the weekly Standard

UNDERSTANDING TERROR
REUEL MARC GERECHT
THOMAS JOSCELYN • CYNTHIA OZICK

Jingle Hell

ANDREW FERGUSON
on the debasement of Christmas music

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No-Fly No-Gun Nonsense

President Obama spent the weeks leading up to the Paris and San Bernardino terror attacks talking about how ISIS was contained and shaming those who think the government won't do a good job screening the thousands of Syrian refugees he insists on America taking in. When reality suddenly eviscerated his credibility on these issues, the White House went casting about for a distraction and found one.

In a speech so terrible that it left *Politico* wondering if Oval Office addresses should become a thing of the past, Obama proceeded to demagogue Republicans for not passing legislation preventing people on the "no-fly list" from buying guns. This proposal is a nonstarter and utterly unserious. For all of the mystique surrounding the list, it's little more than an assortment of people the government deems suspicious for any number of reasons. (It's also a misnomer—people on the list fly all the time but are subject to heightened scrutiny when they do.) Senator Ted Kennedy ended up on the list once, as did The Scrapbook's colleague Stephen F. Hayes (Steve had flown on a one-way ticket to Istanbul, to board a cruise ship that ended up in Athens).

The size of the list—and criteria for ending up on it—can vary from day to day. In 2011, 10,000 people were on the list. In 2013, that number was 47,000. While the no-fly list can be defended as a practical approach to a complex problem where we have little margin for error, it's impossible to argue that it isn't capricious. Further, there's almost no process for those who end up on the list to get their names removed. The idea that anyone is going to be denied a clearly enumerated constitutional right based on some computer algorithm or the suspicion of federal bureaucrats is brazenly illegal.

The White House has disingenuously and deliberately muddied the waters by putting out alarming stats, noting that 2,000 people on the terror watch list—wholly different from the no-fly list—have been able to buy guns. At the end of 2013, 1.1 million people were on the terror watch list.

It's also worth noting that a huge percentage of the people on these lists are Muslim. The media had a collective meltdown when Donald Trump urged an immigration moratorium on Muslims—even though he's an attention-seeking blowhard who's never held office. But when the leader of the free world suggests denying the constitutional rights of a large portion of the Muslim population, it's somehow deemed a reasonable—even praiseworthy—proposal.

Indeed, the media did everything in their power to ensure Obama's demagoguery was taken seriously. On December 4, the *New York Times* editorial page attacked Republicans for standing up for due process:

> The House speaker, Paul Ryan, issued his party's weak defense of arming potential terrorism suspects on Thursday morning: "I think it's very important to remember people have due process rights in this country, and we can't have some government official just arbitrarily put them on a list." Mr. Ryan's Senate colleagues demonstrated that they are more worried about the possibility that someone might be turned away from a gun shop than shielding the public against violent criminals.

It's a curious editorial, considering that just a year ago another *New York Times* editorial attacked the "shadowy, self-contradictory world of American terror watch lists, which operate under a veil of secrecy so thick that it is virtually impossible to pierce it when mistakes are made. A 2007 audit found that more than half of the 71,000 names then on the no-fly list were wrongly included."

This hypocrisy might be amusing, if people weren't dying. We need workable national security solutions, and all we have is a leader who would rather sacrifice the Bill of Rights than own up to his own failures. ♦

Time Gets One Right

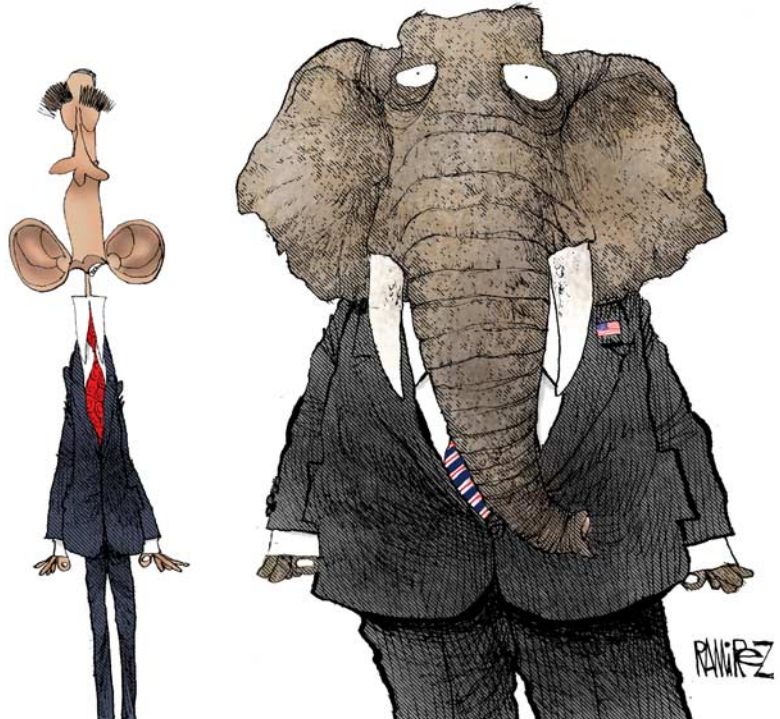
In naming German chancellor Angela Merkel its "person of the year," *Time* has made a bold departure from tradition. Often as not, the magazine gives the honor to a vague collectivity: "the Peacemakers," "the Whistleblowers," "The American Soldier," "the Good Samaritans," the "Ebola fighters," "the Protester," and even—at its nadir of editorial inspiration in 2006—"You." And even that was an improvement on its practice of the 1980s, when *Time* conferred its honors on inanimate objects ("the Computer," "the Endangered Earth").

Merkel, by contrast, is actually a person. She actually did a great deal of importance this past year. She forced a plan on recalcitrant Greeks to resolve the crisis of Europe's single currency, the euro. She opened her own country's borders to hordes of refugees from the Syrian civil war.

But when *Time* says the chancellor's actions show "steadfast moral leadership in a world where it is in short supply," The Scrapbook can only ask whether *Time* is joking. If there is one thing the planet is producing a glut of, it is "moral leadership."

It seems to be more ubiquitous than atmospheric nitrogen or cell phone coverage. The president pursues it to the exclusion of other kinds of leadership. Anyone who acquires a billion dollars or stars in a Hollywood film feels competent to provide it. Others are beginning to get a bit sick of it. You might say that one man's "moral leadership" is another man's "bossing people around."

And so the award has a valedictory feel. Merkel's 2015 actions were certainly bold, but the consequences may be dire. More refugees are coming—many, many more than Merkel herself thought possible, and from many, many places in the Muslim world other than Syria. Their families will join them. The Paris terrorist attacks shocked Europe, brought massive victories for the right-wing National Front in France in December's regional elections, and have not gone unnoticed in Germany, where right-wing extremist parties are on the rise. The "solution" that Merkel worked out to Greece's economic problems is actually just a stopgap. Greece cannot remain in the euro without further, bigger contributions from Germany. Too bad. Merkel may need this money to calm a citizenry increasingly on edge. ♦



Ryan's Beard

Contrary to popular belief, The Scrapbook is not interested just in affairs of state or in cultural controversies. The Scrapbook takes a healthy interest in trivial matters as well. Consider, for example, the new speaker of the House, Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, whose boyish demeanor has caused a certain amount of comment in the nation's capital precisely because it is a little less boyish than before. That is to say, Speaker Ryan seems to be growing a beard.

NEWSCOM

This would not, in and of itself, mean anything other than the fact that Speaker Ryan is letting his beard grow. The Scrapbook has done some research on the subject and is prepared to suggest that Ryan has not given up shaving for charitable purposes, or for superstitious reasons, or in observance of his hometown's (Janesville, Wisconsin) centennial—which, in any case, was 62 years ago.

He seems to have decided to grow a beard. End of story.

But not necessarily. For one thing, Paul Ryan is widely considered to be a politician of not just uncommon appeal and ability but standard ambition, and the number of bearded men in contemporary American politics is severely limited. Indeed, when Al Gore briefly let his stubble grow a few years ago, it was widely regarded as an indication that he had given up any lingering hopes of running, ever again, for the presidency. None of the current candidates for the White House—even outliers like Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump—sports so much as a pair of sideburns, much less a mustache, or goatee, or full Ryan-style beard.

The fact is, of course, that beards are not in political fashion at the moment; but that was not always so. One of our greatest presidents, Abraham Lincoln, grew one between his election and inauguration, and his famous chin whiskers seem not to have

harmed his reputation. As recently as 1941, a bearded chief justice of the United States (Charles Evans Hughes) administered the oath of office to President Franklin D. Roosevelt for the third time.

Still, the last bearded speaker of the House was Frederick Gillett (1919-25), a genteel soul from Massachusetts, and the last speaker with any facial hair whatsoever was his successor, the mustachioed Nicholas Longworth (1925-31), now best remembered as the husband of Theodore Roosevelt's daughter, Alice. This leads us to the conclusion that Speaker Ryan is either sending a subliminal message that he is not available to be drafted next year by a deadlocked Republican party—or, conversely, that he is deliberately standing out from the crowd to give nervous Republicans hope.

Either way, The Scrapbook wishes him well, and commends his apparent defiance of style and political convention. As most males can attest, it doesn't take much effort to grow a beard; but there is more than one way to look like an outsider. ♦

G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero

On December 2, George T. "Joe" Sakato died at the age of 94. Enlisting in the Army after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Sakato was assigned to the segregated 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a fighting force consisting of second-generation Japanese Americans that saw heavy action in Europe. The 442nd became the most highly decorated unit in the war thanks to soldiers like Joe Sakato.

In 1944, deep in the Vosges Mountains of France, Sakato and his platoon were tasked with finding the 1st Battalion/141st Infantry, what became known as the Lost Battalion. In the midst of a German counterattack, Sakato remembers a fellow soldier making the mistake of standing up and getting shot. He died in Sakato's arms.

At which point Sakato got out of his foxhole and basically turned into Rambo. "I just charged up that hill thinking, 'I'm going to get the SOB who shot him or die trying,'" he recounted years later. By his own estimate, he took down "two or three guys." In fact, he killed 12 and received the Congressional Medal of Honor (very belatedly) in 2000.

The citation reads, in part:

> Disregarding the enemy fire, Private Sakato made a one-man rush that encouraged his platoon to charge and destroy the enemy strongpoint. While his platoon was reorganizing, he proved to be the inspiration of his squad in halting a counter-attack on the left flank during which his squad leader was killed. Taking charge of the squad, he continued his relentless tactics, using an enemy rifle and P-38 pistol to stop an organized enemy attack. During this entire action, he killed 12 and wounded two, personally captured four and assisted his platoon in taking 34 prisoners. By continuously ignoring enemy fire, and by his gallant courage and fighting spirit, he turned impending defeat into victory and helped his platoon complete its mission. Private Sakato's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit on him, his unit, and the United States Army.

