage merely from the sort of council resolution threatened by Obama's leakers. Declaring that a Palestinian state exists outside of Israel's 1967 boundaries would instantly terminate all bilateral Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy on these central issues. What else would there be to talk about? Resolution 242's basic premise would be upended; rather than enhancing the role of diplomacy between Israel and the relevant Arab parties, a Palestinian statehood resolution would eliminate it.

The reverberations would echo even wider. Already, Obama's representatives on the U.N. Human Rights Council declined to defend Israel during the HRC's annual festival of Israel-bashing, another first from our transformative president.

More seriously, Israel's "occupation" of West Bank lands would immediately render it in violation of the statehood resolution, thus exposing it to international sanctions, including from the Security Council if Obama continued to stand aside. Prosecutions of Israeli officials in the International Criminal Court would instantly have a jurisdictional basis, and those officials would also be exposed to "universal jurisdiction" statutes that have become all the rage with the international left in recent decades. And won't the White House be surprised when "Palestine" gains admission to the entire U.N. system, triggering a statutorily required cut-off of U.S. contributions to each agency that admits the new state!

No end of mischief will flow from even one undisciplined Security Council resolution, let alone whatever else Obama is prepared to allow. Obama's criticisms, with the implied charge of racism not far beneath their surface, have once again brought Israel's very legitimacy into question. We are all too close to resurrecting the U.N.'s 1975 "Zionism is racism" resolution. Daniel Patrick Moynihan would not recognize Obama as a president from the Democratic party.

Obama needs reminding that petulance is for teenagers, not presidents. U.S. interests extend beyond personalities and temporary frustrations. As in many other policy areas, Obama's "*l'état, c'est moi*" approach is laying foundations for enormous problems both today and long after he leaves office. If anyone wants a convincing argument why national security must be at the very center of America's 2016 presidential contest, Obama has surely supplied it. ♦

Gary Palmer Goes to Washington

A man of policies, ideas, and solutions.

BY FRED BARNES

In 1989, Gary Palmer founded the Alabama Policy Institute, a conservative think tank. By the time he resigned as its president last year, API had become a powerful force on state issues, everything from pensions to prison reform to politics. Palmer led the successful fight against a lottery—Alabama is among the few states without one—and organized the drive that defeated Republican governor Bob Riley's bid for a whopping tax increase.

Last year, Palmer, 60, changed jobs. When Republican Spencer Bachus announced he would retire from his House seat, Palmer jumped in the race to succeed him. He finished second in the crowded GOP primary, then won the runoff with 63.5 percent of the vote. The general election was a snap. The district, based in the Birmingham suburbs, is one of the most Republican in the country. Palmer got 76.2 percent of the vote.

His election raised this question: Can a think tank wonk, an expert on state issues, find success on Capitol Hill? The tentative answer in Palmer's case, after roughly 100 days of the new session, is yes.

Palmer had a threshold problem. In his campaign he promised to vote against another term for Speaker John Boehner. When he arrived in Washington, he privately told Boehner he didn't want to start his time in Congress by breaking a promise. He kept it, voting for Alabama senator Jeff Sessions for speaker.

By early March, Palmer had become something of an insider. He was one of five members of the Budget Committee who refused to go along with a 2016 budget that wasn't fully

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paid for because of a hike in defense spending. That halted the committee's deliberations. Palmer, Marlin Stutzman of Indiana, and David Brat of Virginia adjourned to Palmer's barely furnished office to find a solution they could agree on.

They talked to Tom Price of Georgia, the committee chairman, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy of California, and Jim Jordan of Ohio, the chairman of the House Freedom Caucus, whose members are among the most conservative Republicans in Congress. With Jordan's guidance, they approved a strategy of voting on two budgets, the difference being an additional $20 billion for defense in the second.

The first one, which deficit hawks favored, lost 319-105. The second passed, 228-199. Palmer voted for both.

Stutzman, elected in 2010, was impressed with Palmer's ease in dealing with the budget. "He always has a list of notes," Stutzman said. "He knows the numbers. He knows a lot of the history of these policy efforts. I'm impressed with his knowledge. He's definitely willing to speak up."

Reticence is not Palmer's style. Nor is deference to Obama administration bigwigs. At a hearing of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, he faced a panel of Environmental Protection Agency officials. He said EPA proposed new standards for curbing ozone and "has not been able to identify how [they] will be met."

He went on: "If the EPA can't even point to controls capable of almost half the emission reductions in the East or all the reductions required in California to meet those stringent proposed standards, this sounds like shoot first, ask questions later rulemaking. Should we be imposing this much burden on the American people when the EPA doesn't even know how this rule can be accomplished?" The EPA group didn't have a clear, much less persuasive, answer.

As he questioned the panel, Palmer was armed with a copy of "Environmental Indicators for Alabama and the U.S." in front of him. The Alabama Policy Institute that he headed for a quarter-century publishes a new version every three or four years. "It's nice to have a think tank at your disposal," he told me.

NEWSCOM

Palmer, right, listens to GOP colleague Alex Mooney of West Virginia before a Budget Committee hearing, January 27, 2015.

When Shaun Donovan, the White House budget director, appeared before the budget committee, Palmer followed up on Donovan's comment that Obama's immigration policies would generate revenue. But since the president's budget surely won't pass, asked Palmer, "how much of this does the president intend to do through executive order?" Donovan looked puzzled for a few moments, then said Obama acts "within the power the law grants him." Palmer replied, "He's taken action beyond what the power of the law grants."

Palmer has also taken on energy secretary Ernest Moniz. His department is "investing enormous amounts of money in trying to make renewable energy economically viable. You are the Department of Energy. You are not the EPA." Shouldn't oil, natural gas, and coal be treated similarly, especially by efforts to make fracking more economically viable? The private sector can do that, Moniz said. His department is focusing on things like the "reuse of water."

Policies, ideas, and solutions are Palmer's comfort zone. He knows a lot, far more than even many House veterans. But there's a political gap he'll have to bridge to be influential. He joined the Freedom Caucus, some of whose members concentrate on criticizing Republican leaders in the House. Voting against Boehner put him in their camp—temporarily.

Given his inclinations, he doesn't belong there. "I'm always looking for an opportunity to advance the [conservative] cause, to move the ball down the field," he told me. Palmer was a walk-on, by the way, on the University of Alabama's football team when Bear Bryant was coach.

"We're at the point in this country where people don't believe us," Palmer said, referring to Congress. "The only way you change that is by what you do. You have to prove you're trustworthy." Shutting down the government proves the opposite. Offering credible "solutions"—conservative solutions—works, and Palmer has a boatload of them.

I've known Gary Palmer for nearly 20 years. His success so far is not a surprise. "We're not going to go negative," he promised his supporters. "We're going to run a campaign of ideas." Many candidates have said that. Palmer is the rare one who actually delivered on his promise. If he keeps it up, he may become the new Jack Kemp. ♦

My Life As a Woman

Of bonbons and mango-scented body scrub.

BY P.J. O'ROURKE

Transgender persons are in the news so much lately that they've almost forced sinister college fraternities and ISIS off the front page. Media coverage of the transgender issue has been attention-getting, positive, and (please raise my consciousness if I'm somehow making an insensitive pun) uplifting.

I like attention as well as anyone of any gender. And I am—as are the subjects of many stories about gender transition—in my sixties.

So I thought I'd try it. I don't tell my wife. From what I've seen on TV, not telling your spouse about your gender until it's too late to avoid major drama is an important step in the transgender journey.

I look in the mirror. I suppose androgynous middle-age flab is a start. I could probably fit into a bra size 46A. Five days of stubble isn't helping. But I have it on good authority that where I live, in New Hampshire, many women give up shaving over the winter when nobody ever gets out of their Under Armour anyway. Besides, what's the most significant difference between men and women, now that age has somewhat banked the fires of passion and the baby-having is done? Women smell good!

I eschew the bar of Lava soap I normally use to shower and shampoo. Surveying my wife's bath products, I choose the pineapple bath gel, the jasmine bubble bath, the four kinds of citrus-scented shampoos and three kinds of berry-scented conditioners, the coconut exfoliant, the mango body scrub, the tea tree body wash, the vanilla body moisturizer, and the almond body butter.

I still don't smell as good as my wife. Maybe it has something to do with my

cigar. Women smoke cigars. I've seen it in *Cigar Aficionado*. But perhaps not a 52-ring-gauge Montecristo Torpedo first thing in the morning. I'll buy a pack of Marlboro Menthol Lights.

Cross-dressing is a snap. It's New Hampshire in March. *Everybody* wears long johns, ugly big sweaters, fleece-lined L.L. Bean pants, down jackets, muck boots, and ridiculous snowflake pattern knit ski hats with dangling earflaps.

Do these fleece-lined L.L. Bean pants make my butt look big? Or is that a good thing? I need jewelry. Since my wife doesn't know I'm secretly cross-dressing I can't borrow hers. I look in my cufflink drawer. I don't own earrings, bracelets, or necklaces . . .

Aha! My lovely golden medallion from The Loyal Order of the Sons of Erin Marching and Chowder Society on a pretty green ribbon. I put this on under my sweater. As many transgender people say, I feel more relaxed, more like the real me, once I'm dressed as a woman (and have had a shot of Bushmills).

Now, to really live my life as a woman, I take the children to school. "GET THE @#$% OUT OF BED!" I shout (tenderly) from the foot of the stairs.

They require a wholesome breakfast. Fruit is wholesome. Cereal is wholesome. O.J. is wholesome. Damn it, we're out of milk.

Like any mom, I "multitask"—filling their bowls of Fruit Loops with orange juice while at the same time packing them a healthy lunch. Liverwurst and onion with brown mustard on pumpernickel rye is healthy. (It was my Uncle Louie's favorite. He lived to 93.) And something for a treat. Where's that jar of pig's feet I bought last time I did the grocery shopping . . .

"HUH? HOW IN THE HELL WOULD I KNOW WHERE YOUR MATH HOMEWORK IS?"

Oops.

"What I meant to say, dear, is that homework is an important responsibility and responsibilities are something we all need to learn to share so, here, let me help you."

Fifth grade son Buster: "Do you know the multiplication tables?"

Me: "Yes."

Buster: "What's seven times seven?"

Me: "Forty-nine."

Buster: "No. In Base 8."

"GET IN THE @#$%*@# CAR!"

The music these kids listen to, it's . . . Now, now . . . Women are more open to expansion of their cultural horizons, more sympathetic to artistic expression. Except I can't understand a damn word of this rap junk.

Eighth grade daughter Poppet: "What does 'I want you to Monica on my Lewinsky' mean?"

I drop them at school. This is the moment when moms roll down the window and give kids last-minute reminders and advice. "DON'T FORGET TO TAKE YOUR MEDS!"

What next? I'm not "out in my community." Nix on the beauty parlor.

I come home and look at the bills to pay, bank statements to reconcile,

BIG STOCK PHOTO

P.J. O'Rourke is a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard.

checkbooks to balance, and letters from the IRS. And I feel all fluttered and silly.

My wife does the bill-paying, banking, and taxes. So—I'm tellin' ya, Mac—I feel @#$%*@# fluttered and @#$%*@# silly.

There's bonbons and movie magazines. What *is* a bonbon? Maybe French for beer? I guess *People* qualifies as a movie magazine. Who *are* these "people"?

I do the, as my new gender always does—no matter how much "Women's Liberation" there's been—housework. Know a great trick? Spray Endust on the cat. It'll run around the house like a maniac doing all your sweeping and dusting. And it's cheaper than a Roomba.

I tackle the pots and pans, the plates and cups, and the laundry. It turns out you can't use Dawn liquid dish soap in either the washing machine or the dishwasher. And you can't mix the pots, pans, plates, cups, and laundry together inside any household appliance. Especially not the dryer.

What's for dinner? Well, the liverwurst and the onion and the brown mustard and the pumpernickel rye sitting on the kitchen counter are still looking good. And for dessert? Where's that jar of . . .

It's things like the preparation of meals for your family that make being a woman so fulfilling. There are, nonetheless, certain aspects of womanhood that I'm not yet completely comfortable with. Some of the body language and feminine gestures, for example. I tried a frustrated throwing of my hands in the air and knocked my beer can collection off the mantel.

And turning up the thermostat. What with the Under Armour and the fleece-lined pants I'm sweating like a pig.

And worrying. My wife and my mother-in-law do a lot of worrying. But I can't seem to get the knack. Maybe it's because I'm no longer using power tools, pushing snowblowers, wielding chainsaws, or climbing ladders to clean the roof gutters. Without me being the man of the house, there isn't much to worry about.

Oh-oh, I'm two hours late picking up the kids from school. And they left their coats in the car. They walk home. Fortunately the school is only 12 miles away, and I made sure this morning that they were wearing their warmest shorts and T-shirts.

A cup of hot cocoa makes everything all right—if I put a shot of Bushmills in it.

Buster goes right to sleep.

It's time for the most womanly part of being a woman, the heart-to-heart chats with my eighth grader Poppet and my high school junior Muffin about all the wonderful feminine emotional feelings that they are beginning to wonderfully femininely emotionally feel. Mostly about boys. No, all about boys. It used to be that when they started yakking about boys I'd just grimly shake my head and keep cleaning my double-barrel 12-gauge. But now that I, too, am a woman, we can *talk*.

I talk about just how many pellets there are in a 12-gauge shotgun shell and how, if either of my daughters ever gets herself into a situation where I have to reload, all the pellets from the next two shells are going into their smartphones, credit cards, and car keys.

And so to bed. Any sexual advances might upset the delicate balance of my newfound gender identity, which I suppose I'll get used to, except it entails drinking white wine. I really do have a headache.

Life as a woman is not all bliss. White wine is horrible stuff, and a six-pack of it comes in much larger bottles than Budweiser. ♦

Japan's Tense Neighborhood

China talks about a 'peaceful rise,' even as it probes for weakness. BY TOD LINDBERG

Naha, Okinawa Prefecture, Japan

Japan's Air Self-Defense Force base on Okinawa shares a runway with the civilian planes on this island about 1,000 miles southwest of Tokyo. When the American-made Japanese F-15s scramble, as they often do these days, the civilian traffic awaiting takeoff pulls over to a side taxiway. It must be a pretty decent air show for those with a window seat.

The F-15s scramble in pairs, perhaps a minute apart. Two flights of two roared off as I watched from a balcony at the base HQ, then another pair 20 minutes or so later. Most likely, they were off to intercept traffic inbound for airspace over Japan's Senkaku Islands, to which China has laid a territorial claim that both Japan and its powerful ally, the United States, categorically reject. Planes from the Chinese mainland have repeatedly been probing to test the Japanese response. Scrambling to meet the provocations has been more or less a daily affair since last year. More Japanese F-15s are redeploying to Naha Air Base to meet the mounting demand.

There is no immediate crisis in the South China Sea, nor is anyone expecting one to arise any time soon. But Japanese wariness befits the situation. The practical implication of China as a rising economic and military power has been Chinese willingness to test its neighbors in the "gray zone" of conflict, as Japanese officials characterize encounters like the ones for which the F-15s have set out.

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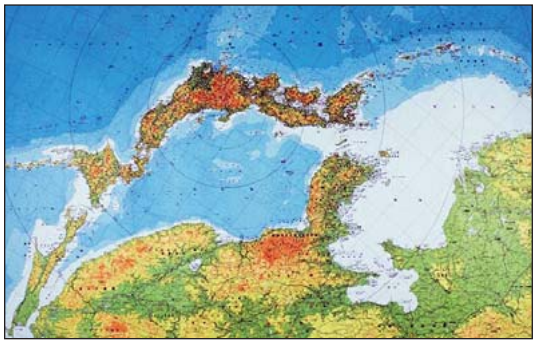
I was in Tokyo and Okinawa with a small group of Americans as a guest of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Japan of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is in the process of reorienting its national security posture. Article 9 of Japan's 1947 constitution (drafted by the United States after defeating the imperial military government 70 years ago) renounces war as a sovereign right and forbids maintaining land, sea, and air forces. Yet as the F-15s indicate, Japan has considerable military power at its disposal, including significant naval assets and the quietest diesel submarines anywhere. The Japanese constitution contains no prohibition on defending the homeland. Hence the official "Self-Defense" designation of the branches of the Japanese military.

Last year, the Abe government promulgated a reinterpretation of Article 9 designed to allow Japan to participate in collective self-defense measures—to come to the assistance of an ally under attack, as Japan would hope to be assisted. Some in Japan, including Abe, would like to amend the constitution to reduce the constraints under which the country operates. For now, the political support for such a move is insufficient, so reinterpretation is the order of the day. The postwar Japanese tendency toward pacifism is sufficiently strong, however, that concerns from the left about reemerging Japanese nationalism and militarism receive a wide hearing both in Japan and abroad. And indeed, some politicians on the right encourage it by giving expression to a sanitized version of Japanese militarism from the 1930s through the end of the war.

But there is a much better explanation for the new approach to security policy than resurgent Japanese militarism, and it is reducible to a single word: China. North Korea is inscrutable and unpredictable; no one in the neighborhood has reason for complacency there. China, by contrast, is a known quantity, and what Japanese diplomats and defense officials in and out of uniform see is a neighbor that talks about a "peaceful rise" but would also like to secure a sphere of influence in which other countries readily defer to its wishes—the peace of deference to the strong.

Japanese officials note that every time a power vacuum has occurred in the region, China has actively sought to fill it, from the colonial French bugout in the 1950s, to the fall of Saigon in the 1970s, to the closing of U.S. air and naval bases in the Philippines in the 1990s. No one thinks China is eager for a war with any of its neighbors; its 1979 invasion of Vietnam was the act of a China in very different circumstances from those of rapidly advancing prosperity today. But if there's a door, China will knock on it, and if there's no answer, China will try the handle.



The view from Tokyo: an upside-down map of East Asia

For Japan, this is an acute problem. An island nation, Japan is utterly dependent on open sea lines of communication for access to the energy resources the country imports and for the goods it exports. A drive down the coastal highway from Tokyo to Yokohama is a revelation in terms of the vastness of mile after mile of port facilities. The centrality of the U.S. Navy in ensuring free transit of shipping cannot be overstated. The U.S. Seventh Fleet is forward-deployed permanently in Yokosuka, about 20 miles farther down the coast. (Of course sea lines are not the only concern of the Seventh Fleet. It's a key element of the U.S. military commitment to our other treaty ally in the immediate neighborhood, South Korea.)

Disruption of open sea lines is hardly in China's interest, since its economy, too, depends on imported oil and exported goods. China also benefits from the U.S. Navy. But as those thinking geopolitically in Tokyo and elsewhere are quick to note, China has embarked on a long-term strategy to assert its dominance in the region, and the ability of the United States to project military power there is its biggest obstacle. So the ideal long-term scenario for China, and the nightmare scenario for Japan, is a gradual U.S. disengagement that eventually sees U.S. withdrawal from the region without a fight. In effect, that would either put China in charge of sea lines, with Japan and others kowtowing to the local hegemon, or would lead to contestation for control, which would be at best ugly and tense.

