



the weekly
Standard

NOVEMBER 30, 2015 • \$4.95

**THE
LONG WAR
CONTINUES**

**STEPHEN E. HAYES
& THOMAS JOSCELYN**
on our feckless president

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL
on European insecurity

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‘Nuanced’ and ‘Symbolic’ Protests

Readers are no doubt aware of the spreading contagion of public demonstrations—largely under the rubric of “Black Lives Matter”—that has agitated campuses from coast to coast. Thanks to modern electronic technology, the spectacle of a Yale college master being cursed to his face (“Who the f— hired you?”), students in the Dartmouth library confronted by screaming radicals (“Filthy white bitch!”), and vandals occupying the Princeton president’s office (“All of this is mine!”) have gone viral on the Internet, as they should.

Anyone tempted to underestimate the bullying character of the movement, or to overestimate the moral courage of academic administrators, should watch the videos—and more than once.

On the one hand, *THE SCRAPBOOK* is horrified by the hysteria and sheer philistine fury of the demonstrators. Those of us old enough to remember scenes from China’s Cultural Revolution of the 1960s half-expect these hapless deans and vice-chancellors for diversity to be pinioned and wrapped in Maoist placards before confessing their sins and being beaten.

On the other hand, *THE SCRAPBOOK* cannot think of a class of scholars and pedagogues who more richly deserve

to reap what they have sown. As might be expected, no amount of groveling has spared them—bullies are expert at recognizing weakness, after all—and some of the groveling has been especially impressive. Dartmouth’s vice provost for student affairs, one Inge-Lise Ameer, apologized profusely to Dartmouth’s library mob, and then—mindful, perhaps, of public perceptions—added this: “There’s a whole conservative world out there that’s not being very nice.”

In that sense, of course, Ameer may well be right: Just as, a generation ago, campus violence and radical insurrection turned America rightward, it could happen again. The Republican presidential candidate who points to this disruption of higher learning, and the feckless behavior of faculties and deans, may find a potent issue. Which makes a recent front-page story in the *Washington Post* more mysterious than usual.

Headlined “How Black Lives Matter became a campus force” (Nov. 18), and written by reporter Sandhya Somashekhar, it can only be described as a long-form version of a Black Lives Matter press release. For, according to the *Post*, screaming racial epithets and intimidating students in libraries is the work not of a

mob but of committed “activists” who are “clamoring for an overhaul of the nation’s criminal-justice system and other social changes aimed at bettering the lives of African Americans.”

The casual reader might believe that bullying tactics, physical assaults, and blackmail demands are inimical to the life of the mind; but according to the *Post*, the casual reader would be wrong. “Campus activists,” it explains, “tend to have more nuanced and even symbolic concerns”—which might surprise students in college to learn, who might also wish to study unmolested by “nuanced and even symbolic” violence.

So *THE SCRAPBOOK* is left with one technical question: In a business environment increasingly hostile to newspapers like the *Post*, what were Sandhya Somashekhar and her editors thinking? If there is one movement in America that daily demonstrates its contempt for a free press, not to say free speech itself, as well as its commitment to coercion, it is the campus division of Black Lives Matter. And yet the *Washington Post* casts a wholly uncritical eye in its direction, and in propagandistic language—on the front page of an organ it expects to sell to people who must wonder what they’re buying. ♦

Wilson’s Progeny

Finally there’s a protest by campus radicals *THE SCRAPBOOK* can sympathize with. Students at Princeton want to remove the name of the school’s most famous alumnus, President Woodrow Wilson, most notably from the university’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public Policy and International Affairs. Students object to Wilson’s racism and—you know what—he was guilty as charged. But perhaps this particular conflict is best understood another way: Idiot student progressives are now protesting the found-

ing father of idiotic progressivism.

In that regard, the essay by the campus’s Black Justice League justifying their cause is priceless. “We owe nothing to people who are deeply flawed,” the essay says. “There is an impulsive reaction to want to ignore uncomfortable or questionable legacies. . . . By not recognizing the importance of this discourse, the University is telling its marginalized community and the outside world that it values its bleached-clean version of history over the prolonged discomfort and alienation of students of color. This erasure is especially dangerous in the present context of state-

sanctioned violence against Black people that prolongs this genocide.”

To be clear, the “erasure” they’re referring to here is the ignoring of mostly petty concerns of elite students, not the literal erasure of Woodrow Wilson’s name. But it’s the comment that “we owe nothing to people who are deeply flawed” that’s especially rich. In contrast to the Judeo-Christian view and classical philosophy, the foundation of modern progressivism is Wilson’s view that human nature is “Darwinian.” That is, we have evolved beyond notions such as original sin, self-interest, and other beliefs that we’re all “deeply

flawed.” As such, Wilson believed constitutional restraints were antiquated means of preventing an obviously benevolent government, led by a progressive elite, from unleashing its nearly unlimited capacity to make our lives better. At one point, he actually lamented that “some citizens of this country have never got beyond the Declaration of Independence.”

As for Wilson, he certainly had got beyond the inalienable rights granted by higher and more righteous authorities than himself. Everyone is fond of quoting Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.’s admonition that you can’t shout fire in a crowded theater. Few people bother to mention that Holmes’s line comes from a ruling where he decided that a man posting flyers in opposition to the draft in World War I had violated the 1917 Espionage Act. Indeed, thousands of Americans did hard time because good Wilsonian progressives decided opposing the government in public was a crime, particularly when those objections awkwardly highlighted the fact that Wilson had gotten elected on a promise of keeping America out of the war in Europe. And in case you’re wondering, this is the same 1917 Espionage Act that Obama invoked last year to justify the Department of Justice snooping on the Associated Press newsroom and Fox News chief Washington correspondent James Rosen. When it comes to respecting the rights of their fellow citizens, it seems the more progressive presidents evolve, the more their basic impulses stay the same.

In particular, you’d think today’s campus radicals should appreciate how directly they’re following in Wilson’s footsteps. After some dissident students at Amherst College recently hung posters on campus that read “in memoriam of the true victim of the [University of] Missouri Protests: Free Speech,” a group calling itself “Amherst Uprising” wanted the students responsible for the posters to go through the student disciplinary process and “be required to attend extensive training for racial and cultural competency.”

Higher education these days is



something of a misnomer. Far from rectifying historical injustice, the current crop of student activists should start by rectifying their own historical ignorance. ♦

Fecal Freak-Out

No round-up of campus lunacy this week would be complete without a mention of the farcical incident at Vanderbilt University. It was described so well by our colleague Michael Warren at weeklystandard.com (which you should visit often!) that *THE SCRAPOOK* is simply going to reprint his account.

It was a story too good to check. The day after some 200 activist

students at Vanderbilt University marched into the administration building to deliver their demands for more diversity and inclusivity to the school’s chancellor, the reactionary forces on campus struck back in the most disgusting way possible.

The school’s police department, reported the *Vanderbilt Hustler*, was “responding to a call reporting a bag of feces that was left at the front door of the Bishop Joseph Johnson Black Cultural Center” sometime Tuesday. The *Hustler* quotes the center’s director, Frank Dobson, who urged caution on assigning blame. “There was indeed feces left on the porch. However, Vanderbilt police are investigating the matter and do not

wish to label the incident until I get further evidence,” said Dobson.

But the student activist group behind Monday’s protest had a different initial reaction on its Facebook page, as the *Hustler* noted:

On the Hidden Dore Facebook page, the organization released an official statement, saying that it was “appalled to announce that our demonstration yesterday was met this morning with a vile act.”

It went on to underscore the BCC’s historical importance as a safe haven for the campus’ African American students, noting, “The violation of a place that in many ways is the sole home for many Black students is deplorable.”

“As many of us sit in grief, recognize that these types [of] actions are what we speak of when we note the reality of exclusion and isolation of students of color and specifically Black students on our campus,” the statement said.

The act as described by the group was reminiscent of the infamous swastika painted on a bathroom wall with human feces at the University of Missouri. It seemed no campus was safe.

The original Facebook post was soon deleted. Why? It turns out there was more to the story than racism at Vanderbilt. In an update to the story, the *Hustler* reported the police department had concluded its investigation and found “no criminal or malicious intent” behind the bag of feces. “The investigation found the bag was inadvertently left by an individual with a service dog who was authorized to be in the building who could not find a trash can near the entrance and did not wish to take the bag inside,” read a university statement.

The student who left her dog’s bag later spoke with the *Hustler*:

Junior Stephanie Zundel, who is visually impaired and assisted by a service dog, clarified that on her way inside the Black Cultural Center to work on a group project, she was unable to find a trash can to dispose of her dog’s waste and left it outside.

According to Zundel, this is the typical protocol for handling service dog feces when a garbage can cannot be found.

“The one thing that guide dog school trains every student to do is that if they don’t know where the garbage can is, you still always pick it up and put it in the bag, that way no one steps in it,” Zundel said. “But then you leave it outside of a building. That way someone else who sees a garbage can put it in there.”

Zundel said that VUPD contacted her and asked if she had a service dog accompanying her on the premises, and if the dog had left behind some fecal matter. She believed VUPD reached out to her after seeing camera footage of her and her dog.

In place of the original Hidden Dore Facebook post condemning the “vile” retaliatory act came a new statement. “It has recently come to our attention that we were absolutely misinformed about a situation that happened this morning at Vanderbilt’s Black Cultural Center, where a black bag filled with fecal matter was left at the front doorstep of the place that feels most like home to many Black students on campus. We have discovered that the fecal matter was not left at the BCC by a vindictive member of this community,” read the new post.

Here’s more:

Given the recent elevation in polarization on this campus in the aftermath of our silent protest this Monday, evidenced by tough personal exchanges and anonymous targeted posts, it was too easy for us to believe that a member of our community would stoop low enough to maliciously leave fecal matter at the Black Cultural Center. Nonetheless, we apologize to the Vanderbilt community for jumping to conclusions and for any personal trauma caused by the quick escalation of this situation. We have personally contacted Stephanie Zundel and apologized for our reaction to the nature of this incident. At this moment, we recognize that the needs of students with disabilities on this campus are also often marginalized, and there are improvements to be made to make the perfect Vanderbilt experience accessible for all of its students.

In 2015, this is what campus hysteria looks like. ♦

the weekly Standard

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The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of Clarity Media Group, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-274-7293. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 421203, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1203. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-386-597-4378 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, \$4.95. Back issues, \$4.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright 2014, Clarity Media Group. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of Clarity Media Group.



The Fairness Doctrine

Having a decidedly anti-romantic view of college, I find myself not entirely opposed to the student radicals besieging campuses across the country.

Once upon a time, universities transmitted knowledge and formed the minds and characters of young adults. But that ended long before I arrived at Johns Hopkins in the mid-1990s.

By then, the university had been transformed into a retail outlet selling, at the end of four years' probation, a credential that promised entrée to professional life. This might sound like an invitation to bacchanalia, and in some instances it was. But in general, once you untether the university from the transmission of knowledge, the institution becomes little more than a forum for the exercise of power.

In my experience, the new arrangement was not especially pleasant. At Hopkins, at least, the result was a war of all against all.

Because they handed out the grades—and the point of college had become grades—the professors came to view students with the contempt of a demigod annoyed by mosquitoes. In my sophomore year, one chemistry professor came in a day after an exam, looked out at the 200 or so of us in the auditorium, and announced, without a trace of irony, “If I could put you all in the toilet and flush it, I would. Because that’s what you are. Crap.” He then turned to the chalkboard and commenced his lecture.

No one went running to the dean, because this was pretty much how the students and professors at Hopkins got on. In the *New Yorker*, Jelani Cobb frets that today’s college students feel like “tenants” instead of “stakeholders.” At Hopkins, we felt like inmates.

Being tenants would have been a step up in the world.

Another example: During my junior year, my mother became ill and required surgery. As the oldest kid in a divorced family and the only one with a driver’s license, I had to go home for a week and take her to and from the hospital, buy groceries, get my siblings to school, and whatnot.

During the week I was to be away, I had only one school assignment, a



weekly worksheet for my biochemistry class. These were handed out on Mondays and due back on Fridays. Our instructions—the professor was very clear about this—were that we were to place completed worksheets in a box outside the lecture hall no later than 10 o’clock on Friday morning. To enforce this, a teaching assistant with a watch would stand over the box and close it at precisely 10. Any assignment not in the box was given a zero, which made it nearly impossible to get above a C for the course.

A few weeks before my mother’s surgery, I went to see the professor, told him about my situation, and asked if he could give me the worksheet early so I could finish it before

leaving school. He told me this would be unfair to the other students.

I then asked him if I could get an extension and complete the worksheet after I got back. This was also not possible, he said, because of fairness.

Somewhat exasperated, I suggested that if I could get another student to fax the worksheet to me, I could fax it back completed to his office. I’ll never forget his response: “You could do that, I suppose. But I’m not sure how it would help you. The sheet has to be in the box outside the lecture hall by 10 o’clock.”

I recount this not as a sob story, but to indicate the general power dynamic in my time.

And to explain why I’m not completely unsympathetic to students who have used the pretext of social grievance to invert the power dynamic. It gives me a touch of pleasure to think that the petty tyrants of the university world now have to step carefully, even if the charges against them are ludicrous and the agitators illiberal.

The principal business of the university is still power, though the power has shifted. This past week, Hopkins president Ronald Daniels sent out a university-wide email designed to preserve him from the fate of the president of the University of Missouri, who had just been shown the door. It seems that even though JHU founder Johns Hopkins was a prominent abolitionist, the school suffers from numerous racist defects, according to campus protesters.

Among the programs Daniels has instituted to save his job are mandatory training on “identity, privilege, and social justice” and “Baltimore Day” to highlight the “vibrancy” of the city and “address concerns about the perpetuation of negative images of Baltimore.” Also, he “suggested” that incoming freshmen read a book by Ta-Nehisi Coates.

Meet the new boss, same as the old boss.

JONATHAN V. LAST

Unspeakable Kerry

Speaking in Paris on November 17, Secretary of State John Kerry made what are already infamous comments about the fight against terrorists and terrorism. He spoke to the staff and families of the U.S. embassy in Paris, and his remarks deserve quoting at some length—because they display a deep misunderstanding of what we are up against and how it must be fought. In State Department lingo his remarks would be called “deeply troubling.” In normal English usage, they are astonishing and unforgivable. Here are two paragraphs.

There’s something different about what happened from *Charlie Hebdo*, and I think everybody would feel that. There was a sort of particularized focus and perhaps even a legitimacy in terms of—not a legitimacy, but a rationale that you could attach yourself to somehow and say, okay, they’re really angry because of this and that. This Friday was absolutely indiscriminate. It wasn’t to aggrieve one particular sense of wrong. It was to terrorize people. It was to attack everything that we do stand for. That’s not an exaggeration. It was to assault all sense of nationhood and nation-state and rule of law and decency, dignity, and just put fear into the community and say, “Here we are.” And for what? What’s the platform? What’s the grievance? That we’re not who they are? They kill people because of who they are and they kill people because of what they believe. And it’s indiscriminate. They kill Shia. They kill Yazidis. They kill Christians. They kill Druze. They kill Ismaili. They kill anybody who isn’t them and doesn’t pledge to be that. And they carry with them the greatest public display of misogyny that I’ve ever seen, not to mention a false claim regarding Islam. It has nothing to do with Islam; it has everything to do with criminality, with terror, with abuse, with psychopathism—I mean, you name it.

And that’s why when some people—I even had a member of my own family email me and say, “More bombs aren’t the solution,” they said. Well, in principle, no. In principle, if you can educate and change people and provide jobs and make a difference if that’s what they want, sure. But in this case, that’s not what’s happening. This is just raw terror to set up a caliphate to expand and expand and spread one notion of how you live and who you have to be. That is the antithesis of everything that brought our countries together—why Lafayette came to America to help us find liberty, and all of the evolutions of the struggles of France, the governments, to find the *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, and make it real in life every day. And all of that peacefulness was shattered in the span of an hour-plus on Friday night when people were going about their normal business. And they purposefully chose a concert, chose restaurants, chose places where people engage in social dialogue and exchange, and they object to that too.



Secretary Kerry was apparently speaking off the cuff, so he was not reciting some speechwriter’s words; he was voicing his own thoughts. These thoughts are in many ways incoherent, which is both a cause and an effect of an administration policy that is incoherent. A day later, after criticism of what he had said, Kerry read a statement to a Washington audience holding, “There are no grounds of history, religion, ideology, grievance, psychology, politics, economic disadvantage, or personal ambition that will ever justify the murder of children, the kidnapping and the rape of teenage girls, or the slaughter of unarmed civilians. . . . [T]his kind of atrocity can really never be rationalized; these kinds of actions can never be excused; and they have to be opposed with every fiber of our being. They have to be stopped.” This is nice, but reflects careful bureaucratic consideration of how to reverse an error—in this case, the error of speaking his mind. What Kerry said in Paris deserves more attention because it tells us what he thinks rather than what his communications staff believes he must say.

Before getting to the major problem with what Kerry said, note that he repeated the ludicrous line that what ISIS is doing “has nothing to do with Islam.” We are dealing with a group that calls itself the Islamic State and recruits Sunnis from Muslim communities across the world. The group then imposes its version of *sharia* on territory it conquers. Its every statement and its entire *raison d’être* are permeated with its view of what true Islam requires. So Kerry’s statement that this “has nothing to do with Islam” is devoid of meaning. Presumably he is trying to say that their version is not “real” Islam, but of course he has absolutely no authority, as an American politician and a Christian, to make such a judgment. Those who have traveled to Syria and Iraq to

join ISIS are obviously motivated in whole or in part by their understanding of their religion, Islam. Unless Kerry understands that all this terror *does* have something to do with Islam, the policies he advocates and implements are doomed from the start.