As Tod Lindberg, the author of *The Heroic Heart: Greatness Ancient and Modern*, noted previously in these pages, "Why soldiers fight is a question that has long vexed armies eager to improve their performance on the battlefield. One answer that stands out in the scholarly literature goes by the term 'small-unit cohesion'—a fancy way of saying that soldiers fight because they believe the soldiers around them depend on them. They are part of a group; they are not alone."

They are also humble. As mentioned in the *Washington Post*, Sakato, upon receiving his medal, said, "I'm no hero, but I wear it for the guys that didn't come back." ♦

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Santa Claus Is Coming to Town

Christmas these days is signaled not by the music played in shops and the wreaths hung along lampposts, but by the increasingly heavy load of catalogues that begin arriving in the mail late in October. Pity the poor mailman, having to lug such stuff around. These catalogues give recycling a bad name. Recycling them, after all, is the surest guarantee that more will arrive. Best, late at night, when the pollution police are long since in bed, to burn them at a disagreeable neighbor's curb.

I have to confess that once in a red moon I do peek into these catalogues, if only to see how mere conspicuous consumption has evolved into wildly ridiculous consumption. A month or so ago, in one of these catalogues I discovered that one could order a home sushi maker. What a splendidly useless and no doubt cumbersome gift, I thought! What a perfect gift for someone one doesn't especially like! And then it occurred to me to make up a Christmas gift list of useless items for people whose happiness I don't particularly wish to enhance and whose lives I should like, however slightly, to encumber. Doing so, I would, in my imagination at least, be a reverse or anti-Santa Claus.

That home sushi maker, for example, sounds just right for a man who seems to have everything but surely cannot have it. I speak, of course, of Donald Trump. I wonder if Roger Teeter's Hang Ups, a contraption that allows one to spend time upside down, thereby, according to Mr. Teeter, relieving back pain, easing stress, increasing flexibility, and building core strength, wouldn't be just the thing for Vladimir Putin? Surely he could find a place in the Kremlin to store it, and it comes with a five-year guarantee.

What to get for Syria's president Bashar al-Assad is a tricky question. He's a natty fellow, and I wonder if J. Peterman's crushable outback hat wouldn't bring out a smile on the old boy. I don't know if he finds much time to read, what with bombing and poisoning his own people, but President Assad might also enjoy a signed copy of *Peterman Rides Again*. As for North Korea's supreme leader Kim Jong-un, an Obama plant face will, I think, do nicely.

My Sharper Image catalogue came in today's mail. On the fourth page I note Pac-Man's Arcade Party, which includes "13 classic arcade favorites: Pac-Man, Ms. Pac-Man, Galaga, Rally X . . . " The arcade stands just under five feet high and weighs in at 240 pounds. It's a bit pricey at $2,895.00, but it ships free. A perfect gift, I immediately thought, for Harry Reid, who looks like he could use some cheering up not only in this the yuletide but in every other season. Kick back, Harry, chill, the Pac-Man Arcade Party will be on its way to you.

DAVE CLEGG

In the Sharper Image catalogue, an electric tie rack caught my eye. Two people for whom it would surely come in unhandy are Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg, two billionaires neither of whom I've ever seen wearing a necktie. Maybe each has a tie buried somewhere in his sock drawer. If not, they can use the electric tie rack for hanging hundred-dollar bills on, thus making trips to the ATM machine unnecessary, though it occurs to me that these two men may well keep ATM machines in their master bathrooms.

My list grows: a therapy hair brush for thicker and healthier hair with a built-in scalp massager for Joe Biden; comfy red sneaker slippers from the Bits And Pieces catalogue for Mike Ditka; the ultimate air guitar with ten preset songs for Bernie Sanders; an electric pepper mill for Debbie Wasserman Schultz; a rechargeable hover board for Tom Brokaw; a pinball machine cashholder for Nancy Pelosi; but no sun-lamp, distinctly not, for John Boehner.

I neglected to send a wedding gift to Chelsea Clinton, but I think I can make up for it this Christmas with a few selected gifts from the UncommonGoods catalogue. Surely she can find a place for a two-tiered pistachio server and a homemade gin kit. Foodie dice, offering 186,000 culinary combos, might come in handy when Mom and Dad drop in for dinner to visit with the grandchild. A Row Boat Salad Serving Bowl is another nice touch for the Clinton-Mezvinsky kitchen; and while at it I might toss in a set of Ooma Bowls, so that daughter Charlotte can enjoy her "top snack twosomes separately and without spills." Fun!

The possibilities for stocking stuffers are not practically but utterly limitless. There are Peterman's Acme Metropolitan Whistles and prismatic compasses, his and hers silk long underwear, ear and nose hair removers, professional razor stropping kits, shoe deodorizers, electronic return ball putting matts, personalized bobble-heads, and paperback copies of *Nothing to Be Frightened Of*, Julian Barnes's book on his fear of death.

Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night.

Joseph Epstein

the weekly Standard

Our Opera Buffa

On January 15, 1787, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart wrote proudly from Prague to his friend Baron Gottfried von Jacquin: "Here nothing is talked about except *Figaro*; nothing is played, blown, sung, and whistled except *Figaro*; no opera draws the crowds like *Figaro*. It's always *Figaro*. Certainly it's a great honor for me."

Now, after more than two centuries of human progress, in great cities supposedly more advanced and more enlightened than the Prague of 1787, we have come to this: Here nothing is talked about except Trump; nothing is reported, analyzed, praised, and denounced except Trump; no candidate draws the crowds like Trump. It's always Trump.

Certainly this is not a great honor to America. If each age gets the *opera buffa* it deserves, we should be less confident than we are in human progress. And if each age also gets the political leaders it deserves, we should also be less confident in human progress—for surely President Barack Obama does not compare well with the Austro-Hungarian emperor Joseph II.

Indeed, the two are related. If we had not suffered through seven tedious years of *opera seria* with Barack Obama, of sanctimonious liberalism and dangerous political correctness, fewer of our fellow citizens would be susceptible to the charms of Donald Trump. No Obama, no Trump, we suspect. Indeed, no Jeb Bush and the prospect of a dynastic Bush-Clinton race, no Trump.

But we are where we are. The Trump *opera buffa* is going strong—but it's getting less funny by the day. We have enough trust in the American people to believe they will eventually bring the curtain down. And as in *The Marriage of Figaro*, where all efforts to persuade the count fail, our national *opera buffa* won't end by convincing Donald Trump of anything: The vain protagonist with an overweening ego has to be humiliated or at least defeated if there is to be a happy ending.

So all hopes—and we, too, have entertained them—that Trump will suffer a embarrassment or two and abashedly withdraw from the race can be put aside. All hopes of conciliating Trump can be abandoned. Trump will have to be defeated. The decisive turn in the plot we're anticipating will be Donald Trump standing in front of a crowd in a hotel ballroom in Des Moines on the evening of February 1 as a loser. And then Donald Trump standing once more in front of a crowd in a hotel ballroom, in Manchester, N.H., on the evening of February 9—a loser again.

How likely is this? Quite likely. Right now, Trump leads Ted Cruz in Iowa in the *Real Clear Politics* polling average by only a small margin. He actually trails Cruz, and barely leads Marco Rubio, in probably the best recent Iowa survey, done by Monmouth University. I was in Iowa last week. The people with whom I spoke were not Trump aficionados. Their judgments may therefore be distorted. But their honest belief was that Trump had little room to grow—and that he might well fall, with many Iowans rethinking their initial attraction to his colorful braggadocio as the caucuses draw near.

As for New Hampshire—there Trump does lead, with a bit above a quarter of the vote. But a recent survey that tried to identify likely primary voters had Trump basically tied with Marco Rubio at about a fifth of the vote. And Trump is more likely to get weaker in New Hampshire than stronger. His overwhelming advantage in free media coverage will start to diminish as we approach actual voting. His recent call for the exclusion of all Muslims reeks not of strength but of desperation. He's become an attention addict who needs to inject stronger and stronger doses of outrage. That works for a while. But it doesn't end well.

As the curtain falls on *Figaro*, all the characters join in an ensemble:

This day of torment,
Of caprices and folly,
Love can end
Only in contentment and joy.

Mozart and Lorenzo Da Ponte didn't actually believe that love always wins out. Tough-minded plotting and bold action by the other protagonists are needed to produce the desired outcome. The same is true in our drama. Unlike in *Figaro*, we won't see even a pretense of repentance and reformation from Donald Trump (though has the count, at the end of *Figaro*, truly mended his ways?). But if Marco Rubio,

GETTY IMAGES

Ted Cruz, and Chris Christie keep their heads and act with the same boldness and cunning as Susanna and Figaro and the countess, our little *opera buffa* can also end in contentment and joy.

—*William Kristol*

Union No

On December 7, Attorney General Loretta Lynch announced a federal investigation of the Chicago police department. Recent history shows that the Obama Department of Justice cannot be counted on to perform a competent investigation, but at least this particular inquiry is not without cause. The city has earned the nickname "Chiraq," because by international standards, certain Chicago neighborhoods have some of the highest murder rates anywhere in the world. Even as the city has become an abattoir, police have been routinely abusive—a series of troubling investigations suggests the police were operating a "black site" out of an off-the-books warehouse where cops were holding and interrogating suspects without due process. Such extraordinary tactics are intolerable in principle, and the fact that they generated no notable decline in crime suggests they were also bad in practice.

Chicago, December 9

It appears, however, that a very ordinary aspect of American policing might be one of the biggest contributors to Chicago's bloody difficulty in maintaining order. A finger must inescapably be pointed at the city's police union for keeping bad cops on the beat.

The latest incident that has people marching in the streets of Chicago is the shooting of Laquan McDonald in October 2014. The 17-year-old had PCP in his system, was walking down the middle of the street carrying a knife, and otherwise acting in a manner that would draw police attention. Even so, dashcam video that only recently surfaced shows officer Jason Van Dyke shot McDonald from a distance when he was moving away. Without the emergence of new and extenuating evidence, it seems impossible to watch the footage and conclude McDonald posed an immediate threat to Van Dyke, warranting deadly force. The shooting is even more outrageous when you consider that events described in the original police report diverge wildly from what was caught on tape and that Mayor Rahm Emanuel may have been involved in a cover-up to protect his reelection prospects.

Van Dyke is being charged with murder and will get his day in court. Until then, the presumption of innocence applies. But Van Dyke's record as a police officer suggests that egregious behavior is not unusual for him. The Citizens Police Data Project maintains a database of misconduct complaints against Chicago police officers. While not comprehensive, the database shows Van Dyke had 20 complaints filed against him in his 14-year career, many of them accusations of excessive force. Van Dyke has been cleared of most of the charges, but in one instance a Chicago jury awarded $350,000 to a man on whom Van Dyke used excessive force during a traffic stop. This past spring, while Van Dyke was still on the job, the city paid $5 million to McDonald's mother even though she had yet to file a lawsuit.