Interestingly, this hypothetical future appears to be the South Korean analysis of the current state of affairs: China on the rise, the United States in decline. South Korea seems, however, to have a very different perspective on what to do. Whereas Tokyo is all about buttressing its alliance with the United States, as well as its own military capabilities and authorities, South Korea currently seems more interested in a closer relationship with China. Certainly Seoul shows no serious interest in working with Japan to cultivate a tripartite alliance with the United States. On the contrary, South Korea's President Park Geun-hye seems preoccupied with Korea's grievances over Japan's conduct during the war, a point on which most of Japan's other neighbors (though not China) have managed to accept Japanese apologies and move on.

China, for its part, has also been pouring on the hate toward Japan, though the current heat map is not as bright as it was six months ago. This is nothing new. A foundational myth of the Chinese Communist party is that its forces (rather than the Nationalist forces) were at the forefront of resistance to the Japanese invasion in 1937, and some in Japan still find it difficult to speak candidly about the cause of the war (Japanese imperial aggression)

and the atrocities the Imperial Japanese Army committed (such as the rape of Nanking). Although the vitriol has hardly shut down Chinese tourism to Japan, which was up 83 percent from 2013 to 2014, it contributes to the tension between two states that have long been wary of each other.

While the tension may be historically or even culturally understandable, I think it is a geopolitical puzzle. One wonders, not cheerfully, what effect a Chinese charm offensive directed toward Japan might have on Japanese views of security. A full-scale rapprochement between China and Japan could effectively cut the United States out of East Asia for good. For now, though, such a rapprochement is the least likely eventuality.

One interesting sight in the offices of many current and former Japanese security officials is an upside-down map of East Asia. Sometimes, apparently, a change of perspective helps to clarify the geopolitics. Upside down, Japan looks a bit like the U.K. off the coast of continental Europe. And therein lies a strategy. Japanese mistrust of its giant continental neighbor dictates a policy of closer cooperation with its offshore neighbors and, especially, with the United States.

Former diplomat Kuni Miyake, now with the Canon Institute for Global Studies and Ritsumeikan University, sees China's maritime expansion in terms of exerting influence over the first and second chains of islands off its coast. Japan is part of that first chain, along with Okinawa, the much smaller Senkaku Islands, and Taiwan; the second, farther out, includes the current U.S. naval base in Guam. If, somehow, the United States decided that maintaining a presence in the region was no longer worth the trouble and expense, China would be in a position to all but deny freedom of navigation in the western Pacific.

Miyake proposes an "Island Alliance," building out from the U.S-Japan alliance, of like-minded maritime countries basically satisfied with the regional status quo: Australia, the Philippines, Indonesia. He sees its three principles as maintaining a balance of power with regard to the continent (no Chinese hegemony); maintaining a "healthy distance" from the continent (a principle of nonintervention); and securing the sea lines of communication, thus a global free trade system. At the center of any such strategy is a strong partnership between Japan and the United States.

When the Obama administration first took office, there was a great deal of hullaballoo about a diplomatic and strategic "pivot to Asia." Its meaning and substance, if any, were somewhat elusive for a considerable period of time, and the administration itself soon seemed to regret having deployed the phrase in the first place. There's a pervasive sense in Japan, as elsewhere, that the United States is underperforming with regard to the strength of its strategic position. Nevertheless, some positive elements of a "pivot" have been detectable. The U.S. Marine Corps now has a presence on the ground in Australia, another close ally, and last year the United States concluded the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement with the Philippines, which allows U.S. military personnel and operations there (though not at a permanent base, à la Subic Bay).

It's a start. With regard to another region, Obama has made clear his sense of affront over Vladimir Putin's flouting "21st-century" norms of international behavior by annexing Crimea and advancing into eastern Ukraine. In Japan, some like Miyake think China is beginning to do by sea what Putin is doing on land; hence the "gray zone" probing the seriousness with which Japan and its American ally take Japan's possession of the Senkaku Islands. Perhaps this is an overstatement, but in any case, we have learned how demonstrably reckless it is to rely on 21st-century norms—or any other norms—as a substitute for serious security policy.

The United States can best encourage China's "peaceful rise" by working with regional partners to ensure that the costs to China of trying to rise in any other way are too high. It looks like that makes Japan our most important 21st-century ally. ♦

Amtrak Is Ruled a Public Entity

A 9-0 Court takes on the administrative state.

BY TERRY EASTLAND

America's freight railroads get to continue their argument with Amtrak, America's passenger rail service.

That is the practical outcome of the Supreme Court's recent 9-0 decision in *Department of Transportation* v. *Association of American Railroads*. Yet if the case returns to the Supreme Court, there is reason to think the justices will engage fundamental questions about the structure and limits of government.

In 1970, hoping to save passenger service from likely extinction, Congress created the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, commonly known as Amtrak. Congress said this would not be a government agency but an entity operated and managed as a private "for-profit corporation," its purpose being to develop "the potential of modern rail service in meeting the nation's intercity passenger transportation needs."

Railroads under the common carrier obligation to offer intercity

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passenger services no longer had to do so if they allowed Amtrak to use their track and other facilities at rates agreed to by both parties—or, in case of disagreement, set by the Interstate Commerce Commission, a role later assumed by the Surface Transportation Board. Amtrak now uses 97 percent of the track that the freight railroads own—which happens to be almost all of the track there is. And thanks to a 1973 law, the railroads must give a "preference" to Amtrak "in using a rail line, junction, or crossing."

In 2008, concerned about poor service, unreliability, and delays resulting from freight traffic congestion, Congress granted the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Amtrak joint authority to develop "metrics and standards" for measuring the performance and scheduling of passenger train service. It also provided that if Amtrak and the FRA disagree on metrics and standards, "any party involved in the development of those standards may petition the Surface Transportation Board to appoint an arbitrator to assist the parties in resolving their disputes through binding arbitration." Congress also said that the metrics and standards may play a role in prompting Surface Transportation Board investigations of passenger train delays and other service problems, and also in enforcement actions, such as levying fines if it turns out that a delay was caused by "a rail carrier's failure to provide preference to Amtrak over freight transportation."

Implementing the new law, the FRA and Amtrak jointly drafted metrics and standards and put them out for public comment. Metrics developed to measure on-time performance in particular drew objection, not least from the Association of American Railroads (AAR), which said they were "unrealistic" and would cause "an excessive administrative and financial burden."

The final version of the metrics and standards took effect in May 2010. But they didn't satisfy AAR, which filed suit seeking their invalidation on grounds that Amtrak is a private entity and it was therefore unconstitutional for Congress to direct the corporation to exercise joint authority in the development and issuance of metrics and standards. The association's argument relied on constitutional provisions regarding the separation of powers and on the Fifth Amendment's due process clause, which provides that "No person shall . . . be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law."

The association lost in the district court in Washington, D.C., but prevailed in the circuit court of appeals, which unanimously ruled, on separation of powers grounds, that Congress had made "an unlawful delegation of regulatory power to a private entity." The circuit court declined to take up the due process question. A unanimous Supreme Court then ruled that Amtrak is not a private but a public entity: "'a federal actor or instrumentality,' as far as the Constitution is concerned." While Congress had said the opposite—that Amtrak is "not a department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States"—none of the justices could deny the reality that Amtrak was created by the government, is controlled by the government, and operates for the government's benefit.

A government outfit—whether Congress likes it or not

Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote the opinion for the Court, Justice Samuel Alito a concurring opinion, and Justice Clarence Thomas an opinion concurring in the judgment. Yet while the public-versus-private issue was the only one the justices decided, it was not the only one they were interested in. Sending the case back to the D.C. Circuit for "further proceedings consistent with this opinion" (the usual boilerplate), the justices took the unusual step of identifying questions it would like the appeals court to consider. "It's hard to think of [another Supreme Court ruling]," a lawyer familiar with the Amtrak case told me, "where the justices basically say here are the constitutional issues we want answered."

One concerns the provision for an arbitrator appointed by the Surface Transportation Board to resolve disputes over metrics and standards through binding arbitration. The issue, as stated by the Court's opinion, is whether the provision violates the nondelegation principle and the appointments clause, matters that Justice Alito's opinion addressed in some detail.

Alito wrote that the law says nothing else about this "binding arbitration," including "who the arbitrator should be." For the justice, those failures were a matter of concern, for "if the arbitrator can be a private person, then this law is unconstitutional" under the principle, accepted by both parties in the case (and disputed by no one, really), that Congress may not delegate regulatory authority to a private entity.

Alito explained why Congress has no business doing that. The principle of nondelegation, he wrote, exists "to protect liberty." The Constitution establishes a process for making law, "and within that process there are many accountability checkpoints." They include bicameralism and presentment (for a bill to become a law it must be passed by both houses and presented to the president for his signature). "It would dash away the whole scheme," wrote Alito, "if Congress could give its power away to an entity that is not constrained by those checkpoints."

Administration lawyers urged the Court to take the route of "constitutional avoidance" (interpreting the

meaning of a statute so as to avoid a constitutional problem) and read the word "arbitrator" to mean "public arbitrator." Yet under the appointments clause in Article II of the Constitution, which treats the presidency, such a reading would raise serious questions, wrote Alito. In particular, a public arbitrator would be making law without supervision (through "binding arbitration"). A public arbitrator doing that cannot be an "inferior" officer but must be a "principal" officer, as the clause requires, appointed by the president with the Senate's advice and consent. That is how the Constitution ensures, wrote Alito, that "those who exercise the power of the United States are accountable to the president, who himself is accountable to the people."

Alito also looked at how the Amtrak board of directors is structured. It has nine members, one of whom is the secretary of transportation. Seven others are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. Those eight board members select the Amtrak president, who is the only board member not appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate.

The board, so structured, is constitutionally problematic, said Alito. "Accountability," he wrote, "demands that principal officers be appointed by the president." And while a multimember body may head an agency, all of its members must be principal officers. The administration argued that the board president is an inferior officer, serving at the pleasure of the other board members. "But," said Alito, "the government does not argue that the president of Amtrak cannot cast tie-breaking votes. Assuming he can vote when the board of directors is divided, it makes no sense to think that the side with which the president *agrees* will demand his removal." Alito's point was that the Amtrak president has responsibilities that make him a principal officer—and require his appointment by the president.

The due process claim was the only one on the Court's list for the circuit court to consider that Alito did not take up. Yet whether Congress violated the due process clause by giving "a federally chartered, nominally private, for-profit corporation regulatory authority over its own industry," as AAR put it, was a clear concern of Justice Antonin Scalia's during the December argument. "Even if [Amtrak] is a government entity," he said in one exchange, "there are some things that government entities can't do." And, later, in another exchange, he asked, "What difference does it make whether it's a governmental entity or not, so long as it is operating on a for-profit basis and is . . . given the last word on some regulatory matters that disadvantage its competitors. There's a violation of regulatory due process."

Twenty years ago in his opinion for the Court in *Lebron* v. *National Railroad Passenger Corporation*, Scalia placed Amtrak within what he called "its proper context in the long history of corporations created and participated in by the United States for the achievement of governmental objectives." By the end of World War II, observed Scalia, corporations "had gotten out of hand, in both their number and their lack of accountability." Congress responded, and many corporations were dissolved. But then, in the early 1960s, "the allure of the corporate form was felt again, and new entities proliferated."

Many of them, said Scalia, "followed the traditional model, often explicitly designated as government agencies and located within the existing government structure." But others didn't. A new model emerged, in which the government sponsored "corporations that it specifically designated *not* to be [federal] agencies or establishments." These corporations were not subjected to statutory control mechanisms, and they were incorporated "with the purpose of entering the private sector" and "doing so with government-conferred advantages." Amtrak, Scalia said, followed the new model, as did the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Legal Services Corporation.

The AAR lawsuit may fairly be seen as a response to the new model and its lack of accountability. "When citizens cannot readily identify the source of legislation or regulation that affects their lives," wrote Justice Alito in his opinion, "government officials can wield power without owning up to the consequences"—by, for example, "passing off a government operation [read: Amtrak] as an independent private concern. Given [the] incentive to regulate without saying so, everyone should pay close attention when Congress 'sponsor[s] corporations that it specifically designate[s] *not* to be agencies or establishments'" of the government.

The quotation in that last sentence comes from Scalia's opinion in *Lebron*, and Alito uses it to good effect, as it is only by paying "close attention" to such matters as a corporation's governing structure that it is possible to say whether a corporation is what Congress says it is. In the case of Amtrak, the close attention Alito paid to it generated an opinion raising necessary questions about the entity's structure.

In addition to his nondelegation and appointment clause analyses, Alito dealt with oaths and commissions. The Constitution requires "all officers" of the United States to take an oath (or affirmation) to support the Constitution and to receive a commission from the president. "There is good reason," wrote Alito, "to think that those who have not sworn an oath [and received a commission] cannot exercise significant authority of the United States." Both provisions, said Alito, "confirm [that] those who exercise the power of Government are set apart from ordinary citizens." As such, they are subject to special restraints. "There should never be a question whether someone is an officer of the United States because, to be an officer, the person should have sworn an oath and possess a commission."

Fair enough. Yet when the railroads' lawyer told the Supreme Court that Amtrak's board members do not take an oath of office to uphold the Constitution, as do Article II (executive-branch) officers vested with regulatory authority, the government's response was silence. "Perhaps," Alito wrote, "there is an answer." Yet the rule, he said, is clear: "Because Amtrak is the government, those who

run it need to satisfy basic constitutional requirements."

Interestingly, Alito briefly discussed in his opinion a dissent by Chief Justice John Roberts in a 2013 case brought against the Federal Communications Commission. Roberts provided an essay on the administrative state that treated the growth of independent agencies (more than 50 new ones created in the past 15 years) and the many powers the agencies wield, enforcing them with "reams of regulations." Concerned here, too, about a lack of accountability, Roberts asserted a bigger role for the courts—one in which they make sure that "the legislative branch has in fact delegated lawmaking power to an agency within the executive branch before the judiciary defers to the executive on what the law is."

Justices Alito and Kennedy joined the Roberts dissent. Justice Thomas did not, but his separate opinion in the Amtrak case ended with this:

> We have too long abrogated our duty to enforce the separation of powers required by our Constitution. We have sanctioned the growth of an administrative system that concentrates the power to make laws and the power to enforce them in the hands of a vast and unaccountable administrative apparatus that finds no comfortable home in our constitutional structure. The end result may be trains that run on time (although I doubt it), but the cost is to our Constitution and the individual liberty it protects.

Clearly, a number of justices—at least five—are concerned about a lack of accountability on the part of the national corporations and federal agencies that have been established by the government over the decades and now influence so much of ordinary life in America. They do not all agree on what should be done, judicially speaking. But ensuring basic constitutional requirements are satisfied—a mundane but accurate statement of what the courts are supposed to do—may require them to adjust unworkable precedents and take the Constitution's structural principles more seriously. For these reasons, Round Two of Amtrak merits close attention. ♦

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The Closing of the Campus Mind

Schools of social work are silencing conservatives.

BY DEVORAH GOLDMAN

"I can't have you participate in class anymore."

I was on my way out of class when my social welfare and policy professor casually called me over to tell me this. The friendliness of her tone did not match her words, and I attempted a shocked, confused apology. It was my first semester at the Hunter College School of Social Work, and I was as yet unfamiliar with the consistent, underlying threat that characterized much of the school's policy and atmosphere. This professor was simply more open and direct than most.

I asked if I had said or done anything inappropriate or disrespectful, and she was quick to assure me that it was not my behavior that was the problem. No: It was my opinions. Or, as she put it, "I have to give over this information as is."

I spent the rest of that semester mostly quiet, frustrated, and missing my undergraduate days, when my professors encouraged intellectual diversity and give-and-take. I attempted to take my case to a higher-up at school, an extremely nice, fair professor who insisted that it was in my own best interest not to rock the boat. I was doing well in his class, and I believed him when he told me he wanted me to continue doing well. He explained to me that people who were viewed as too conservative had had problems graduating in the past, and he didn't want that to happen to me. I thought he was joking . . . until I realized he wasn't.

It was laughable in its own way, though. My school was ostensibly all about freedom of expression. In our mandatory 5-hour diversity awareness training, we were each asked what pronouns we prefer to use when describing ourselves. We could dress and identify sexually virtually any way we wanted, though some fashion choices and sexual identities were more celebrated than others. We talked about how to approach clients whose gender identities were difficult to pinpoint. There was a special gender-neutral bathroom on the fourth floor that seemed rarely used. We were allowed to differ; we could not disagree.

That was the great and strange paradox about Hunter College. Our identities and opinions existed in two separate, unequal planes. Identities were required—the more unconventional and downtrodden the better. During diversity training, we were told to stand up whenever a category

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that applied to us was read by our presiding teacher. (I stood when the category "working class" was called out, naïvely not realizing that there were nonworking classes in America. I realized my mistake when most people stood up for the "middle class" category. I was impressed by the few "upper class-ers.") The categories included a seemingly endless variety of religions, ethnicities, races, nationalities, and educational backgrounds. In that same training, we were also asked to indicate how things like weight, skin color, and a host of other criteria affected our lives by moving to one side or another of a circle (I mostly stayed in the center).

Another professor asked my class to separate by race, with one concentric circle composed of self-identifying white people and another of self-identifying "people of color." After briefly considering declaring that I "felt black inside," I politely refused to participate. I asked the teacher why she felt it necessary to reinstitute a practice of racial sorting that had been abolished decades ago. She gave no concrete answer, though she dropped the idea when other students protested as well.

These and other "identity exercises" were run-of-the-mill at school, the reasons behind them always vague and flavored with sugary social justice. But in a separate class given by the "circles" professor, two women engaged in a respectful discussion were abruptly stopped. One, whom I shall call Tanya, objected to the idea that as a successful 22-year-old graduate student, she should be viewed as "oppressed" simply for being African American. The other woman insisted that, far from being demeaning, identifying as an oppressed minority was part of receiving one's due for injustices done. The teacher, rather than fostering the discussion, interrupted to point out that, though we had just begun talking about race, we were "already having trouble understanding each other."

Sadly, my teachers all seemed to take their cues from the same playbook; they were very nice people with frightening messages. In my teacher's mind, two adults could not hold two different opinions. Any dissent was simply due to a lack of comprehension on one or both of their parts.