The more shocking message he delivered was that the November killings in Paris are more terrible than those of January. Why? Because the earlier killings, of cartoonists and Jews, were . . . were what? First he said the previous attacks “had a legitimacy in terms of” and then stopped himself. Even Kerry realized that what he was about to say was indefensible: that they had a legitimacy in terms of the beliefs of the attackers, who were offended after all by nasty cartoons of Muhammad. And as to the Jews, well, perhaps the attackers were offended by the mere existence of Jews, or perhaps in Kerry’s misguided view they were deeply moved by the real or imagined plight of Palestinians.

Kerry himself has repeatedly linked Islamic terror to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict—and come very close to justifying it. At Harvard last month he had this reaction to the terror spree of Palestinians stabbing Jews in and near Jerusalem: “There’s been a massive increase in settlements over the course of the last years. Now you have this violence because there’s a frustration that is growing.” Like his statement that ISIS and its terror have “nothing to do with Islam,” this one was also plainly false. There has been no “massive increase in settlements,” something the statistics show quite clearly and that Kerry might be expected to know. But the facts were not in his head. Instead, there was a theory of the case in there: Palestinians commit terror because Israelis build settlements.

In the Paris case, there’s a theory inside his head as well, and it isn’t so very distant from what he said at Harvard. The Paris attacks of January had a “rationale that you could attach yourself to somehow and say, okay, they’re really angry because of this and that.” Sure. They were angry about cartoons that criticized or lampooned Muhammad, and about Jews. Completely understandable, it seems. But not these new attacks: This was different. “It was to attack everything that we do stand for. That’s not an exaggeration.”

It seems that to Kerry, when people kill journalists and Jews, that is not an attack on “everything that we do stand for,” whereas attacking a restaurant and stadium and a concert hall is. A bit odd: Do we stand for good food and sports and music more than we stand for freedom of the press and freedom of religion? Kerry seems confused here, but we get the point. He is saying that it’s understandable when people murder innocents because they have a particular reason to be mad at them, but now the terrorists are attacking all of us. He contrasts, perhaps without even knowing what he was saying, last “Friday night when people were going about their normal business” with that other Friday night in January, when some people were instead out preparing for Shabbat.

Few of us are cartoonists and few of us shop in kosher delis, but any of us at all might be a target now. So now to Kerry this is an attack on everything we do stand for, which apparently may not include protecting religious minorities and journalists, who perhaps are to blame in some sense for their own troubles. Somehow it is far worse in his mind to attack “all sense of nationhood and nation-state.” This is bizarre in the extreme. When Jews are attacked we all know why, but when France is attacked, well, that is simply unspeakable.

In October 1980, there was another terrorist attack on Paris. The synagogue on the Rue Copernic was bombed while it was packed with Jewish worshipers. Four people were killed and 46 wounded. Prime Minister Raymond Barre said on television the next day, “This odious bombing wanted to strike Jews who were going to the synagogue and it hit innocent French people who crossed Rue Copernic.”

Kerry is regarded as an enlightened man and without bigotry or prejudice of any kind, which makes his remarks all the more interesting. If his language was incoherent at times, his thoughts were not, and they are remarkably close to those of Barre and to his distinction between Jews and “innocent” Frenchmen. The November 13 attacks, Kerry appears to be thinking, are more terrible than the January attacks because those shootings hit Jews and cartoonists, but these hit, as Barre would have put it, “innocent French people”—people like you and me going to dinner or a concert. This is a statement not of solidarity with targeted victim groups but of distancing from them, and as such it is an immoral and disgusting position. Kerry’s Harvard statement blaming (nonexistent) Israeli settlement expansion for Palestinian stabbing attacks is equally offensive. That this is the thinking of the American secretary of state during a period of rising terrorism, especially against Jews, is almost unbelievable.

—Elliott Abrams

The Deal and the War

In July the Obama administration and its European and Russian partners met with Iran in Vienna to sign the so-called nuclear deal. The general idea was to at least delay nuclear proliferation in an already volatile part of the world. No doubt the White House was hoping for much more—that the Islamic Republic of Iran could be welcomed back into the community of nations, bringing stability to a violent Middle East. But it is now clear that

Obama's great diplomatic endeavor has had the opposite effect: Sectarian war is engulfing the Middle East. Four months after the Iran deal was signed in the Austrian capital, Europe is perhaps irrevocably changed. The November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris look like one salvo in what is likely to become a long-running and brutal conflict on the continent.

Sure, German chancellor Angela Merkel should be held accountable for the flood of Muslim-world refugees making their way to Europe. She welcomed 800,000 to her own doorstep, and millions more will feel encouraged to follow. She didn't mean to overwhelm her EU neighbors and expose them to danger. She didn't mean to overtax European security services already concerned about European Muslims returning from the war in Syria and Iraq. And neither did Barack Obama. He wanted to extricate America from Middle East conflicts, not broaden them.

Obama didn't want to commit force to the Syrian conflict because he believes there's little upside in engaging in the endless wars of the Middle East. No less important, he feared that backing proxy forces to topple Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad was likely to anger Assad's patrons in Tehran, causing them to walk away from the deal. Senior members of his own cabinet recommended to the president that we at least establish a buffer zone, or a no-fly zone to protect those fleeing from Assad and his allies, a policy that would have had bipartisan support. But protecting those refugees might have required firing on the forces hunting them, angering the Iranians, so Obama turned a deaf ear. The Iran deal, he thought, would balance out these warring sects and force them to come to an accommodation with each other.

As the wars in Syria and Iraq raged, observers noted that the borders of the Middle East were collapsing. Whether the post-World War I state system of the region is falling apart or not, the reality is that borders are somewhat irrelevant in a part of the world where tribes extend from Lebanon to Yemen or Syria to Saudi Arabia. The key feature of Middle Eastern history throughout the ages is not the borders, but the populations. The White House had its eye on the wrong big picture.

There is some confusion in the popular imagination about the source of the refugee crisis. ISIS, for all the gory violence and punishments it visits on the townsfolk it rules, is responsible for only a small percentage of the refugees from the Syrian civil war (among them

the Yazidis and Christians it has targeted for extermination). Overwhelmingly, the Syrian refugees are Sunnis in flight from the campaigns of sectarian cleansing waged by the pro-Iran camp, especially the Assad regime and its Hezbollah and Iranian allies. Many European leaders now let on that they agree with Iran and Russia that Assad should stay, believing this is the only way to stabilize the situation. But it's the Syrian president who drove the Sunnis out. With no buffer zones, the refugees went first to the states on Syria's borders, and some made the long trip to the Gulf Arab states. The numbers of refugees, in the millions, and their needs quickly overwhelmed Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. Besides, Europe

was always a more attractive destination. All they needed was an invitation.

Without question, the vast majority of these poor and huddled masses are simply looking for safety, work, and a future for their families. Some are hustlers, of course, happy to sign up for a handout from self-advertised welfare states. And a few others have war on their minds. War against Europe, and war against each other. A

colleague recently back from Germany showed me photographs he'd taken of the refugees. These are Syrians, he said. And these are Iranians. Even among the Syrians are scores of Lebanese and Iraqis, including Shiites, traveling on forged Syrian documents to enhance the probability of finding refuge in Europe. In other words, the two sides of the Middle East's sectarian conflict, Sunnis and Shiites, have made their way to the continent. Most of them are young men of military age.

If ISIS managed to send operatives back to the continent from which they came, the region's other bad actors have probably also done the same. The Islamic Republic of Iran, which waged a campaign of terror in Paris in the 1980s, would not want to miss out on an opportunity to place assets among the refugees. We're therefore likely to see a replay of previous waves of terror in Europe, which is to say further terrorist attacks, street violence, and assassinations.

The nuclear deal with Iran may well go down in history as a pivotal moment, just not in the way Obama imagined. Not only has it paved the way for Iran to have a nuclear weapon within 15 years, as its many critics correctly warned, but it has also worsened the sectarian conflicts of the Middle East and exported them to Europe. Some deal.

—Lee Smith



Bashar al-Assad and Ali Khamenei in Tehran, 2010

Liberal Sanctimony

It would be an interesting exercise to trace the history of the word sanctimony. In its original derivation from the Latin *sanctimonia*, it seems to have had the straightforward sense of sanctity or sacredness. But centuries ago, it took on its current meaning—of pretended or affected or hypocritical holiness. Already in Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* Lucio remarks on “the sanctimonious pirate, that went to sea with the Ten Commandments, but scraped one out of the table”—i.e., that thou shalt not steal. So we’ve been well aware of sanctimony since before the Puritans arrived in the New World. And it didn’t take the exposés of Nathaniel Hawthorne in the 19th century or Sinclair Lewis in the 20th to convince ordinary Americans to be on their guard against those who indulge in it, whether in the pulpit or the public square.

One might think that sanctimony would have gone into remission in our supposed age of sophisticated irony. Yet it thrives. Perhaps 21st century liberal sanctimony is a particularly hardy and virulent strain of *sanctimonia*. Or perhaps our immune system is weaker than that of previous generations of Americans, owing to our soft and comfortable prosperity. But for whatever reason, liberal sanctimony is going strong.

And liberal sanctimony has its own distinctive character. From Angelo of *Measure for Measure* to Lewis’s Elmer Gantry, most purveyors of sanctimony know they’re frauds. Some agonize over succumbing to temptation. Others cheerfully feign piety because it is useful to them. But their awareness of what they’re doing makes them interesting characters. What’s amazing about today’s liberal sanctimony is its apparent lack of self-awareness.

Take, for example, our president. His sanctimony seems unalloyed with self-knowledge and untempered by doubt. And so he leaves even hardened observers of the human condition, like the foreign affairs scholar Walter Russell Mead, agape. Mead, by the way, says he voted for Obama in 2008. Here he is this week, writing on Obama’s berating of his countrymen for their hesitation in admitting thousands of immigrants from Syria and its environs:

“To see the full cynicism of the Obama approach to the refugee issue, one has only to ask President Obama’s least favorite question: Why is there a Syrian refugee crisis in the first place?”

“Obama’s own policy decisions—allowing Assad to convert peaceful demonstrations into an increasingly

ugly civil war, refusing to declare safe havens and no fly zones—were instrumental in creating the Syrian refugee crisis. This crisis is in large part the direct consequence of President Obama’s decision to stand aside and watch Syria burn. For him to try and use a derisory and symbolic program to allow 10,000 refugees into the United States in order to posture as more caring than those evil Jacksonian rednecks out in the benighted sticks is one of the most cynical, cold-blooded, and nastily divisive moves an American President has made in a long time. . . .

“To think that conspicuous moral posturing and holy posing over a symbolic refugee quota could turn President Obama from the goat to the hero of the Syrian crisis is absurd. Wringing your hands while Syria turns into a hell on earth, and then taking a token number of refugees, can be called many things, but decent and wise are not among them. You don’t have to be a xenophobe or a racist or even a Republican to reject this President’s leadership on Syria policy. All you need for that is common sense and a moral compass. . . .

“For no one, other than the Butcher Assad and the unspeakable al-Baghdadi, is as responsible for the humanitarian catastrophe in Syria as is President Obama. No one has committed more sins of omission, no one has so ruthlessly sacrificed the well-being of Syria’s people for his own ends, as the man in the White House. In all the world, only President Obama had the ability to do anything significant to prevent this catastrophe; in all the world no one turned his back so coldly and resolutely on the suffering Syrians as the man who sits in the White House today—a man who is now lecturing his fellow citizens on what he insists is their moral inferiority before his own high self-esteem.”

Now it might be that Obama’s sanctimony is merely a cover for cynicism; it might be he’s self-aware enough to know exactly what he’s doing. But we shouldn’t underestimate the self-delusion of the liberal mind. In Obama’s case, that mind is the product of decades of intellectual cocooning and smug moral preening. It shouldn’t surprise us if the sanctimony he indulges is habitual and oblivious.

We leave the unraveling of the pathologies of the liberal mind to the next Tom Wolfe and Allan Bloom—or the next Shakespeare. For now, the task is to save America from liberal sanctimony, as the Duke saves Vienna from Angelo’s Puritan sanctimony in *Measure for Measure*.

This isn’t easy. On the one hand, read *Measure for Measure* and ask whether our politicians are up to the standard of the Duke. On the other hand, we do have the advantage that our America is presumably less decadent than his Vienna. A leader who wanted to steer America safely between the Scylla of sanctimony and the Charybdis of cynicism could draw on the common sense and moral realism of the American people. But some of the cleverness of the “duke of dark corners” wouldn’t hurt.

—William Kristol

Paris Letter

An immense spirit of solidarity.

BY ANNE-ELISABETH MOUTET



Observers gather outside a Paris café where patrons were shot by ISIS terrorists, November 16.

In the confusion and horror of Paris in shock, the details stay with you. In the bleary early Saturday morning, behind the police barriers, a lone tour bus was still parked on Boulevard Voltaire in front of the Bataclan concert hall, where the Eagles of Death Metal gig had been bloodily interrupted by Daesh terrorists the night before. It was impossible not to notice how the band's black-painted bus strangely matched the half-dozen hearses maneuvering around it to carry away bodies still lying in the concert hall by the dozen; a surreal ballet of mourning, watched mainly by cops and young soldiers, as Parisians had been advised to stay home.

Another image: a shaky telephone video of soccer fans spontaneously singing “La Marseillaise” while being

evacuated from the Stade de France in north Paris, after three suicide bombers detonated themselves outside the France-Germany game in the course of the coordinated attacks. French soccer, and the Stade de France, have a complicated history with “La Marseillaise”: Fourteen years ago, then-prime minister Lionel Jospin walked out of a France-Algeria game after the “Marseillaise” was booed by French-born supporters of the Algerian team. More than once, the French national team was blamed because our players would not even pretend to mouth the national anthem being played before a game. But this time it was the public themselves, in a moment of uncertainty and fear, who reacted with the unerring *Résistance* instinct.

Our city has been attacked: For the first time, we have been hit by indiscriminate terrorism, not targeted at journalists, soldiers, or Jews. This makes it somehow more intimate: Our reaction is not just horror, but

the feeling that this is personal, our moment of truth.

I first saw a tweet announcing “a shootout” in a Paris restaurant around 10 P.M.—something that could very well have happened for a dozen reasons on a booze-fueled Friday night—and when I heard it was in the area near Bastille where I’d done a series of broadcasts at the time of the *Charlie Hebdo* killings, something impelled me to turn on France Info radio news. The very first sentence I heard was “We mustn’t yield to psychosis; this may not be terrorism.” By that time there were tweets on another shootout in the same neighborhood, and “explosions” near the Stade de France, in a different district. I remembered *Charlie*. I no longer believed in coincidences.

The stories and reports trickled out: on the radio, on cable news, on Twitter. Mobile networks overloaded; but Parisians became ingenious. Someone set up a special “event” page on French Facebook, where you could “check in” and tick an “I’m safe” box; notice of it automatically went to all your friends, as the news worsened throughout the night.

We Parisians saw the morning on Saturday dizzy with shock and lack of sleep, obsessively checking on the ever-mounting body count from the bloodiest attacks since the liberation. What soon became evident was the immense spirit of solidarity.

There was a disconnect between the hackneyed, emotional introductions and questions from reporters and the calmness of survivors describing scenes of war and carnage. “Terrified Clarisse is trembling still,” one began; but Clarisse, a young woman whose flat is located just above the Petit Cambodge restaurant, the scene of one of the shootouts, was utterly composed. “We realized the bangs outside came from guns. We knew *Charlie*’s offices were nearby; it’s only been 10 months. I turned off all the lights; then I crawled to the window to look outside; and I saw this young man who’d been shot and was dead.”

Laura, another young woman, described in a *banlieues* accent how, driving with three mates for a Friday

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evening of fun, they had crossed the path of one of the terrorists' cars. "You must have felt terrified?" she was prompted. "I saw his face; I saw his gun. They started shooting at my car; later we found the body [of the car] was riddled with bullets and we'd all been incredibly lucky not to be hit. I revved it and we escaped; but now I think instead of fleeing we should have crashed bang into their car."

Bastille is Victor Hugo's Paris: a lively area now being gentrified—all the best new restaurants seem to open around here—but still pretty young and diverse.

The café owner next to Bataclan told how they took in any people they could who'd fled from the hall, including some of the musicians, during the siege and in the confused hours afterwards. "We gave people phone chargers, we passed out drinks and food. Some of the rock band musicians were with us and wanted to pay, but we told everyone this was not about money, not that night," Yemen, one of the bar's waitresses, recalled. "People were on the telephone with families, telling them of deaths; but they would say things like: 'she shielded us, she saved our lives'; they would give it meaning." A friend's 17-year-old son, shot in the behind, walked out of the hospital and told his mother: "It's nothing, I just won't be able to sit for a week; the doctors needed the space."

Soon, the hashtag #PortesOuvrtes (#OpenDoors) started trending on Twitter. As the news of the consecutive shootouts in Rue Bichat, Rue de la Fontaine au Roi, and Rue de Charonne spread, the entire area between Place de la République and Place de la Bastille became a confused war zone, with public transport halted. Parisians were giving out their home addresses and telephone numbers so that anyone stranded in the streets could find refuge. Among them was Emma, a theater actress whose flat, on Boulevard Richard-Lenoir, just yards from the *Charlie Hebdo* offices, ended up with 14 people sitting on her floor and talking throughout the night. "Of course we could not sleep; you have

to process something like that. I just made coffee."