To put Van Dyke's record in perspective, of the 12,000 police officers in Chicago, only 402 have had 20 or more complaints filed against them, according to the Citizens Police Data Project database. One Chicago cop against whom 68 complaints have been filed is still on the job. There is little doubt that the resources and clout of Chicago's police union are keeping dangerous and incompetent cops on the streets.

Now, it is certainly true that cops are often wrongly accused of brutality and other misconduct, and working in such difficult circumstances would make one grateful for a union eager to provide legal support and other assistance. But the magnitude of Chicago's police problems suggests that the union's fanatical approach to defending officer misconduct makes no concessions for officers who are a demonstrable threat to public safety. This is particularly counterproductive at a time when police are, rightly or wrongly, enduring a great deal of public criticism. America's police officers, the vast majority of whom are dedicated and sensible, deserve better than to have their image destroyed by highly publicized incidents involving bad cops who should have had to surrender their badge and gun a long time ago.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to imagine the Justice Department or any of the relevant authorities in Illinois taking this union problem seriously. Chicago's entire city government is based on patronage and union payoffs to politicians. The result is a city where the debt service and annual pension costs for public employees are closing in on claiming half the city's annual revenue. That's money that otherwise could be spent finding ways to reduce crime by preventing it before it starts, such as bolstering social services, putting more and better cops on the streets, and improving the city's terrible schools. (Alas, teachers' unions present a pretty dramatic problem unto themselves.)

Again, we don't expect the Justice Department or the deeply and deservedly unpopular Mayor Emanuel to make this connection. But it wouldn't kill Democratic politicians to take a more critical look at the consequences of their co-dependent relationship with public-sector unions. The failure to do so may have played a role in the killing of Laquan McDonald.

—*Mark Hemingway*

GETTY IMAGES

More of the Same

Even after San Bernardino, Obama fails to change course. BY THOMAS JOSCELYN

On December 6, Barack Obama addressed the nation from the Oval Office for just the third time in his tenure. The president sought to reassure the American people that he has a strategy for defeating ISIL (the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant), just days after supporters of the self-declared "caliphate" massacred 14 people at a holiday party in San Bernardino, California.

Given recent events, Obama could have announced a change of course. He could have said that the time has come to end, once and for all, ISIL's grip on its de facto capital of Raqqa, Syria, and second city of Mosul, Iraq. Instead, the president simply offered a bullet point summary of what his administration has done to date. He also stressed, once again, that he would not deploy a significant number of American ground troops to combat ISIL's jihadists.

Look at the president's explanation carefully, however, and it quickly becomes apparent that his reasoning is ahistorical and specious.

"We should not be drawn once more into a long and costly ground war in Iraq or Syria," Obama said. "That's what groups like ISIL want. They know they can't defeat us on the battlefield."

If ISIL knows it "can't defeat" the American military, why would it "want" a ground war? Obama attempted to explain this contradiction: "ISIL fighters were part of the insurgency that we faced in Iraq. But they also know that if we occupy foreign lands, they can maintain insurgencies for years, killing thousands of our troops, draining our resources, and using our presence to draw new recruits."

Obama is right that ISIL's fighters "faced" American troops in Iraq, but he neglected to mention that the jihadists' prospects once looked very grim. At the peak of its power in 2006, ISIL's predecessor, the Islamic State of Iraq (a front for al Qaeda), was gobbling up territory. By 2008, however, the jihadists had been pushed back, losing much of the ground they once controlled. This wasn't magic. It was the result of an American-led "surge" in forces and an uprising of Iraqis who wanted to end the jihadists' draconian rule. In his speech to the nation, Obama remembered the high cost paid by American soldiers, but said nothing of their accomplishments. Those soldiers are the reason the jihadists know they can't beat us.

Losing from afar is cheaper and easier.

ISIL's forerunner fought on but failed to regain the momentum it once enjoyed—until, that is, President Obama oversaw a complete withdrawal from Iraq. In October 2011, Obama announced he was bringing the Iraq war to a "responsible end." Just two months later, the last U.S. forces left Iraqi soil.

Consider the scene at the time. The jihadists launched regular attacks throughout Iraq, killing hundreds. Their war was not over. But they were unable to take and hold ground. Their diminished strength was evident in their manpower.

According to the State Department's *Country Reports on Terrorism* for 2011, ISIL's predecessor could field only 1,000 to 2,000 fighters by the end of the year. Their presence was a problem—one we should have actively fought—but it was not a menace. By the end of 2014, the situation was dramatically worse. State's *Country Reports on Terrorism* for 2014 notes that ISIL could "muster between 20,000 and 31,500" fighters. Even this figure likely underestimates ISIL's roster, as its territorial gains throughout 2014 demanded additional personnel to manage its proto-state.

Thus, Obama's claim that ISIL would use "our presence to draw new recruits" is a nonstarter. The total number of ISIL fighters grew quickly (10 to 30 times over) in the three years after the Americans left.

Obama also introduced a straw man, portraying any ground deployment as an occupation that would allow ISIL to "maintain insurgencies for years, killing thousands of our troops, draining our resources." An American deployment need not be a full-scale occupation of Iraq and Syria, which is impossible for many reasons. Any U.S.-led strategy should focus on identifying capable local forces willing to "occupy" the lands vacated by ISIL. This is what worked in the past, when American-backed tribes drove ISIL's forerunner out of western Iraq.

This is not to suggest that a more robust war effort would be easy or that the United States wouldn't suffer losses. The situation has become enormously complicated, with multiple actors, many of them hostile to the West, vying

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SAUL LOEB / BLOOMBERG / GETTY

for power across Iraq and Syria. And as America has stood on the sidelines, thousands of potential Muslim allies against ISIL have been slaughtered.

But the president has already been forced to deploy some American boots in the region, and he should at least consider sending in more: 30,000 jihadists, or even double that number, cannot beat 30,000 American troops, backed by airpower, in a straight fight—which, Obama pointed out, ISIL knows.

The stakes are higher than the president acknowledges. On November 13, a suicide assault team dispatched by ISIL wreaked havoc in Paris, killing 130 people as they enjoyed a Friday night out in the City of Light. Throughout Europe, America's allies say it is only a matter of time until another attack is successful. On October 31, an ISIL branch in the Sinai blew up a civilian airliner carrying Russian and Ukrainian vacationers. All 224 passengers and crew members on board perished. It was the most devastating jihadist attack on civilian aviation since September 11, 2001.

The terrorists responsible for these attacks and a rising tide of violence throughout the Muslim-majority world share a common motivation. They believe that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has resurrected the long-awaited caliphate. Until this founding mythos is refuted, ISIL will continue to terrorize the world.

Some claim that an American invasion in northern Syria would validate ISIL's apocalyptic vision. ISIL regularly quotes Abu Musab al Zarqawi, who said: "The spark has been lit here in Iraq, and its heat will continue to intensify—by Allah's permission—until it burns the crusader armies in Dabiq [northern Syria]." This is a play on sayings attributed to Muhammad. The idea is that Allah has predestined the jihadists' confrontation with the West's "crusader armies" in the approximate area currently under ISIL's control.

But no messiah will save Baghdadi's forces from an American-led ground coalition. Zarqawi did not survive an American bomb in 2006, and his organization's prospects dimmed when the United States marshaled its resources to confront it head-on. It would be irrational to organize our policies around illogical prophecies.

Just as the jihadists look to Raqqa for inspiration, the civilized world still looks to America for leadership. ISIL has lost some ground, but the jihadists will not lose Raqqa or Mosul any time soon unless President Obama decides Baghdadi's men should feel the full brunt of American force. Therefore, ISIL's claim to have resurrected the caliphate will live on. And so will the violence ISIL's mythology inspires. ♦

End of the West?

Syria, the Islamic State, and Europe.

BY REUEL MARC GERECHT

Should the United States militarily defeat jihadist outfits in the Middle East? After 9/11 the answer seemed easy, but after the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Barack Obama is not alone in arguing that large-scale offensive campaigns against radical Muslim movements aren't worth the cost. Even if the president's go-slow approach is actually more likely to provoke more terrorism, is it the sensible policy for America? And can Western governments actually defeat the Muslim radicals who live in the West and are a nightmare for domestic intelligence services to find, let alone stop? These questions are as much about Europe as the Middle East.

The United States could destroy the Islamic State militarily only to see Western-born or immigrant holy warriors continue to slaughter Americans and Europeans. What would be the point? A narrative is already developing—see last week's *New York Times* piece "U.S. Seeks to Avoid Ground War Welcomed by the Islamic State"—that questions whether the United States can and should destroy the Islamic State if doing so requires tens of thousands of American troops. Left unsaid but clearly implied: Better to have terrorist safe havens in the Middle East and absorb occasional terrorist attacks (especially if they are in Europe) than to risk a campaign that could generate thousands of new holy warriors and require America again to occupy Muslim lands.

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And how connected to the Islamic State are the holy warriors who killed in Paris and San Bernardino? Could they survive, prosper, and replicate themselves even if ISIS were destroyed or collapsed? As the French scholars Olivier Roy and Farhad Khosrokhavar have written for years, this militant "globalized Islam" is as much about the radicalization that comes with Westernization—the violent anomie that springs forth as ancestral ethics die and personal freedom and individualism both empower and immiserate—as it is about a discovery of charismatic Islamic history, the fraternal, political power of the Muslim identity, and the appeal of the holy law.

It's already clear that Washington isn't going to rally to Europe unless all hell breaks loose. American armies will not march to save the European Union from the refugee crisis that has followed the Arab Spring, especially the savagery of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad. The Europeans will have to summon the will and means to wall off the continent from the ever-growing flood of Muslim immigrants if they believe doing so is essential to save the EU or the health of national politics. It's possible to envision that America, after January 2017, might send its

soldiers into the Middle East if European cities endured bloody terrorist strikes emanating from the Islamic State. Self-interest might spring from an understanding that, if Washington fails in the eyes of the Europeans even to try to protect the Old World under siege by Islamic terrorism, the West will fracture, and the United States will be alone in an increasingly chaotic, violent, and authoritarian age. A more aggressive America might also spring from the realization that an Islamic State that can organize or mobilize repeated strikes on European soil is just prepping for increased soft-target terrorism in the United States.