That was why my social welfare and policy teacher felt entirely justified in asking me to stop sharing my opinions in class. She was not allowed to discriminate against me—it would have been wrong to ask me to stop speaking for being gay or a woman or black. She was discriminating against my thoughts, which were not an intrinsic part of who I was. Not important. Identities, with the exception of straight, white, religious male, could not be banned. Beliefs could.

This approach is not unique to Hunter: Two hundred thirty-five master's programs in the United States are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), which requires schools to "advocate for human rights and social and economic justice" and to "engage in practices that advance social and economic justice" as part of their curricula. As Greg Lukianoff, president of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), points out, the CSWE standards act as "an invitation for schools to discriminate against students with dissenting views."

Lukianoff discovered the abusive culture fostered by CSWE after several students complained about their treatment in social work programs. Emily Brooker, a Christian student at Missouri State University's School of Social Work in 2006, was asked by her professor to sign a letter to the Missouri legislature in favor of homosexual adoption. When she explained that doing so would violate her religious beliefs and requested a different assignment, she was subjected to a two-and-a-half-hour interrogation by an ethics committee and charged with a "Level Three Grievance" (the most severe kind). Brooker was not permitted to have an advocate or a tape recorder with her at the ethics meeting, during which she was told to sign a contract promising that she would "close the gap" between her religious beliefs and the values of the social work profession. At the risk of having her degree withheld, Brooker acquiesced.

Bill Felkner, a student at Rhode Island College's School of Social Work, was instructed to lobby the Rhode Island legislature for several policies he did not support. In addition, RIC's policy internship requirements for graduate students included forcing students to advance policies that would further "progressive social change." When Felkner accepted an internship in the policy department of Republican Rhode Island governor Don Carcieri's office, he received a letter from Lenore Olsen, chair of the Social Work Department, informing him that he had violated their requirements and could no longer pursue a master's degree in social work policy.

Brooker's story arguably ends on a happier note than Felkner's: After sitting through weekly "consultations" that served as a follow-up to her review by the ethics committee, she graduated and sued the school. In response, Missouri State University launched an outside investigation of the social work school, dismissed several of her professors, and awarded her a settlement. Felkner, on the other hand, never graduated, despite multiple attempts to negotiate with his professors. They never forgave him for, as one of his professors wrote in an email to Felkner, opposing the "socio-political ideology about how the world works and how the world should be" that defined social work for them.

In response to these and similarly outrageous cases of abuse at social work schools, FIRE approached the federal Department of Health and Human Services for help. In a 2006 letter, FIRE, along with the National Association of Scholars (NAS) and the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, asked HHS to reconsider its policy of only hiring social workers from CSWE-accredited schools, arguing that "CSWE's Educational Policy . . . effectively requires social work programs to impose ideological litmus tests on their students as a condition of accreditation." A 2007 FIRE letter would go on to say that "HHS' exclusive relationship with CSWE" poses a "threat to

freedom of conscience" and serves to encourage the highly politicized standards set by CSWE for the social work field.

While nothing seems to have come of FIRE's letter to HHS, it demonstrates the power that CSWE has in influencing the way social work is taught and practiced all over the country, including the federal government. Doubtless, Brooker, Felkner, and my own teachers thought they were acting in good faith on CSWE-inspired principles. While CSWE is not an official government agency, it might as well be, since virtually all U.S. social work schools must receive its accreditation to be considered legitimate and to give their students a chance of being hired. Since its inception in 1952, it has worked, largely successfully, to transform a profession into a belief system.

I was not familiar with CSWE's policies or publications (including such gems as Conservative Christian Beliefs and Sexual Orientation in Social Work: Privilege, Oppression, and the Pursuit of Human Rights) during my time in school. I also had not yet read Milton Friedman's warning about the dangers of overly restrictive licensing organizations in his book *Free to Choose*, in which he says that "altruistic concern for . . . customers" is rarely the primary motive behind "determined efforts to get legal power to decide who may" join any given profession.

And so I sat, zombie-like, through the strange and sad reality that is groupthink for two long years. In a publicly funded school in America's greatest city, I was censored, threatened, and despised by my teachers. I left school after graduation feeling that something had been stolen from me. I wanted to go back and argue with my teachers some more, ask them, for example, whether a description of Reagan's economic policies as "nightmarish" in a textbook could be considered unbiased in any context. I wished I had stood up more often for my white male friends in class, asked people if they really believed that Band-Aids that were not exactly fair and not exactly dark in color were racist. Realizing that I had been awarded a diploma in part because I kept my opinions to myself was deeply unsatisfying.

I never practiced social work after school, but I still wanted my school to change. But that is the problem—accredited social work schools are remarkably averse to actual change, and embrace only those aspects of their students they view as immutable. As long as what makes you different is something you have no control over—your heritage, skin color, or economic background—it is acceptable to CSWE and its dependents. Celebrating a lack of control is celebrating a lack of freedom, and is extraordinarily infantilizing. My friends at school were protected from my opinions, but not from the insidious idea that some opinions do not deserve to be aired. Our training suffered for it. Along with being taught to tolerate everything but disagreement, we were told that people, including our clients, could not make meaningful choices in life. That is bad for social work, bad for education, and, as a reflection of modern liberalism, dangerous for society. ♦

Resisting Bureaucracy

Republicans rediscover the Congressional Review Act. BY KEVIN R. KOSAR

The third time will apparently be the charm for the Federal Communications Commission's "net neutrality" regulations. Having been shot down twice by the courts in earlier attempts to regulate broadband, members of the commission—enterprising bureaucrats that they are—found new legal authority for their power grab.

However one feels about the new rules, it is inarguable that this is not how the Founding Fathers designed our government to operate. "All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States," reads Article I of the Constitution. To prevent its misuse, the awesome power to make laws was split between two chambers. By design, governance requires the diverse representatives of the governed to find consensus.

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The first Congress had more than 90 voting members; the current one has 535. The FCC, by contrast, has 5 members, only 3 of whom agreed on the net neutrality rules. That was enough to promulgate 300 pages of regulations that have the effect of law.

The FCC's action is all the more galling because Congress has been actively debating broadband legislation. Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) and Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.) circulated a draft bill in January.

Of course, the FCC's action was not a rare instance of unaccountable government. Today's executive agencies make law as a matter of course, and generate a ton of it. At agencies' current pace of about 4,000 regulations issued annually, a new federal rule is created roughly every two hours. Lay the 170,000 pages of the *Code of Federal Regulations* end to end and it would leave a trail of impenetrable text 29.5 miles long.

When one considers Congress enacts perhaps 50 meaningful statutes

per year, it becomes plain that the first branch no longer is our nation's primary lawmaking body. America has morphed into the expert-led state imagined by John Stuart Mill in his 1861 treatise *Considerations on Representative Government*. Civil servants devise policy and the legislature serves mostly as a pressure valve for *vox populi*.

> Instead of the function of governing, for which it is radically unfit, the proper office of a representative assembly is to watch and control the government; to throw the light of publicity on its acts; to compel a full exposition and justification of all of them which any one considers questionable; to [censure] them if found condemnable, and, if the men who compose the government abuse their trust, or fulfill it in a manner which conflicts with the deliberate sense of the nation, to expel them from office, and either expressly or virtually appoint their successors. This is surely ample power, and security enough for the liberty of the nation.

'. . . as long, that is, as government experts agree with us.'

Mill's conception is eerily prescient, but rather different from the government the American Framers intended. In our constitutional system, agencies are created to execute the laws made by Congress. Toward this end, they are obliged to issue rules clarifying how a law should operate in practice. These rules should not expand the scope of the law as written or establish new powers beyond those explicated in the statute.

Emblematic of the modern administrative state was the Environmental Protection Agency's "tailoring rule," which targeted greenhouse gas emissions before it was struck down a year ago by the U.S. Supreme Court for attempting to "bring about an enormous and transformative expansion in EPA's regulatory authority without clear congressional authorization." Alas, that case was far from an anomaly. According to Sam Batkins of the American Action Forum, courts have invalidated more than a dozen regulations in recent years, issued by agencies ranging from the Department of Health and Human Services to the Securities and Exchange Commission. Undoubtedly, the FCC's net neutrality rules likewise will be challenged in court, contributing to significant economic uncertainty for the broadband industry, major content providers, and the peerage market that connects the two.

Congress at long last may be wearying of regulatory overreach. A spate of regulatory reform bills has been introduced recently.

■ Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) proposes that agencies be limited to issuing regulations whose benefits justify their costs and are drafted to "impose the least burden on society."

■ Sen. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) has legislation that would slow the ceaseless growth of the *Code of Federal Regulations* by imposing seven-year expiration dates ("sunsets") on some regulations.

■ Senators Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), Angus King (I-Maine), Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), and Roger Wicker (R-Miss.) advocate establishing a BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure)-type body, which would solicit public input on bad or outdated regulations and submit a package of proposed repeals to Congress, which would vote to keep or ditch the whole lot. It is an especially promising idea that Democrats will have a hard time opposing aloud.

■ Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Rep. Todd Young (R-Ind.) have reintroduced the REINS (Regulations from the Executive in Need of Scrutiny) Act, which would force congressional votes on economically significant regulations before they take effect. The REINS Act is a serious attempt to reclaim some of Congress's legislative authority.

Getting the president to sign regulatory reform legislation is a long shot, but Congress is not helpless. The Congressional Review Act empowers Congress to stop a regulation before it takes effect. Any legislator may introduce a short CRA disapproval resolution to kickstart a process that grants Congress 60 days to approve the resolution and send it to the president. If the White House signs the resolution, the rule never takes effect.

The CRA was passed 19 years ago with bipartisan approval, spearheaded by Sen. Don Nickles (R-Okla.) and signed by President Bill Clinton. Harry Reid (D-Nev.) supported it, and Carl Levin (D-Mich.), a longtime CRA advocate, cheered its enactment: "Now we are in a position to do something ourselves. If a rule goes too far afield from the intent of Congress . . . we can stop it. That's a new day, and one a long time coming." Unlike the REINS Act, the CRA is standing law and raises no separation of powers anxieties. Justice Stephen Breyer, by the way, gave congressional review a thumbs-up in a 1984 lecture.

A standard complaint about the CRA is that it will never work. A president will always veto bills that kill regulations written by his agencies. That may be true, but there is only one way to find out. Last week, Congress used the CRA against new pro-union regulations issued by the National Labor Relations Board. Presumably Obama will veto the resolution, but no matter. The next two years ought to be a particularly appealing time for Republicans to use the CRA. Any new regulations almost assuredly are the product of the Obama administration. At minimum, using the CRA to protest unwise proposed rules signals to constituents that a legislator is standing up for them, and against a not-very-popular president. ♦

Troublemaker for Tyrants

Thor Halvorssen hammers the Kims

By Matt Labash

Seoul

From the moment his dead-of-night emails, texts, and encrypted Wickr messages start flooding my inboxes like a storm surge, it's clear that Thor Halvorssen, who keeps vampire hours, is not your average clock-punching do-goodnik.

The 39-year-old Halvorssen is president of the New York-based Human Rights Foundation (HRF), which he launched in 2005. Half-Norwegian, half-Venezuelan (born and raised in Caracas, he speaks accentless American English), he descends from assorted swashbucklers and heads of state. His paternal grandfather Øystein, who was the Norwegian king's consul in Venezuela during World War II, diverted all of Norway's merchant fleet to Venezuelan ports when the Germans invaded his homeland, then had a fistfight with a couple Nazis when they stopped by to object. His mother is descended from the first president of Venezuela, Cristóbal Mendoza, as well as from Simón "The Liberator" Bolívar, the statesman/military leader who helped win Latin America's independence from Spain. For Thor, as for his forebears, human rights and individual liberty are not something that should be on the table in any discussion, they are the table upon which all other discussions rest.

Halvorssen, right, with human rights activists at the Oslo Freedom Forum, May 13, 2013

His knowledge of the subject is not theoretical. After exposing government corruption while working as Venezuela's drug czar, his father was tortured in a Caracas prison. His mother was shot in an anti-Hugo Chávez demonstration. His first cousin Leopoldo López—a perpetual challenger of the Chavista regime that failed to die with its namesake—is currently gutting it out as a political prisoner in a Venezuelan jail. But unlike many in the human-rights racket, Thor spends no time playing the stereotypical activist sad-sack. He doesn't emit sour world-weariness, or cluck over the evils of American hegemony, or adopt the default gloomy-Gus disposition of one who loves humanity and hates people.

"I love people!" Thor says, as he says most things: emphatically. Those he loves most are dissidents and defectors, freedom's troublemakers who blow spitballs at authoritarians while standing up against tyranny. Thor had Václav Havel serve as HRF's chairman until he died in 2011, only to replace him with Garry Kasparov, the Russian chess grandmaster and political activist/Vladimir Putin scourge. It's not a ceremonial title, either. By 2012, Kasparov was carried off and repeatedly punched by Russian police while protesting the guilty verdict of Pussy Riot, the Moscow punk band sentenced to two years in prison for the crime of singing an anti-Putin song.

Thor himself has been beaten black-and-blue for the cause. In 2010, he and a cameraman traveled to Ho Chi Minh City to interview the patriarch of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, Thich Quang Do, whose church had been banned, and who'd spent 28 years under house arrest. After Thor snuck into his monastery, they taped an interview. On the way out, Vietnamese authorities decided to use Thor as a heavy bag. He was arrested and detained until convincing police he was a Buddhist seeker. (He's actually a lapsed Catholic.) His cameraman snuck out a side door with the video card hidden in his rectum. "Someone else had to download that one," Thor grimaces. HRF's unofficial motto, it seems, is don't just talk about human rights, roll up your sleeves and get dirty.

In some quarters, Halvorssen is thought of as a right-winger for his serial criticism of left-wing Latin American dictatorships and receipt of some funding from traditionally conservative foundations. He admits one progressive deep-pockets philanthropist, Sigrid Rausing, walked out of their meeting in a huff when she found out HRF had received a check from the conservative Bradley Foundation. "A sense of intolerance that was almost crippling," he says, still chapped. "No concern for our track record, achievements, political prisoners freed. All that waved away based on perceived politics. Meanwhile, Bradley doesn't even fund us anymore."

ERIT ROALD / AFP / GETTY

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Halvorssen, center, speaks to reporters before launching balloons carrying antigovernment leaflets into North Korea, June 29, 2013.

NEWSCOM

Thor adamantly rejects the conservative label, considering himself a "classical liberal" in the John Stuart Mill tradition and pointing out that he's pilloried Chile's right-wing Pinochet (in the pages of *National Review*, no less), just as he has Venezuela's left-wing Chávez. He stands against dictators of any stripe. "Why discriminate?" he says. He doesn't even ask about the political inclinations of anyone who works for him, so long as they're on the same mission: to rid the world of tyranny. HRF staffers tend to range from dishwater democrats to the legal brains behind the operation, a Bolivian attorney named Javier El-Hage who grew up a Che-worshipping Marxist, but who eventually realized that "Cuba's dictatorship was just as despicable as any other Communist or anti-Communist dictatorship around the world."

The daily toil of HRF's modest staff of 12 involves covering various corners of the globe, striving to shine a light on authoritarianism and lend a megaphone to dissidents and political prisoners. Considering nearly half the world lives under outright despotism, they have plenty of corners to choose from. So they waste no time on democracies, worrying, say, whether Guantánamo prisoners are getting three square halal meals a day, plus Klondike Bars (even the hunger-strikers at Gitmo have been known to gain weight), or writing 138-page reports, as Human Rights Watch recently did, on "Tobacco's Hidden Children," which examined child labor practices among American farm kids. HRF might be smaller than other blue-chip human-rights organizations, but they're only after big fish. And besides, other professional worrywarts clearly have the rest covered. An analysis that Thor commissioned on the total output of sister organizations like Amnesty International (with which he sometimes works) showed that from 2000 to 2014, Amnesty's Americas chapter spent 56.5 percent of its output decrying U.S. injustices, but only 4.3 percent on a stone-cold dictatorship like Cuba that, up until last year, still had 114 political prisoners.

HRF's annual Oslo Freedom Forum has become its signature, now widely recognized as a can't-miss event for human-rights beat reporters, who've come to shorthand it "Davos for Dissidents." In addition to the media rubberneckers and movers'n'shakers—the likes of PayPal cofounder Peter Thiel and Google's Sergey Brin are major HRF donors—Thor and his crew host lesser-known Solzhenitsyns from the world over, assuming they're not currently in hiding or imprisoned. Think TEDTalks without the self-indulgent gasbags.

In Oslo, dissidents are given the stage and the "rocket fuel" of moral support and connections to people who can help their causes. (Wikipedia's Jimmy Wales, after

introductions made through an HRF conference, has fixed up North Korean defector groups with full sets of Korean-language Wikipedia USBs to smuggle into the Fatherland.) Held at Oslo's Grand Hotel—the very same hotel where the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded—the Oslo Freedom Forum awards dissidents the "Václav Havel Prize for Creative Dissent." The award is a bit like a harder-earned Nobel, minus the Nobel committee's head-scratcher selectees, such as Yasser Arafat and Al Gore.

A longtime inhabitant of his orbit tells me, "Thor's like the director, and we're all bit players in his movie." And indeed, Halvorssen, who often emphasizes the importance of "good production values"—he enjoys watching televangelists like Pat Robertson and Creflo Dollar, just to study how they ply their trade—recalls with relish a scene from the first Oslo Freedom Forum in 2009, which he engineered and repurposed from one of his favorite films, *The Shawshank Redemption*. (He's seen it at least 20 times.) The movie involves a wrongly convicted man, played by Tim Robbins, finding camaraderie with fellow prisoners. In one scene, Robbins's character breaks into the warden's office, locks himself inside, and over the loudspeaker treats the prison yard to an aria from Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*. Another inmate, played by Morgan Freeman, can be heard in voiceover, saying: "It was like some beautiful bird flapped into our drab little cage and made those walls dissolve away, and for the briefest of moments, every last man in Shawshank felt free."

Similarly, in the Grand Hotel's majestic dining room, Halvorssen had the German mezzo-soprano Friederike Krum sing the same aria. "And most important," Thor says, "in that room was Tibetan monk Palden Gyatso (33 years in a Tibetan prison), Harry Wu (19 years in a Chinese labor camp), Armando Valladares (22 years in a Cuban prison), Ales Bialiatski (prisoner from Belarus), Vladimir Bukovsky (12 years in Soviet prisons), Leyla Zana (Turkish prisoner for 10 years), and many others. It was epic, and very moving." Thor views his mission in life as giving such people a platform: "I talk to these dissidents, and in five sentences, they can destroy a government more than some graduate-degree'd exile in Miami can. It's poetry. The truth is the only thing that matters. But sometimes, you've got to turn the light on for it."