News started trickling in from the Bataclan theater from the first escapees; then, after 1 A.M., from those who had managed to survive until the special RAID gendarmerie units stormed the place and the terrorists detonated themselves. A young woman described a scene terrifyingly similar to the storming of the Krakow ghetto in *Schindler's List*.

"We were perhaps 60, running in the corridors of the theater; we tried to get into the boxes over the stage, but they gave no shelter; so we kept running up staircases and finally found the toilets." These didn't look like refuge enough either; one of the men climbed on one of the seats and tore off the ceiling tiles, opening up a narrow, dark loft space full of glass wool insulation; and the escapees huddled there in the dark for hours after replacing the tiles as best they could. "I'd dropped my handbag while crawling away; I had no telephone, had no way of knowing what was going on; we kept hearing

shouts and screams. We waited and waited; we didn't even talk. I was afraid that a killer would come in and just spray-shoot through the false ceiling. When finally the RAID gendarmes came in below us, we wouldn't come down until they told us enough that we were sure they were real police." As it turned out, people had hidden in all sorts of nooks and crannies of the old, historic theater, with some spending most of the night in a tiny shower stall.

A curfew was decreed, but Parisians, an unruly lot, decided not to cower. As hearses were still arriving at the Bataclan theater, by midmorning Saturday, a crowd had brought flowers and stood talking. "Stay in? I'm going to go out twice as much, go to the movies, to the restaurant, to bars," one woman said. Around 11, a man rode in on a bicycle, pulling a grand piano on wheels. He played John Lennon's "Imagine," took applause, and left, still dragging the piano. I love the grand gesture, but I don't need to imagine anything. This is my city, and I have never been so proud of it. ♦

The Mumbai Parallels

Not the first such attack; probably not the last.

BY JONATHAN FOREMAN

For those of us who were in Mumbai during the 2008 terrorist attacks there, the bulletins from Paris on Friday night evoked queasy déjà vu. With each shocking addition to the story—drive-by shootings at one crowded restaurant and then another, explosions reported at the other end of town, casualty estimates rising sharply, and then the first social

media hints at hostages being calmly slaughtered—the feeling intensified.

The parallels between the two outrages are striking, and not just in the terrorists' methodology of using small teams to attack simultaneously multiple "soft" civilian targets in carefully chosen, symbolically significant locations.

In both cases, some or all of the terrorists had received professional military-style instruction. The Mumbai terrorists had learned their lethal craft at camps in Pakistan run by Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), a militant group

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associated with that country's intelligence agency, ISI. Just 10 of them were able to hold off some of the best of India's armed forces for almost four days. As for the Paris terrorists, it seems likely that at least some were veterans of ISIS's campaigns in Syria and Iraq, and it's possible they had been specifically trained for urban terrorist missions in Europe.

In any case, both sets of terrorists were highly proficient killers. A photographer who witnessed the

them up, it is more intimate and therefore more psychologically disturbing when contemplated by the society that has been attacked. No one should underestimate the psychological sophistication of the planners of the Mumbai and Paris attacks: They understand very well just how terrifying and demoralizing the idea of slaughter by bullet and blade is for civilized, prosperous people who have the good fortune to be unfamiliar with extreme violence.



Mumbai hotel guests flee past Indian commandos, November 26, 2008.

methodical slaughter in Mumbai's CTS Terminus told me that the two terrorists fired with consistent, lethal accuracy at the upper bodies of their victims. In Paris a survivor of the Bataclan theater massacre said they were "shooting at us like if we were birds."

In Mumbai and Paris alike, the terrorists employed deliberate cruelty, both as a means of stunning hostages into inaction and to amplify the impact of their attacks. In both cities, the jihadists had no intention of surviving their attacks. (Although the Mumbai terrorists were not equipped with suicide vests, as were all eight of the known Paris attackers, some of them carried cyanide capsules.)

They also made the same tactical choice to use guns and grenades rather than massive bombs, preferring to kill their victims up close or even one by one. This was presumably because, while gunning people down is less efficient than blowing

They also understand how social media and 24-hour news coverage can not only powerfully amplify the fear they instill, but can also project it across great distances, even around the world.

(As modern as all this sounds, there is a theory that the terrorists were employing a strategy that goes back to the days of the prophet himself. Among the methods his numerically weak forces used to demoralize and conquer great cities and long-established regimes was to send small groups of disguised fighters into marketplaces, where they would sow panic by suddenly attacking and slaughtering unarmed civilians.)

The planners of both attacks put considerable thought into choosing targets whose violation would be particularly damaging to a city's morale and sense of security.

In Mumbai, although the targets included a train station, a hospital,

a cinema, a Jewish center, and a café popular with backpackers, the primary objectives were two five-star hotels long favored as social and business hubs by India's small political, cultural, media, and business elites. The terrorists knew that by attacking these institutions they would send a chill through the entire Indian ruling class.

The Paris attackers, on the other hand, seem to have been more concerned with shaking the confidence of French society as a whole than with striking a blow at the heart of the French establishment, although they surely knew that President Hollande was attending the international soccer match they targeted with suicide bombers. Moreover, their attacks were about more than demoralizing the "crusader" enemy or demonstrating their ability to cause mayhem.

That is because for ISIS, unlike LeT, the targets were also attractive for ideological and religious reasons. They were attacking activities as well as people: sports, drinking, music, the free mixing of the sexes, all of which are deemed by the Islamic State to be hateful and deserving of harsh punishment. (Because at least some of the terrorists were locals, they knew precisely which were the most suitable "cool" neighborhoods to attack.)

Killing people in restaurants, on bicycles, in bars, a stadium, and a concert hall therefore represents a symbolic victory regardless of its effect on enemy morale. And like all ISIS victories it attracts more recruits and reassures Islamist fighters who may have been unnerved by battlefield reverses in Syria and Iraq.

In both Mumbai and Paris, the terrorists exploited the carefree atmosphere of liberal, orderly urban politics in which people are used to moving around without imagining they might be in danger. You simply could not carry out a similar attack in those restricted, untrusting societies in which social and family life are hidden behind high walls.

It's also worth noting that the planners of both attacks apparently hoped that a great many more people would die. The terrorist captured in

Mumbai reportedly said that his team wanted to kill 5,000. If even one of the three suicide bombers who blew themselves up outside the Stade de France had managed to get into the stadium before detonating, the resulting carnage and panic could have killed thousands.

In general, we don't expect history to repeat itself or a terrorist spectacular to be copied both closely and successfully. Every time terrorists carry out a new kind of attack, it ceases to be inconceivable; those who would use the same methods therefore lack the advantage of complete surprise. The police forces of the world's great cities analyzed what happened in Mumbai between November 26 and 29, 2008, and thought about how to respond to such a challenge. This certainly was the case in Paris, where the French government developed what it called Plan Rouge Alpha in early 2009.

France's security services, moreover,

had apparently been warned of the possibility of an ISIS strike in the days before the attack, and in any case had good reason to be on alert given the *Charlie Hebdo* atrocity in January. Similarly in Mumbai in 2008 terrorist attacks had been predicted—bombs had been set off in Jaipur, Bangalore, and Ahmedabad earlier in the year, killing at least 130 people—and security had supposedly been tightened.

And that is one of the most chilling things about this weekend's horrors: Paris was probably as prepared for such an attack as any Western capital, and hundreds of innocents were killed or wounded anyway.

The terrorists were able to wreak dreadful carnage even though France's police forces are vastly more competent, better trained, motivated, and equipped than those whose job description was maintaining law and order in Mumbai.

The effectiveness of the French police is one of the reasons the Paris attacks were over within three

hours—rather than dragging out for four days, as they did in India's commercial capital. (Few contemporaneous reports captured the full extent of the fecklessness and disarray of the various local and national police and military forces that responded to India's most infamous terrorist attack.) Many lives were undoubtedly saved by the courage, skill, and sacrifice of the special forces team who stormed the Bataclan theater.

But the awful truth is that this kind of attack is all but impossible for even the best prepared police forces to snuff out without loss.

The only way to defeat such an attack is to prevent it. And the only way to do that is through intelligence and surveillance. They, however, are less effective than previously thanks to Edward Snowden's publication of the techniques and technologies previously used to track terrorists. As one intelligence official said of the Paris attackers, "They don't use their mobiles anymore." ♦

America Has Much to Be Thankful For

By **Thomas J. Donohue**

President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

If some of the talk on the presidential campaign trail is to be believed, America has lost its edge and squandered its greatness. Such heated rhetoric, playing to the anger that many voters legitimately feel toward Washington, ignores a fundamental truth. Even in tough times such as the ones we face today, our country continues to be set apart by extraordinary advantages. As we observe Thanksgiving this week, it's worth taking stock of our nation's blessings and reasserting our commitment to preserve them.

Our land and waters are rich with natural resources. U.S. farms can feed the world's hungry, creating businesses and jobs across industries throughout the country. An abundance of North American energy has freed America and its allies from the grip of hostile regimes, helped spur a manufacturing renaissance, lowered costs,

and has driven growth and jobs.

We have the most talented and productive workforce in the world. With positive improvements to our education system and a commitment to openness and individual opportunity, our country will continue to have a constant supply of the hardest workers, smartest innovators, and most intrepid entrepreneurs.

There's plenty to criticize when it comes to our laws, politics, and government. But what other system in the world would we rather have? Our strong rule of law, low level of corruption, and a commitment to equal treatment are significant advantages.

Above all, freedom is the foundation of our economy and political system. Free speech fosters open debate and enables multiple viewpoints to be heard. Our system of free enterprise rewards innovation and individual initiative and ensures the right to take a risk, fail, and try again. It has allowed American businesses of all sizes and types to flourish. And when businesses do well, they do a lot of good for their

workers, communities, and those in need.

This doesn't mean we don't face challenges. We must accelerate our economy, restrain the growth and ambition of government, advance policies that will unlock our natural advantages, and spread opportunity for Americans. We must fight back against efforts to silence those with opposing or unpopular views. We must respond to growing attacks on free enterprise from opponents that wrongly believe government knows and can do better than free citizens and businesses. And we must contend with unsettling and tragic events around the globe.

But let's not sell America short. Let's not throw up our hands and say we've lost. Let's recognize what makes America exceptional, what gives her the edge, and sets her apart among the world's great nations—and let's fight to protect it.



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Defending a Civilization

Does France have the strategic reserves?

BY NEIL ROGACHEVSKY



Paris Muslims pray in the street near Montmartre.

After the astonishing German break through the French lines in May 1940, Winston Churchill flew to Paris to meet his French counterpart, Prime Minister Paul Reynaud, and army chief Maurice Gamelin. Reynaud had called Churchill in near-hysterics, but even Churchill wasn't prepared for the utter despondency he would find amongst the French command. "*Où est la masse de manoeuvre?*" Churchill asked in his charmingly awful French. "*Aucune!*" replied Gamelin. There were no strategic reserves. The realization that France would fall, Churchill later recalled, was one of the most shocking moments of a life full of them.

I couldn't help but think of Reynaud and Gamelin while listening to first reactions of the French political class to the assault on Paris. On the line while the situation was still

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out-of-control, the deputy mayor of Paris Patrick Klugman spoke to CNN in a weeping, disoriented tone—more a grieving family member than an official charged with the safety of a capital city. President François Hollande offered some strong first remarks, promising a “war which will be pitiless” against terrorists. He had spoken well after the *Charlie Hebdo* and kosher supermarket attacks in January, but, then as now, his body language told a different story. Very few watching the weary-looking Hollande could persuade themselves that he would rise to master events rather than merely react to them. Of course it is not 1940, and France might be able to call upon politicians steelier than its prewar chiefs. But it's an open question whether the country is up to the task it faces.

In the week following the attack, the French government has certainly stepped up the fight against Islamism both abroad and at home. Already active in Syria, French warplanes have

been conducting their most extensive bombing missions against ISIS, the French nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, the *Charles de Gaulle*, is on its way to the Gulf, and Hollande has proposed extending the domestic state of emergency for three months, giving French security services extra latitude to pursue leads and question suspects. The interior minister, Bernard Cazeneuve, has called for a dissolution of radical mosques and the expulsion of those who “preach hatred in France.”

These moves expand upon steps taken after the January attacks, when the government acknowledged—rather forthrightly—that its security apparatus was understaffed, underfunded, and overwhelmed. As also seems to be the case with the current attacks, the terrorists at *Charlie Hebdo*, Chérif and Saïd Kouachi, had been on the radar of French security services. Surveillance had been lifted, however, because there were simply too many other persons of interest requiring it. Prime Minister Manuel Valls, one of the more energetic and competent French politicians, boosted the budget for intelligence-gathering operations and hired thousands of new counterterrorism officials. A few plots and attempted attacks—most spectacularly on the high-speed train in August—have been disrupted or foiled. Whatever else one might say about the French response, the government has not coasted along in denial.

The problem is that the character of the terrorism threat in France differs from that facing other Western nations. France does not keep official statistics on its citizens' religion, but its Muslim population is estimated to be around 10 percent, excluding the current influx of refugees. Largely North African and Middle Eastern in origin, the community is much more homogenous than the comparably large but diverse Muslim population of Great Britain. To be sure, most French Muslims simply want to get on with their lives—though a recent survey found that around a quarter of all French youth express some sympathy for ISIS. This number is probably

TONY C. FRENCH / GETTY IMAGES

inflated, but in practice it means that terrorists have significant networking advantages within France (and, as we see, within Belgium).

In America, a terror cell has very few places to hide. In France, there are more than a handful of areas, clustered especially around Paris, Marseille, and a few other big cities, where state law-and-order runs extremely thin. Every French *banlieue* is depressing in its own way, and certainly not all of them are dangerous and gang-ridden. But the ones that are provide a fairly hospitable environment for terrorists to go about their business unnoticed. French security can, of course, follow Internet “chatter” and phone calls, but one of the frightening lessons of recent days is that attackers have learned to keep much of their organizing offline, except for the postmortem gloating.

Leaving aside the question of the fight against ISIS in Syria, which, to be frank, France can’t handle on its own, what can it do about its domestic threat? The strategist David Goldman

has suggested France undertake a kind of “surge” whereby the state makes a concerted effort to reassert its authority over the dangerous *banlieues*. Through a war on gangs, petty criminals, and, one could add, radical mosques, those who now either actively support or turn a blind eye to terrorism might conclude they have more to fear from the state than from the criminals or terrorists, thus boosting the flow of information in the dangerous neighborhoods towards the government. A highly visible effort to prove that the French state has reach everywhere, along with bolstered intelligence, could ultimately weaken the networks that terrorists rely upon to engage in mass-casualty attacks.

The chance the French would tolerate this or some other highly intrusive strategy is, one has to think, fairly small. Thinking beyond the solidarity of this week, one can already imagine the army of French intellectuals on their preferred battlefield, the opinion pages of the major newspapers,

denouncing a “new Algeria,” a “colonialism at home” that, far from fighting terror, would breed more resentment, more violence, and riots even bigger than the ones that have convulsed France in recent years. Supporters of a tough policy might respond that, actually, the longer France waits to enforce order throughout the country, the more likely it will suffer riots and street battles of a vehemence of which French history furnishes all too many examples. Even in ordinary times, French law and custom offer the government broad powers to engage in this kind of policing. But it’s unclear whether any French politician would take full advantage.

The essential question, in other words, is not whether France has the capability to deal with its very substantial terrorism problem, but whether it has the moral resources to do so. As has been frequently remarked, France seems to be the European country that has put up the staunchest fight against

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multiculturalism. While in recent years they have grudgingly acknowledged the need to learn English, politicians of all stripes still insist on the importance of the French language—spoken correctly—and bemoan the precipitous decline of it among the younger generation. Public outcries have met demands by some Muslim parents that school cafeterias not only provide some alternative to pork, but ban it completely. Considered an affront to aesthetic sensibilities and the proper relation between men and women, the 2011 prohibition on the *hijab* has been broadly, though not universally, accepted. Both before the attack and in the wake of it, the French “way of life” has had its patriotic defenders.

The more one pays attention to these defenses (as I did when living in France during its last presidential election in 2012), though, the more one begins to see that they are somewhat hollow. In the wake of last week’s attack, patriotic French men and women have insisted in a praiseworthy way on going out to the bars and cafés to spend time *en terrasse*. Almost entirely missing from this defense of their way of life is any invocation of the reason behind that way of life, an explanation as to why, for instance, a certain equality between the sexes is natural and what the foundation is for the toleration of religious difference. Neither this week nor previously did one hear much of a French invocation of first principles.

Proponents of the French way of life have simply been matching custom against custom, as if it’s self-evident why one should prefer to have a glass of wine with a beautiful woman in a café rather than smoke *nargilah* with a group of men while the women stay at home. The deterioration in the *banlieues* reveals that many Frenchmen don’t believe this. In fact, opinion surveys of the angst, fears over lack of life prospects, and sense of purposelessness afflicting younger French people of all backgrounds proves that this is not merely a problem for newcomers.

Have the French successfully resisted multiculturalism? A far more

powerful political dynamic than the defense of the French way of life and its customs has been, for the past few generations, the move to construct a supranational Europe dedicated in theory to a world without borders. Along with this has grown an individualism that denies all national and collective purpose. Considering the

“I am *Charlie*” slogan after the January attacks, the political writer Pierre Manent noted that it’s much harder to say “we” than to say “I”—and no one was saying we. France’s inability to say we—and explain the purpose behind that we—will be its biggest obstacle as it confronts a threat that can rightly be called existential. ♦

Killing the Golden Goose

How Walmart’s left-wing critics destroy jobs.