Unlike al Qaeda, which never managed to turn its anti-American cause into a mass movement capable of attracting tens of thousands of Muslims to its suicide-loving standard, the Islamic State has shown that its call reaches deep inside European Muslim communities. That call has been immeasurably aided by Syria's Alawite Shiite dictator. The Sunni-Shiite clash in the Levant and the establishment of the Islamic State have proven by far the most magnetic events in contemporary Islamic history—a much bigger holy-warrior draw than the Soviet-Afghan war or the Anglo-American war in Iraq. Arab rulers, secular Arab intellectuals, and even Arab fundamentalists ruminated little over Soviets slaughtering Afghans. ISIS and the Syrian war are different. For everybody.

At the heart of the post-World War II order is an unwritten constitutional amendment: The United States is a European power, and it has sworn to defend Europe as it would defend itself. An unspoken corollary is that Washington would overlook the imbalance of this alliance: Like parents with refractory children, the United States would endure the disrespect and parasitical behavior of the Europeans, to ensure the family stayed intact to face those who loathed Western civilization. United we are stronger than alone. As a democratic people with global responsibilities, Americans have been a bit nervous about the exercise of their power unless they received some European approbation. This is particularly true for the U.S. left, which, since Vietnam, has had an eye on European critiques of American hubris. Conversely, many U.S. conservatives have never particularly liked this transatlantic union, because it placed unfair demands on the United States. It infantilized (already condescending) Europeans. And it implied that American exceptionalism was tempered by American insecurity.

In 2011, when the revolt against Assad's tyranny started, no one in the West predicted it would produce

THOMAS FLUHARTY

the greatest threat to transatlantic bonds since World War II. Or that an American president, the most eagerly welcomed in Europe since John F. Kennedy, would be so nonchalant about Europe's Muslim problems. He is condign punishment for Europeans who took America for granted. The European left got what it said it wanted: a president who viewed himself as a "global citizen," averse to the wars that undergirded American hegemony and the liberal world order. President Obama radiates almost no warmth towards Europe and little interest. The president's awkward "pivot to Asia" was not just an attempt to run from the troubles of the Greater Middle East; it was also an attempt to distance the United States from Europe and scale down the the costs and responsibilities of the transatlantic partnership.

In all probability, Obama's approach to the Islamic State will make the Europeans bleed more, perhaps a lot more. The president wants to patiently bomb, drone, and assassinate the Islamic State into submission. That approach is tailor-made to be reciprocated. We will wound the Islamic State, repeatedly, but we will not try to kill it quickly, which would entail tens of thousands of U.S. soldiers in Syria and Iraq and obligate the United States to occupy both countries. The White House probably realizes that a U.S. invasion of Syria and Iraq to destroy the Islamic State and erect a Sunni Iraqi force capable of holding ground and suppressing a jihadist rebirth would inevitably put the United States on a collision course with the Islamic Republic, the region's preeminent power. The nuclear deal probably wouldn't survive that encounter.

In other words, we are going to see how good the Islamic State is. Orchestrating terrorist attacks, even against soft targets, is hard. Finding young men and women who not only are willing to die, but also have the sang-froid to operate clandestinely and securely, under enormous pressure, with the necessary coordination and skill to kill large numbers of people, isn't easy. Though he doesn't openly say so, President Obama's entire counterterrorism policy hinges on a bet that the Islamic State really is a "JV" team, that it cannot routinize the skill that the West's better intelligence and security services use to operate stealthily in unfriendly environments.

If the Islamic State can't continue to kill impressively, then Obama's counterterrorism policy for Syria and Iraq will surely hold into the next administration, even if Republican. A handful of Europeans mowed down once a year by Islamic terrorists won't rise to the threshold for American action. Europeans will be able to tolerate those losses without European politics coming unhinged.

And we just don't know now whether the Islamic State can effectively harness European Muslims and Muslim immigrants against European security services on full alert and empowered to be much more intrusive than they were before the attacks

in Paris. Consider Germany. German security officials have estimated that around 1,500 German Muslims have gone to Syria; roughly half have returned home. The vast majority of returnees came back because their Islamic State dreams didn't survive the reality of the caliphate. These folks are superb antibodies in German Muslim communities, communicating more effectively than any official propaganda the ugliness of the Islamic State. From the perspective of the German interior ministry, however, it's an operational nightmare to try to surveil these denizens until security officials can narrow their focus on those most likely to conspire and kill. German internal-security services are much weaker than their French counterparts. Would-be Islamic terrorists surely know that. What is true of terrorist-rich Belgium (with its complicated federal structure, not particularly aggressive internal security, concern about civil liberties, and lack of interest in taking the fight to Islamists abroad) is also true of Germany. Any counterterrorism analyst looking at Germany would have to conclude that the unknowns are vastly greater than the knowns. If the Islamic State can't strike again before Obama leaves office, then American and European counterterrorism services may start to believe that they have a grip on this threat. The refugee crisis will continue (there is zero chance that diplomacy will end this *guerre à outrance*). But the fear of Islamic terrorism emanating from Syria will decrease.

In European and American eyes, the Islamic State is judged only by whether it can gain Westernized Muslim recruits. If it can survive but not hypnotize the faithful beyond its reach, then the West won't care all that much what it does to Christians, Yazidis, Shiites, or Kurds. The pool of militant Sunni Muslims in Europe is a given. It has been a problem in Western Europe since the early 1990s. But such radical Muslims have been capable only of random, often lamely conceived acts of terrorism. (Admittedly, one lame act of terrorism, if it had benefited from a bit of luck, like the attempted 1995 derailment of a high-speed French train by an Islamist Algerian terrorist group, could change our conception of the threat overnight.) "Globalized Islam" is only really scary when it comes down to earth organized, capable of sustained terrorism that cannot be consistently thwarted or deterred. The Islamic State has been the lightning rod that has given these radicalized Muslims a cause, self-confidence, and training in how to kill. If the Islamic State can continue to inspire in sufficient numbers, then it's really a math problem: How many American and European victims is the United States prepared to accept before the risks and costs of war and occupation seem less than the destruction, both in lives and in spirit, of such Islamic terrorism?

The indefatigable critic of American hegemony Andrew Bacevich isn't wrong when he argues that the United States will need to decide whether it's in or out of the Middle East's wars. President Obama has obviously decided we're out so long as he is president. His decision and his methods—less is more—will likely continue after him since they fulfill the essential requirement for an appealing presidential policy post-Iraq, offering some hope at minimal cost—provided the Islamic State, as Obama has confidently predicted, fails. If the president is wrong, however, then the Europeans may write the first draft of his legacy. They won't be kind. ♦

Understanding Terror

Depravity is a choice.

BY CYNTHIA OZICK

On a *New Yorker* panel nearly a dozen years ago, in the wake of the publication of his novel *Snow*, Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk set forth an emphatic credo. "Our moral duty," he said, "is to pay attention to the humanity of everybody." And since the subject of the panel was "Literature and Politics," this comment was altogether in keeping with Pamuk's remarks elsewhere, on the responsibility of the novelist: "I strongly feel that the art of the novel is based on the human capacity, though it is a limited capacity, to be able to identify with the 'other.' . . . It requires imagination, a sort of morality, a self-imposed goal of understanding this person who is different from us."

No one understands me.

But in 2004, this anodyne and conventional literary conviction, addressed to the *New Yorker*'s loyal audience, rang out with an unexpectedly unsettling force. The motivations and influences and inmost desires and doubts and dreams and fevered schemes of invented characters in a novel, however pleasing or villainous, make up the very essence of what we derive from storytelling. We want to understand Isabel Archer and Mr. Kurtz (who are so different from us), we want to know them to the deeps of their marrow. The glory of literary modernism

Cynthia Ozick's most recent book is the novel Foreign Bodies. *Her new collection,* Critics, Monsters, Fanatics, and Other Literary Essays, *will be published next year.*

especially—the revelatory dazzle of Joyce and Proust and Woolf—turns precisely on this psychological probing into hidden consciousness. It was a shock, then, to learn that Pamuk's "everybody," his requirement of imagination, his "goal of understanding this person who is different from us," his vaunted "humanity"—all this was meant to reach well beyond his primary literary argument. It was meant to include terrorists. Are not terrorists a portion of humanity? A challenge came from a fellow panelist: What about suicide bombers, are they to be similarly understood by the humanely embracing imagination? Pamuk's response was quick and sharp and dismissive: "We have to base our judgment on moral essential things rather than on what we see on TV the other night."

Three years before, in 2001, writing in the *New York Review of Books* in an attempt to explain the sources of terrorism, Pamuk had already made this judgment explicit:

> The Western world is scarcely aware of this overwhelming feeling of humiliation that is experienced by most of the world's population. . . . And it is while living within this private sphere that most people in the world today are afflicted by spiritual misery. The problem facing the West is not only to discover which terrorist is preparing a bomb in which tent, which cave, or which street of which city, but also to understand the poor and scorned and "wrongful" majority that does not belong to the Western world. . . . It is the feeling of impotence deriving from degradation, *the failure to be understood* [italics mine], and the inability of such people to make their voices heard. . . . Nothing can fuel support for "Islamists" who throw nitric acid at women's faces so much as the West's failure to understand the doomed of the world.

One need not be a novelist conversant with imagination's psychological impersonations to be carried away by such an analysis. These notions of imperious context—impoverishment, grievance, impotence at the hands of powerful faraway forces, humiliation, spiritual misery (a fresh coinage particularly worthy of the novelist's art)—have become unassailably commonplace to the point of vacuous triteness. And more: Terror can now be counted among matters urgently spiritual.

What comes of these divinings is, finally, a confusion of categories. The Paris atrocities, the Jerusalem stabbings, the San Bernardino shootings are not chapters in a novel to be intensively parsed. A novel is a cultural artifact. A human mind, whatever culture it is born into, is privately, even instinctively, free to enact individual will. Everyone—Pamuk's own wide-ranging "everyone"—can choose whether to murder or not to murder.

Here, accordingly, one may be driven to ask: Is there no infamy so depraved that it can escape explanation, apologia, vindication verging on exoneration, all under the gentle rubric of "understanding"? The terrorist's mind: Let us strive to understand it—what shall we find there? Deformations of

A Productive 2015 Defies Expectations

By Thomas J. Donohue
President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

As we look ahead to 2016 and consider the policies we need to grow the economy and put Americans back to work, we must not buy in to the conventional wisdom that it's impossible to get anything done in an election year. Isn't that what they said about 2015? Well, a funny thing happened on the way to 2016—working with Congress, the business community got a lot done for the country.

One of the biggest victories was the hard-won passage of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA)—a measure that makes the White House and Congress partners in negotiating trade agreements. TPA paves the way for the United States to move forward with major new deals like the recently negotiated Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

The business community also fought for the first long-term extension of the highway bill—legislation to fund and authorize roads and bridges—in a decade. The five-year bill buys us time to work on longer-term solutions to maintain and modernize critical infrastructure. The bill updated our permit streamlining process for the first time since 1969. And it also extended the Ex-Im Bank's charter, which will help U.S. businesses of all sizes continue to operate in lucrative global markets.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and its allies supported the first real budget passed by Congress in six years. We successfully pushed for the first meaningful reform of entitlements in a generation that will save hundreds of billions of dollars over decades. We advocated for—and Congress passed with strong bipartisan majorities—significant changes to Obamacare, preventing big cost hikes for small businesses and eliminating the threat of automatic enrollment provisions for some employers.