The people Thor is not quite as moved by are the professionals in his racket who seem to find it "fashionable to place dictatorships and democracies on the same level, and criticize them as if they were in the same bag. . . . I'm talking about the gray suits, most of them just angry that they made career choices that didn't make them a lot of money. The overwhelming majority of human rights activists you meet in Europe? You're like, 'Get this person a therapist!'"

Thor is dismissive of the professionals in his racket who seem to find it 'fashionable to place dictatorships and democracies on the same level. I'm talking about the gray suits, most of them just angry that they made career choices that didn't make them a lot of money.'

The man the *New York Times* once called "a maverick mogul, proudly politically incorrect" and that BuzzFeed labeled "the face of a new global human rights movement" seems to regard sleep as a mortal enemy on a par with the dictators and tin-pot thugs that he and his merry band of associates seek to eradicate, from Equatorial Guinea to Venezuela to North Korea.

You can't always be sure from where exactly Thor is checking in via one of his three laptops or five phones. In the course of our dealings, he might be communicating from a human-rights confab in Geneva. Or from having drinks with surviving *Charlie Hebdo* staffers in Paris. Or while taking meetings in Los Angeles, since Thor moonlights as a film producer, having founded the Moving Picture Institute (see The Weekly Standard, August 13, 2007) the same year he founded HRF, which nurtures young filmmakers interested in "promoting freedom through film." And even attracts the occasional big dog like Quentin Tarantino, with whom he coproduced *Freedom's Fury*, the story of the 1956 Hungarian uprising told through the prism of their Olympic water-polo showdown with the Soviet Union.

But check in Thor does, frenetically and at all hours, his nimble mind wheeling wildly from subject to subject. He'll tell you how juiced he is to have just set up a big-budget deal at 20th Century Fox to coproduce Robert Heinlein's 1966 science-fiction novel *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*, with the *X-Men* franchise's Bryan Singer set to direct. ("Sci-fi allows the writer to address any cultural or political topic in a total vacuum—a terrific way to exercise the mind philosophically.") He'll tell you why he selected his Wickr secret-messaging service moniker "summerwind" (he's a sucker for Sinatra). He believes so strongly in the impenetrability of Wickr's end-to-end encryption and self-destructing emails and texts—a necessity in his trade—that he invested in the company. He'll loop you in with his South Korean assistant, with whom he enjoys easy badinage as she calls him a dictator, while he threatens to send her back to North Korea,

making oblique dog-eating jokes about her canine-rights activism ("perhaps, deep down, there is some kind of karmic issue being addressed").

He'll tell you about his health-nut habits (emphasis on "nut"), which involve ingesting or injecting some 35 supplements a day—everything from tree-bark extract (against aging) to tryptophan, the sleep-inducing agent in your Thanksgiving turkey which he hopes helps settle him down a bit. His colleague Alex Gladstein says it isn't working: When HRF staffers bunk two-to-a-room on the road, even when Thor steals three hours of sleep, he still keeps roommates awake with his restless leg syndrome.

He's even trying to dodge the Big Sleep, having made plans to be cryogenically preserved upon his death. He worries a bit about his hereafter: "Have you met any of the cyronauts? The most bizarre mix of nerds, hippies, and plain weirdos. I tell my friends, because frankly, I want them to join too. The future is gonna be real lonely if I'm stuck with some of the current clients."

But what animates Thor most in his round-the-clock correspondence is the mission that lies before us: to set the good people of the ironically named Democratic People's Republic of Korea free. Or at least to set their minds free, since through 70 years of totalitarian rule by three generations of Kims, a good many of the Hermit Kingdom's citizens have had their heads hermetically sealed from all outside sources of information. Without the thought distractions that go with free speech, this leaves North Koreans plenty of time to: deify portly dictators with bad haircuts and Dennis Rodman fixations; hear their stomachs growl even though there are fewer mouths to feed since the 1990s state-stoked famine may have killed as many as 3.5 million people (nearly a third of the country is still thought to be undernourished, and there are recent reports of cannibalism in South Korean papers); be subjected to preposterous state-crafted propaganda slogans ("Let the strong winds of fish farming blow across the country!"); and live in constant fear—for crimes as minor as watching a South Korean soap opera—of being transferred to one of the country's unspeakably brutal prison camps, still thought to enslave some 200,000 people, after hundreds of thousands have already died in them.

By January, the media hubbub over the Sony hacking scandal is still on full-boil. The Guardians of Peace—thought to be a North Korean hackers' collective—have pulled off the largest corporate-hacking heist in history. They bill it as a vendetta against Sony for making *The Interview*, a frat-boyish comedy, whose plot turns on a couple of talk-show dunderheads being recruited by the CIA to assassinate Kim Jong-un. While you could see how the general narrative arc might bug the Supreme Leader (not to be confused with his Dear Leader dad or his Great Leader grandpa), it's hard to imagine anyone getting that exercised over a Seth Rogen/James Franco film unless they were trying to get their money back. But one presumes Kim Jong-un never saw it in Pyongyang theaters, where titles like *The Respected Comrade Supreme Commander Is Our Destiny* are more typical fare.

HRF is never one to let a human-rights-atrocity spotlight pass. Unlike a lot of humanitarian outfits that incessantly court celebrity to represent their causes, HRF regularly and publicly lights celebrities up for performing for dictators, raising holy media hell when, say, Mariah Carey or Jennifer

A poster for the 2014 comedy The Interview

Lopez tries to go nonchalantly collect a seven-figure payday for a private concert. It's not a stunt, Thor says, but an effective strategy. Not only can HRF instantly undo years' worth of image-polishing that dictatorships often pay Western lobbying firms to do on their behalf. But instead of expecting people to read dreary white papers on human rights abuses, those very same abuses will now be splashed on *Access Hollywood*, while Howard Stern does 20 minutes of material on Turkmenistan, which he previously couldn't locate on a map. (Stern impersonating J. Lo: "I want to say everybody raise your glasses, let's hear it for concentration camps! Now I'd like to sing 'Jenny from the Block.'")

Similarly, Thor's team is all over the North Korean concern. They have been for years, anyway, conducting hackathons for defector groups, coming up with innovative ways to smuggle goods into North Korea—such as stealth USBs and giant slingshots that fling contraband across the river from China. They also send unmanned balloons loaded with antiregime leaflets, cash, and entertainments (everything from *Braveheart* to *Desperate Housewives*) wafting north from South Korean border towns. Even though the

seasonal winds aren't quite right for ballooning in January, *The Interview* publicity bubble is too good to miss. Not only does HRF instantly launch a "Hack Them Back" campaign, attempting to raise a million dollars that it will disperse among defector groups who are ballooning, smuggling, or broadcasting information to their isolated countrymen. But it also publicly vows to place copies of *The Interview* in balloon payloads, just to thumb Kim Jong-un in the eye.

As news of HRF's intentions hits the *Hollywood Reporter* and other atypical outlets, Thor's logistics messages are coming in a-mile-a-minute. We will meet up in Seoul and head to the border. His people have reserved a bank of rooms in a secure hotel. Oh, and he forgot to mention one thing: "North Korea has threatened to kill us, send assassins, and 'pull out' of dialogue talks with South Korea if the balloons go."

He sounds positively over the moon.

When I meet up with him in Seoul, Thor does not look like a man who's just been threatened by the most brutal regime on earth. Or rather, he looks like a man who's at ease with such threats, as it's hardly his first rodeo. Before a 2013 balloon launch, North Korea put out a "warning message," calling HRF "human scum" and "thieving Americans," while promising to "slit their throats" and buy them a "one-way ticket to hell." (They might not have watched *The Interview*, but they clearly watch a lot of bad movies.)

With chiseled features and a laser-beam intensity, Halvorssen has a bit of a Tom Cruise/cult-leader air, making you think that he could take over Scientology if David Miscavige pulled a hamstring. Throughout the week I spend in his company, his default demeanor seems best described as caffeinated calm—exuding natural tension, without being tense.

I haven't dropped my bag in the hotel lobby before he ushers me to the bar, where he's already two drinks in. He knows that I'm jetlagged and bronchial. So he pulls out of his pocket what looks like a dehydrated caterpillar. "It's a cordycep!" he says enthusiastically, a rare combination of caterpillar and fungus. Traditional healers in North Sikkim love it. He shows me, on his phone, a BBC video of an ant who'd eaten one, went out of its mind, then had the caterpillar/fungus erupt out of its head, as if in an *Alien* movie. "Wanna try one?"

No, thanks, I'm all set with Robitussin.

Thor's closest co-conspirator, a defector named Park Sang-hak, whom the DPRK has labeled 'Enemy Zero,' would have been assassinated a few years back if South Korean authorities hadn't intercepted his would-be killer, who'd planned to do him in with a toxic needle concealed in a pen.

Much as Halvorssen exhibits caffeinated calm, he paradoxically seems to be a closed open book. On the one hand, he is exceedingly transparent. He thinks nothing, while talking to me, of grabbing a fistful of 35 supplements from his "tackle box," as he calls his oversized dispenser, and swallowing them all in one gulp. Or taking a hypodermic needle, lifting his shirt slightly, and shooting himself up in the stomach with Genotropin (a growth hormone) in my presence. "The fountain of youth!" he gleams.

When I ask Thor if he's married, he tells me he's gay. I would've guessed eventually anyway, from his red suede Zegna shoes, his penchant for ordering "Twinkle Twinkles" at the bar (Talisker, Tanqueray, and peach juice), and his mention of dating a guy named Colt. (I'm a quick study that way.) All his friends and family know, but it's never been in print. "Can I use it?" I ask him. He thinks for about two seconds, then says, "Yeah, why not?"

But when I repeatedly ask him where he lives, he refuses to tell—not even the state. "Why are you so nosy?" he bristles. "That's my job," I say. "Why are you so secretive?" I inquire. "That's my job," he responds.

His colleagues say he's fearless. But he'd be a fool not to take some precautions, especially since South Korean police let it be known that North Korean agents are casing the comings-and-goings at our hotel. (They subsequently post a cop in our lobby.) Seven defectors we meet with are on a published DPRK hit list. And Thor's closest ballooning co-conspirator, a defector named Park Sang-hak who heads Fighters for a Free North Korea and whom the DPRK has labeled "Enemy Zero," would have been assassinated a few years back if South Korean authorities hadn't intercepted his would-be killer, who'd planned to do him in with a toxic needle concealed in a ballpoint pen. Park now has an around-the-clock bodyguard.

Such are the charms of dealing with North Korea: the decades of their juggling our carrots and sticks, the misappropriated famine relief, the futile South Korean sunshine policies seeking to normalize relations, the nuclear tests, the kidnapping of foreigners, the sinking of South Korean ships, the seemingly random acts of aggression that by insider accounts are shrewdly calculated. It's why they are able to terrorize people well beyond their reach, and why the failed state is allowed to keep failing. For of all the loonies in the loony bin, they're still the hands-down looniest. This is a country, after all, where Kim Jong-un's own uncle

Balloons bearing antiregime leaflets and a banner mocking Kim Jong-un are released near the North Korean border, January 20, 2015.

URRU

was recently executed for, among other things, not clapping loudly enough when his nephew waddled into the room.

North Korea might talk like a cartoon villain, calling the South Korean president "a crafty prostitute" and the U.S. mainland a "boiled pumpkin." But even though they often sound like a joke, nobody knows when they're serious. From a safe distance, we have a good laugh at reports that Kim Jong-un drinks cobra wine for his erectile dysfunction, or that he cuts his own hair since he's terrified of barbers, or, as DPRK propaganda has it, that he doesn't defecate. (That would explain a lot.) But to the 25 million North Koreans who've yet to perish from purges or hunger, but who'll end up dead or in prison camps if they try to leave, the joke's never seemed terribly funny.

Our liberation delegation includes some HRF staffers, a couple North Korean defectors, a few Silicon Valley friends of Thor's providing technological expertise, and a small scrum of journalists. Our bus pulls into a field just outside the border town of Paju, bunkered by a small ridge, to better conceal us since we're just a stone's throw from the demilitarized zone, where North Korean artillery batteries lie itchy on the other side of the Imjin River. We've deliberately arrived way after dark, though the closer you are to North Korea, the darker it gets, since the DPRK has typically had higher spending priorities (the military, Dear Leader statuary, Kim Jong-il's $1 million-per-year Hennessy habit, etc.) than keeping the lights on.

Thor and Park, who over the years has sent tens of millions of leaflets into North Korea, are trying to operate more stealthily to avoid repeats of recent circuses. North Korea tried to shoot down balloons at a non-HRF-sponsored launch last October. And the South Korean government is forever nervous that balloonists will provoke its belligerent neighbors, getting civilians killed. In the past, Park and Thor have attracted unwanted attention, everything from Park being arrested after plowing through a police barricade with his truck, to a Paju cop taking a shine to Thor. "He started petting me like I was a cat," he says. "It was hilarious and creepy. Poor guy is so deep in the closet he's in Narnia."

Park's troops arrive with all the necessities: leaflets, hydrogen tanks, cash (Park estimates he's given away up to $30,000 over the years). Everything, that is, except the balloons themselves. Park's nickname is "Fireball," and when he's informed of the screw-up, we see why, as he barks'n'boils in Korean at his comrades, who will now keep us waiting a few more hours while they go retrieve the balloons. Henry Song, our South Korean translator, informs the bus of the bad news. Park, who doesn't otherwise speak English, mounts the freezing bus, yelling, "I sowwwwwy!"

Thor covers for him, suggesting it gives us an opportunity to quiz Park about his background. HRF staffer John Lechner pulls some rotgut Soju out of his bag, and we all take hits and pass it around to keep warm, like vagrants around a barrel-fire. Park's father was a spy for the North Korean government, and once even received a gold watch from Kim Il-sung. Park himself had a job in the propaganda office. But after intelligence officers started getting purged—a semiregular occurrence among the elites (all eight of Kim Jong-il's pallbearers were purged by his son inside a year)—his father worried for his life. While in the field, he defected, later sending for his family. After they crossed the Yalu River on foot into China, their father hooked them up with fake passports, and they were off to South Korea. Park gained his freedom, but had to leave his fiancée behind.

As I pass the bottle to Park and he takes a nip, Thor elbows me, saying, "Look at Mr. Park for a moment, in his baseball hat and chewing gum with a massive smile on his face, and you'd never think that his uncle was beaten to death. There's something about that spirit that is so important." Indeed, Park discovered his uncle had been killed in retribution for the family's escape, a possibility that weighs on any North Korean leaving someone behind. When asked how he feels about it, Park swigs his Soju bitterly, then murmurs in low-register Korean. "He still feels the hatred," our translator says.

Hours later, Park's troops return with balloons. Other balloonists send everything into North Korea from Bibles to Choco Pies to photos of Kim Jong-un's wife purportedly starring in a porno before she became first lady of North Korea. Park keeps it simple tonight, though in the past, he's included such extras as DVD cartoons portraying Kim Jong-il as a transvestite. Thor says they'd planned to include in our drop the bootleg copies he'd made of *The Interview* (still not out on DVD), but the subtitles weren't completed in time. Next run, however, *The Interview* is going in.

But there's still a huge flapping banner attached to one of the balloons that says in oversized script *THE INTERVIEW*—a trailer, of sorts, for the annoyance that's coming. Above it is a big, baby-huey picture of Kim Jong-un, his lower lip protruding as though he's about to cry. Though I can't read the waterproof plastic leaflets that Park is enclosing, it's clear they're not puff pieces. Henry translates the Korean inscribed on the bookend missiles abutting Kim's head on the banner, which reads, "Kim Jong-un will be assassinated" and "I am afraid of the people's court." A nice change of pace for North Koreans, who are typically treated to state news service headlines such as "Kim Jong-il's Feats Lauded by Foreign Personages."

Fireball's team works furiously and fast. Five balloons 30 feet high are inflated from hydrogen tanks. Everyone is forbidden from smoking, or Park won't be the only fireball around here. Lechner hits the play button on a phone connected to a loudspeaker, his launch playlist derived from *The Interview* soundtrack. But as Eminem's "Lose Yourself" starts blasting, Thor makes him cut the music, having noticed a civilian's house in the near-distance. Just because we're trying to topple a dictator doesn't mean we should be rude.

The whooshing hydrogen fills the balloons, and the payload bags are connected. Once airborne for a spell, the latter will burst open when time-release acid burns through a metal fastener, scattering antiregime sentiments like fluttering leaves. The communication method might seem primitive, but you'd be surprised what has turned the hearts and minds of North Koreans over the years. In a land where everybody is starving for outside information (black-market DVD players, computers, and Chinese cell phones pervade North Korea now, though the Internet is still a distant dream), even a crumb can seem like a feast. Defectors say that while still in the DPRK, they were turned around by something as simple as a bootleg copy of *Titanic*, which demonstrated the possibility of dying for love, rather than for the regime. Lim Young Sun (who runs Unification Broadcasting, airing broadcasts of North Korean television in the south so South Koreans can see what they're lucky enough to miss) was influenced by the likes of the smuggled writings of Marx and bikini calendars, not necessarily in that order. "Reading a book about Marx hurts your brain," he says, "but looking at the pictures was a delight, to be honest."

As Park's people prepare for simultaneous release, Park starts a chant in broken English: "Free-a-North-a-Korea!" We echo his call. The cylindrical balloons ascend, looking like giant runaway condoms, bringing the message of freedom to God-knows-who-or-where.

We all re-mount the bus, flushed with the warm glow of accomplishment. Thor chomps a victory cigar. But as we travel back to our hotel, we are alerted by Pink Hair (a techie buddy of Thor's who prefers the alias, since he has pink hair). It appears the Winds of Change are blowing the wrong direction. Pink Hair had wired up one of the balloons with a GPS tracker—the kind climbers typically use, he bought it at REI—so they could tell how far the balloons travel. While we thought we had a wind from the south, the GPS says otherwise. We watch the dot on his phone drifting back towards Seoul. "It's beating us home," says Pink Hair.

"Let me see that," Thor says, leaning into Pink Hair's iPhone, slapping it while speaking to it in exaggerated fashion: "Siri, make the balloons turn the right direction."

By the next morning, Pink Hair determines that the balloon landed near a South Korean highway, and somebody carried it off in a car. Not only is Thor not discouraged, he's

actually adrenalized. This is precisely why he connects his Silicon Valley buddies with defectors—to help them perfect their craft. If you can measure something, you can improve it. Park usually doesn't know where his balloons end up. This time, he does, and can make the appropriate weight and timing adjustments.

Thor never believes that just because something has always been done a certain way, that's the way it should be done. He doesn't assume he knows anything, but he does assume he knows lots of people who do—smart, rich, resourceful people. Maybe better answers can be had, if better questions get asked. As he describes HRF's modus operandi to one defector group: "We tend to bite off a lot more than we can chew, then spend a lot of time chewing." Maybe balloons are yesterday's news, he thinks. After all, what are the chances of them floating hundreds of miles to Pyongyang? He has another idea, one that makes his staffers recoil in horror.