BY ANDREW B. WILSON



Careful what you ask for.

Under three different CEOs, Walmart has done all kinds of somersaults to appease left-wing critics. In 2005, Lee Scott set goals of “zero waste” and “100 percent” conversion to renewable energy. In 2009, Mike Duke, the next CEO, took on Obamacare—as an outspoken supporter of the unpopular health care bill.

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This was “a stunning metamorphosis,” the *Wall Street Journal* declared in a company profile. Walmart had gone from being a “whipping boy of the political left to corporate leviathan now welcomed with open arms by a Democratic White House.”

This February, Doug McMillon, the current CEO, agreed to raise the entry-level hourly wage at Walmart to no less than \$9 an hour in April and to \$10 an hour (or 33 percent above the current federal minimum wage) in early 2016.

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How is the sharply elevated internal “minimum wage” working out for the world’s largest retailer and (by a wide margin) the nation’s largest private employer?

So far, not at all well.

In announcing the company’s third-quarter results on November 17, McMillon acknowledged that the wage hike had been “by far the biggest driver” of a 13.3 percent reduction in corporate earnings over the first nine months of the fiscal year ending on January 31, 2016. Higher wages have added \$1.2 billion in annual costs this fiscal year and will add another \$1.5 billion in costs next year.

Net income at Walmart hit an all-time high of \$17 billion in calendar 2012 (fiscal 2013, ending on January 31, 2013). According to Value Line estimates, it will drop to \$14.8 billion at the end of this year and to \$12.6 billion next year, which would be the lowest annual earnings for Walmart in a decade.

That is no big deal to critics like Robert Reich, who served as secretary of labor under President Clinton. Reich pointed to Walmart and McDonald’s in a petition that he launched on MoveOn.org in 2013 urging the biggest employers to increase wages so workers can finally “get a fair share in this economy.” “Your typical employee is now earning \$8.25 to \$8.80 an hour,” Reich wrote. “[Walmart and McDonald’s] can easily afford to pay [workers] \$15 an hour without causing layoffs or requiring price increases.”

But regarding any profit as proof that a company can afford to pay more to its workers—without harming its customers—disregards the realities of a competitive marketplace.

For one thing, Walmart competes with other public companies in striving to maximize returns to shareholders. To say that Walmart has been getting hammered in this regard is something of an understatement.

Walmart’s shares have lost a third of their value since the beginning of this year—falling from a high of \$90 a share in January to \$60 at the close of business on November 17. Meanwhile,

its biggest rivals have been gaining. Costco has climbed from \$140 a share to \$159, and Amazon.com has more than doubled in price.

In July, Amazon passed Walmart to become the most highly valued company in the retail sector, and since then it has shot further and further ahead. It now has a total market capitalization of \$309 billion, dwarfing \$195 billion for Walmart.

Walmart lags far behind both Amazon and Costco in productivity—measured in sales per employee—with Walmart at \$219,000, Costco at \$565,000, and Amazon at \$578,000. It is clear that Walmart is intent on closing the gap by slowing the growth of bricks-and-mortar stores while putting much greater emphasis on e-commerce. As McMillon put it in his presentation on Tuesday:

We will be the first to deliver a seamless shopping experience at scale. No matter how you choose to shop with us—through your mobile device, in a store or a combination—it will be fast and easy. Online retailers are testing physical store experience because they recognize the same customer desire that we do. There’s a race to do this right.

But consider the impact on total employment at Walmart if the company were to close the productivity gap between itself and Amazon by

25 percent over the next three years while also achieving its stated objective of growing annual sales from about \$485 billion to \$530 billion or more.

In that situation, Walmart would need a global workforce of 1.7 million associates, well below the 2.2 million it has now—a loss of approximately 500,000 jobs. That would entail a loss of about 320,000 associates out of the U.S. workforce of 1.4 million associates.

While those numbers are speculative, they clearly point to the conclusion that Walmart will no longer be the great job-creation machine that it was in years past, which is something that self-declared champions of the working class should be thinking about in agitating for higher wages. Paying higher wages has made the company more focused on achieving higher levels of productivity.

At the same time the company may water down if not abandon its historic commitment to serving less affluent shoppers with rock-bottom prices across a vast array of merchandise. The late founder Sam Walton said his dream was “to serve the under-served.” That is less of a priority today. As McMillon stated at an investors’ meeting in October, “Globally, we know growth will come from middle- and upper-income households in the years ahead.” ♦



The Long War Continues

Whatever President Obama may say

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES & THOMAS JOSCELYN

In many ways, the reaction to the horrific attacks in Paris has been familiar. There were the expressions of solidarity: flowers at French embassies; social media avatars changed from silly selfies to photos of the French flag snapping defiantly in the wind; buildings across the Western world lit up in red, white, and blue; spontaneous and deeply moving renditions of the national anthem, sung by spectators being evacuated from a soccer match at the Stade de France, site of one of the attacks, and three days later by French legislators after President François Hollande addressed them at Versailles.

There were glimpses of the attacks themselves: gut-wrenching descriptions of sudden horror from eyewitnesses; cell-phone videos capturing slices of the chaos and carnage; photos of rescue workers walking gingerly through broken glass and torn clothing and human flesh; and, later, the emotional remembrances of those lost, by friends and relatives whose ordinary Friday had just become the worst day of their lives.

And, of course, there were the condemnations and declarations of resolve from Western leaders: The world must not tolerate such barbaric acts; together we will fight those who have carried out such unfathomable deeds; we will work with the international community against terrorism; and on it goes.

President Obama's words on the night of the attacks

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were familiar, too. “We’re going to do whatever it takes to work with the French people and with nations around the world to bring these terrorists to justice, and to go after any terrorist networks that go after our people.”

They were meant to be reassuring, but rang hollow. Nobody expected that the United States under Barack Obama would actually “do whatever it takes” to win a war the president has long neglected. Even his mouthing of the promise seemed perfunctory—a man saying what the president is supposed to say in such a moment, rather than a leader announcing a new American resolve in the long war against jihadism.



Obama comments on the Paris attacks, November 13.

Obama validated this skepticism in short order. Three days after the Paris massacre, as President Hollande was calling the slaughter an “act of war” and preparing a full-scale international response, Obama gave a bizarre press conference in which he made clear that for him nothing had changed.

Speaking to reporters at the G20 summit in Antalya, Turkey, Obama said that, while the Paris attacks might have been a “setback” for his ISIS strategy, they would not change it. When reporters expressed surprise at his continued embrace of an approach that was failing, he lashed out at them for daring to question him. At a time when an American president might have been expected to show some righteous anger at the attackers and those who enabled them, Obama instead directed his fury towards critics at home who worry about jihadist violence against the homeland. It was a shameful spectacle, and a revealing one.

Barack Obama remains committed to a failed strategy against an enemy he has long underestimated in a war he has no plans to win. Nothing has changed. And this time, what’s past truly is prologue.

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In an interview with ABC News the day before Islamic State (ISIS) terrorists killed more than 130 people in multiple, coordinated attacks in Paris, Obama told George Stephanopoulos that the terror group had been “contained.” Stephanopoulos had asked Obama a straightforward question: “ISIS is gaining strength, aren’t they?”

“Well, no, I don’t think they’re gaining strength,” Obama responded. “What is true is that from the start our goal has been first to contain, and we have contained them. They have not gained ground in Iraq. And in Syria they’ll come in, they’ll leave. But you don’t see this systematic march by [ISIS] across the terrain. What we have not yet been able to do is to completely decapitate their command and control structures. We’ve made some progress in trying to reduce the flow of foreign fighters.”

Some of what Obama said was true, if incomplete: The United States and its allies *had* made some progress in slowing the movement of foreign fighters, but where some routes had been closed others had opened. And ISIS *had* suffered some military defeats in Iraq and Syria. But there is no indication that ISIS is immediately at risk of losing most of the territory it claimed in 2014. And ISIS’s international network has grown to span multiple continents, with jihadists loyal to the “caliphate” executing terrorist attacks on a daily basis far outside of the group’s strongholds in Iraq and Syria. Just two weeks before Obama sat down with ABC News, an ISIS “province” in the Sinai blew up a Russian airliner, killing all 224 people on board. It was one of the most devastating terrorist attacks since 9/11. In no meaningful sense, therefore, is ISIS “contained.”

The vast majority of U.S. intelligence on the subject—at least the intelligence that hasn’t been rewritten at the behest of the White House—makes clear that ISIS has become a significant threat to the United States, its interests, and allies. ISIS’s expansion around the globe, its deep roster of foreign fighters, and its brutally effective war machine make it a far greater threat today than its precursors were when Obama took office.

Senator Dianne Feinstein, ranking Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee and frequent ally of the White House on national security matters, offered a blunt contradiction of Obama’s claim. “I read the intelligence faithfully. ISIS is not contained. ISIS is expanding.”

Obama has been underestimating the threat of the global jihadist movement since before he was sworn in as president. And he’s been misleading the country about that threat for nearly as long.

Four months before he was elected president, Obama traveled to Iraq for briefings on the war he had long opposed. He met with General David Petraeus, who was then seeking to consolidate U.S. and coalition gains resulting from the surge in American forces and the Anbar Awakening. When Petraeus insisted that Iraq, not Afghanistan, was the central front in the war against al Qaeda, Obama challenged him, arguing that Al Qaeda in Iraq—the organization that would grow to become ISIS—had little ambition or reach beyond Iraq.

According to an account of the meeting in *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama*, by *New York Times* correspondent Michael Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, Obama questioned “whether al Qaeda in Iraq presented a threat to the United States.” He said: “If AQI has morphed into a kind of mafia then they are not going to be blowing up buildings.” Petraeus pointed to an attempted attack in Glasgow, Scotland, in 2007, as an example of AQI’s reach and expressed concern about “the potential of AQI to expand its influence to Syria and Lebanon.” Obama was unmoved. “The al Qaeda leadership is not here in Iraq. They are there,” Obama said, pointing to Pakistan on a map.

It was an instructive exchange. Obama, a first-term senator with no experience in military or intelligence matters, challenged the general who had beaten back a jihadist insurgency in Iraq, led a remarkable turnaround in the country, and was a leading figure in America’s broader war on terror. The assessments Petraeus offered were based on years of personal experience guiding U.S. troops against jihadist armies generally, and Al Qaeda in Iraq specifically, and they were bolstered by mountains of intelligence reporting on the enemy, its objectives, and its practices.

Obama simply thought he knew better. His challenge wasn’t based on facts that contradicted Petraeus, or on facts at all. Rather, Obama made a series of assertions based on nothing more than his long-held conviction that Iraq was a distraction from the war on terror. And when he was presented with evidence that contradicted his thesis, Obama simply set it aside and restated his own view. It’s a pattern that would play out repeatedly throughout his presidency.

■ **GUANTÁNAMO.** It started early. As one of his first acts in office, President Obama ordered the detention facility in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, shuttered within one year. The president issued this deadline knowing little about the 240 detainees remaining in Cuba in January 2009. Obama’s

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executive order also established the Guantánamo Review Task Force, set up to review the intelligence files on each of the detainees.

The detainees had been evaluated many times before, including by Joint Task Force Guantánamo (JTF-GTMO), which oversees the facility. JTF-GTMO's analysts probably knew more about the detainees than anyone in the U.S. government. And they concluded that nearly 75 percent of the 240 jihadists held at Guantánamo seven years after it was opened were "high risks" to the United States and its allies.

George W. Bush's administration had moved aggressively to transfer detainees, particularly in Bush's second term. Most of the transferees were deemed "low" or "medium" risks, but the Department of Defense under Bush started to transfer "high risk" detainees as well. The effects of Bush's transfer policies were not felt until Obama took office. In January 2009, the Defense Department estimated that 61 of the detainees who had been released up to that point either had returned to the jihad or were suspected of having done so. As of September 2015, that figure had more than tripled to 196 ex-detainees. All but 12 of them were transferred prior to Obama's inauguration.

Obama has eagerly criticized the Bush administration's transfer policies, pointing out that nearly two-thirds of the detainees ever held in Cuba were transferred before he himself took office, and many of them returned to terrorism. But rather than learn from his predecessor's mistakes, Obama repeated them.

The final report from Obama's own task force, published in January 2010, made clear that the overwhelming majority of the remaining detainees belonged to the jihadists' paramilitary armies and terror cells. Obama's review body found that 95 percent of the detainees fit into four categories, ranging from low-level foreign fighters to terrorists who were "involved in terrorist plots against U.S. targets." None of the remaining detainees was deemed innocent.

Instead of reevaluating his decision to close Guantánamo in light of the obvious risks, however, Obama continues to press forward. His own task force approved 156 (65 percent) of the 240 detainees it evaluated for transfer despite finding that nearly all of them had belonged to al Qaeda or Taliban-affiliated terror networks in some capacity. The Obama administration has transferred more than 120 detainees, and if recent history is any guide, more of them will one day join the U.S. government's list of recidivists. Dozens of the jihadists Obama wants to ship out were once deemed "high risk" to the United States, its interests, and its allies by JTF-GTMO. Like its predecessor, the Obama administration disregarded the task force's recommendations in many cases, and it continues to transfer "high-risk" detainees.

For obvious reasons, the president rarely speaks of the dangers posed by the detainees. Obama argues that such

talk is political demagoguery, but he often finds the time to criticize his own country for holding the jihadists in the first place. In a speech at the National Archives in May 2009, for instance, Obama briefly acknowledged that some of the jihadists in Guantánamo would be tried for their past crimes, and there were others who "cannot be prosecuted yet who pose a clear danger to the American people." But much of his talk was devoted to portraying Guantánamo as a stain on America. "There is also no question that Guantánamo set back the moral authority that is America's strongest currency in the world," Obama argued. He added: "Meanwhile, instead of serving as a tool to counter terrorism, Guantánamo became a symbol that helped al Qaeda recruit terrorists to its cause. Indeed, the existence of Guantánamo likely created more terrorists around the world than it ever detained."

There is no evidence, however, to back up Obama's claim. Guantánamo is rarely mentioned in al Qaeda's propaganda and has never been a dominant recruiting theme.

While evidence of Guantánamo as a recruitment tool is lacking, evidence of the threat from recidivists is not. Ex-Guantánamo detainees have served international terror networks at every level, from suicide bombers to senior strategists and leaders. Mullah Zakir, a senior Taliban leader transferred by the Bush administration to Afghanistan in December 2007, quickly returned to the ranks, becoming the Taliban's most senior military leader. Zakir was responsible for countering President Obama's surge in southern Afghanistan and is likely responsible for the deaths of a dozen or more U.S. Marines. Another ex-detainee, Abdul Hafiz, returned to terrorism mere weeks after the Obama administration transferred him to Afghanistan in December 2009. Hafiz assumed command of a unit tasked with hunting charity workers, among others.

More than 100 of the confirmed or suspected Guantánamo recidivists remain at large today.

■ **FORT HOOD.** In November 2009, Army Major Nidal Hasan shouted "*Allahu Akbar*" as he gunned down fellow soldiers in an attack at Fort Hood. Despite eyewitness accounts confirming Hasan's obvious jihadist beliefs, the Obama administration moved quickly to downplay suggestions that the shooter was motivated by a radical ideology. In the hours after the attack, one FBI source told Fox News that the bureau was not even looking at the possibility that Hasan had ties to terrorist groups. When news outlets reported that Hasan had been in touch with radical cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, the FBI dismissed the contents of their emails as "benign." The FBI was forced to abandon those claims when the emails—which included Hasan asking Awlaki if killing U.S. military personnel was permissible under *sharia* law—were made public. But in its revised assessment, the bureau argued that the emails were consistent with Hasan's research as an Army psychiatrist. The

official Pentagon report on the attack made no mention of Hasan's radical views or his contacts with Awlaki. The attacks were codified as "workplace violence," and only months later did the administration acknowledge that the attack was, in fact, "violent Islamic terrorism."

■ **THE CHRISTMAS DAY BOMBER.** When Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab attempted to detonate a bomb in his underwear on Christmas Day 2009, Obama administration officials immediately sought to minimize the significance of the botched attack. Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano said there was "no indication" the plot was "part of anything larger," and White House press secretary Robert Gibbs boasted, erroneously, that the "system has worked." In fact, Abdulmutallab's father, a prominent banker in Nigeria, had tried to alert U.S. officials to his son's radicalism and the potential threat he posed to U.S. interests. His warnings were ignored. The system failed.

Obama, on vacation in Hawaii at the time, waited three days to make a statement. When he spoke, the president suggested that Abdulmutallab was an "isolated extremist." He was not—and Obama should have known it when he spoke. As court records make clear, Abdulmutallab confessed almost immediately to FBI interrogators that he had received training and financing from Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and that the group had dispatched him to attack the U.S. homeland.

■ **THE TIMES SQUARE BOMBER.** In May 2010, after Faisal Shahzad attempted to detonate an SUV loaded with explosive materials, Secretary Napolitano suggested it was a "one-off" attack, and administration officials downplayed claims of responsibility from the Pakistani Taliban (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan). But Shahzad soon confessed that he had received bomb-making training in Pakistan and met with a senior leader of an al Qaeda-allied terror group. Only after Pakistan's interior minister publicly reported that Shahzad had not, in fact, acted alone did the Obama administration acknowledge that the Pakistani Taliban had supported the attempted attack.

■ **THE BIN LADEN DOCUMENTS.** In May 2011, Obama authorized an operation to capture or kill Osama bin Laden at a compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan. It was a courageous decision that involved significant risks and no guarantee of success. Obama had pledged to focus on al Qaeda senior leadership, and the death of bin Laden made good on his promise.