Pro-growth advocates also played a key role in the first major overhaul of our nation's K–12 education policy since No Child Left Behind, ending seven years of gridlock on this priority. The House voted twice on a bipartisan basis to lift the 40-year-old ban on oil exports. And some important changes were made to the Dodd-Frank financial regulatory reform law.

Not only did business get a lot done in 2015— it got big things done. But significant challenges remain in 2016. Let's not use the election as an excuse to take the year off. Let's use it as an opportunity to highlight the kind of leadership and the kinds of policies our country needs to grow and prosper.

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humanity, corruptions neither inborn nor bred, but chosen. If pornography can be defined as avid curiosity focused on distortions of appetite, then the urge to understand the terrorist is indisputably a kind of pornography—a desire to penetrate what Mark Twain uncannily names "evil joy." And we have, yes, *on TV the other night*, seen evil joy in action: the corpse of the Palestinian "martyr" as he is "escorted to his wedding," accompanied by ululations and his honored mother's camera-ready avowal of pride and jubilation, yearning to offer the next-in-line killer son.

At bottom, an open-hearted willingness to understand "everyone" is an appalling distraction from the intrinsic depravity of the act of premeditated murder. The evil deed speaks for itself; to search out the evildoer's "backstory," to look for some exculpating *raison d'être*, is no more useful or edifying or moral than an attraction to pornography. Pascal's *aperçu—to understand is to forgive*—comes perilously close to our current penchant to treat terrorists as interesting characters in a novel. True, Conrad did it in *The Secret Agent*; James did it in *The Princess Casamassima*. But let the Roman poet Terence have the last (Latin) word: *Quod licet Jovi non licet bovi.* What is permitted to the gods is not permitted to pornographers. James and Conrad, after all, understood that a terrorist in a novel is not the same as a jihadist spree in California or a terror massacre in Paris; and that murder, contra Pamuk, deserves no artistic credo. ♦

How Corbyn Wins

Yes, it could happen.

BY ANDREW STUTTAFORD

"Cameron moved so far to the left," a journalist told me in London, "that he pushed Labour into the sea. Then it reemerged as a monster." That's not really why David Cameron's Conservatives won the May general election, but the vivid description of what happened next illustrates how bleak the political landscape looked to Britain's center-left after Jeremy Corbyn became Labour's leader in September. But if those moderates had any consolation, it was their conviction that Corbyn wouldn't last at the top. Dour, dim, and ostentatiously shabby, Corbyn, 66, is a stalwart of the far left with a weakness for ideologically correct thuggery from Belfast to Caracas and beyond. His obvious unelectability would, argued optimists, quickly bring the party to its senses: Corbyn would fall on his sword or be pushed onto someone else's. A more suitable replacement would then take the helm.

Such hopes were knocked on December 3 by a by-election in Labour's deindustrializing northern heartland. Despite the party's advantages—longstanding strength in the constituency, a solid South Asian voting bloc (roughly 25 percent of the electorate), and the selection of Jim McMahon, a likable local moderate, as candidate—there was speculation Labour would be run close by UKIP. The populist Euroskeptic party now focuses much of its attention on the white working class, a strategy that delivered votes, if not parliamentary seats (it only has the one), at the general election and had led to a near miss at a by-election in a nearby Labour stronghold last year.

But it was not to be UKIP's day. Labour actually grew its slice of the vote by some 7 percentage points, to 62 percent. Denied its breakthrough yet again, UKIP increased its tally from 20 to 23 percent, while the Conservatives, a vanishing presence in the north of England, saw their share halved, to 9 percent. Yes, Corbyn was a very small presence in McMahon's emphatically local campaign, but it's also a good rule of thumb in U.K. politics that even the best local candidate will only add a thousand or so votes to his party's total. Whatever else can be said about this result—by-elections can be deceptive—it was not the resounding rejection of Corbyn his critics had doubtless (if discreetly) been looking for.

So what now? Corbyn may stumble from controversy to gaffe and back again, but he is appreciated by his party, if not his members of Parliament. A November YouGov poll revealed that two-thirds of Labour voters thought their new leader was doing "well." With this by-election safely behind him, Corbyn is not scheduled to face any potentially embarrassing electoral tests until May, which is bad news for any unhappy Labour MPs praying for a crisis to send him packing.

Thanks to the new voting rules that landed them with Corbyn in the first place, such a crisis could take a long time to arrive. These rules provided that any candidate for the Labour leadership had to be nominated by at least 15 percent of MPs. A (much) wider electoral college made up of party members, "registered supporters" (who had paid a princely £3 for this status), and "affiliated supporters" (mainly trade unionists, who did not have to pay anything at all) then chose the leader. Corbyn was held in so little regard by his parliamentary colleagues that he was set to fall at the first hurdle until a few of them—presumably possessed by their inner Menshevik—"lent" their nominating votes to Corbyn, not because they wanted him as leader but, they explained, to broaden the debate. The suckers gave him an even break. The consequences were catastrophic.

Interest in the contest and excitement over the possibility of a previously unthinkable Corbyn victory attracted huge numbers of new members to the

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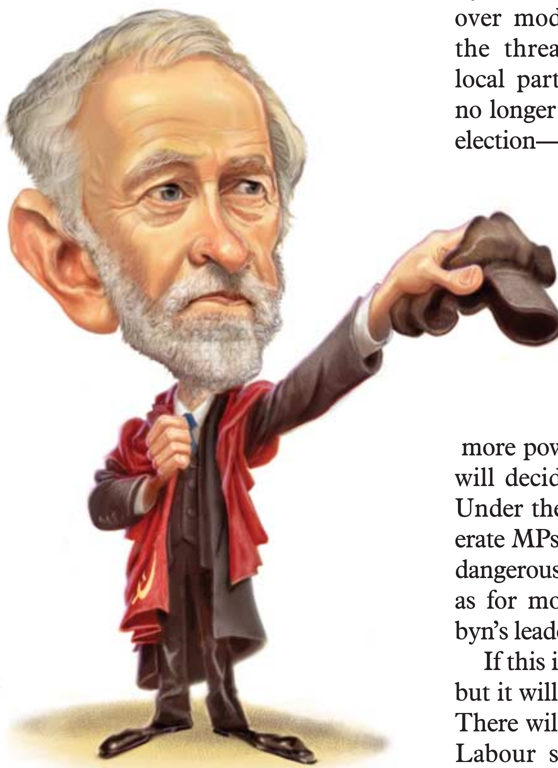
Labour party, a surge that continued after Corbyn's triumph. Between May and early October, party membership nearly doubled, to 370,000 (the Conservative party has maybe 150,000 members). Just under half of the full members who voted opted for Corbyn, as did 84 percent of over 100,000 "three pounders," and 58 percent of the 72,000 "affiliated supporters" who voted, generating a majority that comfortably eclipsed his rivals. Corbyn's mandate is about as democratic as it gets. A revolt by MPs—by definition Westminster insiders—to try to reverse it wouldn't look good, and it's hard to imagine it would succeed: Labour's new wider electorate won't be willing to dump Jezza. It's even harder to imagine that enough moderates could be convinced to join the party to secure a change of course.

That means Brits—highly averse to divided parties—will continue to be treated to the spectacle of a leader at odds with much of his parliamentary corps (over a quarter of Labour MPs voted with the Tories to extend British airstrikes against ISIS to Syria, for example) and appealing over their heads to the constituency that gave him the top job (which, incidentally, opposes the bombing). Throw in the fact that Corbyn has yet to resonate with voters outside the Labour camp and the deep suspicion that much of the electorate feels for his attitudes to issues such as defense, terrorism, and immigration, and it's easy to see why the Tories are chuckling. If things don't change, they are forecast to be a shoo-in for the next general election, due in 2020.

That's very probably right, but it ignores the deeper game that Corbyn is playing. Until just a few months ago, opinions such as his were largely kept to the political fringe; now they are center-stage, and there is every chance that the result will be to drag Britain's public debate to the left, something that he would surely count as a win.

Or consider this: Less than six months ago, Corbyn struggled to persuade more than a handful of MPs to support him as Labour leader. Now, according to recent polls, 30 percent or so of Brits say that they would vote him into 10 Downing Street. That's some 10 percentage points behind the Tories, but it's roughly the same percentage as voted for Corbyn's predecessor in May. The fact that Corbyn now heads one of Britain's two great political tribes matters.

And his leadership is reshaping that tribe into something more in accord with his views. The inflow of so many



GARY LOCKE

new members, many of them younger and including a number of former Greens and Liberal Democrats (both parties are longstanding asylums for the utopian disaffected), must, if they stay, mean the growing Corbynization of Labour, a process that will only be accelerated by the departure of moderates with no taste for a fight. As incompetent as Corbyn and his comrades may sometimes seem (and are), they have the hard left's understanding of power. Corbyn's campaign tapped into popular resentments of a depth that his opponents struggled to deal with, but it was also cleverer and far more effective (trade union backing helped) than they had anticipated.

After the revolution come the enforcers. Corbyn is inserting his people into the party's structure and, still gingerly (the Corbynista Twitter posse is not so diffident), trying to whip his MPs into line. In doing the latter, he will be assisted by the support of groupings of the *pur et dur*, such as the one named Momentum, now beginning to move into local parties. The (public) talk is of a broad church; the reality will be rougher. The sword hanging over moderate Labour MPs will be the threat of de-selection by their local party—meaning that they will no longer be the candidate at the next election—something that would promise not only political disaster, but unemployment too. The fact that there is likely to be a redrawing of constituency boundaries (and a reduction in the overall number of parliamentary seats) before 2020 will only hand more power to the local activists who will decide who gets to stand where. Under the circumstances, many moderate MPs will feel constrained to keep dangerous thoughts to themselves, and as for mounting a challenge to Corbyn's leadership, well . . .

If this is right, the party will change, but it will, more or less, hang together. There will be defections, but the great Labour split that some expect will not happen. And so, by 2020 Britain's principal opposition will be well on the way to becoming a party of the hard left, a transformation that would be yet another win for Corbyn, even if it costs him support for now: Current polling indicates that this radicalized Labour would be extremely unlikely to prevail in 2020, either alone or in conjunction with the leftist Scottish Nationalist party. But if, between now and 2020, some fresh catastrophe hits, say, the economy, or, for that matter, the Tory party, Corbyn's Labour will be there, ready to take advantage of what former Conservative prime minister Harold Macmillan famously described as "events."