Halvorssen as a boy, second from right, with his parents and brother.

"Drones!" he says. "What about drones!!!?"

Thor's best friend from college, a Silicon Valley venture capitalist named Alex Lloyd, speaks for Thor's troops when he says, "Dude, you're seriously on crack."

One night over dinner, I ask Thor to tell me about his Caracas upbringing. "My father was a miner and my mother a schoolteacher," he deadpans. "They instilled in me values, values that I bring to my election here in the district, because I know the suffering of working families." He breaks character as he takes another Twinkle Twinkle hit. "No, I grew up in the lap of luxury, man! It was crazy. We had a gardener, driver, bodyguard, butler, cook, governess, and that was just the skeleton crew. There was a calligraphy teacher—a calligraphy teacher!—I'm not joking. In a house that had a pool, sauna, billiard room, library, and a servants' wing. It was a throwback to another century. I must add that these people were like family, and my parents made it very clear that we were to treat domestic staff better than our friends."

Thor's mother is directly descended from the author of Venezuela's declaration of independence. Her own family did well, though nothing to match the days of the Mendozas' silver-mining fortune, long since depleted from funding independence fights. On his father's side, his Nazi-fighting Norwegian grandfather stayed on in Venezuela after the war, made a killing in all manner of businesses, then died while Thor's father (also named Thor) was still a teenager. After college, Thor's dad and his Uncle Olaf took over and expanded the family businesses—real estate, insurance, and representation of international companies like Dunlop. (Plenty of their real-estate holdings would later be expropriated by Hugo Chávez.)

They also became what the *New York Times* called "Venezuela's most eligible playboys." They drove Jaguars and flew to Paris for weekends. Olaf dated Candice Bergen, and the brothers kept a pet lion named Petunia in a Philadelphia apartment. "It was a good hook, telling the girls, 'You wanna come back and see my lion?'" Uncle Olaf tells me from his home in Miami. "It ate us out of sofa and shoes."

The profligate spending was not ideal, Thor allows. But he absorbed another lesson from his family's buccaneer spirit. "There were no limits. You could do anything," he says. "If there's one thing my parents gave me, it was this sense that I shouldn't be afraid of anything, and I certainly shouldn't be afraid of people. Also, that there's a shortcut to everything and that if there's a wall you don't like, you can have it moved. So many people grow up thinking things are the way they are and you can't change them."

When Thor read his father's obituary in the *Miami Herald* (he died last summer), he learned things about his dad that he'd previously understood only vaguely. About how extensively his father was himself immersed in the work, serving on the boards of numerous human rights groups, taking up the cause of Nicaragua's Miskito Indians, spotlighting violations by Marxist rebel groups all over Central America. (Not for nothing has his father been accused of being a CIA asset, which Thor denies, though he allows that in his lines of work, he certainly had contact with them.)

His father is best described, he says, with the Tim Burton film *Big Fish*: "It's a movie about how this father tells his son all these tales which are almost all not believable. At the end, when he's burying his father, all the people from the tall tales show up at the funeral. The giant, the midgets, and suddenly the son is like, 'My God, it was all true.' The craziest thing is when somebody meets me and says, 'You've done exactly the same thing your father did 25 years ago in this very town.' What? 'Oh yeah, he held a meeting here for a whole bunch of dissidents.' That's pretty trippy."

Thor describes his idyllic childhood as "magical-realist." Barred from television during the week by his strict

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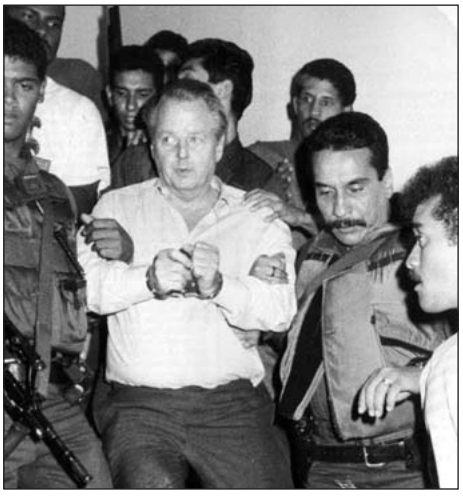
mother, he'd sneak off to watch *Batman* and over-the-top Spanish soap operas with staff in the servants' quarters. He played with the family's battalion of dogs. He witnessed the decadences and grotesqueries of an oil-booming narco-state on the verge of becoming a socialist horror show, all of it on display side-by-side: "the Rolls Royce driving past the one-legged man in the street asking for money with some kind of deformity that'd be unthinkable in a place like Germany."

But his parents ended up divorcing, and his mom moved to London, partly because of his father's drinking (which he later got a handle on). "He was the most lovely drunk you've ever met," Thor says. "He'd wake us up in the middle of the night to tell us he loved us. We were like, 'Dad, we know. Can we go back to sleep now?'"



Halvorssen's father is seized by Venezuelan police, October 1993.

Thor ended up in a British boarding school, where he got his first real taste of what would become his life's work: kicking bullies in the shorts. "There is no crueler being on the face of the earth than the British schoolboy," Thor says. His schoolmates decided to haze the new kid, and for a while, he found his bed covered nightly in tea leaves. Rather than look like a whiner, Thor would sleep in a bed that looked like a Lipton bag. After a while, however, he'd had enough.

"I informed my schoolmates that if this continued to happen, I would pee in their beds every night for the rest of the year." The tea leaves kept coming. So realizing he didn't have enough urine to go around, he squirted in a pitcher and mixed it with water, soaking all his tormentors' beds. "All I heard was [doing a British accent] 'Joe, is your bed wet? My bed's wet,'" Thor recalls. "I said, 'Gentleman, that was me. Tea on my bed? Pee on your beds. Pee on my bed? S—t on your beds.'" He didn't have another problem the rest of the year.

Upon finishing school, Thor decided to leave Britain "before I became British." (A natural mimic who speaks four languages, he took two years to shed his British accent.) He attended the University of Pennsylvania, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa and magna cum laude while double-majoring and double-minoring, and also earning his master's in history—all in four years. "And I was drunk through half of it!" he says with some pride. "And in a fraternity and running the newspaper."

Thor started writing for the campus's conservative paper, *Red and Blue*, around the time the campus exploded in howls of protest over a satirical Haiti article decried as racist. Upon being elected editor of the paper, he fired most of the people who'd voted for him, cleaning house of what he calls the three-piece-suit-and-cigar set, faux Anglophiles and affected young fogeys who "seemed much more interested in being the assholes on campus" than publishing engaging articles.

Thor went more counterintuitive, publishing pieces that disoriented campus liberals such as reporting on a group called White Women Against Racism, who prohibited a black woman from attending because "this is a space for white women to address their racism." At the same time, his adventures in student government left him sour on thought-police and grievance-group bean-counters. He wearied of hearing indignant young know-nothings, such as the head of the Latino student association, wielding their ethnicity like a cudgel, saying, "On behalf of the Latino people I would like to speak." To which, responds Thor, "I would say, 'Point of order, you can't say on my behalf because I'm not represented by you.' They'd get sassy with me, and so I'd talk to them in Spanish, which they couldn't actually speak."

While at Penn, Thor received a much more serious education from the outside world. Thor's father had been appointed by Venezuelan president Carlos Andrés Pérez to head the state-owned telephone company in the 1970s. When Pérez was again elected in the late '80s, he made Halvorssen his antidrug czar, enabling Thor Sr. to make enemies of half of Venezuela, including the Medellín cartel, powerful banking interests, and even his own boss, whom he found keeping a $19 million slush fund for his mistress (Pérez was impeached in 1993).

In the middle of one of his investigations of a now-defunct bank for money laundering, Halvorssen was fingered as being a conspirator (by a single witness who later recanted, saying police tortured the accusation out of him) as one of the "yuppie bombers" who were said to have set off a series of bombs in Caracas to manipulate the stock market.

Halvorssen was never charged, let alone convicted. But that didn't stop Venezuelan authorities from detaining him for 74 days, some of it in El Retén De Catia, a prison so squalid raw sewage was known as a water source and Pope John Paul II condemned it. (It has since been demolished.) While in custody, Thor's father was kept in a pit with snakes

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and rats, had a rib broken by interrogators, and was even urinated on. The family found out through a government source that he was supposed to be killed in prison, though it would have been made to look like a suicide.

Still a college student, Thor and his Uncle Olaf went to work, doing anything and everything to attract attention to his father's plight. They were successful. Amnesty International, British members of Parliament, and New York's legendary district attorney Robert Morgenthau all protested his innocence. The first political prisoner Thor ever helped get released was his own father.

"That's what really awoke me," he says. "That crystallized the idea of what it looks like when you actually stare into the abyss in a country with no rule of law. Every day of the week, my daddy is dying here. I'm tired, and can't go to sleep, but every moment of every working day is spent trying to push the ball forward, to get journalists to understand, to get someone involved, and so on. So when I talk to some [dissident's relative] whose parent is in prison, I tell them I know what you're going through. And let me tell you how I went to sleep, and let me tell you how I passed the nights, and they immediately get it. That doesn't mean our case was particularly special, but it's a bond like no other."

Above, Halvorssen's mother, Hilda Mendoza Denham (in red), after being shot during a 2004 Caracas protest by regime gunmen, below

What nags him still is that the ordeal helped ruin his father financially: "I loved my father deeply. Profoundly. . . . But he never truly recovered after the destruction he suffered, personal and financial, at the hands of these very bad men—looters all of them. He kept his dignity and his optimism all his life. He died in a slip and fall. Senseless accident. And he was planning his comeback. But age takes a toll on your cognition, on your energy. It's heartbreaking. On his death bed, I made promises to him. And told him plenty. In some odd way sometimes I think I'm finishing some of the things he was doing. It just happened."

After college, Thor went on to help cofound the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), the anti-p.c. organization that has done as much as any in the country to combat the campus Idiocracy Industrial Complex, meaning they're never shy of material. Thor would often find himself in the papers, calling attention to the theater professor whom feminists tried to blackball for teaching Shakespeare (privileged white male), or defending the Christian group that was temporarily banned from meeting on campus for refusing to select a lesbian as its leader. ("We are delighted and relieved that the Tufts Committee on Student Life does not have to seek shelter in catacombs beneath the Tufts campus," Thor said at the time.)

But in 2004, a decade after his father's ordeal, he received another wake-up call. His grandmother was turning 80, and the entire family went back to Venezuela to celebrate her birthday. Concurrently, a protest about the results of a recall-referendum against Hugo Chávez was taking place. Being a family of freedom-fighters, his mother and grandparents showed up for what they thought would be a peaceful assembly. Thor skipped it, while trying to straighten out having been thrown off the voter rolls in what was widely suspected to be voter fraud.

"Jimmy Carter was doing his 'Cartering' down there," says Thor, by which he means election monitoring/sucking up to dictators. The protest aimed to persuade Carter not to certify the results (which he did, before leaving in a flash to attend his wife's birthday). As described by Thor in a piece he wrote for the *Wall Street Journal*, 100 or so Chávez supporters, many of them in Chávez's trademark beret, descended on the protest square. Three men, wearing red T-shirts with government-funded "Bolivarian Circle" insignias, opened fire indiscriminately on the crowd. (All of which was captured on television, which Thor watched from his grandparents' house.) A grandmother was shot in the back, later bleeding out in an emergency room. Thor's mother was taken down with a hollow-point bullet from a high-caliber pistol; he wrote his account in her hospital room. She survived, though she was convinced she was going to die. "Every f—ing day of her life since then has been affected by this bullet," he says. "My mother has been in pain every day since the day she was shot."

He believed in FIRE's mission, but began to reconsider priorities. "Chávez has taken over Venezuela," says Thor.

"So like, why am I defending the rights of student cartoonists at the Harvard Business School, who are getting in trouble for publishing cartoons of the administration, when journalists in Venezuela are getting shot? Okay, this is not exactly where I need to be." He founded the Human Rights Foundation a year later.

Even now, though, Thor's Venezuelan family members are still not in the clear. His cousin Leopoldo López, a former mayor of the Chacao municipality in Caracas and the founder of the Voluntad Popular party (Popular Will), served as a perpetual thorn in the side of Chávez and his acolyte, current president Nicolás Maduro. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, López has been taken hostage by armed thugs, had a bodyguard shot, and was detained and assaulted by the state intelligence service.

Halvorssen's cousin Leopoldo López is taken into custody in Caracas, February 18, 2014.

For over a year now, López has been rotting in a Caracas military prison for imagined crimes. According to reports, his family has had to take him food (not provided by the prison), guards have flung feces against his cell walls, and just the other day, a group of men in ski masks breached his cell, destroyed his books and notes, and placed him in isolation without toilet or running water. Bill Clinton has called for his release, and Amnesty International—after much pressure from Thor's family—has named him a Prisoner of Conscience. ("Last ones on the bus," Thor says with contempt.) Since López has tested higher in national popularity polls than Chávez did when he was alive, Thor suggests the only reason his cousin hasn't been killed in prison is that "if they kill him, the price they pay will be incalculable."

Thus, when Thor gets wind that a colleague told me Thor himself is fearless, he quickly amends the record: "That's a crock. Fearless is López, who from inside a dungeon has the guts to face down his would-be executioners. Fearless are those Oslo people. Perhaps the use of that term is simply an admission of the decline of courage in Western (free) society . . . [which instead] prefers self-gratification and the transitory satisfaction of material wealth. We give priority to the immediate and superficial. And Cubans, North Koreans, Kazakhs, Equatoguineans, Gambians, Ukrainians—all targets of man-made tragedies—are not visible or prevailing. It's decadence, [which doesn't] reflect well on a digital world that is supposed to be more 'connected' and empathetic than ever before. And so we must compete to conquer hearts and minds and ultimately spread a common morality through story, narratives, appeals to love based on humanizing utterly preventable suffering."

A long-time acquaintance of Halvorssen's who doubts whether he'll ever achieve true mainstream acceptance within the human-rights community tells me there's a stark difference between him and many establishment-activist types: "Thor's a guy who will slingshot sh— over the river. He's a f—ing doer. It's not Michelle Obama making a sad face on an Instagram photo saying I really wish those people from Boko Haram would call me so we can 'bring back our girls.' He's not a hashtag. He's the kind of guy who says, 'Let's go find them.' A man of action. And that is not human rights. Human rights is typically 'We're going to have campaigns to raise awareness.' Well, everyone's aware of North Korea, but doesn't do anything. So he actually does things like let's come up with slingshots and shoot copies of USB drives that they can watch, that will change people. Balloons? Not an incredibly revolutionary idea. But you do it, you get out there and breathe on every microphone and sweat on every television, and you're there. He's like the *America's Got Talent* for victims of dictatorship, and that's not a pejorative either."

During our time in Seoul, we meet plenty of North Korean defectors, both in our hotel and in the dingy cubbyholes in ratty office buildings that seem standard-issue for their perpetually underfunded activist groups. Reunification of the Korean peninsula is low on the priority list of prosperous South Koreans. They bustle along modernized, indistinguishable streets, earbudded and smart-phoned, partaking of authentic Korean cultural spoils like KFC, Yankee Candle, and Starbucks, as their former countrymen, a short distance over the border, live lives not many care to fathom.

We meet radio broadcasters, like those at Free North Korea, who keep spitting truth into the wind to an audience that Arbitron can never measure, despite the blood-stained axes and knives that regularly arrive in their mail: not-so-subtle promptings for them to take up another line of work.

We meet Yeon-mi Park, a living doll of a 21-year-old, who Thor's personally taken under his wing, helping her navigate the shoals of Western culture that confront her at blinding speed. He insists she dip into his tackle box for

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"an osteo pack" in case she has lingering effects from malnutrition during her North Korean childhood. He teaches her American idioms, like "freezing my balls off," which makes her collapse in a pile of shameful laughter on the floor. She embarrasses easily, showing reluctance to admit that she's seen *Pretty Woman*, "because the North Koreans want to kill you for the sexually bad things." Thor has to tell her that in the West, *Pretty Woman* is practically considered a children's film.

She tells me she learned English from watching *Friends* "30 times, all 240 episodes. I took the quiz about *Friends* and I got 100 percent correct." Her English is coming along nicely, which is lucky for her, since she's a star of the defector circuit, giving knockout performances from Oslo to Dublin, while getting a Penguin book deal that has her yoked to Hillary Clinton's ghostwriter for support. It's a long way from her 2007 escape across a frozen river into China, after which, she's said, a smuggler raped her mother in front of her. And that's the part she's talked about in public. The parts she hasn't, Thor assures, "are so much worse."

Yeon-mi Park

While Yeon-mi's father was in a labor camp, she's said she was reduced to eating grass and dragonflies. Since her escape, she's tried lobster, once, with Thor. "I loved it," she rhapsodizes. But the list of things she hasn't tried is long. One night, I watch her eat a can of minibar mixed nuts, as she sorts the cashews from the almonds. She says the almonds remind her of the nuts she'd had back home, which come from the pumpkin. "Those aren't nuts, honey, those are seeds," says Thor. "Oh really? I thought this was a seed or something," says Yeon-mi. "So you've never had nuts?" asks Thor. "What is this 'nuts'?" she asks, puzzled.

We meet Jang Jin-sung, who was a poet laureate for Kim Jong-il, as well as a psychological warfare officer within the United Front Department. He gives his prognosis on matters North Korean—the need to un-deify the Kims and the shoddy state of outside scholarship on the country—sounding like an armchair pundit.

Left unspoken is how he and a friend had to escape across the frozen Tumen River, afraid they'd be shot in the back, because he'd lent his friend a forbidden book, which his friend lost on a train. (The government immediately traced it back to Jang.) Or how he and his fellow escapee had to spend months on the lam in China, dodging authorities who would have repatriated them, as the Chinese often do, to certain death in North Korea. Or how their food supply was so meager and circumstances so dire that his friend spent their last won buying a blade to kill himself if he was caught. Or how Jang was separated from his friend, who eventually was caught and jumped to his death off a roadside cliff while in transit.

These details come from Jang's memoir, *Dear Leader*, which is both riveting and beautifully written. So I couldn't help but ask, in the prurient way journalists do, how a man of his talents could go to work every day, writing poetry glorifying the Dear Leader, and whether he was proud of any of it. As the translator conveys my question, I watch the look of shame cross Jang's face. I'm immediately ashamed of myself for asking. After a very long pause, he says that his poetry was "cringe-worthy." Then he adds, "The best way to answer your question is the books that I'm doing now are a way to repent for all the things I wrote while I was in North Korea."