That important moment should have kicked off a comprehensive campaign to make the death of the al Qaeda

leader the first step in the death of al Qaeda and the global jihadist movement. That didn't happen. Obama, eager to end what he would call the Bush administration's "boundless war on terror," mistook this victory in an important battle as victory in the broader war.

During the raid, the Sensitive Site Exploitation team filled several oversized canvas bags with material belonging to the al Qaeda leader. Obama's national security adviser, Tom Donilon, called it "the largest cache of intelligence" ever collected in such a raid and said the contents would fill "a small college library."

But after a brief initial scrub for real-time intelligence, the bin Laden documents remained largely unexploited for as long as a year, according to Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, former director of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). After interagency infighting that echoed the pre-9/11 battles that had prevented information-sharing

among relevant analysts, DIA officials were given limited access to the documents but told they were not allowed to write official reports based on their contents or circulate them throughout the intelligence community. Even that limited access made clear just how much valuable information had been missed by the Obama administration's initial triage: details of the close relationship between al Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban; after-action reports on past operations and indications of future

al Qaeda targeting; correspondence between bin Laden and top operatives that revealed the internal dynamics of the al Qaeda network and its relations with al Qaeda branches around the globe; and additional intelligence on al Qaeda's supporters and allies, including in Pakistan and Iran.

Beyond a deeper understanding of al Qaeda, a full exploitation of the documents would give the U.S. intelligence community (a) an accurate baseline from which to judge its past assessments of al Qaeda and its leaders, (b) the ability to compare what we thought we knew with what was actually happening, and (c) an opportunity to evaluate sources and methods to determine who and what means were producing the most accurate information.

But the U.S. intelligence community never made a comprehensive study of the bin Laden documents, says Derek Harvey, a former senior intelligence analyst with the Defense Intelligence Agency and ex-director of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Center of Excellence at U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM). "A full exploitation? No," he says. "Not even close."



Michelle and Barack Obama pass the Fallen Hero Memorial at Fort Hood, November 10, 2009.

■ **THE 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.** Beginning on the first anniversary of the raid that killed Osama bin Laden, the Obama campaign rolled out an effort to portray the president as the imminent victor in the global war on terror. John Brennan, at the time a top White House counterterrorism official and later CIA director, spoke at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., and boldly predicted the demise of al Qaeda by the end of the decade.

Brennan began with a disclaimer—“We’ve always been clear that the end of bin Laden would [not] mark the end of al Qaeda”—but his speech pointed strongly in the other direction. Al Qaeda leaders were being killed at such a pace that the group “has had trouble replacing them,” and the “handful” of al Qaeda leaders who managed to survive “struggle to communicate with subordinates and affiliates.” Al Qaeda leadership was “on the path to its destruction,” he said, and “we can . . . envision a world in which the al Qaeda core is simply no longer relevant.”

Obama himself made this case in the strongest terms. Dozens of times during the campaign, Obama asserted that al Qaeda was “on the run” or “on the path to defeat.”

During a speech at a fundraiser in New York City on September 18, 2012, Obama suggested that al Qaeda was “decimated.” He said: “I ended the war in Iraq, as I promised. We are transitioning out of Afghanistan. We have gone after the terrorists who actually attacked us 9/11 and decimated al Qaeda.” It would become a campaign talking point.

Al Qaeda was not, in fact, decimated. Just as Obama and his supporters were boasting of al Qaeda’s demise, many of those closest to the fight were saying the opposite. “We were still facing a growing al Qaeda threat,” said Flynn, the former DIA director. “And it was not just Pakistan and Afghanistan and Iraq. But we saw it growing in Yemen. We clearly saw it growing still in East Africa.” The expansion of al Qaeda—and the broader jihadist threat—was not marginal. “By that time, they probably had grown by about—I’d say close to doubling by that time. And we knew that.”

Flynn tells *THE WEEKLY STANDARD* that he saw most of the president’s daily briefings over the two years he headed DIA, from 2012 to 2014, and he had been studying assessments of the jihadist threat for a decade before that, in positions at the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and in the intelligence bureaucracy. “The intelligence was very clear,” he says, and that intelligence “did not meet the narrative the White House” was selling to the American public. “Especially during the run-up to the elections,” Flynn says, “they were basically misinforming the public.”

■ **BENGHAZI.** The attacks in Benghazi offer a case study of that deception. Six weeks before the election, on September 11, 2012, al Qaeda-affiliated fighters attacked U.S. facilities in Benghazi, Libya, killing four Americans including the ambassador. The Obama administration’s duplicity is

well known. Administration officials attributed the attacks to an out-of-control protest over an anti-Muslim film trailer. They downplayed the al Qaeda links of the attackers. They made revisions to talking points drafted by the U.S. intelligence community and produced a second set of talking points designed to elevate the importance of the video and distract from the administration’s policy failures in Libya.

Internal documents released as a result of FOIA requests or made public by the Select Committee on Benghazi make clear that the narrative created by the administration in the aftermath of the attacks was at odds with what administration and intelligence officials were saying to one another behind the scenes. On the night of the attacks, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told her daughter that the attacks had been conducted by an al Qaeda-like group, and the following day, in a conversation with Egypt’s prime minister, she knocked down speculation that the attacks were the result of a protest. According to State Department notes recording the call, Clinton said: “We know the attack in Libya had nothing to do with the film. It was a planned attack, not a protest. . . . Based on the information we saw today, we believe that the group that claimed responsibility for this was affiliated with al-Qaeda.”

Two days later, however, she met with Charles Woods, the father of one of the CIA contractors killed in the attacks. He immediately jotted down her words to him: “We are going to have the filmmaker arrested who was responsible for the death of your son.”

President Obama repeatedly used the administration’s discredited narrative as he campaigned on his claim that al Qaeda had been decimated. “A day after 9/11, we are reminded that a new tower rises above the New York skyline, but al Qaeda is on the path to defeat and bin Laden is dead,” he said at a fundraiser in Las Vegas on September 12, 2012, one day after the Benghazi attacks.

So desperate was the administration to avoid admitting that the Benghazi attacks were a deliberate assault by jihadists that Jay Carney, the White House press secretary, scolded a reporter who asked whether there was some significance to the attackers’ choice of September 11 as the date for their assault on the U.S. facilities in Benghazi. “I think that you’re conveniently conflating two things,” Carney snapped, “which is the anniversary of 9/11 and the incidents that took place, which are under investigation.”

Hillary Clinton attributed her many contradictions to “the fog of war.” But the indictment of the only person in U.S. custody for those attacks is not foggy. The government charges that Ahmed Abu Khatallah, a leader in Ansar al Sharia, an al Qaeda-affiliate in Libya, discovered the presence of a CIA facility in Benghazi and developed a plan to take it out. According to the indictment, “Khatallah informed others that there was an American facility in

Benghazi posing as a diplomatic post, that he believed the facility was actually being used to collect intelligence, that he viewed U.S. intelligence actions in Benghazi as illegal, and that he was therefore going to do something about this facility.” The 21-page indictment mentions no video.

■ **AL QAEDA IN AFGHANISTAN.** Obama has repeatedly said that he plans to bring the war in Afghanistan to a “responsible end,” echoing his myopic claim about the war in Iraq. Obama decided only recently to keep a small American force of 5,500 troops in Afghanistan into 2017, as opposed to withdrawing all U.S. soldiers before he left office.

The decision was a tacit acknowledgment of stunning advances the Taliban and al Qaeda have made throughout the country. Approximately 40 of Afghanistan’s 398 districts have fallen to the jihadists this year. With 9,800 American troops in the country currently, the Taliban-al Qaeda axis launched attacks on Afghanistan’s provincial capitals and even briefly captured the city of Kunduz in late September. American airstrikes and special forces helped drive the insurgents out of Kunduz proper, but the city remains surrounded. The jihadists have not had such success in Afghanistan’s few urban areas since before September 11, 2001—an ominous sign.

Obama’s handling of the Afghan war has been uneven, to say the least. Afghanistan was the “good war,” according to Obama, and therefore deserved the resources that Iraq did not. Obama did order his own surge of forces into the country in late 2009, and the American-led coalition had some success, particularly in the south. But Obama’s “surge” was short-lived, bound by an arbitrary deadline of 18 months that he announced in the same speech as the surge itself, and didn’t target all of the jihadist-infested areas of the country. All of the additional American forces sent by Obama were withdrawn before the 2012 presidential election.

As part of their case that al Qaeda has been “decimated” in Afghanistan and Pakistan, administration officials have for years said the estimated number of al Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan is between 50 and 100. It’s an argument driven by politics, not facts.

In October, U.S. military officials revealed the existence of two large al Qaeda training camps in the southern province of Kandahar. The larger of the two was a virtual town of approximately 30 square miles.

Destroying the camps required a sustained, five-day campaign by both air and ground assets. The U.S. military

and its Afghan allies launched 63 airstrikes on the training facilities and deployed a joint ground force of more than 200 troops. Establishing such a facility would have been neither possible nor necessary if there had been fewer than 100 al Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan.

Obama has said that America’s mission in Afghanistan is to ensure “that al Qaeda can never again establish a safe haven to launch attacks against us or our allies.” Al Qaeda has safe havens in Afghanistan today. A “responsible end” to the war in Afghanistan is not within sight.

■ **IRAN AND TERROR.** The highest priority of Obama’s second term was a nuclear deal with Iran, and the administration made clear early that it was willing to set aside Iran’s support for terror in order to secure such a deal. Administration officials described their approach as “decoupling” the nuclear talks from the other provocative behavior of the regime, including terrorism.

At times, however, top administration and intelligence officials went beyond simply ignoring Iran’s support for terror. They whitewashed it.

For years, the U.S. intelligence community’s “Worldwide Threat Assessment” reported in blunt language on Iran’s support for terrorism and its use of proxies to expand its influence in the region. For more than a decade, the report, produced for Congress by the director of national intelligence, was clear and consistent.

In 2007, for instance, the report read: “We assess that Iran regards its ability to conduct terrorist operations abroad as a key element of its national security strategy: It considers this capability as helping to safeguard the regime by deterring U.S. or Israeli attacks, distracting and weakening Israel, enhancing Iran’s regional influence through intimidation, and helping to drive the United States from the region.”

By 2015, despite the fact that Iran remains the leading state sponsor of terror in the world, all references to Iran’s support for terrorism had been stripped from the DNI’s report. All that remained was vague language about Iran’s backing of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, its “promulgation of anti-Israeli policies, development of advanced military capabilities, and pursuit of its nuclear program.”

Republicans on the Senate Intelligence Committee noted the change in a letter to James Clapper, the director of national intelligence. “We are writing to express our concern that your 2015 worldwide threat assessment did not

Top administration and intelligence officials have gone beyond simply ignoring Iran’s support for terror. They have whitewashed it.



John Kerry and Iranian foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif

fully represent the threat posed by Iranian support for terrorist proxies and violent Shia militants throughout the Middle East. Iran continues to advance its subversive behavior through violent extremist groups like Lebanese Hezbollah, Shia militias, the Houthi rebels, and Palestinian extremists, among others. The Iranian regime leverages these relationships to export its so-called Islamic revolution, destabilize the regional order, and counter American interests in places like Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Israel.”

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence described the changes as “an oversight” and denied any effort to minimize the threat from Iran as the administration pursued a nuclear deal with Tehran.

The administration’s policy of “decoupling” the nuclear talks from Iran’s support for terror came to an abrupt end with the signing of the deal itself. Among those who will receive international nuclear sanctions relief as part of the broader deal: Qassem Suleimani, the man responsible for overseeing Iran’s external terror operations as head of the Quds Force; Ahmad Vahidi, former head of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps, wanted for his involvement in a terror attack on a Jewish community center in Argentina in 1994; and Iran’s Bank Saderat, which the regime uses to finance a variety of terrorist groups.

■ **ISIS.** Obama’s skepticism about the Iraq war is well known. It helped get him elected president, and in speeches and interviews to this day he often points to that war to explain the chaos in the region. As his exchange with Petraeus back in 2008 makes clear, Obama believed jihadists operating from Iraq did not present a threat to the United States or the West. They were, in his view, “a mafia,” with parochial interests.

For Obama, the threat was limited to a core group of senior al Qaeda leaders, located in Afghanistan and Pakistan, who wanted to attack the United States. He was from the beginning utterly unconcerned about the potential expansion of AQI—now ISIS—and dismissive of evidence that jihadists from Iraq presented a threat to the West.

Obama was not only mistaken about the postwar threat from Iraq, he was apparently ignorant of the relevant history of jihadist threats emanating from Iraq. Even before the Iraq war began in March 2003, the CIA and liaison intelligence agencies across the Atlantic hunted down suspected terrorists in Europe who were tied to Abu Musab al Zarqawi’s operations in northern Iraq.

Former CIA director George Tenet writes in his autobiography, *At the Center of the Storm*, that U.S. “efforts to track activities emanating from Kurmal [in northern Iraq] resulted in the arrest of nearly one hundred Zarqawi operatives in Western Europe planning to use poisons in operations” prior to March 2003. Tenet also writes that two longtime subordinates to Ayman al Zawahiri (who was then bin Laden’s

top deputy and is now the head of al Qaeda) were among the “dozen al Qaeda-affiliated extremists” who “converged on Baghdad, with apparently no harassment on the part of the Iraqi government,” in 2002. The CIA had “credible information” that they were “willing to strike U.S., Israeli, and Egyptian targets sometime in the future,” according to Tenet. One of the two, known as Abu Ayyub al-Masri, went on to become one of the first leaders of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), a political front organization for Al Qaeda in Iraq, the terror group Zarqawi formally established in 2004. Zarqawi’s Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) grew into the group now known variously as ISIS, ISIL, and the Islamic State.

After Masri and his coleader were killed in April 2010, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, a former prisoner in the coalition’s Camp Bucca detention center, took over as the new chief of the expanding terror operation and moved quickly to accelerate its growth.

Voices in the U.S. intelligence community warned about the jihadist threats from Iraq, echoing many previous assessments. In 2004, the 9/11 Commission Report cautioned that if “Iraq becomes a failed state, it will go to the top of the list of places that are breeding grounds for attacks against Americans at home.” Obama’s dismissal of the terror threat from Iraq not only disregarded contemporaneous intelligence reporting, but ignored bipartisan concerns of more than a decade’s standing.

On October 21, 2011, Obama announced that he was bringing the Iraq war to a “responsible end—for the sake of our national security and to strengthen American leadership around the world.” For Obama, the war in Iraq remained disconnected from the fight against al Qaeda and like-minded jihadists who threaten the West. “The tide of war is receding,” Obama claimed. “The drawdown in Iraq allowed us to refocus our fight against al Qaeda and achieve major victories against its leadership—including Osama bin Laden.” Obama said nothing about Al Qaeda in Iraq (predecessor of ISIS) or the fact that it was still loyal to al Qaeda’s leadership. Obama’s oversight was glaring. In July 2011, in his first public statement as chief of the organization that would become ISIS, Baghdadi threatened to carry out terrorist attacks against the United States to avenge the slaying of Osama bin Laden.

Administration officials mocked the jihadists’ goals in Iraq and elsewhere. On June 29, 2011, Obama’s top counterterrorism adviser, John Brennan, argued that the administration wasn’t going to organize its counterterrorism policies around the “absurd” idea that al Qaeda and its branches were fighting to resurrect an Islamic caliphate. Brennan stressed that this was a “feckless delusion” that didn’t require America to be on a war footing.

Meanwhile, Baghdadi expanded his operations into Syria in late 2011 and 2012. His ambitious efforts led to a

dispute with al Qaeda's senior management in 2013 and eventually a formal split from al Qaeda. This fissure did not weaken either group.

In 2014, David Remnick, editor of the *New Yorker* and author of a bestselling biography of Barack Obama, interviewed the president. Remnick asked him about ISIS and its worrisome gains in western Iraq. Obama was dismissive.

"The analogy we use around here sometimes, and I think is accurate, is if a jayvee team puts on Lakers uniforms that doesn't make them Kobe Bryant," Obama said. Remnick, obviously taken aback by Obama's comparison, noted that he had resorted "to an uncharacteristically flip analogy." Obama continued: "I think there is a distinction between the capacity and reach of a bin Laden and a network that is actively planning major terrorist plots against the homeland versus jihadists who are engaged in various local power struggles and disputes, often sectarian."

Obama's comments echoed the language of a major national security address he had given the previous spring at the National Defense University. In that speech, Obama contrasted the war in Iraq and the war against al Qaeda. Obama claimed to have "ended" the Iraq war, which "carried significant consequences for our fight against al Qaeda, our standing in the world, and—to this day—our interests in a vital region." Obama said nothing about the resurgent jihadist threat in Iraq and only briefly mentioned that "extremists" had gained "a foothold in countries like Libya and Syria." Obama sought to cast this threat as having "differences from 9/11." He said some jihadist "groups are simply collections of local militias or extremists interested in seizing territory." Obama did say the United States must be "vigilant for signs that these groups may pose a transnational threat," but he insisted that "most are focused on operating in the countries and regions where they are based." The jihadist threat was primarily "localized" and "regional," according to Obama, and we need not be overly concerned about large, 9/11-style attacks in the West.

Obama's confidence was misplaced. On June 29, 2014, three years to the day after Brennan mocked the idea of a caliphate as "a feckless delusion" and six months after Obama dismissed ISIS as "jayvee," Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi named himself "Caliph Ibrahim" and declared the vast swath of territory ISIS had come to control "the caliphate."