That's not something to chuckle about. ♦

Wrong Again

Governors make the best presidential candidates? Call it conventional unwisdom. BY FRED BARNES

At full tide, 9 of the 17 Republicans running for the 2016 presidential nomination were current or former governors. There was a perfectly good reason so many were in the race: Governors have an advantage with voters. They are executives who make real-life decisions, not just talk about doing so. Governors, more often than not, are regarded as leaders.

At least that was the conventional wisdom as recently as last spring. But it has died this year like many other assumptions about presidential campaigns. Three governors have dropped out, and none of the remaining six is in the top tier of candidates.

A corollary to the notion of a governor's advantage has also died. Given their dislike of President Obama, Republican voters were supposed to be leery of electing another first-term senator with a thin record. On the contrary, senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz are in the top tier, along with Donald Trump and Ben Carson. Rubio has been a senator since 2011, Cruz since 2013.

Republican voters, a large bloc of them, have changed their minds about what they want in a presidential candidate. In March, a Pew poll found that 57 percent of Republicans believed it is more important for a candidate to have "experience and a proven record" than "new ideas and a different approach." Only 36 percent preferred a candidate with a fresh approach.

By September, the numbers had flipped. Nearly twice as many Republicans—65 percent—said experience is less important than a candidate's ideas and different style. Those saying experience was more important dipped to 29 percent.

The first casualty of this dramatic reversal was Texas's Rick Perry, who dropped out in September. Perry had an impressive record as a conservative governor before bolstering his candidacy by developing expertise on foreign affairs. But "our perceived strength was actually a great weakness," said Perry's campaign manager Jeff Miller.

A governor, and then some

The rise of Trump, a real estate mogul, appears to have both spurred the change in voters' attitudes and benefited from it. Ben Carson, the retired brain surgeon, is another beneficiary.

Trump "has sold himself as a mega-executive, a kind of super-governor, who makes tough decisions and doesn't wither under fire," said the University of Virginia's Larry Sabato. "He's the big shot looming over this field of garden-variety politicians. . . . Whatever you think of Trump's positions, he projects leadership, decisiveness, and success."

Aside from the Trump effect, governors have been hurt by "the fact that millions of GOP voters are just plain rejecting conventional politics after the election of a GOP Congress that didn't seem to change much," Sabato said. "Why would governors be spared the base's wrath when it's directed at the party establishment? Governors are status quo, too."

Former Florida governor Jeb Bush and Wisconsin governor Scott Walker have not been spared. They started from first-place in polls and gradually fell out of favor. Poor performances in televised debates were a factor. Critics of Bush blame him for "underperforming."

Presidential campaigns are usually about the future. But Bush and Walker emphasized achievements as governors—that is, the past. Bush was successful as a reform governor from 1999 to 2007. Walker, now in his second term, broke the chokehold of public sector unions on state government. Walker dropped out in September.

Bush's decline has a poignancy because his father and brother reached the White House. "Jeb is the most qualified of the candidates to be president," an official of a rival campaign told me. "He just doesn't have the political skills."

John Kasich is a popular governor in Ohio, won reelection in a landslide, and has a record of economic success. But after an initial burst, his presidential bid has faltered. Ex-governors Jim Gilmore of Virginia and George Pataki of New York haven't gotten off the ground. Louisiana's Bobby Jindal ended his campaign in November.

A serious problem for Republican governors has been all but ignored by the media and the political community: Common Core. It requires state standards for K-12 students on what they should know in math and what's called English language arts. In numerous states, parents have revolted against Common Core for downgrading the teaching of traditional math and literature.

The issue has been unsettling for the campaigns of Bush, Kasich, Walker, and New Jersey's Chris Christie. They have sought to separate themselves from Common Core after initially endorsing it. Bush, for instance, says the federal government needs to stay out of Common Core. Walker waffled, and this contributed to his demise as a presidential candidate.

In Washington, the conservative American Principles Project is spearheading a national effort against Common Core. And it has begun to draw media attention to the issue, one whose impact has been underestimated.

MICHAEL VADON

Fred Barnes is an executive editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Alone among governors, Christie has found a way to escape the downside of being a governor. He's not running as a governor. He's running as a federal prosecutor who handled terrorism and national security cases as a U.S. attorney after the 9/11 attacks.

In Iowa last week, he said: "Let me suggest this to everybody. If a center for the developmentally disabled in San Bernardino, California, is a target for radical Islamic terrorism, then every place in America is a target for radical Islamic terrorism."

Meanwhile, the *New Hampshire Union Leader* endorsed Christie for president, arguing he is the best prepared to thwart ISIS, the terrorist group. The New Hampshire primary is on February 9. ♦

Is Political Science Dying?

Its wounds are self-inflicted.

BY STEVEN F. HAYWARD

While the campus grievance mongers cry for *Justice!* and continue their drive for power and safe spaces, I note an extraordinary story in the latest issue of *Stanford*, the bimonthly magazine of the Stanford Alumni Association. Take this in very slowly:

> UNDECLARED UNDERGRADUATES needn't feel forlorn: Political science wants YOU. It's looking for more than a few good students who are interested in a globally relevant education that readies them for everything from an academic career to national security work. And the department's recruiting mission is headlined with a revamped major that offers students a better opportunity for tackling "big problems—and social issues," as noted by associate professor Justin Grimmer. New enlistments are earnestly sought *in the wake of a notable decline in poli-sci majors over the last four years, from 74 in the 2010-11 academic year to 61 in 2013-14 to 47 in 2014-15* [emphasis added].

By extrapolation, it would seem that Stanford has slightly more than 200 political science majors, out of an undergraduate student body of a bit more than 7,000—or 2.9 percent. There are 46 faculty listed on the political science department's web page, which means there is a faculty-to-major ratio of about 1-to-4. This is incredible, as it indicates a discipline at one of our leading universities that attracts almost no students. The fact that political science majors are *declining* (this is happening at a lot of universities—not just Stanford) at a time when general interest in politics is rising suggests a crisis in the discipline.

Steven F. Hayward is the Ronald Reagan distinguished visiting professor at Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Public Policy.

Wait! Is that a Stanford poli sci major?

AP / MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ

I hasten to add that the Stanford political science department has some excellent scholars (Morris Fiorina, David Brady, and Barry Weingast, to name three), some of them even conservative or at least sympathetic to conservative perspectives on modern politics. So this is not a case of a department self-marginalizing through ideology.

One explanation might be Stanford's decision willy-nilly to become Caltech by the Bay. Computer science and its related fields are by far the leading majors at Stanford. But that can't be the whole story, and Stanford has the resources to have leading humanities and social science departments. Indeed, the *New York Times* reported recently that Stanford is aiming to have the number-one-ranked economics department and is spending freely to attract the biggest names in the field. And Stanford's history department has always boasted some of the best scholars in the field.

A more complete explanation requires a digression for a moment back to the college protesters who are demanding an expansion of the politicized and deeply ideological courses about oppression, "social justice," and so forth. Why are they demanding more of this? Why wouldn't students interested in "justice" be flocking to political science, which, in the abstract, ought to be one of the most vibrant and lively departments on any campus, engaging the issues of justice more directly than other social sciences? Leaving aside for the moment the simple will to power among the protesting left (a decisive motive in the end), one reason is that the fundamental questions of justice have either gone missing from most political science curricula, or more often are only anemically discussed. This is *the* plague of the social sciences, where issues of justice are reduced to the category of "normative" questions, which, being subjective, are not treated seriously. They are not even much discussed in many classes. It might be more accurate to call them the "anti-social sciences."

Allan Bloom put his finger on the problem in his famous book from the late 1980s:

> A few words about political science and its peculiarities might help to clarify the problems of social science as a whole. To begin with, it is, along with economics, the only purely academic discipline that, like medicine, engages a fundamental passion and the study of which could be understood as undertaken in order to ensure its

> satisfaction. Political science involves the love of justice, the love of glory and the love of ruling. But unlike medicine and economics, which are quite frank about their relations to health and wealth, and even trumpet them, political science turns modestly away from such avowals and would even like to break off these unseemly relations.

Nothing much has changed since then. The typical social science journal article is largely a mathematical exercise today, often revealing something counterintuitive that is useful and interesting, but invariably noting that "more research" is necessary, and that the narrow findings "raise normative questions," before abruptly ending. In other words, just as things are getting interesting, political science often goes mute. Richard Weaver noted the defect in this approach in his 1948 classic *Ideas Have Consequences*:

> The theory of empiricism is plausible because it assumes that accuracy about small matters prepares the way for valid judgment about larger ones. *What happens, however, is that the judgments are never made.* The pedantic empiricist, buried in his little province of phenomena, imagines that fidelity to it exempts him from concern with larger aspects of reality—in the case of science, from consideration of whether there is reality other than matter [emphasis added].

Next to this desiccated approach to political life, it is not surprising that many students flock to radical courses where professors purport to battle against clear injustice and on the side of justice. At least here there is clarity and purpose, even if badly degraded and poisonously politicized. Meanwhile, too many political science departments—Stanford's likely among them—have become narrowly specialized ("knowing more and more about less and less," as Leo Strauss once put it), conforming to the dictates of modern academia, which has sacrificed the liveliness and engagement with the real world of politics that attracts interested and public-spirited students. I've stopped keeping track of students who, while full of interest in and opinions about politics and current affairs, say to me: "But political science is so *boring!*" Memo to universities: If your political science classes are boring large numbers of students, you're doing it wrong.

My understanding is that the number of students choosing to major in sociology is plummeting even faster at most universities. The irony here is that if you were a student leftist in the 1960s, sociology was the field you took for a major, and it was the hotbed for cutting-edge radical thought then. But having settled in to the usual academic conventions of journal-publishing obscurantism, it was rendered obsolete by the burgeoning "-studies" departments.

Contrast Stanford with Bowdoin College, an elite institution, where government and legal studies is the largest major on campus, or Claremont McKenna College, which, at less than half the size of Stanford, has about the same number of government majors. The government departments are thriving at several other universities I can name, and they typically have one thing in common: They teach the subject the old-fashioned way, and understand politics as more an art than a science, usually combined with a serious historical perspective. Actually, you can tell by the way the subject is named at different colleges and universities. Instead of "political science," places where the study of political life is thriving usually have a "government" or "politics" department, without any scientific or technical pretense.

Stanford has responded by attempting to make political science more "relevant" to student interests, but it appears they may be doing so by embracing the politically correct ideology of the "studies" departments. A little further in the alumni magazine article is this account:

> Briana Roberson, a junior, was the first student persuaded to commit to the revised major. . . . She had previously been "a little reluctant" to declare for political science because of "its broad focus on theory, political research and data, statistics, etc." The new track-based system, however, made the decision easy. "I naturally chose the justice and law track because it consisted of specific courses that focused on my interest of becoming a lawyer who concentrates on social justice."