We meet Kang Chol-hwan, whose work with the North Korea Strategy Center is so secret—they help smuggle goods and information overland from China—that he won't let us quote a single word he says, for fear a stray detail will get one of his people killed. Left unsaid is that he is the author of the highly acclaimed *Aquariums of Pyongyang*. Or that as a child, he and his entire family spent 10 years in Yodok concentration camp because his grandfather had been accused of treason. Or that he had to watch fellow prisoners get executed, then was forced by prison guards to throw rocks at them. Or that his food ration was a fistful of corn kernels once a month, so he had to survive by eating rats and earthworms. Or that the only way he'd get a change of clothes was to take them off of dead prisoners.

But the one who gets me—who gets everyone—is Ji Seong-ho, who runs a group called Now, Action, Unity, and Human Rights. He's 34 years old but appears about 19. He has an artificial hand that looks like a mannequin's. He's missing part of one leg, too. When he crossed the Tumen for the first time, it wasn't to defect, but just to secure food. (He lost his grandmother to starvation during the '90s famine.) He noticed that the Chinese fed their dogs better than most North Koreans ate. When he returned, authorities snatched him, confiscated his rice, and tortured him. Another person was arrested along with him but didn't get beaten as badly, since the government has a special distaste for the disabled. (Some witnesses say the DPRK conducts experiments on them.)

Compelling as this is, Ji blows through the details of his life as most of the defectors do: quickly, as though he doesn't want to impose on us. When I stop him, asking him

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to tell us how he lost his hand and leg, he calmly and matter-of-factly relates the particulars of his life. Feeding himself during those years meant either begging in the streets, going to the mountains to eat tree bark, or jumping a coal train that came out of one of the prison camps, so he could steal coal and sell it.

Ji and his cohorts would climb aboard while the train was moving, trying to remain unseen by guards, while filling rucksacks with as much coal as they could carry, before jumping off. One night around 2 A.M., he was feeling particularly weak from malnourishment. He passed out and fell. When he woke up, he was sprawled on the tracks, feeling intense pain. The train had run over the left side of his body. His leg was hanging, but not completely detached. When he tried to stop the blood, spurting everywhere, he realized two fingers were missing. None of his friends had jumped off to help, since that would've meant no coal, and they couldn't feed their families.

Ji screamed for help. His body was freezing, the open wounds freezing even faster than the rest of him. A railway worker found him and took him to the hospital. Ji couldn't see anything, he was so blinded by coal dust and blood. He required a four-hour surgery, but this being North Korea during the Arduous March (the propagandists' word for the famine), there was no anesthesia. "Looking back," Ji says, "I remember the indescribable pain when they were using the saw to sever my limbs."

Kang Chol-hwan, left, and Park Sang-hak

His mother repeatedly passed out in the waiting room from hearing the screams of her son. The surgeons botched the procedure, and had to do a corrective surgery the following day. His leg ended up getting gangrene, and for his father to afford the medicines Ji would need, the family had to go even hungrier than usual. "My younger siblings resorted to eating grass and wild mushrooms," says Ji. "They were left with stunted growth. For that, I am eternally sorry."

Upon recovering, Ji and his brother decided to escape from North Korea. They would run the traps, sending word back to their father, which would make it easier for him to do the same. "Before we left, my father and brother and I had a drink together and toasted one another, saying we will meet again in about three months," Ji says. "I remember my father crying. I became very heavy-hearted also. I did not know whether I would make it out alive. So I was very sad to see my father sad. We embraced one another very tightly. I took one picture of our family with me."

Ji and his brother crossed the Tumen. But Ji had to do so holding a crutch, his useless hand dangling. While wading, he fell into a deep seam in the river. He didn't know how to swim, and thought he'd die. "I began to swallow water, I felt my life ebbing away." His brother spotted him, grabbed him by the hair, and dragged him across. "I owe my life to my brother," he says.

Once on the other side in China, they were hardly safe. The brothers decided to split up, in order to be less conspicuous. Better that only one of them be repatriated, if caught. Using an underground railroad network, it took Ji seven months, instead of three, to wend his way to South Korea. It took his brother even longer. In the interim, the rest of his family left North Korea too, except for his father, still awaiting word from his sons. Once Ji was able to make contact with North Korea, he found out from a friend, who cursed him, that his father had passed away. Ji couldn't believe it. His dad had been healthy when they parted. What happened?

His father had grown increasingly despondent, not hearing from his sons. He finally tried to cross the river himself, but was caught by North Korean border guards. He was transferred to a state security department, where he was tortured by agents. His friend wasn't sure if his father had died in his holding cell, or had gone home to die after being released. "There was some talk," says Ji, "that because he had no family left, the officials just carried him in a wheelbarrow, and left him in the house."

The room falls silent. Our translator, Henry, an ordinarily stoic type, openly cries twice while translating, for which he profusely apologizes. Afterwards, Thor approaches me, saying, "Nice work, this isn't the tear-jerker tour, dude." But what he's really saying is welcome to the world of the dissident and the defector, the people to whom freedom means something that those of us who are born free can only play at understanding. Ji's story is just one more variation on an endless theme. And this is how it's often delivered: matter-of-factly, without pyrotechnics or waterworks or emotional manipulation. The truth stands hard enough by its lonesome. Maybe they're numb. Maybe they're just tougher than we are. But that's how it usually comes, Thor says: "My parents got executed, now pass the ketchup."

Thor is ready to leave Seoul to return to wherever he lives—he's still not saying—so he can get cracking on his drones-for-balloons scheme. His usual approach with HRF's staff is to use them as a pitch-back net. He throws an idea at them (often a wild screwball) as

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hard as he can, to see how hard they toss it back in his face. He then uses their suggestions/ridicule to hone the concept or discard it. When he first suggests drones, the pushback is fierce. They tell him drones connote weaponry. They warn him of violating North Korean airspace. ("What are you, the State Department?" Thor scoffs.) Balloons make people happy, they say, drones make people sad. His Silicon Valley buddy, Alex Lloyd, asks why not just drop leaflets from an ICBM?

Everyone laughs at Thor's expense. Until they stop laughing, and start thinking. What if it works? Who do they know? How much would it cost? What walls can be moved? Within a couple weeks, Thor is relating their findings: talking payloads and weights and split-bay doors and ram air scoops and a manufacturer he's located who'll donate a drone at cost. "This is for real, pal!" he says.

But first, there's one more mission to carry out. He's not here merely to send a message to North Koreans, but to South Koreans, too. To rouse them from slumber. Their brothers and sisters languish right over the border, living through a modern-day Holocaust. Why does some Venezuelan-Norwegian, running an American NGO, have so much skin in the game, and they can hardly be bothered? Thor and the HRF crew, including Fireball, pack several cabs and head for Channel A, a national South Korean news network.

On a live broadcast in Seoul, Halvorssen tears a photograph of North Korean founder Kim Il-sung, January 22, 2015.

In our cab, besides Thor and Lloyd, is a new translator. She's a young, attractive Arizona State University-educated South Korean named Sarah. Lloyd met her last night at a Chinese restaurant called Mao's. "He texted me like an hour ago to ask if I'd translate," says Sarah, who's never been on television. "I'm like, seriously?"

Thor has a bit of a caper planned today, and so wants to clue Sarah in on what's in store. He's brought with him large glossy photos of the three Kims—junior to grandpa—and he's going to rip them in half on national television. When he says the name Kim Jong-il, Sarah asks who he is. She's never heard of him. Lloyd and I look at each other in disbelief, but Thor kindly explains. Just to make trouble, I ask Sarah who her favorite Kim is. She thinks for a moment. "Kardashian," she says.

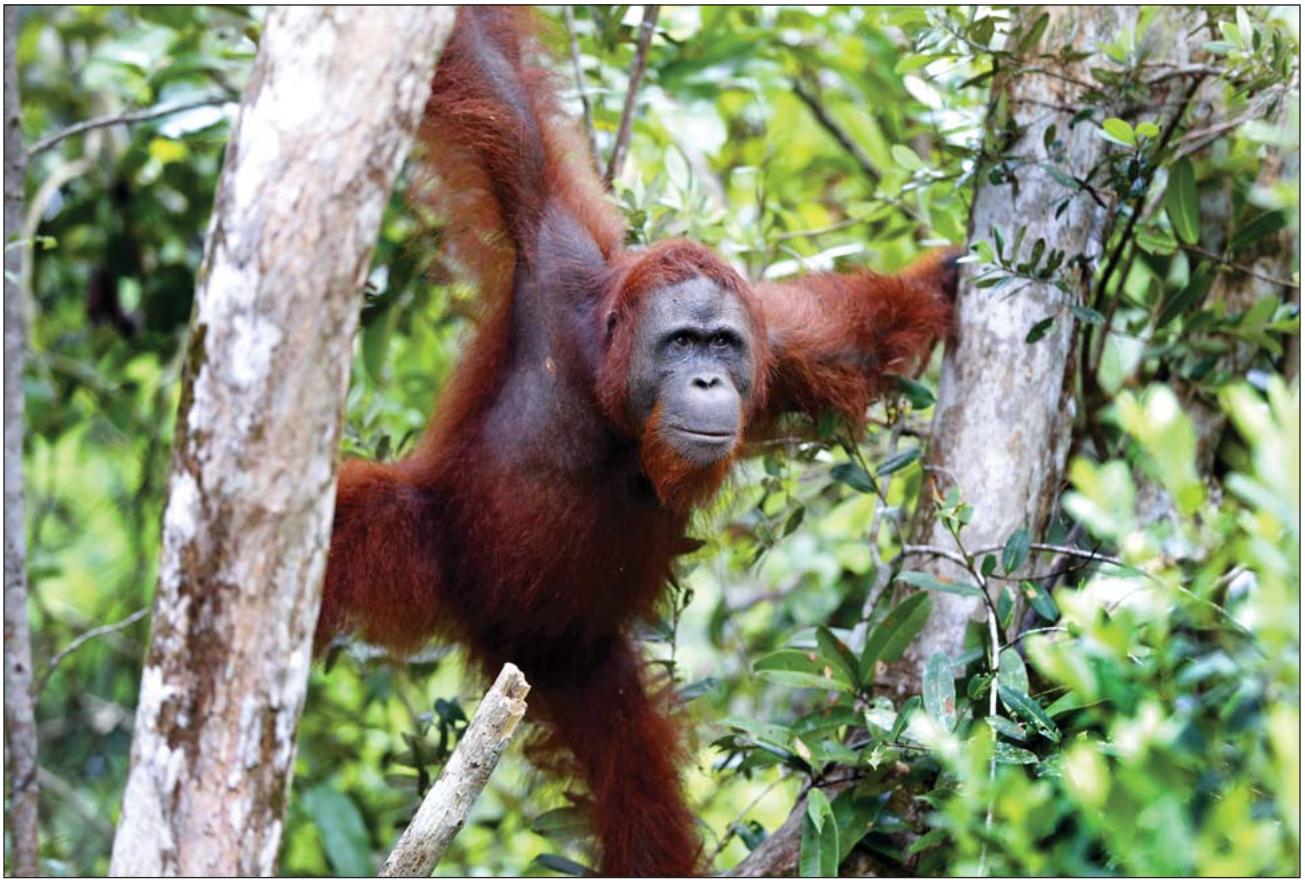
Once she understands the plan, she worries aloud that Thor's ploy might look slightly aggressive. "The anchor could freak out," he concedes, "but that's okay. This is what makes live television so exciting. You just need to look straight ahead, and enjoy the ride." Sarah nods dutifully, scared out of her mind.

Inside Channel A, Thor, Fireball, and Sarah head to the set, while the rest of us cool our heels in the green room with Fireball's bodyguard, watching a monitor. The segment begins, and while I have no idea what the South Korean anchors are saying, Thor, with Sarah faithfully translating, talks about the information monopoly North Korea has over its people, and the importance of getting them real information, by way of smuggling or radio broadcasts or balloons. He adds: "What surprises me, what saddens me, is that so many South Koreans are not interested in helping the North Korean people. Some South Koreans don't care. Some South Koreans are afraid. What are they afraid of? They are afraid of this man, and this man, and this man."

He then displays a photo of each Kim, dramatically ripping all of them in half. "Do not be afraid of them!" he commands. "They are afraid of freedom!" (Technically, two of them are already dead, so they're not afraid of anything. But the youngest Kim has their totalitarian spirit, and so is presumably scared on their behalf.) The anchors look ashen and unsettled, as Fireball mentions the "d" word (drone), and Thor gives them a "hackthemback" T-shirt, inviting their viewers to join the fight.

In the days that follow, the DPRK will put out a release denouncing the "human scum" and the "plot-breeders of the U.S." who "conducted [the] anti-DPRK leaflet-scattering operation" and who should "go home at once." But in the cab on the way back, returns are already coming in. Sarah gets a text from a friend, saying, "I saw you translating on TV, I didn't know you were interested in human rights. Good on you." We figure she'll be happy at her newfound celebrity. Instead, Sarah covers her face, moaning in pain. Her day-job is translating for a cosmetics company. She'd told her team managers she was leaving for two hours on a personal matter, having no idea she'd appear on national television. "I hope no one sees this," she says.

"Absolutely everyone saw it," Thor crows. Though he tells her not to worry. He'll straighten it out with her boss if she runs into trouble. But only a monster, he offers, would penalize her for caring about the rights of North Koreans. "We spread the love, baby!" he says. "We spread the love!" ♦



Resident of Tanjung Puting National Park, Kalimantan (Indonesian Borneo)

BARBARA WALTON / EPA / NEWSCOM

The Jungle Books

On the intellectual origins of evolution. BY CHRISTOPH IRMSCHER

In 1856, while hiking through the woods in Borneo, the English naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace saw some movement in the trees. On a quest to hunt great apes, he didn't waste time. The female orangutan that tumbled out of the tree turned out to be surprisingly hard to kill: Three shots were needed before she fell dead. It was then that Wallace found that she had been holding a small baby, not more than a foot long, in her arms. Wallace picked her up and adopted her.

Wallace, Darwin, and the Origin of Species
by James T. Costa
Harvard, 352 pp., $37.95

Over the next few months he fed his "orphan baby" from a bottle and with biscuits soaked in water. He made a little cradle for her and a pillow from an old stocking, gave her baths, rubbed her dry, and even found a monkey playmate for her. In short, he did everything for her a human parent—or, given the expectations of the time, a human mother—would have done. (Perhaps with the exception of the monkey playmate.)

"There never was such a baby as my baby," Wallace boasted in a letter to his sister Fanny. On one occasion, the little ape got hold of Wallace's beard and whiskers, holding onto them with all her might, "cruelly tight," as he complained.

Wallace's sweet bonding experience with his orphan orang, his "dear little duck of a darling," did not keep him from killing more members of her species. He dispatched 16 in all, by his own count. But his baby he

Christoph Irmscher, provost professor of English at Indiana University, is the author, most recently, of Louis Agassiz: Creator of American Science.

pampered. He even made plans to take her back home with him. Sometimes, the little orang appeared to make efforts to learn to walk:

> When laid upon the floor it would push itself along by its legs, or roll itself over, and thus make an unwieldy progression. When lying in the box it would lift itself up to the edge into almost an erect position, and once or twice succeeded in tumbling out.

Sadly, despite all that he did, Wallace's little daughter of the woods did not survive. Rice water turned out to be a poor substitute for milk. Try as he might, Wallace, hairy whiskers and all, could not replace the long-haired "mad woman" he had shot—her real mother.

In this deeply absorbing book, James T. Costa seeks to establish Alfred Russel Wallace as the fully vested co-creator of what he feels we should once again call the "Darwin-Wallace Theory" of evolution by natural selection. That Wallace had a part in the history of evolutionary theory is, of course, well known. While he was collecting in Malaysia, the basic facts of natural selection occurred to him with the kind of beautiful clarity most of us experience only in dreams (and Wallace was indeed suffering from malaria at the time). He sent his account to Charles Darwin, catapulting the more senior naturalist into a period of frenzied writing, at the end of which stood the magnificent achievement of *The Origin of Species* (1859), a massive tome Darwin persisted in calling an "abstract" only.

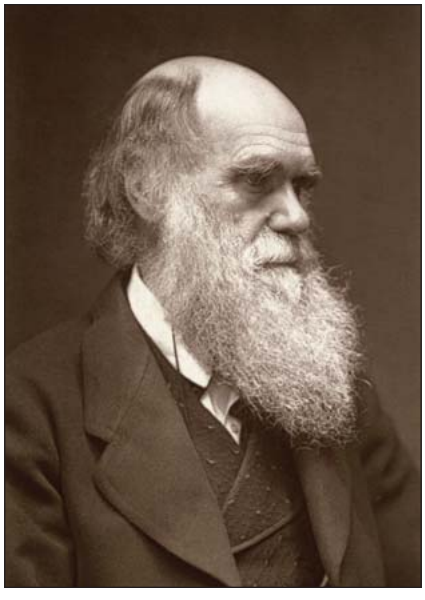
The book's appearance was heralded, the year before, by a mix of papers presented to the Linnean Society into which Darwin's colleagues had cleverly incorporated Wallace's letter—a smart move that saved Darwin from looking like a jerk in the eyes of posterity but also established him as the primary agent in the evolution business. For, as Andrew Berry points out in his lucid introduction to this study, even if you're a Victorian gentleman, you want to be first. Since he was still in Southeast Asia, Wallace didn't even know about the Linnean Society presentation, which, tragically, happened on the very same day that Darwin's infant son Charles was buried. In later years, as Darwin reaped both the scorn and then, increasingly, the admiration of the rest of the world, Wallace watched from the sidelines, apparently without rancor. His own big book on species he never wrote.

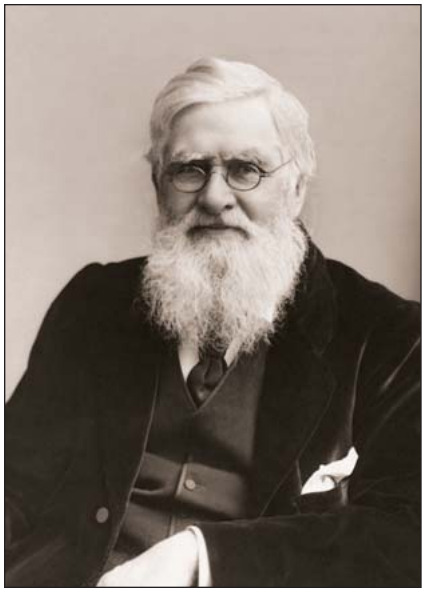
But we have his field notes from those years, and we also have Professor Costa, editor of an annotated edition of Wallace's "Species Notebook" and the best possible guide to Wallace's meandering mind. Wallace's notebook, now sitting on a shelf at the Linnean Society in London, traveled some 14,000 miles across Southeast Asia in the pockets of its author. Costa evokes it with poetic fervor, asking us to imagine wafting from its marbled boards and well-worn pages the lingering scent of "orangutan, durian, arrack, the spice islands, sago cakes, gunpowder, camphor, the spray of the Coral Sea." For a moment, at least, Wallace's poor little orphan orang and her jungle world come alive again, if only in our imagination.