In the space of less than three years, Baghdadi's organization went from holding virtually no territory to ruling large parts of two nation-states, Iraq and Syria, and wiping out a border that had existed for decades.

The administration was at a loss to explain the dramatic rise of a terror group the president had so cavalierly dismissed. Press briefings at the White House, State

Department, and the Pentagon were filled with exchanges between administration spokesmen and reporters incredulous at the repeated claims that the administration had a plan and that the plan was working. The charade came to an end on September 4, 2014, when Obama took questions from reporters in a White House press conference. In response to an inquiry about his plan to deal with ISIS, Obama made a startling admission. "I don't want to put the cart before the horse," he said. "We don't have a strategy yet."

Elements of the U.S. intelligence community carefully tracked the strengthening of ISIS, and many analysts tried to call attention to the mounting threat. But administration officials made clear that such assessments were unwelcome.

"More than 50 intelligence analysts working out of the U.S. military's Central Command have formally complained that their reports on ISIS and al Qaeda's branch in Syria were being inappropriately altered by senior officials," the *Daily Beast* reported in September.

"The analysts have accused senior-level leaders, including the director of intelligence and his deputy in CENTCOM, of changing their analyses to be more in line with the Obama administration's public contention that the fight against ISIS and al Qaeda is making progress."

All the while, Obama and his advisers dismissed the group as "a kind of mafia," "jayvee team," and "local"—while belittling its ambitions as "absurd" and a "feckless delusion." It was members of this jayvee team who conducted the Paris attacks.

Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, the former DIA director, described the evolution of the jihadist threat over the course of the Obama presidency. When Obama was elected, the threat of the global jihadist movement had been "stabilized." By 2012, as Obama campaigned for reelection, "they were back on the march in the Middle East and in Europe." By the time Flynn left the DIA in August 2014, after two years of challenging the administration's willful blindness on terrorism, "they were winning."

And now?

"They have more than doubled. They are stronger. They are more 'modernized' via the world of the Internet. They have far better leaders, [they're] more organized. They've clearly demonstrated a high planning ability, and their operational security is exceptional."

Al Qaeda is not decimated. ISIS is not jayvee. Iran is not our friend. Terrorists sent by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula are not isolated extremists. Attempted bombings by operatives dispatched by the Pakistani Taliban are not one-off attacks. Planned assaults on American facilities overseas are not protests. Groups blowing up airliners are not contained. September 11 was not an episode. Mass casualty attacks are not setbacks.

The long war is not over. ♦

European Insecurity

The bloody crossroads where migration and terrorism meet



The police raid in the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis, November 18

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

If Europe doesn't get serious about protecting its borders, it's going to head back to the days of barbed wire and concrete walls. That's what President François Hollande warned when he went before a rare joint sitting of France's National Assembly and Senate to argue for an extended three-month state of emergency. His warning came in the wake of the half-dozen simultaneous bomb and machine-gun attacks in Paris on November 13, claimed by the Islamic State (ISIS), that left at least 130 dead.

Hollande's standing with his countrymen has had something in common with that of Barack Obama. He came to power to replace a right-winger the broad public

had come to loathe, in this case Nicolas Sarkozy. And Hollande soon settled into a pattern of permanent unpopularity that has left the man in the street counting the days till he leaves office, and the politically minded migrating steadily towards the opposite ideological pole. Marine Le Pen's right-wing National Front has for long stretches of the Hollande era been the most popular party in the country. Conservative former labor minister Xavier Bertrand called for the establishment of special tribunals for jihadists.

For now, it is easy to understand why Hollande is asking for emergency powers but hard to tell how he will use them. The new law would allow expanded use of house arrests, warrantless searches of computers, new airline security programs, and surveillance of various social groups. This week, police fired 5,000 rounds of ammunition into an apartment building in the city of Saint-Denis, north of Paris, in a raid that killed the ringleader of the November 13 attacks. It

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appears that Hollande, who describes France as being in a state of war, has been swept up in the security-consciousness of his countrymen.

But the situation is ambiguous. Europe—or at least the Western European politicians who claim to speak in its name—is managing two emergencies at once: terrorism and a mammoth overland migration of millions of Muslims, mostly young men. Some are refugees from the Syrian war. Others pretend to be such refugees in order to ease their path to political asylum. Almost assuredly these migrant flows will harbor a certain number of people who would be deemed terrorist threats. In a sense, Hollande is pursuing hard measures—like ransacking apartments in the slums—that would protect the French people from terrorists. In a sense he is *avoiding* hard measures—like repudiating once and for all Europe’s system of porous borders—and thus protecting the French political class from the judgment of the French people. He is also dodging the judgment of financial markets, using the attacks to wriggle out of the austerity budgets that the common European currency, the euro, has imposed on France’s state finances. (“The security pact,” Hollande says, “takes precedence over the stability pact,” as the budgetary targets are called.)

Hollande is not the only Western leader who is trying to insulate himself from accountability to voters as he deals with terrorism on one hand and seeks to avoid dealing with mass migration on the other. President Obama, speaking in Turkey, used his platform in Antalya not to deplore the Paris attacks but to belittle those of his fellow Americans who saw them as a reason to increase the vetting of would-be migrants from the Syrian war. This was the same week Turkish soccer fans booed the moment of silence for the victims of the Paris attacks and shouted *Allahu akbar!*

Chancellor Angela Merkel in Germany has used the Syrian war as the occasion to launch a demographic revolution. Her estimate that Germany could receive 800,000 migrants in a year (a number that vastly exceeds the number of German births) has sped the onrush of Middle Easterners into Europe since August. This migration has been extremely unpopular in certain sectors of German society. There has been a great deal of violence by migrants in refugee housing—and, by some counts, hundreds of attacks against such facilities, most of them in eastern Germany. At the end of August Merkel gave a press conference that has been remembered for its declaration that thuggery would not be tolerated. Its real significance was that it, too, declared a sort of state of emergency. Merkel warned that the crisis would

continue not for days or months but for a much longer period. Under the circumstances, she said, Germany would have to relax its traditional punctiliousness about the rule of law: “It is important that we say German thoroughness is super, but now is the time for German flexibility.”

Thereafter, migrants started pouring into the country without identity checks or proper registration. Most of these people were not, in fact, Syrians, and therefore not entitled to settle. That didn’t stop them from doing so. In mid-November, employees of the federal migration office wrote a letter of complaint to Merkel that authorities were accepting as Syrian anyone who claimed to be Syrian and was vouched for by the translator attached to him. These translators are neither state employees nor under oath. They are usually recently arrived migrant kids themselves.

The press came to refer to the massive welcome to migrants as Merkel’s state of emergency (*Ausnahmezustand*). In an unfortunately timed cover story, Britain’s *Economist* published a paean to Merkel on the eve of the Paris attacks, calling her “The Indispensable European.” It unwittingly gave a good indication of the dim view of democracy in the EU. On migration, the magazine editorialized, “she has boldly upheld European values, almost alone in her commitment to welcoming refugees.”

One is entitled to wonder how these values can be called “European” if one lady in Germany is “almost alone” in espousing them.

The European value the magazine seemed to value most was fecklessness. The arrival of millions of Muslim migrants into the lands of the European Union was taken almost as an unstoppable natural phenomenon. The EU’s officials in Brussels could do nothing to slow or deflect the flow, having eviscerated the governing institutions of once-capable nation-states like Germany and built nothing to replace them. (That is because the EU lacked the democratic legitimacy, and the budgets that go with it, to build such institutions.) This heartfelt dedication to the EU’s impotence mystifies all foreigners who encounter it. When *Die Zeit* interviewed Demetrios Papademetriou of the nonpartisan Migration Policy Institute in Washington, the interviewers asked only for confirmation that defending borders was futile. “Are there ‘good’ borders?” they asked. “Borders that protect states without being brutal? Can borders be secured?”

“Of course they can,” Papademetriou replied. “Almost

Authorities were accepting as Syrian anyone who claimed to be Syrian and was vouched for by a translator. These translators are neither state employees nor under oath. They are usually recently arrived migrant kids themselves.

every country on earth does it, and successfully. . . . Every time I talk to officials and politicians in Brussels, I'm shocked by how convinced they are that they can't do anything to influence people's migration patterns."

The interviewers simply couldn't absorb it. "How do you secure borders?" they pressed on. "The chancellor [Merkel] says, 'Fences don't help.'"

"That's wrong," Papademetriou said. And so the mutual incomprehension continued, across an entire newspaper page.

Naturally, European actions, or nonactions, have a huge influence on migration patterns. Muslims are moving out of Syria in the direction of Germany, first, because Europe is rich and, second, because it is choosing not to give meaning to its borders. Eventually it will have to defend itself, but for now Europeans would rather not think about such things. Consider how little thought went into this assessment of the situation by Alexander Betts of the Refugee Studies Center at Oxford, interviewed in the *New York Times*: "If Lebanon can host one million Syrians, despite being the size of Maryland," Betts said, "a region the size of Europe should be able to host millions." Aside from the obvious cultural differences he chooses to ignore, he is not reckoning with a couple of facts fundamental to his own field. The further from the site of conflict refugees are settled, the more likely they are, over the long term, to become permanent residents rather than temporary sojourners.

In Germany in particular, there is an impatience with the idea that migration might ever be bad, or unmanageable, or even problematic. The Tübingen mayor Boris Palmer, one of the most successful and well-known young Green party politicians, is pro-immigration. But when he expressed his doubts that Germany could absorb all the migrants Merkel had welcomed, many Greens urged that he be thrown out of the party. Simone Peter, the party co-chairman, wouldn't go that far, but she thought he was hurting morale. "If Boris Palmer says we can't manage it, then he calls into question the efforts of all of those working in the field," Peter said. "That Boris Palmer is known well beyond Tübingen gives him a special responsibility. That is why I would hope he would get with the program and spread confidence."

Even the opposition to migration has tended to be

carried out within very politically correct parameters. Merkel's center-right party rules in a "grand coalition" with the Social Democrats—this would be the equivalent of a Republican-Democrat government in Washington. The Greens and ex-Communists form the tiny opposition, and both support Merkel's policy. So the only (slight) grumbling has come from the Christian Social Union (CSU), the wing of Merkel's own party that is based in Bavaria and hence a bit more traditionalist and Catholic than her own Christian Democrats. The CSU leader Horst Seehofer has raised misgivings that the overwhelmingly young and male migrants will be allowed to bring their large families after them, changing a migration of 1 or 2 million people into a colonization of 10 million or more. So Merkel accepted that there would be no family reunification for migrants receiving "subsidiary protection." This is a category that covers 181 of the refugees who have come so far, but not the other 999,819.

For this Seehofer gets called a rightist. Yet when Bavaria's CSU finance minister Markus Söder tweeted "#ParisAttacks change everything. We shouldn't allow uncontrolled illegal immigration," Seehofer flew into his own censorious rage. "After such attacks as those in Paris," he said in an interview, "it should be forbidden to stress personal and partisan views." German government spokesmen have a hard time distinguishing between opposition to mass immigration on one hand and Nazism on the other. Actual protests against the party have been confined to

the new, hardline Alternative for Germany party and to the East German anti-Muslim social movement Pegida.

The so-called right-wing press has shown just as little tolerance for unorthodox tweeting. Writer Matthias Matussek of the conservative *Die Welt* tweeted: "I'll bet the terror in Paris shifts our own discussion over open borders and the quarter-million undocumented Muslim men in a new, and healthier, direction." It cost him his job. Editor Jan-Eric Peters "distanced himself in the name of *Die Welt*" from Matussek and then fired him.

Outside the government and EU ministries, Europeans are rightly very worried about this migration, even in Germany, which is either the most pro-immigration country on the continent or the one that,

According to a poll taken in November, 71 percent of Germans want an upper limit to the total number of migrants—something Merkel resolutely refuses to give.





Migrants wait to enter a registration camp after crossing the Greek-Macedonian border near Gevgelija on November 18.

for historical reasons, is least willing to avow its anti-immigrant sentiments. According to an Infratest-Dimap poll taken in early November, 71 percent want an upper limit to the total number of migrants (something Merkel resolutely refuses to give), 78 percent are worried about the increasing influence of Islam, and 87 percent fear a rise of the far right. By similar margins, they call for the introduction of a law that would require migrants to obey “basic German values.”

Germans seem to believe that all they have to do is insist newcomers respect, for instance, equal treatment of men and women and the right to change or leave one’s religion. These are the two main sticking points Europeans have when they consider Islam. It has pleased certain observers to claim the November 13 attacks in Paris as an attack by Puritans on hedonism or youth or sexual freedom, noting that the venues chosen, like the Bataclan concert hall, were places where young people met to party. The ISIS communiqué, read by Fabien Clain, a French Muslim from Toulouse, called Paris “the capital of abominations and perversions, the place that carries the banner of the cross in Europe.” But this would seem to identify Christianity as ISIS’s primary enemy. And who was Clain? An intimate of Mohamed Merah, the terrorist who murdered several Jewish

schoolchildren and a rabbi in Toulouse in 2012. Clain spoke years ago about targeting the Bataclan. What interested him was not the tunes and the scene but its “Zionist” owners.

France was more or less capable of keeping at bay the radical part of its Muslim population until a couple of years ago, when its secret services had to monitor only, say, 800 or 1,200 bad actors. But continued immigration, and jihad, changed the balance of power. Now, according to the ministry of the interior, there are 11,700 with ties to the Syrian war, and the hard core has risen to 2,000. That is just too many to keep an eye on. On October 24 in Marseille, three worshipers on their way to synagogue were wounded in a knife attack. Days after the attacks on Paris, a Jewish school history teacher was stabbed by a group of three men waving a photograph of Mohamed Merah.

What exactly do European politicians think “values” are? Magic words that you just have to say in order to bring others to heel? No, values are another way of saying social power. A value is something that the state is willing to deploy its monopoly on legitimate violence to protect, as the German sociologist Max Weber would have put it. Europe is about to rediscover that it can preserve its values only to the extent it is willing to fight for them. ♦

DIMITAR DILKOFF / AFP / GETTY IMAGES



In New York, Herbert Aptheker, Tom Hayden, A.J. Muste, and Staughton Lynd discuss their recent trip to North Vietnam (1966).

Herbert the Red

When Stalin called, Professor Aptheker answered. BY HARVEY KLEHR

Edgar Hoover may have called Herbert Aptheker “the most dangerous Communist in the United States” in 1965, but an attentive reader of Gary Murrell’s interesting but very flawed biography will come away with a picture of an ideological fanatic who squandered his talents as a historian, gave slavish devotion to a monstrous regime, and lacked the intellectual courage to say

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The Most Dangerous Communist in the United States

A Biography of Herbert Aptheker
by Gary Murrell
Massachusetts, 464 pp., \$29.95

publicly what he wrote privately. Overreaction by anti-Communists turned a hardworking Communist party hack into a mini-celebrity, and gave undeserved attention to a dishonest and flawed human being.

Born in 1915 in Brooklyn, the son of a wealthy garment manufacturer, Aptheker was radicalized while observing racism during a trip to Ala-

bama as a teenager and began writing for Communist publications at Columbia University in the mid-1930s. While working on his master’s degree, he began a romantic relationship with his decade-older, divorced first cousin, herself a party member. They kept their relationship secret for six years, until his mother died, whereupon they married. Herbert Aptheker joined the American Communist party (CPUSA) in August 1939, after the Nazi-Soviet pact, just as thousands of other disillusioned Jewish Communists were leaving. In speeches and articles for the rest of his life, he defended the pact, denied that antisemitism existed in

BETTMANN CORBIS / AP

the Communist world, and slandered as crypto-Nazis those who provided voluminous evidence of its existence.

Apart from his fierce devotion to the CPUSA, the other constant in his ideological life was a refusal to admit that the Soviet Union had any significant flaws. The Russian revolution had been the “greatest event in human history.” When Nikita Khrushchev denounced Stalin’s crimes, Aptheker briefly wavered, but quickly launched attacks on those American Communists who wanted to create a more independent political party. One of them pointed out that, as a historian, Aptheker had a special responsibility to speak out about the falsification of history. Instead, he wrote *The Truth About Hungary*, a mendacious defense of the 1956 Soviet invasion of that country in which he misused and distorted sources to argue that the Soviet Union had no choice but to intervene to put down a fascist uprising.

Gary Murrell calls *The Truth About Hungary* “arguably the most offensive and contentious of his books” and admits that it did significant “damage to his reputation.” Murrell speculates that Aptheker’s fear of war and his anger at American policy were responsible. But a much simpler explanation is that a man who, late in life, in an interview published in the *Journal of American History*, denounced “objectivity” as a goal for historians consciously lied to serve his cause. (He wrote a similar screed about the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia.)

Murrell has an unfortunate penchant for denouncing Aptheker’s anti-Communist critics as right-wing reactionaries and suggesting that he successfully exposed their distortions about communism. For example, Murrell excoriates Sidney Hook, who insisted that Communist teachers could not be free intellectual agents. In fact, Aptheker’s reply to Hook was thoroughly dishonest, equating anticommunism with fascism, insisting that Lenin and Mao were opposed to conspiracy, and that communism was democratic.

To demonstrate that Communist teachers were not under Communist discipline, Aptheker triumphantly noted that the policies of the party they were

obligated to support “are designed to serve the best interests of the masses.” He defended the Soviet imposition of Lysenkoism on biologists because it “was in accordance with scientific truth.” And in the very same article demonstrating just how open-minded Communist historians were, he ridiculed Hook’s argument that there was any antisemitism in the 1952 Czechoslovak purge trials. (He even had the gall to state that the overwhelmingly Jewish defendants had been exposed as antisemites and insisted that the Rosenberg case was rife with it.) Like a good party member, Aptheker knew what the truth was regardless of the evidence.