If the new "law and justice" track just borrows from the current conventions about "social justice," I doubt it will halt the slide at Stanford. ♦

Playing Hurt

The casualties of football.

BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

In the National Football League, it is the year of the orthopod. Football, the cognoscenti like to say, is a game of injuries, but this year, it sometimes seems as though that's *all* that it is. That, and the blown call, anyway.

ESPN recently did a little segment on the casualties suffered by one of the teams playing in its Monday night game. Baltimore Ravens quarterback Joe Flacco had torn two tendons in his knee a couple of weeks earlier. But he managed to engineer a game-winning drive before leaving the field and heading to the OR and a long, painful rehab. Earlier in the season, Flacco's favorite pass receiver, Steve Smith Sr., had gone down with a torn Achilles tendon. It was the end of his season and, probably, his career. The team's primary running back, Justin Forsett, broke his arm in two places, finishing his season. And then, in the first game this fall, Terrell Suggs had torn *his* Achilles tendon. He, also, was done for the year.

Geoffrey Norman, a writer in Vermont, is a frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Elsewhere around the league: Peyton Manning, out with an injury to his foot. Andrew Luck, the man drafted by the Indianapolis Colts to be the next Manning, was sidelined (as they say) with broken ribs ... among other things. Tony Romo of the Cowboys broke his collarbone, rehabbed enough to come back, and, after a game and a half, broke it *again.* Arian Foster, running back for the Texans, was done with a torn Achilles. Jimmy Graham, Seahawks tight end, blew out his knee.

And on and on. The New England Patriots suffered so many injuries that even the genius of coach Bill Belichick could not compensate. Quarterback Tom Brady, missing his favorite pass receiver, Julian Edelman (broken foot), and the offensive linemen who were accustomed to protecting him, couldn't keep the Patriots undefeated. They lost two in a row.

Most of the conversation about football and injuries deals, of course, with concussions. Along with pitches for car insurance, beer, and fantasy football, recent broadcasts of NFL games have been peppered with ads for the eponymously named movie.

Concussion is one of those "based on a true story" films. Will Smith plays the lead role of Dr. Bennet Omalu, a forensic pathologist who studied the connection between concussions and a condition called chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE). His published findings have been challenged, but the evidence is disturbing. The brains of 96 percent of football players examined in a recent study by the VA and Boston University showed evidence of CTE. In an especially poignant note, the family of NFL legend Frank Gifford announced after his recent death that examination of his brain showed he suffered from CTE.

The concern over concussions has even trickled down to the level of the players. The sovereign remedy for dealing with a hard hit to the head that did not actually leave you unconscious was always to shrug it off. The player "got his bell rung." Part of the game. Shake it off and get back in there.

But concern over the long-term effects of concussions—on the health of both players and the NFL—has changed that, even if not sufficiently. Players who may have been concussed are taken out of the game and subjected to what is called a "concussion protocol." A series of tests is administered on the sidelines and in the locker room to determine if the player has, indeed, been concussed. If so, he is not allowed to return to that game and may be kept out of further games until he is medically cleared to play.

Players, being tough guys, often resist even being evaluated and, if the evaluation indicates they have been concussed, will still insist on getting back out there. The team may take a player's helmet away to make sure he gets the message.

NEWSCOM

Tough break: Tony Romo goes down again.

In a league of tough guys, Ben Roethlisberger of the Pittsburgh Steelers is among the toughest. He has "played through" all manner of injuries to include what he thought was a sprained ankle but turned out to be a broken foot. Earlier this season, he injured a knee—sprained ligament and bone bruises—and was held out of several games. When he did, finally, suit up, it was as an emergency backup for Landry Jones, who injured his leg early in the game. The convalescent Roethlisberger came in and passed for 379 yards and three touchdowns.

On the Sunday after Thanksgiving, the Steelers played the Seahawks in Seattle, and Roethlisberger threw for over 400 yards. With his team behind, late in the game, he was hit in the head on a play that cost the Seahawks a roughing penalty. On the sidelines, a few plays later he approached the trainers and told them he was experiencing symptoms and wanted to be evaluated for a concussion. Landry Jones replaced him and threw an interception to end the game. The Steelers' chances of coming back would have doubtless been better if Roethlisberger had been under center.

"I'll play through any injury," he said later, "but brain."

Roethlisberger was medically cleared to start the Steelers' next game. He completed 24 of 39 pass attempts for 364 yards and four touchdowns in a rout of the Indianapolis Colts, whose quarterback, Matt Hasselbeck, left the game in the fourth quarter with a neck injury. Hasselbeck is a 40-year-old backup who would not have started the game if Andrew Luck had not been sidelined with a lacerated kidney and a partially torn abdominal muscle.

Those are, of course, just part of the game—the sort of inuries that send players to the operating room every week and of which there seem to be more and more every year. Where a concussion might cause a player to miss part of a game and, if it is serious enough, sit out another one or two weeks, a blown knee means the end of a season and, perhaps, a career. And as the rules are rewritten to protect players from blows to the head, outlawing the helmet-to-helmet hit that was the signature tactic of a number of the NFL's superstar headhunters, players have begun going low to make the tackle. For a receiver, going hard over the middle, it is a Hobson's choice. Or maybe not. Players, being young and gifted, no doubt feel immortal or, anyway, that the bill for all those hits to the head—that thing called CTE—will not come due for a long, long time. Their speed and their legs are the key to their career. They might prefer to be hit high.

For the fan—the grizzled sort, anyway—the injuries are leaching something vital from the game. You could once expect a unit, like those Steeler defenses of the Chuck Noll years, to be more or less intact for an entire season. Mean Joe Greene would be in there pretty much every game. In the contemporary game, it is unusual for someone to play every snap of every game. The game depends on backups and good fortune. Green Bay's prospects for the season changed drastically when

their star receiver Jordy Nelson went down in a preseason game. Blew out his ACL for nothing.

A fan begins to feel almost complicit. Yes, the players are out there of their own free will. They will fight when they are told to come out because they may have been concussed. They will play through all manner of pain. It is their pride. They are warriors.

And yet ... the injuries do take something out of the game, and you wonder why there are so many of them and, then, if there is anything to be done. The answer to the first question is, in large part, mass times velocity. The players are bigger and faster than ever. And yet bones, ligaments, internal organs ... these are still weak and vulnerable. There is no known way to make them tougher. And the players will keep getting bigger and faster.

During one of those many, many injury timeouts during a game I was following recently on television, I told the others in the room about how there used to be this thing called "one-platoon-football." I never saw it played, but I read about it and heard stories when I was researching a book on the history of the Alabama/Auburn rivalry.

In those days, players went for 60 minutes. You played offense and defense. Just like in basketball. On a change of possession, a halfback became a defensive back. A lineman might become the center. Even the quarterback stayed on the field and played defense. Which probably motivated him to keep a drive going as long as possible. Much better to take the snap from center and then hand the ball off or throw it down field than to have to cover and tackle pass receivers.

In this kind of football, the players would still be fast but there would not be so many behemoths out there. And by the fourth quarter, everyone would be tired and there would be less momentum behind every collision.

We talked about that for a while. Someone even brought up the possibility of going back to leather helmets.

Then the injured player was taken to the locker room "for further evaluation," another player replaced him, and the game went on. ♦

The Locker Room Fight Continues

The gender-war gendarmes throw their weight around. BY DENNIS BYRNE

Hoffman Estates, Ill.

Coming soon to a girls' locker room in a high school near you: the Obama administration's transgender gendarmes.

In the first action of this sort, President Obama's Department of Education steamrolled a suburban Chicago high school district into giving a student, a biological male who now identifies as a female, access to the girls' locker room.

Township High School District 211 had fought valiantly to protect the privacy rights of the girls using the locker room. But it gave up the fight after the education department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) threatened to withhold $6 million in federal aid.

This was no small fish that OCR was trying to land. District 211 is Illinois's largest high school district, serving 12,500 students in seven schools from 11 thriving suburbs several miles northwest of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. Having now established a precedent for clubbing schools into accepting the arch-progressive definition of gender, the OCR may be emboldened to visit your school if it sniffs the slightest existence of "transphobia" of the kind it supposedly unearthed in District 211.

The school originally, in an effort at a "common sense" and compassionate solution, had provided separate changing facilities for Student A for athletic activities and gym class. Based, one would suppose, on the startling assumption—to transgender activists—that adolescent girls have a right of privacy when dressing, undressing, and showering.

Dennis Byrne is a Chicago writer.

The phobia police on the beat, December 7

NEWSCOM

The OCR and the American Civil Liberties Union, representing Student A, at first resolutely demanded full and unrestricted access to the locker room, arguing that anything less violates Title IX of the Civil Rights Act. Never mind that this was a new and novel interpretation of the federal ban on sex discrimination in public schools.

After weeks of negotiation, a "compromise" was reached. The OCR, in its beneficence, would permit the school to install "curtains" in the locker rooms, giving Student A and other students—if they so desire—a place to shelter from prying eyes while changing and showering. How this will accommodate scores of girls trying to use the locker room all at once bewilders.

As part of the agreement, the OCR imposed a series of costly and intrusive conditions on the school, including a deluge of paperwork, strict federal monitoring, the hiring of an expert on "transgender and gender nonconforming youth," and the creation at the student's request, of a "support team," that would include her parents.

Hundreds of parents showed up December 2 at a long, emotional, and heated public hearing to rail against giving a male transgendered student access to a girls' locker room under any circumstances. The board nonetheless

proceeded to approve the agreement.

Then just hours later came an unexpected hitch: Catherine E. Lhamon, OCR's boss, disavowed the agreement. In an appalling display of incompetence or bad faith, she told the media that the agreement applied to all students in all district schools, not just Student A in one school—a mystifying misreading of the clearly written agreement. School superintendent Daniel Cates's immediate response was blunt: "We are outraged by [Lhamon's] mischaracterization . . . and her blatant disregard for the facts of the negotiated agreement. . . . It is wrong, it is an act of bad faith, and our school district will not let it stand."

When the board scheduled an emergency session to rescind the agreement, Lhamon, properly chastised, issued a one-paragraph retraction of her high-handed interpretation: The school's reading was the correct one.

Still, the board went ahead with its emergency meeting on December 7. Fully alerted, transgender activists loaded up the allotted two-hour public comment time with nonresidents. What followed were unending personal condemnations, accusing board members, students, and parents of assorted phobias and hatreds.