Drawing extensively on that fragrant volume, Costa sets out to prove that Wallace and Darwin followed analogous paths as they painstakingly assembled evidence in favor of natural selection. As he shows, the convergence of their ideas manifested itself even in the words they chose to express those ideas. Some fascinating parallels do emerge, even beyond the obvious resemblances in their 1858 papers, which Costa, every bit as indefatigable as the busy Wallace, subjects to minute scrutiny.

I, for one, will never read Darwin's famous definition of natural selection as a kind of machine scrutinizing, rejecting, and preserving, "silently and insensibly working," without hearing, somewhere in the background, Wallace's own selection machine churning away, a steam engine checked by a "centrifugal governor," whose task it is to correct all irregularities even before they become evident. And I know, too, that I won't be able to admire, as I have done many times before, the famous ending of *Origin of Species*, where natural selection is represented as one of the immutable laws of nature that make the planets spin, without remembering that Wallace, four years earlier, had already offered such a comparison:

> Granted the law and many of the most important facts of Nature could not have been otherwise, but are almost necessary deductions from it, as are the elliptic orbits of the planets from the law of gravitation.





Charles Darwin, Alfred Russel Wallace

Charles Darwin began traveling down the path towards evolutionary theory somewhat earlier than Alfred Russel Wallace, a fact that his generous colleague always acknowledged. And curiously, Darwin had had his own ape epiphany 20 years before Wallace, in the zoo at Regent's Park, where he encountered a young, newly acquired orang named Jenny. Darwin was entranced and came back several times. Orang Jenny had entered Darwin's life at a particularly opportune time: He had just fully embraced the idea of a common origin of all living things—and there Jenny was, in her cage, pouting and crying like a human child. In his notebook, Darwin charged those who didn't believe him to go and watch Jenny in action and then still insist on the "proud preeminence" of humans.

Queen Victoria went, and shrank back in horror. But where the queen beheld something "disagreeably human" in Jenny's countenance, Darwin found cause for liberating irony: "Man in his arrogance thinks himself a great work, worthy of the interposition of a deity. More humble and I believe true to consider him created from animals." (Note that Darwin's orang had a name, while Wallace's did not; at least, he never mentions one.)

Fascinatingly, Costa, in comparing Wallace's observations with Darwin's, also discovers the root of their later disagreements. Writing about birds' nests, for example, Wallace takes issue with the concept of instinct in helping us separate humans from animals. Birds are said to construct their nests, year after year, spring after spring, according to the same plan, while humans, exercising their reason, vary the style of the homes they build.

Not true! snorts Wallace, who had seen too many different nests to endorse such nonsense. If Darwin thought that instinct ruled both human and nonhuman animals, and that variations in the appearance of bird's nests were due to variations in the expression of inherited traits, Wallace had a more uplifting take on the situation. His view allowed for the role of learning and experience in acts normally thought to be instinctive: Birds, just like humans, will change their behavior over time in response to circumstances and as a result of information-sharing.

This makes sense. Today we know (to use a different example) that birds will modify their vocalizations in response to their environments, with some of them even adopting the songs of alien species. But Wallace, when he reached the end of his notebook, as if daunted by his own daring, backtracked again and clarified that, in his view, humans displayed no instinctive behavior at all: "What are very commonly called *instincts* in man"—such as the suckling of newborns—"are only habits." If Wallace had started out by implying that humans and animals were part of an organic continuum, he ended by asserting that they were, after all, different.

The ghost of that little orang from Borneo, helplessly resistant to her adoptive father's efforts to make her human—and thus, perchance, presentable to friends back in England—still casts her shadow over Wallace's theorizing. Whining, gasping, screaming, she extends her arms, searching for her mother's fur, and finds nothing to hold onto but a man's scraggly whiskers. ♦

B&A

Here Comes Trouble

The Internet is the mob's best friend.

BY SONNY BUNCH

After two years of reading and writing about those who live the politicized life—those who suffuse every aspect of their personas with politics and allow ideological considerations to trump all others—I'd finally found what I was looking for: I'd discovered the worst person in the world.

"Somebody getting fired is pretty bad," Jon Ronson tells his interviewee, Adria. She had taken a photo of a guy sitting behind her at a conference who had made a very slightly off-color joke to his friend. The essay that accompanied the photo caused the man (who has a wife and kids) to get fired. "I know you didn't *call* for him to be fired. But you must have felt pretty bad."

Adria's response was vexing:

> "Not too bad," she said. She thought more and shook her head decisively. "He's a white male. I'm a black Jewish female. He was saying things that could be inferred as offensive to me, sitting in front of him. I do have empathy for him but it only goes so far. If he had Down syndrome and he accidentally pushed someone off a subway that would be different. . . . If I had a spouse and two kids to support I certainly would not be telling 'jokes' like he was doing at a conference."

In other words, Adria believes that a mentally incapacitated person accidentally killing a man is less bad than someone possibly—possibly!—offending a person who might overhear a joke. Infuriated, I wanted to tweet my outrage. I wanted to set the mob on her, to let loose my right-thinking followers on this feckless and callow arbiter of social justice. I cannot imagine that Jon Ronson would have approved.

So You've Been Publicly Shamed
by Jon Ronson
Riverhead, 304 pp., $27.95

Sonny Bunch is managing editor of the Washington Free Beacon.

So You've Been Publicly Shamed focuses on the resurgence of humiliation as a form of punishment. "After a lull of almost 180 years . . . it was back in a big way," Ronson writes of shame. The stocks were out; ruinous Google results were in. Ronson opens by recounting an online shaming that he precipitated: A trio of researchers had appropriated his identity and given it to a spambot on Twitter, the sort of account that tweets borderline gibberish but confuses friends and strangers alike. Appealing to the mob, Ronson swamped the researchers with complaints until they relented and took the bot down.

Most modern-day shamings aren't so clean-cut, with a neatly packaged hero (Ronson), villain (the troika of academics), and goal (the removal of the bot). Rather, they are open-ended (when they aren't unending) and focused on personal destruction, culminating in calls for a person to be fired. Or murdered. Or raped. Or all three, with some bonus cruelties tossed in for kicks.

The *casus belli* for these crusades varies. Perhaps most famous is the tale of Justine Sacco, a public relations executive whose misunderstood joke about AIDS in Africa led to a Twitter storm the likes of which has rarely been seen. After firing off her sub-140-character joke, Sacco powered down her phone and embarked on a 12-hour flight. By the time she woke up, she was trending worldwide, receiving death threats—and out of a job.

It's fair to say that others were a bit more deserving of their shaming. Ronson's second and third chapters deal with the tale of Jonah Lehrer, the wunderkind at the *New Yorker* whose bestselling pop science books and columns were found to be rife with journalistic sins, both venial (self-plagiarism) and mortal (quote fabrication). Lehrer's destruction culminated in a speech at a journalism conference in which he offered a wholly unconvincing "apology" as hate-filled tweets, penned in real time, appeared on a screen behind him.

Ronson is employing a bit of rhetorical trickery here by conflating the ordeals of Justine and Jonah. One's career was ruined over a failed joke that had nothing to do with her profession; the other's was torn down because it was built on a foundation of fraud.

Then again, Ronson would likely argue that this is a false dichotomy: Shame is too powerful a punishment to be deployed willy-nilly. Sure, in certain cases—as with Rep. Ted Poe's decision as a judge to sentence criminals to (among other things) hold a placard outside the store they had robbed pronouncing their guilt—it can work. But letting loose a digital mob wielding embarrassment and emotional terror to rein in those who have trespassed against us is more likely to deaden the intended victims' souls than turn them into productive members of society.

That conclusion is debatable; not all shamings are created equal. What isn't debatable is the effect that the proliferation of Internet rage mobs inchoately ramping up their anger in the echo chambers of Facebook and Twitter has had on the culture: "We were creating a world where the smartest way to survive is to be bland," Ronson writes. It is the paradox of our time. There are more outlets than ever before with which to express ourselves to the world—Twitter and Tumblr and Tinder in the Ts alone—and at the same time, there is more incentive than ever before to keep our heads down and thoughts to ourselves, to pronounce our love of cat videos and little else. What an amazing, awful time to be alive. ♦

B&A

War of Words

The CIA and the postwar clash of ideas.

BY GABRIEL SCHOENFELD

Patriotic Betrayal
The Inside Story of the CIA's Secret Campaign to Enroll American Students in the Crusade Against Communism
by Karen M. Paget
Yale, 552 pp., $35

Some 60 million people perished in World War II. Before the embers of that terrible conflagration could cool, a new conflict loomed. Joseph Stalin's Russia was imposing a cruel dictatorship on the conquered peoples of Eastern Europe and threatening Western Europe by subversion and force of arms. By 1949, the Soviet Union had nuclear weapons in its arsenal. In the event of a clash between the superpowers, many millions more would die.

The United States and its allies began to check Soviet expansionism by following George Kennan's prescription for containment: The "application of counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points." One such shifting political point involved student politics. Here in the United States, student politics had seldom been important. But in some of the embattled countries of Europe, very different traditions prevailed, and student politics were at the center of events.

The Kremlin was ready and quick to exert influence in this arena. Its operatives seized effective control of various international student organizations, set up chapters in the satellite states, and tried to draw in young people from Africa, Asia, and elsewhere around the world. As in other aspects of the Cold War conflict, the United States sought

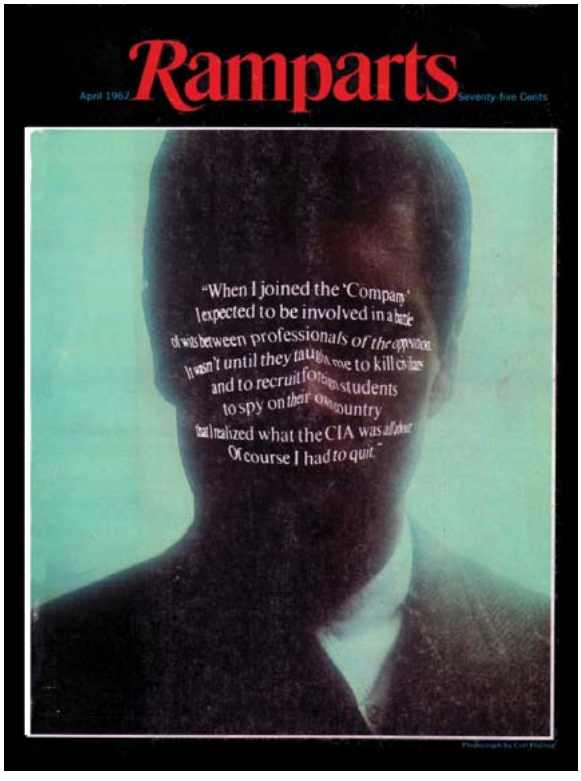
Gabriel Schoenfeld is the author of Necessary Secrets: National Security, the Media, and the Rule of Law.

to counter. Veterans of the Office of Strategic Services—our wartime intelligence body, incorporated by 1947 into the fledgling CIA—began to channel funds to (and influence) the international activities of American student groups, preeminently the National Student Association (NSA). The funding and controlling continued into the 1960s, until the operation was blown in a spectacular leak—the first of its kind—in an exposé published in *Ramparts* magazine.

Here, Karen M. Paget tells the story of the CIA's relationship with the National Student Association. As she notes in her preface, she has a personal—and bitter—connection to the subject. Her ex-husband served on the National Student Association's staff. They were both among those who knew about the CIA link and had been sworn to secrecy about it. Even after the *Ramparts* disclosure, she writes, "we kept quiet, cowed by the threat of prison terms if we divulged information." Decades later, Paget ceased being quiet and has now written a detailed history, drawn from extensive excavation of declassified documents supplemented by interviews with participants.

What kind of picture emerges? The story of the CIA's tie to the National Student Association has been told before, beginning, of course, with the *Ramparts* exposure. Paget's contribution, as she sees it, is to revise our understanding of what exactly it entailed. Though the operation has long been thought of as a CIA conduit to fund anti-Communist forces around the world, the agency was engaged in much more than the mere transmission of money. The CIA, Paget writes, "did not merely subsidize the NSA with a few travel grants," as the conventional narrative would have it. Rather, it "ran an *operation*, global in scope, which disguised and protected the hand of the U.S. government—the very definition of covert action."

Through a painstaking combing of documents, Paget succeeds in demonstrating that the CIA exercised a good deal more direction over the NSA than has commonly been believed. In addition to control of the organization's purse strings, it also was deeply involved in the selection of personnel and the formulation of its foreign policy planks. In and around the organization were three categories of people with varying degrees of engagement: the "unwitting," who did not know that they were pawns in someone else's game; the "witting" (like the author and her then-husband); and the CIA masters moving the pieces around the board.



The mechanism by which the machine functioned was a CIA-created body called the International Student Relations Seminar, which offered a six-week summer course to students interested in foreign policy. While in session, the CIA surreptitiously conducted background security checks, after which politically or personally undesirable candidates were weeded out and others, deemed sufficiently loyal and smart, were inducted into the "witting" category and positioned within the NSA.

The political agenda that these inductees were instructed to follow had nothing in common with the strident anticommunism of the 1950s. Quite the contrary. The CIA, in those years, was inhabited by a now-extinct breed of Cold War liberals. As the agency sought to make inroads in the contest with Moscow, it pressed the NSA to assume positions, such as support for Algerian independence, that were often at odds with America's allies—and sometimes in contradiction to the policies of the United States government. Increasingly, as Paget shows, the CIA was forced to deal with a paradox: "The more the NSA distanced itself from official U.S. foreign policy, the more it earned respect among overseas students." This tension was never resolved: It broke out into the open as the Vietnam war heated up, and it played a part in the program's eventual undoing.

Along the way to that end, Paget introduces us to a cast of Americans familiar to us today from other roles. One of the more notable witting student leaders was Gloria Steinem. The feminist icon, then just a bright recent graduate of Smith College, was an enthusiastic supporter of, and participant in, the covert action. Paget details her activities in Vienna in 1959, where she played a prominent role in the agency's campaign to undermine the Soviet-sponsored World Youth Festival. Joining her there, among other young anti-Communists, was Zbigniew Brzezinski, the future national security adviser, and Walter Pincus, then a cub reporter, today a decidedly liberal national-security correspondent for the *Washington Post*.

By the early 1960s, CIA manipulation of the NSA increasingly ran into difficulties. Unwitting conservatives were clashing with unwitting liberals within the organization, in a battle for control that neither side could win, given that the CIA/American

policy toward Fidel Castro's Cuba was a major source of discord. So, increasingly, was Vietnam. Paget tells the story of the endgame in close detail. The internal divisions that fractured the NSA also helped erode the ethos of secrecy among the witting. Quite haplessly, the CIA believed that it could ride out the storm and prevent any damaging leaks. They were wrong. The *Ramparts* article appeared in March 1967, and a huge quantity of something unmentionable hit the fan.

In light of the intense embarrassment and political damage caused by the *Ramparts* disclosure, what is the balance sheet? Paget's verdict is starkly negative. She acknowledges that, in its early years, the program had reasonable-sounding goals: "to deny the Soviets a monopoly position among the world's students, to build goodwill with foreign students, and to win adherents to democratic values." But as time wore on, she complains, a liberal student group became an "arm of a covert government organization" and a "straightforward operation to thwart Soviet influence at home and abroad grew, multiplied, and divided like a vast spider plant," as the NSA was dragooned into espionage.

It is undeniably true that the CIA link to the NSA—and a number of other domestic and foreign organizations—continued well past the point of usefulness, especially when weighed against the ever-present (and virtually inevitable) risk of exposure. The agency's blunder is not all that difficult to comprehend. Americans who lived through World War II and the terrors of the early Cold War were eager to aid their government in the fight against totalitarianism. If that entailed cooperating with the CIA, there was no shame in that.

By the early 1960s, that patriotic attitude, at least in some elite quarters, had begun to evanesce. In its place came an ever-more corrosive self-criticism. Thanks to a mixture of bureaucratic inertia and ideological blindness, the CIA continued on its merry way without realizing that America's domestic political order was shaking beneath its feet. The result was the *Ramparts* disaster.

CIA astigmatism should be condemned. But Paget extends her indictment quite a bit further. She wants readers to be shocked and appalled by the CIA's "crusade against communism." Thus, when the agency shunted aside students who were "advocates of cooperation with the Soviet Union," she complains that they were perpetrating a "witch hunt" in search of "political heresy." The witting student leaders cooperated because they "hated communism and trusted the CIA," and to them, in their naïveté, "good and evil seemed self-evident." She intones darkly that "intelligence gathering and espionage—despite subsequent CIA denials—were integral to [the program's] nature" and involved illicit and underhanded behavior.

Paget offers a prime example of such behavior: When young Americans, including Gloria Steinem, traveled to the World Youth Festival in Vienna on the CIA dime, they engaged in what she labels "dirty tricks." These entailed printing literature and lapel pins that, although "written in the festival idiom of 'peace and friendship,'" nevertheless "contained anticommunist messages." They also arranged for planes trailing banners reading "Free Hungary" to be flown over the city. Brzezinski and Pincus together unfurled an enormous banner bearing the word "freedom," draping it between two buildings. This was a dirty trick, indeed. Think of it! A banner bearing the word "freedom." Shocking. Appalling.

There are more such preposterous judgments scattered throughout the book. That is its most serious, but not its only, flaw. *Patriotic Betrayal* advertises itself as having the "aura of a John le Carré novel." That is a mischaracterization. The subject of intelligence is intrinsically fascinating; but reading Karen Paget as she traces the comings and goings of dozens upon dozens of long-forgotten student activists (the book comes equipped with a guide to its extensive "cast of characters") is only slightly more invigorating than reading the white pages of a telephone book. ♦

B&A

Gladly Teach?

A more rational division of power on campus.

BY JONATHAN MARKS

Last century, American professors accomplished a miracle. In a nation not known for its love of intellectuals, the American Association of University Professors declared, in 1915, that they were more than employees. Their relationship to trustees, who are legally responsible for governing universities, was akin to the relationship of Supreme Court justices to presidents. Trustees and administrators were to respect and defend the independence of professors, who, much as judges answered to the Constitution, answered to a socially sanctioned mission: the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge.

This unlikely view is now so widely accepted that even legislators retreat when "academic freedom" is invoked. As William G. Bowen and Eugene M.

Locus of Authority
The Evolution of Faculty Roles in the Governance of Higher Education
by William G. Bowen and Eugene M. Tobin
Princeton, 400 pp., $29.95

Jonathan Marks is professor of politics at Ursinus College.