Aptheker enlisted in the Army after Pearl Harbor. While stationed in the South, he combed through archives to write a dissertation, later published as *American Negro Slave Revolts*, arguing that far from being unique, Nat Turner’s rebellion had been one of many such uprisings. Aptheker deserves credit as a pioneer in the field of African-American studies—although his work later came under sustained attack by far more accomplished historians who argued that he had overemphasized the significance of slave revolts and misjudged the militancy of most slaves. Even his fellow Marxist, Eugene Genovese, who praised Aptheker and sought to integrate him into the historical profession, offered a devastating critique of his thesis.

After returning from service in Europe as a major in an artillery unit, Aptheker received a Guggenheim Fellowship, lectured frequently at colleges around the country, and began working with W.E.B. Du Bois. He was, however, unable to get an academic position. While Murrell attributes this failure to anticommunism, he provides no evidence that Aptheker even applied for any academic jobs between 1945 and 1948, by which time his role as a defense witness in the first Smith Act trial made him a pariah and began a lengthy period during which college administrators frequently canceled his scheduled appearances to lecture after pressure from public officials or angry alumni.

As anticommunism faded away, starting in the 1960s, Aptheker taught at several universities, receiving accolades as a trailblazer in the field of black history. There is no doubt that he did make significant contributions to the study of African Americans: Entrusted with control of W.E.B. Du Bois’s papers, he edited and annotated 3 volumes of Du Bois’s correspondence and 40 volumes of his published writings, including a 600-page annotated bibliography. Even as late as the 1970s, however, the Yale history department, with the dean of Southern historians, the liberal C. Vann Woodward in the lead, refused to allow him to teach a departmental course, arguing that he was unqualified. He taught it under other auspices.

Distrust of the Communist party, and Aptheker’s full-throated defense of the Soviet Union, was the driving force behind the academic community’s antipathy to him, but his pugnacious and offensive personal style was a contributing factor. Murrell admits that Aptheker was often “belligerent” and given to fits of rage. A fellow Communist, Lloyd Brown, lamented his “lack of moderation in language and tone.” His primitive Marxism led him to attribute base motives to intellectual opponents ranging from Gunnar Myrdal to Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Critics were warmongers, fascists, and paid lackeys of predatory capitalism. The ruling class has

[t]he morals of goats, the learning of gorillas, and the ethics of—well, of what they are: racist, war-inciting, enemies of humanity, rotten to the core, parasitic, merciless and doomed.

If faith in the Soviet Union was one of Aptheker’s lodestars, the other was subservience to the CPUSA. One of the virtues of Murrell’s book is the wealth of evidence he presents, from Aptheker’s own files and those of Daniel Rubin, a onetime party apparatchik, documenting that, in private communications, Aptheker often pleaded with party leaders to develop a more accommodating policy towards non-Communist leftists

and urged them to drop their homophobic policies and to be more open to expressions of black nationalism and feminism.

Almost without exception, his advice was rejected. But as a good Marxist-Leninist, Aptheker remained publicly silent and faithfully carried out the party's wishes. He had created the American Institute for Marxist Studies in 1964 as a vehicle to promote the study of Marxism among academics, including non-Communists. The party leadership was constantly irritated by its listings of "heretical" Marxists in its bibliographies and newsletters and pressured Aptheker to give the party control over the organization. While Aptheker pushed back—privately—the non-Communist chairman, Robert Cohen, complained as years went by that the Aptheker-edited newsletter had become more and more biased towards the Communist party and "not a useful tool for most Marxist intellectual activists in any field of activity." Without informing Cohen, Aptheker turned it over to the CPUSA in 1984.

Apart from editing the party's theoretical magazine for several years, and serving on its powerless national committee, Aptheker did not hold any party positions. Murrell argues that he had no organizational influence: Gus Hall, party leader from the late 1950s until 2000, despised intellectuals in general and Aptheker in particular. He subjected him to constant slights and humiliations, against which Aptheker raged—once again, privately. But Aptheker insisted in interviews that he influenced the party through his connections with Henry Winston, Hall's second-in-command and the leading African American in the CPUSA leadership. In 1971, this close friend accused Aptheker of disloyalty to the party, attacked his scholarship and understanding of Marxism-Leninism, pronounced him guilty of "petty bourgeois radicalism" as well as "left adventurism." And Winston offered the ultimate insult: "You unfortunately follow in the wake of the racist oppressors."

Aptheker refused to appear before the party's political committee to answer

the charges, and even reestablished working relationships with people who had denigrated his life's work, cooperating with them for the next 20 years.

In that same decade, the CPUSA publicly humiliated Aptheker's daughter Bettina by ignoring her key role in Angela Davis's defense. When International Publishers refused to publish Bettina's book on feminism because it contradicted Marxist-Leninist doctrine, her dutiful father wrote a private letter of protest and bravely insisted that he would no longer allow his longtime publisher to print his books. When she resigned from the CPUSA

His primitive Marxism led him to attribute base motives to intellectual opponents. Critics were warmongers, fascists, and paid lackeys of predatory capitalism.

in 1981, he was at first angry—with her—but, Murrell proudly reports, did not break his relationship with her the way he did with other "renegades." Still, he remained in the Communist party.

One curious gap in Murrell's account is the question whether Aptheker ever belonged to a party club. Immediately after World War II, he did not, but the book is silent about whether he did so later—and on whether his private disagreements and criticisms were ever thrashed out in this "democratic" political organization, and what, if any role he played in what was, for most party members, their most important link to the CPUSA.

Herbert Aptheker's world came crashing down on him with the collapse of the Soviet Union. When Gus Hall supported the failed coup against

Mikhail Gorbachev, he aligned himself with those seeking to alter party policy. Unlike most of his fellow dissidents who were blocked from attending the party's 1991 convention as Hall sought to purge the CPUSA, Aptheker was a delegate and even managed to speak, but was brusquely and brutally denounced.

It was the last straw: He left the Communist party after 52 years and became a member of a rump group, the Committees of Correspondence for Democracy and Socialism. He condemned Soviet brutality: The Soviet Union had been guilty of "massive human extermination." He also admitted that he had been allowed to falsely testify under oath that the CPUSA was independent of the Soviet Union, that Soviet subsidies had propped up the CPUSA (Soviet money had paid for the establishment of the American Institute for Marxist Studies), and that had the party held state power, people like him "would now be dead." In short, he confirmed much of what the "right-wing reactionaries" had said about the CPUSA and the Soviet Union for decades. Invited to rejoin the party after Hall's death, he refused, citing ill health.

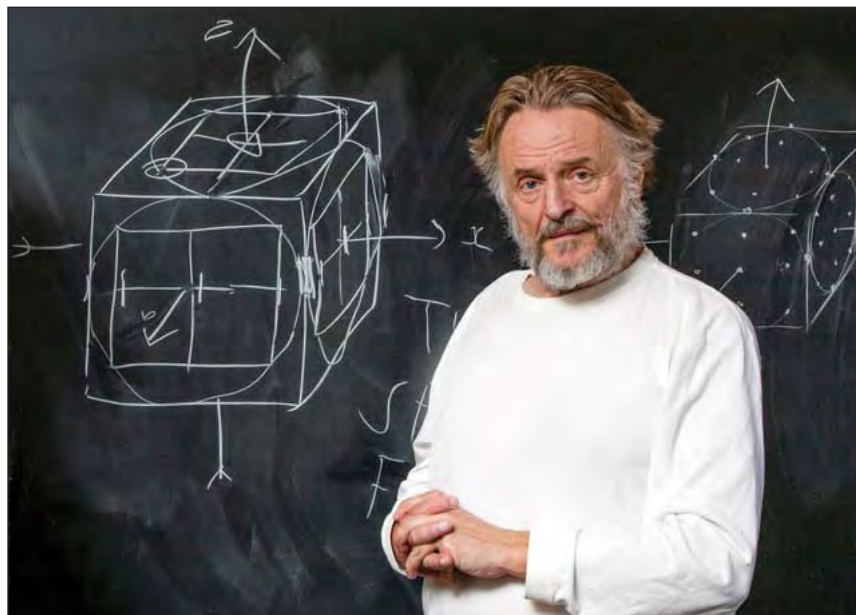
Herbert Aptheker died in 2003, but a new controversy erupted in 2006 when Bettina published her autobiography and charged that, through recovered memory, she had determined that her father had sexually molested her for a decade, from the age of 3 to 13. When she confronted him after her mother's death, Herbert had asked her to forgive him, and she had. In his preface, Murrell writes that he had stopped work on his biography for two years while trying to process this revelation; he does not mention it in the text because, he says, it is historically unprovable. In an afterword, Bettina complains that Murrell thus casts doubt on the truth of her story.

Whether or not he violated one of the most universal human taboos, Herbert Aptheker was a deeply flawed human being who devoted his talents to a murderous and vile political regime and a despicable political party that he himself finally realized had played him for a sucker. ♦

Wizard of Princeton

The formula for one rare mathematician's life.

BY DAVID GUASPARI



John Horton Conway

This is an unusual biography of a highly unusual man, the prodigiously gifted mathematician and professional eccentric John Horton Conway—creative scientist, teacher, showman, and cult figure. His third ex-wife told the author, Siobhan Roberts, that he was both “the most interesting person I have ever met” and “the most selfish, childlike person I have ever met,” and that she didn’t think she would marry again because John had “set the bar rather high.”

Writing about Conway’s work is difficult because it’s all over the map, including significant contributions to number theory, the theories of groups, knots, games, coding, and, more recently, to quantum mechanics. The arc of his story is determined not, as in many scientific lives, by the urge to ever deeper exploration of a

David Guaspari is a writer in Ithaca, N.Y.

Genius at Play

The Curious Mind of John Horton Conway
by Siobhan Roberts
Bloomsbury, 480 pp., \$30

few fundamental questions, but by a vow he made, at a critical time, to “stop worrying and feeling guilty” and permit himself to think about whatever pleased him. So, for example, he has devised a clever algorithm for calculating the day of the week on which any given date falls and regularly practices in order to use it as a parlor trick.

“Mathematicians in general don’t do . . . calculational tricks,” he says. “My colleagues in Princeton think it’s rather beneath them. They don’t think anything is beneath me.”

Thus the substance of what Conway does is inseparable from his outsized personality. Roberts, a science journalist, has therefore written an entertaining, often exhilarating, book

that reads like a deeply researched magazine profile. (Its website naturally contains a blurb from Conway: “I couldn’t put it down!”) The book consists largely of anecdotes—often very funny, many presumably true—and extensive quotations from a very quotable man: “I have taste but I don’t exercise it very frequently. So I’m just as likely to be doing something that’s not worth doing as something that is.”

Every superhero needs an origin story, and Conway’s comes in two acts. As a schoolboy, he says, he was a shy, insecure outsider, the “math brain.” But when he arrived at Cambridge to begin university studies he realized that, since no one there knew him, he could start from scratch. So he willed himself to become an extrovert. (On first encountering Conway, I wondered: Is he really like that? Is it all an act? The answer, it turns out, is: Yes.)

The curtain went up on Act Two in his early thirties. After a workmanlike Ph.D. he held a teaching appointment at Cambridge but spent most of his time holding court in the mathematics department common room playing backgammon and inventing, other games. He was oppressed by the thought that he had done, and was doing, no work of importance. Enticed by a problem in a then-hot area—the search for exotic objects called “sporadic groups”—he buckled down and quickly discovered the Conway group.

“Before,” he told Roberts, “everything I touched turned to nothing. Now I was Midas, and everything I touched turned to gold.” Newfound confidence encouraged a life spent following, insouciantly, wherever curiosity might lead.

At the same time, he also became a celebrity to a wider, nonprofessional public by inventing the Game of Life—though he is now dismayed by the possibility that it will be the only thing he’s remembered for. Life was the subject of the most popular article that Martin Gardner ever wrote for his famous *Scientific American* column, “Mathematical Games.” It is not a game with winners and losers but rather a set of rules for a *cellular automaton*. Imagine a checkerboard

with a limitless number of squares. Mark the board by placing checkers on some of the squares; given any such marking, the rules of Life define the *next* marking, so that repeated application of the rules causes the board to evolve, step by step.

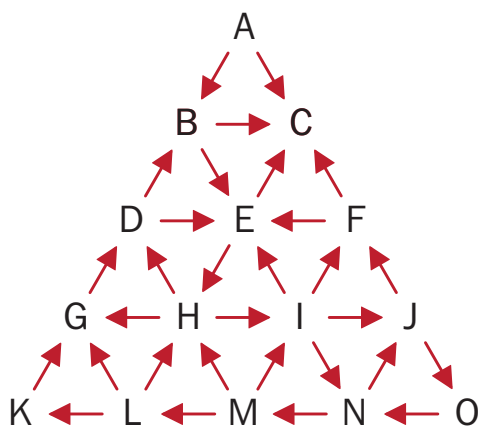
The rules of Life are simple: Whether a square is occupied in the next position depends on how many of its neighboring squares are occupied in the current one. A checker is removed from a square—having, metaphorically, died of loneliness or overcrowding—if it has too few or too many neighbors, and one is placed on an empty square if a suitable number of neighbors are available to (metaphorically) procreate there.

Conway's interest lay in finding simple rules that could produce complex behavior. For example, there is no general procedure for predicting how a marking might evolve (e.g., whether it will eventually die out, leaving an empty board). Some markings act like beings that reproduce by populating the board with copies of themselves; some can simulate fully general programmable computers. The Life craze began before the advent of personal computers, so addicts played by filching millions of dollars' worth of computer time from their employers.

The reader will not learn a great deal of mathematics from this book (which is an observation, not a complaint). Its real concern is what moves Conway: philosophy, aesthetics, a hunger for knowledge (also for sex). He has a Platonist view of the mathematical world. The Conway group was not something he invented but something he found, waiting for an explorer to come upon it. He treasures simplicity because simple things are beautiful and can truly be understood. Hence his interest in Life; hence his attitude toward a celebrated theorem of his former student, Richard Borcherds, which proved the truth of a remarkable guess by Conway himself, the "Monstrous Moonshine conjecture." (The showman likes whimsical names.)

Borcherds developed powerful abstract mathematical machinery to

prove that the theorem was true; but from Conway's point of view, the machinery was too complex to explain why. Conway also revels in the *thinginess* of the mathematical universe, the particularity of its inhabitants. The sporadic groups are so called because they are exceptions to a classification scheme for organizing the building blocks of group theory into a sort of



In Conway's game Traffic Jams, players start at A, D, F, and M and move until all end up stranded at C. The player meant to move next loses.

periodic table. When Conway found his group, it wasn't known whether there were only a finite number of these renegades. He hoped that they would never run out, each a remarkable one-of-a-kind. Sadly, they did.

Now, for some mild complaints. Never-explained technical terms crop up in sentences that will bewilder a nonmathematician. It is interesting and true, for example, that "Penrose tiles produce only nonperiodic tilings of the plane"—but "nonperiodic" and "tiling" are left undefined. There are some errors: "[Alan] Turing . . . showed that any Turing machine could be programmed to behave like every other Turing machine." But what he showed is that *some* Turing machines could be so programmed. And I feel entitled to whine about an annoying orthographic tic: Words that name numbers are routinely (and inappropriately) replaced by numerals, as in "[he] had managed to infuriate 2 departments at once." This is a book, not a tweet.

Siobhan Roberts is clearly fond, and

in some awe, of her subject, but does not try to hide his shortcomings: "He's high-maintenance, he's generous. He's emotional, he's impassive. He's a sweetheart, he's an asshole." She has produced a portrait of a lion in winter. Conway, now 77, has weathered two heart attacks, bypass surgery, two strokes, and a suicide attempt. Roberts frames her portrait with an account of a series of public lectures that Conway gave in 2009 on the free will theorem, a result in quantum mechanics proven jointly with the Princeton mathematician Simon Kochen. He is feeling his age and wonders, as the date approaches: Has he lost his mojo? Could he still dazzle an audience?

The free will theorem says, roughly, that if an experimenter can choose what measurements to make on a certain kind of physical system, and if that choice is not determined by the preceding history of the universe, then the results of the experiment are similarly undetermined. A twist in the argument shows that the unpredictability of the results cannot be accounted for by postulating some mechanism that selects randomly among the possible experimental outcomes. In Conway's provocative formulation, if an experimenter has free will, so do elementary particles. Conway, an atheist, believes that we do have free will, and that the small freedom available at the atomic level could explain why we have it. The mathematics is not controversial, but the interpretation is.

When the first lecture began, the hall was full and people were sitting in the aisles; an overflow room was overflowing. All went well, putting Conway in an expansive mood: "I can be conceited again. I've got my groove back. I wondered if I was really capable of giving the blockbuster talk any more. . . . So last night was tremendously reassuring. My ego needs to be fed!"

Roberts compares Conway to the Hotspur of *Henry IV* Part I, quoting Samuel Johnson: "Inflated with ambition" and full of "turbulent desire," Hotspur is "able to do much and eager to do more." And Conway, it seems, is not done yet. ♦

Up, Down, and Around

A veteran diplomat reflects on Israel and America.