Tobin explain here, professors eventually used their unique standing to fight for (and sometimes win) a voice in nearly every aspect of higher education governance. But the problem, as Bowen and Tobin see it, is that faculty members govern poorly. Faculty meetings teach us that the monks of scholarship depicted by the AAUP are as vain and selfish as everyone else. They are as inclined as anyone to love an opinion because it is theirs, as prone to let disputes over office space color disputes over the curriculum, and as likely to believe that what enables them to live comfortably just happens to be best for everyone.

Faculty Senate in session, University of Southern Maine (2014)

Small wonder that change rarely comes, as onetime president of the University of California Clark Kerr put it, "at the instigation of this group . . . as a collective body." Small wonder, too, that "the call for effectiveness in the use of resources [is] perceived by many inside the university world as the best current definition of evil." Bowen and Tobin go further: Clark Kerr gave considerable ground to faculty, whose resistance to change and insistence on deliberation and consensus yielded "a greater sense of order and stability." But Bowen and Tobin deny that "the most urgent need for today" is a greater sense of order and stability.

Rather, Bowen, president emeritus of Princeton, and Tobin, former president of Hamilton College, think that university administrators and faculty alike are fiddling while Rome burns. Their worries are familiar. Americans complete college at relatively low rates and take so long to do so that success is measured by completion in six years, rather than four. Costs remain staggeringly high, which means not only that students often graduate with significant debt but that universities will have to right themselves without spending more money. Viewing the landscape, Bowen and Tobin see mostly paralysis. A 2014 survey they draw on shows that although "many campus chief financial officers lack confidence in the sustainability of their colleges' business model," they also "seem loath to take cost-saving measures" because they fear "antagonizing key constituents, especially faculty."

When Bowen and Tobin, friends and knowers of higher education, worry about "the uncertainty one senses about higher education's resolve to reform from within," the heart sinks.

In two informative chapters, they give a brief history of the faculty role in academic governance, from the colonial era to today. The main takeaway is that this role has often changed to accommodate "market pressures," "financial realities," and "the changing needs of the society that higher education exists to serve." It is foolish to think that a "hundred-year-old system of governance practices" is right for today's troubles. A new governance system is needed for a world that is itself quite new.

Of the new things described in the remaining chapters, two stand out. First, we live in a "digital age," and technology, including online courses and even automated grading, can help lower costs without necessarily sacrificing educational quality. Unfortunately, faculty members, who think that how they teach should be up to them, obstruct the systemwide changes needed to take full advantage of new technologies. It is time, Bowen and Tobin assert, for faculty to "give up . . . any claim to sole authority over teaching methods of all kinds."

Second, the vast majority of faculty members today are neither tenured nor on the tenure track. In 1969, tenured and tenure-track faculty comprised 78.3 percent of all faculty; in 2009, that number was 33.5 percent. Rather than "bemoan reductions in their relative numbers" and long for a return to the past, tenured faculty should cooperate in defining a role for professional teaching staff who will receive benefits and opportunities for promotion but not break the bank. And however attached professors may be to mentoring graduate students, they need to ask, in the face of an oversupply of Ph.D.s, "How many [doctoral] programs does the country really need?" Has the emphasis of even midlevel institutions on research been driven by demand—or by a wish to have a piece of the prestige enjoyed by first-class research universities?

Most broadly, faculty members need to relinquish some of the gains they made in the last century and concede that remedies for the university's ills will come, albeit after consultation, mainly from the top down. "In today's digital world," Bowen and Tobin argue, the "ability to make decisions promptly" is more important

PORTLAND PRESS HERALD / GETTY IMAGES

than it has ever been, and "nimbleness is a real virtue." Although they remind us that faculty should be consulted, their overwhelming message is that "decision-making authority needs to be located unambiguously in the hands of senior administrators."

Professors will be tempted to respond that, as much as they would have liked to exercise real power, they have had very little leverage. The job market in many academic fields has been soft for a quarter-century, and as Bowen and Tobin themselves say, administrators don't just cave in to the demands of people who depend on them for a livelihood. It's not faculty members who hired a new army of administrators, or who built resort accommodations, or who took on dangerously high levels of debt. Considering their hand in the problems that beset higher education—which have worsened even as the power of professors has diminished—administrators are going to need a better message for faculty than "surrender, Dorothy."

But that response, however just, is too easy. Bowen and Tobin are right that few can afford to be romantics about higher education. Faculty members need to embrace leadership, rather than disparage it as "corporatism," if they are to play a constructive role in overcoming the great challenges most colleges and universities now face. That does not rule out the possibility that leaders will sometimes need to be led, or at least taught. Those who take Bowen and Tobin as their models will say, with a straight face, that we need "organizational machinery that can facilitate an all-encompassing set of strategic decisions that allocate human and capital resources effectively and provide a compelling set of incentives for faculty to pursue system-wide goals."

Faculty members who take the academic vocation seriously do not need to be monks of scholarship to remind the leaders who utter such limp sentences (which have nothing in particular to do with education) that the professors of 1915 were right to think that colleges and universities have a distinctive and distinguished mission. ♦

B&A

A Leading Lady

The 70 years (and counting) of Angela Lansbury on stage and screen. **BY TARA BARNETT**

Dame Angela Brigid Lansbury is presently headlining a tour of Noël Coward's *Blithe Spirit*, the play that won her a fifth Tony in 2009. She plays Madame Arcati, an eccentric medium who conjures up a novelist's dead wife to the tune of Irving Berlin's "Always," much to the comedic exasperation of his (living) second wife. As Lansbury crosses the United States, she leaves in her wake a renewed flurry of interest in her lengthy career. The 89-year-old has stated that this will be her final tour; and while she is not retiring from acting, much of the world will no longer have the privilege of seeing Dame Angela tread the boards live.

As such, it may be time to remember the eternal life and endless youth of pixels and silver halide, where we can always visit Lansbury as she walks us through a masterclass in every archetype a woman can play. For, while Lansbury is perhaps best known to American audiences for playing the warm-but-sharp mystery author Jessica Fletcher, who is inexplicably plagued by murders wherever she goes, she has in her lifetime filled many very different roles. Angela Lansbury is a character actor who has fought hard for breadth in her career and has never been merely a pretty face—though she has played plenty of those.

In her youth, she ran the gamut of seductive roles. Perhaps most famously, she played the actress Sibyl Vane in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945), who is tested and found to be disappointingly mortal out of the spotlight by the cruel Dorian. In Cecil B. DeMille's *Samson and Delilah* (1949), she played the older sister of Delilah, Semadar, the Philistine beauty Samson first desires. In *Gaslight* (1944), her first film role, she played the disdainful but seductive young cockney maid who furthers the "gaslighting" of Ingrid Bergman.

EVERETT COLLECTION

'The Picture of Dorian Gray' (1945)

Then there are her innumerable caring, guiding, mothering roles. In *Blue Hawaii* (1961), Lansbury played the comic, nagging mother of Elvis Presley, though she was a mere 10 years his senior. She also played the title role in a charming television musical, *Mrs. Santa Claus* (1996), and provided the voice of the Dowager Empress in the surprisingly tolerable *Anastasia* (1997). Lansbury is a beloved figure in the Disney cosmos. She is the voice identifiable in an instant to millions of children as Mrs. Potts from *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) and the stern but kind witch Miss Price from *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (1971). In her Christmas concert with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir

Tara Barnett is a writer in Washington.

in 2002, she expounded on this aspect of her career: In these roles, she reassures us that we are "safe and loved, and that good will triumph over evil, and right will prevail."

Of course, that is not always the message her distinctive voice has given; she has a well-exercised villainous streak as well. In *Nanny McPhee* (2005), encumbered by a latex proboscis, Lansbury played Aunt Adelaide, a strict and frankly evil archetype of a villain. And in *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962), in what is surely her most villainous role, she played Mrs. Iselin, the cold and remarkable operator who surrenders her own son to the cause.

For all these parts, and many more, Angela Lansbury was awarded an honorary Academy Award in 2013. This was, presumably, a consolation for the Emmy and Oscar slights of the past—although she seems to fare just fine with the Golden Globes, having won six thus far.

With five Tony awards as well, it's difficult to say that Angela Lansbury lacks recognition. Indeed, some (me, for example) would say that Lansbury's work on stage is her strongest. And as every member of every high school drama club is aware, her stage work thankfully lives on in audio recordings, filmed performances, and YouTube clips. While B-roll footage of *Gypsy* (1973) exists for those devoted enough to scour the Internet, the recording of the cast production is the best way to experience Lansbury's turn as Rose. To experience her glamorous appearances in *Mame*, fanatics may choose from the recording that won her a Tony (1966) or grainy footage from the revival two decades later. A 1982 production of *Sweeney Todd* (in which she originated the role of Mrs. Lovett four years earlier) is preserved in its entirety on DVD.

Angela Lansbury's life has not been without complexity. Her family came to America from London in 1940 to escape the Blitz. She studied acting in New York, and then moved to Los Angeles, where she got her first film roles with MGM. She has spoken publicly about the death of her father in her childhood, the dissolution of her first marriage, the brightness of her marriage to Peter Shaw, and her children's (short-lived) drug abuse.

Such episodes, of course, are never as simple in life as they appear on film, and the best actors reveal the complexities that lie one layer below the milestones in our lives. That is what Lansbury brings to her roles. She has said that she has a "God-given gift" for acting—and while this is true, no doubt, experience adds depth to any talent. While more than a few of Lansbury's roles could be reduced to parody, she plays every character with authenticity and insight. Whether sleuth or saint, vamp or villain, she is unmistakably real.

Lansbury now has the luxury of a professional victory lap: The audience applauds her entrances and even her benign comedic gestures. But Madame Arcati, the oddball medium of *Blithe Spirit* who could so easily be played as slapstick, is granted a sense of self through Angela Lansbury's understanding of her character. As she has said, that's the way she *has* to play her. ♦

B&A

It Takes a Village

The 'auteur theory' meets the life and work of Charles Walters. **BY JOHN PODHORETZ**

Charles Walters
The Director Who Made Hollywood Dance
by Brent Phillips
Kentucky, 368 pp., $40

Fifty years ago, a wildly heated cultural battle broke out between two movie critics: a New Yorker named Andrew Sarris and a San Franciscan named Pauline Kael. Sarris was the chief American expositor of the "auteur theory," which emerged from French film magazines in the 1950s and asserted that the director of a movie should be considered its author. Kael considered the theory utter balderdash and went at it with the take-no-prisoners gusto and snap-crackle-pop prose that would mark her as the best popular-culture critic of her or any other time.

They traded barbs and fired at each other in incendiary essays for years, if not decades. Kael went so far as to say that she thought Sarris was corrupting America's youth and that his work should not be taught in colleges (which it shouldn't, as film should not be taught in colleges, but that's a matter for another day). And yet, from the distance of half a century, it is clear the two didn't disagree quite as much as they thought they did. Both treated a film's director as the most important creative force on a movie, found commonalities and themes in the work of their favored directors over time, and considered the movies a form capable of achieving a level of art previously defined only by important novels and plays.

But Sarris was a fundamentalist whose work was so committed to the auteur theory that it discounted the roles played by other, arguably more skilled, artisans working in the director's service: the editor, the screenwriter, the cinematographer, the performers. Kael was more of a mainline Protestant; she accepted the director as God but found Sarris's artistic theocracy false and off-putting.

And they were, and are, both very wrong. That much is made startlingly clear in this new biography, which tells the story of a now-obscure filmmaker who was wildly successful during the two decades (from the 1940s to the 1960s) he made A-list pictures yet never

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

made much of an impression (Sarris called him "likable but elusive").

Charles Walters was a wonderful dancer who became a minor Broadway star in the 1930s before making a transition into choreography. He proved to have such an intuitive eye for how to stage and photograph dance on film that he made the leap into the director's chair just as his studio, MGM, was entering the golden age of the American movie musical. He made a string of hits, notably *Good News* (1947), *Easter Parade* (1948), *Lili* (1953), and *High Society* (1956).

He was known for two qualities. First, he helmed numbers and scenes with high energy and youthful enthusiasm, like the amazing "Varsity Drag" sequence that closes *Good News* and the wonderful "Well, Did You Evah" duet shared by Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra in *High Society*. Second, he created iconic moments for enduring stars. Sinatra endures in our collective cultural memory casually and comfortably walking toward the camera in a gray suit with a tilted fedora as he sings the title song for *The Tender Trap* (1955). And Judy Garland spent the last 20 years of her tragically shortened life reliving the two great moments Walters staged for her: the happy-hobo number called "A Couple of Swells" she performed with Fred Astaire in *Easter Parade* and the eye-popping, tuxedo-on-the-top-tights-on-the-bottom solo called "Get Happy" from *Summer Stock* (1950).

By all accounts a lovely and mild-mannered man of whom no one ever said a bad word, Walters was not a terribly interesting person, though he lived quietly but openly in a gay relationship with his agent for nearly 50 years. What was most interesting about him, this biography inadvertently reveals, was the work for which he was *not* credited. For while Walters never made a movie that endures as a whole on its own, it turns out that he was responsible for the most memorable sequences in several classic films. Ironically, those same films helped establish what now appears to be the largely false legend of director Vincente Minnelli. Those films were *Meet Me in St. Louis* (1944), *Ziegfeld Follies* (1945), and *Gigi* (1958).

Walters staged every musical number but one in *Meet Me in St. Louis*, arguably the first of the golden-age MGM musicals. That means he conceived the action, designed the movement, and planned the interaction of the camera and performers. Two of those numbers in particular—"Under the Bamboo Tree" and, especially, "The Trolley Song"—are extraordinary, and Walters's ability to build them to a show-stopping crescendo helped define the bright and energetic MGM style.

SNAP / REX / NEWSCOM

Charles Walters (behind the camera), Judy Garland in 'Summer Stock' (1950)

The best number in *Ziegfeld Follies*, which is a plotless series of songs and sketches, is called "A Great Lady Has an Interview," in which Garland plays a self-infatuated Hollywood diva. It was her high-water mark as a comic performer, and it turns out that the scene was conceived and designed by Walters, though Minnelli nominally filmed it. The fact that Minnelli got the credit was a matter of bitterness to Walters. And yet Walters would step in again, 12 years later, when Minnelli was at the helm of *Gigi*, the movie that won the director an Oscar. It's stunning to learn that it was Walters who was responsible for "The Night They Invented Champagne" and "She Is Not Thinking of Me" and whose weeks of reshoots helped reshape *Gigi* to such a degree that an initial cut preview audiences found dull became the film that would sweep the 1959 Academy Awards.

Walters did fill-in work on other pictures, too. The very fact that he could have played so central a role in the direction of the films of others is the most convincing evidence I've yet found that the auteur theory is utter rubbish—and that the director-centric mode of film criticism (in which I, too, have indulged in my time) is highly problematic. Moviemaking is, quite simply, a communitarian art form. In other words, Sarris was a fundamentalist Baptist and Kael a mainline Protestant when they both should have been Jewish. (Well, Kael was, in point of fact; but you get my meaning.)

As for Charles Walters, the glossy MGM style of filmmaking in which he excelled fell out of favor by the mid-1960s, and he simply stopped getting hired. He concluded his career making a few television programs with his old friend Lucille Ball, a somewhat depressing ending for a man who had once been nominated for an Oscar and who had made his studio fortunes for many years. His biographer notes that other directors spent a lot of money on press agents, but the retiring Walters never put his own best foot forward. It's amusing to think the real source of the auteur theory was a press release. ♦

"With the deadline nearing for international talks on constraining Iran's nuclear program, Yukiya Amano, director general of the IAEA, said in an interview that Iran has replied to just one of a dozen queries about 'possible military dimensions' of past nuclear activities."

—Washington Post, *March 24, 2015*

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Kerry hails landmark deal with Iranians

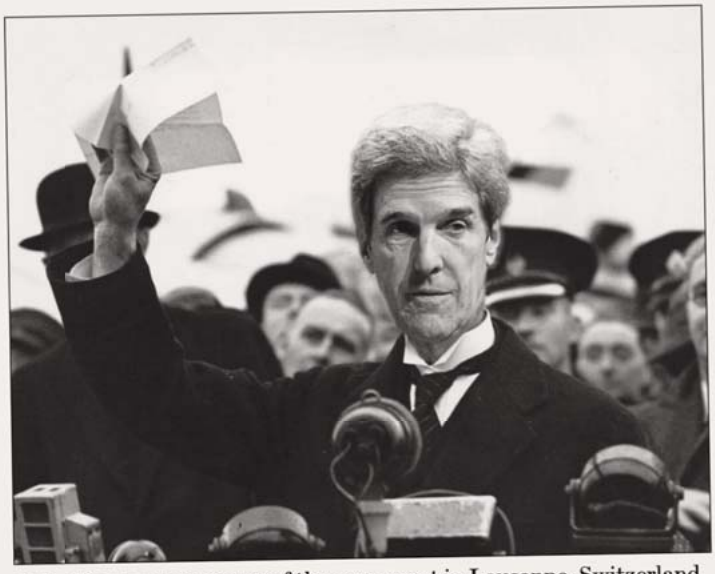
'NOT SINCE INDIANS SOLD MANHATTAN'

Agreement contingent on Nantucket boat ride, women

BY PETER WARNE

LAUSANNE, Switzerland — Despitc concerns by the International Atomic Energy Agency that Iran has not been forthcoming with regard to its nuclear intentions, Secretary of State John Kerry was able to push through a deal with the Islamic Republic. "My Iranian friends have come a long way," said Kerry, "and I believe that this nuclear agreement signals peace for our [inaudible]." His Iranian counterpart, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, added, "We are not your friends."

The director general of the IAEA, Yukiya Amano, earlier expressed frustration that out of a dozen queries, the Iranians only replied to one. Secretary of State Kerry, however, said that the one reply was "good enough for me." According to Kerry, the email was a response to an invitation to breakfast. "Our people needed to know if we should save them a table," he explained. "I mean, are we a table for 5 or 10? It's kind of a big deal because of the wait time."



John Kerry waves a copy of the agreement in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Foreign Minister Zarif said that the agreement came with conditions, including a trip on Kerry's yacht to Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, and Block Island this summer. The secretary has promised to pick up the bar tab at each destination, personally pilot the yacht while wearing a captain's hat, and allow himself to be called Skipper. "But on this boat trip," warned Zarif, "there had better be women. If I ever have to say, 'Where are the women?' all bets are off!"

For this reason, Secretary Kerry explained, the yacht will be picking up another passenger with much expertise in this area. A resident of Chappaqua, New York,

CIGAR AFICIONADO ON A6

Investigators retrieve deleted emails to Hillary

Gowdy asks, 'Who is this Lane Bryant?'