BY TEVI TROY



Levi Eshkol, Lyndon B. Johnson at the White House (1968)

For over half a century, Harry Truman has been put forth as the paragon of presidential support for Israel. Presidents are routinely measured against the Truman standard, and under the right circumstances, they can gain the moniker “the most pro-Israel since Truman.” This informal list of honorees has included, at different times, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and, somehow, even Barack Obama—although this came from his own vice president, Joe Biden. Give ‘Em Hell Harry earned this status by backing the nascent state of Israel over the objection of his own secretary of state, George Marshall, who

Tevi Troy, presidential historian and former White House aide, is the author of What Jefferson Read, Ike Watched, and Obama Tweeted: 200 Years of Popular Culture in the White House.

Doomed to Succeed
*The U.S.-Israel Relationship
from Truman to Obama*
by Dennis Ross
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 496 pp., \$30

even threatened to resign if Truman did not follow his advice.

It is therefore to be expected that Dennis Ross, the longtime Middle East expert and government official—in both Democratic and Republican administrations—begins with Harry Truman here. Yet, despite the well-deserved credit Truman earned for making the decision to recognize Israel, his overall Israel record was more ambiguous. In fact, his first impulse was to oppose the creation of a Jewish state: He found Jewish lobbying on the issues of Israel and the resettlement of Jewish refugees to be—well, annoying, reportedly tell-

ing his cabinet in 1946, “Jesus Christ couldn’t please them when he was here on earth, so how could anyone expect that I would have any luck?” In addition to using terms like “kikes,” Truman wrote in his diary that he found the Jews, “very, very selfish.” This was not a youthful lapse, but took place in 1947, while Truman was serving as president. More important and problematic: He instituted an arms embargo during Israel’s war of independence. The embargo applied to both sides in the war, but had a greater effect on Israel, which had fewer sources of weapons.

In showing the ups and downs of the U.S.-Israel relationship, Ross correctly highlights a—if not *the*—recurrent strategic fallacy that has plagued most presidents and administrations over the last seven decades: the belief that turning a cold shoulder towards Israel will garner the United States credit or favor with the Arab nations who are Israel’s sworn enemies. It is this fallacy that forms the thesis for *Doomed to Succeed*, as Ross demonstrates that, whatever it is that policymakers are seeking from Israel’s Arab neighbors at the time—support in the Cold War, access to oil, or a diminution of jihadist terror—giving the cold shoulder to Israel does very little to achieve the desired objectives.

To accomplish his goal, Ross takes readers on a tour of the foreign policy of Truman’s successors, giving each president his own chapter. We learn, for example, that Dwight Eisenhower was the first, but by no means the last, to feel that his predecessor had been too pro-Israel and that he had to re-balance American policy against Israel. The Eisenhower administration felt that Truman’s positions on Israel were based on domestic political considerations. Ike’s secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, summarized this view with no small bitterness, saying, “I am aware how almost impossible it is in this country to carry out a foreign-policy not approved by the Jews. Marshall and Forrestal learned that. I am going to try and have one.”

Challenges continued for the

relationship in Democratic administrations. Lyndon Johnson pointedly warned Israel not to attack first in the 1967 war: "Israel will not be alone unless it decides to go alone." LBJ also worked behind the scenes to pressure the Israelis, subjecting foreign minister Abba Eban to the famous Johnson "treatment" in an unsuccessful effort to get Israel to agree. At the beginning of the conflict, in which Israel did preempt in order to stave off a multifront assault, a State Department spokesman announced that the United States was "neutral in thought, word, and deed," a sentiment that the American Jewish community understandably did not appreciate.

These challenges in the U.S.-Israel relationship continued throughout the 1970s. Gerald Ford limited aid to Israel and called for a "total reassessment" of American policy. Jimmy Carter was even worse: As Ross writes, for Carter, "Israel seemed to be a constant irritant." When Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat received the Nobel Peace Prize for their role in the Israel-Egypt peace treaty, Carter noted in his diary, "Sadat deserved it. Begin did not."

It's a fascinating history, but as Ross gets closer to the present, *Doomed to Succeed* becomes less of a history of the relationship between the nations and more of a history of Dennis Ross's role in that relationship. The book also gets increasingly detailed, as each succeeding chapter seems to be longer than the one that preceded it: Truman and Eisenhower get 24 pages each, while Barack Obama gets 51 pages. The paradigmatic example of Ross's personalization of detail comes during the Clinton chapter, in a footnote to page 293, where he explains that "there is no need to run through the details of Camp David here.*" This is because, as Ross states in his footnote: "I describe Camp David in great detail in *The Missing Peace*, pp. 650-711."

Readers may want to know more about Bill Clinton's Camp David efforts, and even in "great detail." But it's unclear how many would want to assign themselves a combined more

than 1,000 pages in order to get there.

There is, indeed, a strategic error at the heart of the continuous urge to distance America from Israel in order to assuage the Arab world. But the book's shift from history to memoir makes it uncomfortably clear that, if there is an ongoing failure, the author must have been party to it. In many ways, he is

the one constant in Middle East policy in almost every administration over the past 40 years. We can only hope that, if there is yet another administration post for Dennis Ross, he will be able to prevail upon his bosses, and convince his colleagues, that common cause with Israel is the right policy, for both Israel and America. ♦

BCA

Imperial Vision

The centuries of art in the Habsburg realm.

BY PARKER BAUER

Atlanta

The year is 1781 and a swarm of ordinary citizens have been admitted, free of charge, to see for themselves the imperial art collection in the Upper Belvedere Palace of Vienna. Never before in Europe has a great collection been opened up in this democratic way. The entree comes by order of the Habsburg emperor, Joseph II (1741–1790).

In mothy waistcoat and breeches I could be there myself, a poet who pens a prickly broadside every so often and perceives no need to earn a normal living. I've hied to the palace gallery aiming to feel galled by a show of riches—and indeed, there's enough gold in view to cast a life-size calf: a gold chalice, a canvas of Zeus raining gold on the nymph Danaë, gold-inlaid hunting rifles, a gilded carriage, a sleigh that seems to have weathered a gold blizzard. Imagine, then, the stab of distress when all this opulence upsets my preconceptions: Despite the glitter—or because of it—the artworks heaped up by the various Habsburg emperors, kings, and princes arouse a ruffled wonder, an abashed awe.

Now, a confession. The pieces noted—Zeus and Danaë and the rest—

Parker Bauer is a writer in Florida.

Habsburg Splendor
High Museum of Art
through January 17, 2016

may or may not have been among those seen at the Belvedere in 1781. But they do shine in this traveling exhibition of nearly a hundred pieces from the imperial trove, which, having shown in Minneapolis and Houston, is now here in Atlanta. Since few of these sumptuous works have ever appeared in America, the effect on the viewer proves much the same as on my raggedy precursor bedazzled in the Belvedere. Everything in *Habsburg Splendor* comes from the Kunsthistorisches Museum of Vienna, built by the Emperor Franz Joseph (1830–1916) to merge collections scattered around the city.

At greatest reach, in the first half of the 16th century, the Habsburg Empire spanned much of Europe. With gaps here and there it spread from Spain east to Hungary, and from Italy north to the Netherlands, taking in the vast Spanish conquests in the New World as well. The collecting of artworks—paintings, sculpture, and more—was not a mere whim of courtly aesthetes; it played a lively supporting role in the politics of empire. Resplendent art was an emblem of imperial fortune and power, especially when it took as its

subject a ruler, his spouse and spawn, and his military or moral exploits.

In *Habsburg Splendor* this role is plain to see. A spectacular tapestry, in oddly pacific tones of pink, gold, and aqua, depicts Emperor Charles V (1500-1558) reviewing a snakelike procession of mounted troops before his conquest of Tunis in 1535. A bronze bust of Charles shows him with rippling armor, a pendant of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and a shoehorn beard masking the jutting Habsburg jaw. Heroic busts may not be ideal vehicles for irony: This one, by the Milanese sculptor Leone Leoni, was finished in 1555, only a year before Charles, beset by deficits and weary of war, abdicated and thereby split Spain and its colonies from the Habsburg Empire.

Sometimes the depictions are symbolic or allegorical, as in a finely modeled relief in pinkish limestone of Emperor Maximilian I (1459-1519), portrayed as St. George on horseback with a freshly slain dragon underfoot. The portrayal seems quixotic, almost whimsical: Max/George sports a fancy hat whose scrolling plume copies the curve of the dragon's tail, while the horse holds up a hoof in the instant before stomping the head and wiping off its face a final evil grin. The German artist Hans Daucher, working about three years after the death of Maximilian, may have taken the liberty of a lighter touch than would have been welcomed by a living sovereign.

Even more figurative is the proto-surrealist painting *Fire* by the quirky Giuseppe Arcimboldo. Created for Emperor Maximilian II (1527-1576), it pictures a bust which is not the emperor himself but a personification of his armed power. The cheeks are flints, the hair a knot of flame, with the torso formed by the barrels of a pistol, mortar, and cannon. It seems a conglomerate not only of arms but of aims, a meta-comment on the very idea of a heroic bust—the flesh burnt away to reveal the true bones.

Paintings figured also in the rounds of matchmaking: “Let others wage war,” ran the cheery motto, “you, happy Austria, marry!” Portraits of nubile daughters were dispatched to inflame the scions of coveted realms. *Infanta Maria Teresa* by Diego Velázquez equips its 14-year-old subject with a rouged complexion, a corona of gold curls, and a buoyant hoop skirt

“Europe’s mother-in-law.” In *Maria Theresa as a Child* by the Danish portraitist Andreas Möller, she appears, at 10 years old, already to own the composure and resolve of a Habsburg ruler. The silken teal of her gown suggests the wing of a waterfowl, as if she were about to take flight, while her flaxen hair forms a close-set halo in which floats a discreet jeweled tiara. Small wonder that her father Charles VI (1685-1740) decreed in 1713 that succession in Habsburg domains be expanded to include the daughters of ruling princes.

Not all the works collected by Habsburgs are Habsburg-centric. Most are merely great art, and the emperors and archdukes did have an eye for it, on the strength of this exhibition. Charles V was said by his early biographers to have bent to pick up a brush dropped by Titian: True or not, the story marks the esteem in which art and artists were held.

From the hoard of Archduke Ferdinand II (1529-1595) and his successors at Ambras Castle comes a lissome bronze, *Venus Untying Her Sandal*, of the Roman first century. Balanced on one foot, she glances to her side, positioning the viewer to face her gaze and observe her crosswise pose—right hand



‘The Three Philosophers’ by Giorgione (ca. 1506-1510)

upon which dangle (perhaps as a spur to timely bachelor response) a pair of watches on pink ribbons. Multiple copies were produced by the Velázquez workshop for a trio of suitors. To reaffirm the unity of the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs, this comely daughter of Philip IV of Spain and Elisabeth of France might have married either the son or the brother of the Habsburg emperor Ferdinand III (1608-1657); in the end, she wed Louis XIV of France, doing her bit for the loss of Spain to the Bourbons.

A woman of the same name but sterner priorities was Queen Maria Theresa (1717-1780), whose marriage and arrangement of her children’s marriages (16 offspring in all, 13 surviving infancy) won her the epithet of

to left ankle—from the ideal angle. *Three Philosophers*, acquired by Archduke Leopold Wilhelm (1614-1662), is a mystically creepy composition by Giorgione. In a woodland setting, three sages, robed and carrying arcane scientific instruments, confront a cavernous bluff whose root-haired brow seems to embody the dark core of man’s nature. Also from Leopold Wilhelm is Guido Cagnacci’s *Death of Cleopatra*, perhaps erotic but surely perverse, serving up a bevy of handmaids and the lolling queen herself, bare above the pubis, with an engaged pink-brown adder fastened to her forearm.

Seduction, in one form or another, often its more forceful variants, is a vivid motif. In Titian’s *Danaë* the gold coins showered down by Zeus,



'The Crowning with Thorns' by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (ca. 1603-1604)

hovering in the guise of a rosy cloud, puddle beneath the thighs of the nymph on a rumpled bed. The stormy king of the gods pops up again in the masterwork *Jupiter and Io* by Correggio, which the curators have made the bodice-ripping logo of the exhibition—except that there's no bodice. The divine cloud, dark as Dickensian factory smoke, enwraps the nude *Io* with a paw-like appendage as she reclines on a riverbank, her head thrown back in abandon.

These myths of seduction, with their flopped bodies and chiaroscuro, bear a fleshy likeness, when seen in the same museum space, to scenes of the Passion. Caravaggio's *The Crowning with Thorns* features Pilate's enforcers roughing up the husk of Jesus, who bends like the broken Vatican statue called the Belvedere Torso. In Rubens's *Lamentation of Christ*, the fallen Jesus is mourned

by his mother, three other Marys, and John, with the axis of the pallid corpse pointing to the blonde Mary Magdalene, whose radiance outshines the savior of the world.

Rounding out the show is a wealth of lustrous miscellanea: a gold and silver "many-sided equatorial sundial," the pint-sized suit of armor worn by Archduke Philip the Fair (1478-1506) as a boy, the gilt and velvet Princes' Carriage of the Vienna court, spangled with monocle made for the myopic Charles VI after he fatally shot Prince Franz Adam Schwarzenberg, mistaking him for a stag.

The exhibition closes, fittingly, with an elegant painting by Gyula Éder, rendered in gold and crimson and titled—a sort of verbal fanfare—*Empress/Queen Zita and Crown Prince Otto Descending from the Imperial Carriage before the*

Coronation in Budapest on December 30, 1916. Completed 13 years after the coronation, which would be the last in six centuries of Habsburg history, it has the advantage of rueful hindsight. Little Otto, 4 years old, steps down from the carriage in a long coat of gold brocade trimmed with ermine—the garment itself appears in the exhibition—while his mother peers out at the painter, and through him to the present day, in no evident hurry to rise and step down herself. Her form is layered in silk and ermine that swells to fill the rococo cavity of the carriage; on her head a crown rests heavily.

In the long wake of that regal occasion, Otto von Habsburg lived in exile, partly in America, from 1918 onward. He died in 2011 in Bavaria, having served many years—in a role unthinkable to his imperial forebears—as a member of the European parliament. ♦

GETTY IMAGES

Her New Life

From Ireland to Brooklyn, in a minor key.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

C olm Tóibín did something interesting and unusual when he wrote his novel *Brooklyn*, which was published in 2009. He chose to tell an immigration story about an Irish girl just out of her teens who has no particular desire to go to America, no particular drive once she arrives in America, and no particular ideological experience of America. What this girl, Eilis Lacey, goes through is far truer to the American immigrant experience than the grander existential and political dramas around which most such novels have been built.

The year is 1952. Eilis's more purposeful older sister arranges her emigration in response to a lack of opportunity, both professional and romantic, in their small town. She also arranges for a kind priest living in Brooklyn to take up Eilis's cause, sort out her housing, get her a job, and set her up in a school where she can learn bookkeeping.

Eilis is a good girl. She does what she is supposed to do, she fulfills everyone's expectations of her, and she lives most of her life inside her head—where she is far more guarded, and frightened, and more lost without the set roadmap of County Wexford than she ever appears to others. *Brooklyn* is a book about being deprived of place, about the horror of homesickness, and about the unexpected virtues of simple resilience.

Despite the fact that she moves a continent away to live among people she has never known, Eilis is one of the more passive protagonists in recent



Saoirse Ronan

Brooklyn

Directed by John Crowley



literature. You would not think such a character could be the central figure in a successful film. And yet the winsome and affecting cinematic adaptation of *Brooklyn* finds a way. What director John Crowley and screenwriter Nick Hornby do, quite simply, is make Eilis charming.

She remains quiet and watchful, but she has a wry way about her, and momentary flashes of quick wit. More important, they made the wise decision to have the actress Saoirse Ronan inhabit her, and Ronan pulls off the extraordinarily difficult feat the movie needs her to: She is both entirely ordinary and utterly luminous.

The novel wears Tóibín's meticulous research into the habits, manners, and styles of 1950s Brooklyn very lightly, because these are just the things around Eilis she does not understand and which make her feel displaced. The movie, of course, revels in them, and it left me almost sick with nostalgia for a

New York I was too young ever to know.

Eilis lives with five other girls in a shabby but comfortable boarding house run by a sniffy Irishwoman (the wonderful Julie Walters) who was deserted by her husband—a homely lower-middle-class dwelling that will one day be a Wall Street banker's \$4 million home. Salesgirls at a classy women's clothing store send cash through capsules in pneumatic tubes to an office where change is made and then returned in the same manner. The boys talk of nothing but the Dodgers. Couples go to see *Singin' in the Rain* the week it opens.

It seems churlish to complain about the immense charm of *Brooklyn* the movie, but by making Eilis accessible, and re-creating Brooklyn in a lovely haze, Crowley and Hornby have simplified and to some degree vulgarized Tóibín's more grave and more ambiguous account.

This happens, as well, with the depiction of Eilis's budding relationship with Tony, an Italian-American boy who shows up unexpectedly at Eilis's very Irish church dance. Tóibín makes it clear that while Tony is a likable and decent person whom Eilis has no reason not to love, and that she knows what is likable and decent in him, she is a passenger in their romance rather than a driver. She is still being carried along a current in which others are handling the tiller.

This is important, because Eilis's story takes a turn in the book's final section—a turn that throws a wrench into her romance with Tony and forces her, at long last, to make a decision entirely on her own. All of a sudden, and because of Tóibín's careful preparation, *Brooklyn* turns into a nerve-wracking page-turner. You don't know what Eilis is going to do because she doesn't know, either, and you can barely breathe as she stumbles toward her decision.

The movie's ending simply can't generate the same kind of emotional wallop. But like the rest of *Brooklyn* on film, it's very, very winning. And I guess that's more than enough. ♦

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