The board ultimately declined to rescind the agreement, leaving the curtain solution in place. Republican state representative Tom Morrison called it a terrible mistake. The district would have won a court challenge, he said, because federal case law backs its original no-access policy. Indeed, research by the Alliance Defending Freedom and the Thomas More Society cites several federal court decisions affirming that schools are not legally required to allow students to use opposite-sex restrooms, showers, and changing rooms. Furthermore, granting students access to opposite-sex changing areas could subject schools to tort liability for violating parents' rights.

Whether the District 211 Parents for Privacy, a group actively opposed to any access, will followup with a lawsuit is not yet clear. Morrison plans to introduce legislation requiring Illinois school districts to ban the use of opposite-sex locker rooms by students claiming to be transgender.

But across the country, some school districts, anticipating the OCR's approach or of their own volition, already are opening up opposite-sex locker rooms to trans students, sometimes with little or no public notice. Transgender activists are increasingly confident they'll win this latest cultural battle.

Significantly and sadly, the progressives at the public hearings never acknowledged the central issue: the other girls' right to privacy. It's as if the left were conducting a war on adolescent women.

A few classmates of Student A rose at the last public hearing to challenge the settlement, emotionally, courageously, and eloquently. In sum, they said: *We, too, have been bullied for our views. We know Student A and she's a friend. We have never bullied her and we respect her own brave fight for what she believes are her rights. But, please, also consider our privacy rights. We're concerned about our modesty. Seeing the male genitalia isn't our problem. We are self-conscious of our bodies; this is a difficult time for us.*

They were rewarded with shouts of approval and a standing ovation.

These girls are minors, children really. Their right to privacy is being offered up in sacrifice for a grand social experiment. Has it come to this, that even children must now be subjected to this rigid ideology, without their or their parents' assent?

One angry father told the board that he would never, ever let his daughter use an open washroom unless every girl and her parents signed waivers stating they wouldn't mind the presence of a boy in it.

Strong words. In Township High School District 211, the fight appears not to be over. ♦

A Few Good Men and Women

Advocates for military gender-integration win—and they're not finished. BY AARON MACLEAN

When Ash Carter stood at the podium on December 3 to reveal the most profound social change in military policy in at least a half-century, he stood alone. Absent from the defense secretary's announcement that all ground combat jobs were to be opened to women were the uniformed service chiefs and their civilian service secretaries, and especially conspicuous by his nonattendance was General Joseph Dunford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and Carter's military counterpart.

Aaron MacLean, a former Marine Corps infantry officer, is managing editor of the Washington Free Beacon.

In one respect, Carter's solitude might seem strange. As he pointed out in his remarks, opening all jobs to women "was the recommendation of the secretary of the Army, the secretary of the Air Force, and the secretary of the Navy, as well as the chief of staff of the Army, the chief of staff of the Air Force, the chief of naval operations, and the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command." This certainly sounds impressive, until you realize that the Air Force and the Navy had exceedingly little skin in this game. The same applied, perhaps counterintuitively, to the Special Operations Command, which has such high physical standards for its personnel that the

decision will likely have little effect on it, barring a campaign for dramatically lower entry requirements.

Continuing through the list, the service secretaries for the Army and the Navy are, by definition, civilian appointees of the Obama administration. And neither the current acting secretary of the Army, Eric Fanning, nor his recent predecessor, John McHugh, has ever spent a day in a military uniform, let alone time carrying a rifle and pack in combat—something that also applies to Carter. The secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, served two years as a naval surface warfare officer in the '70s. These men have legal authority but zero relevant experience on this issue.

That leaves the commandant of the Marine Corps and the Army's chief of staff. The Marines opposed the change, and the Army supported it—in other words, a 50-50 split between the leaders actually affected by the decision. General Dunford, until a few months ago the Marine commandant, also opposed it, and he is effectively senior to everyone else cited by Carter in his somewhat misleading argument from authority. It is no surprise Dunford didn't alter his schedule to attend, and his absence would have made the presence of the others awkward.

From the narrow perspective of political self-interest, the Army leadership's decision was the prudent one. They saw the way this decision was going to go and rolled over early. The Marines, on the other hand, have spent the last several years making themselves aggravating to the civilian defense staffers in the vanguard of the revolution. They did so by taking seriously the Pentagon's requirement, set in 2013, that requests for exceptions to the integration of women in the armed forces be "narrowly tailored, and based on a rigorous analysis of factual data." The Marines accordingly invested a great deal of money, time, and manpower establishing an experimental task force that included both all-male and gender-integrated units, which then had their performance measured as they accomplished a series of simulated battlefield tasks.

The results weren't close. All-male units outperformed gender-integrated units on 93 of 134 battlefield tasks. The gender-integrated units outperformed male units on two tasks. Based on this outcome, the fact that women were injured at twice the rate of men during the course of the study, and other aspects of the multiyear review, the Marines made a "narrowly tailored" request to keep their infantry and reconnaissance fields closed to women.

Carter turned them down flat, and did not address the results of the Marine

No narrow tailoring, thanks: Ash Carter makes his announcement, December 3.

study in his announcement, though he did somewhat surreally assert that "mission effectiveness" is his most important guiding principle. He also stressed that "equal opportunity likely will not mean equal participation," and said that both the reality and perception of any quotas must be rejected. It appears that he really believes this to be important—but it is naïve to expect that the political pressure groups that have successfully brought about this change in policy will simply declare victory and close up shop.

As ever with the left, bait-and-switch is the tactic of choice. The most appealing argument for opening ground combat jobs to women was the notion that anyone who can meet the standard should have a shot. There is something all-American about that line of reasoning, even if it fails to take into account the facts that gender-integrated units perform demonstrably worse than male units. Clearly Carter was persuaded by it.

But those most aggressively pushing this argument have also spent the last several years arguing that the military's physical standards are often unnecessarily high. They won't stop now. For instance, in well-publicized cases involving fire departments, the disparate success of men and women in physical evaluations has led to legal challenges in which female plaintiffs succeeded in arguing that the results were proof of gender discrimination. The military will resist this trend, but the decades are long, the public's knowledge is limited, and the social energy is all in one direction.

Another aspect of the bait-and-switch, which didn't take even 24 hours to reveal itself, is the fact that women will now likely be obliged to register for the draft. The White House announced it was studying such a shift, which would require the cooperation of Congress, the very day after Carter's remarks. A lawsuit demanding women be subject to the draft enjoyed a favorable hearing before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on December 8.

This change may or may not happen soon, but after Carter's decision, it will happen, and should a call-up go out in the future, women aged 18 to 25 will be off to the infantry (among other fields) whether they like it or not.

For the left, this represents progress, and though most Americans have treated combat gender-integration as a somewhat parochial controversy, it is anything but. The members of the academic and political vanguard who drove this shift—their writings are easy enough to retrieve; you should check out Anthony King's *The Combat Soldier*, published by Oxford University Press, as a good sample of the species—tend to believe that men and women are interchangeable, that women underperform on physical evaluations not because of innate differences but because of cultural conditioning, and that, rather than being the "bands of brothers" of romantic memory, American combat units have been plagued by "hyper" or "toxic" masculinity, making them less effective than gender-integrated units will be.

This would all no doubt be news to the regiments that held Château-Thierry or took Belleau Wood or Iwo Jima or Omaha Beach or Inchon. But what did they know? ♦

NEWSCOM

Jingle Hell

The debasement of Christmas songs

By Andrew Ferguson

In the city where I live, one of the pop music radio stations shifts to an all-Christmas music format beginning in . . . oh, I don't know, late August?

Kidding! No, I think the transition takes place a couple weeks before Thanksgiving, which gives us all plenty of time to get sick of our seasonal favorites long before the season officially begins. The all-Christmas programming used to start Thanksgiving week. And before that, many years ago, it began the weekend after Thanksgiving. This is in keeping with the familiar chronological acceleration that nowadays places the tubby rubber Santas up against the plastic jack-o'-lanterns on the shelves at the local CVS, right next to the back-to-school supplies, which will soon be replaced by Valentine candy.

Make it stop.

I dislike the acceleration of Christmas as much as anyone else, but with no access to a Pandora account and lacking satellite radio in my car, I listen to the station all the same, until I can't stand it anymore. Like the season itself, my moment of Christmas-music overfeeding arrives earlier and earlier with each passing year. In a few years I will be driving around shouting for the death of the entire Mormon Tabernacle Choir before Columbus Day. But I am captive to the station's programming long enough to notice a few things. Chief among them is that during the modern Christmas season you can't get away from Mariah Carey. Even now, many years after the salad days of her career began to wilt, she's like our generation's Queen of Christmas—or the new Mrs. Claus. Or the Transitioning Santa. She's everywhere.

Her status rests on the song "All I Want for Christmas Is You," released 21 years ago as of this writing and perhaps the only Christmas song written in the last 40 years to show the staying power of a standard, like "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" or "The Christmas Song."

Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor at The Weekly Standard. *This essay is adapted from a chapter in* The Christmas Virtues: A Treasury of Conservative Tales for the Holidays, *edited by Jonathan V. Last (Templeton Press).*

Mariah Carey wrote "All I Want" with a collaborator. He arranged it, produced it, and, through the miracle of digital programming, played all the instruments. But it is Mariah who filled the crucial role, not as singer but as Yuletide sex kitten: She appeared in a music video that has become a feature of the season almost as indelible as the song itself. In it she is seen disporting—I'm sorry, there's no other word for it—along winter landscapes in a snug-fitting snowsuit and then donning a Santa's cap and red velvet miniskirt and crossing her legs enthusiastically in the ample lap of Santa himself. He looks extremely jolly, and why not?

"Make my wish come true," she sings, in the emphatic tones of an oil barge lost in a fog bank. "All I want for Christmas is you, baby." I can listen to the song more often than most of the songs our all-Christmas radio station plays—roughly twice as often, for example, as I can listen to Bon Jovi singing "Back Door Santa." It's a catchy rave-up with an impressive rhythm section, even when you know the tom toms and snappy snare are really just the electronic pulsations of a drum machine. And while it's more successful than most Christmas songs of its time, it is representative of them, too. Mostly in this: It doesn't have anything to do with Christmas.

By design, according to Mariah Carey's cowriter, "All I Want" is a bit of musical misdirection, a love song swaddled in Christmas clothes (velvet miniskirt, Santa cap). The seasonal references to reindeer and snow and Santa and Christmas trees are used as a means to convey the singer's earthier, and less Christmassy, need for a hunk-a hunk-a burning love. At first glance, of course, this is a much more marketable yearning than the yearning Christmas is supposed to give rise to. It could be worse. I think of a version of "O Holy Night" released over a decade ago by one of Mariah Carey's early imitators, Christina Aguilera. Her recording of this old and explicitly Christian hymn was probably intended as an assertion of piety, but it might be the biggest blow to the Christian religion since the Turks overran the Byzantines at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071.

To convey her depth of religious feeling, Christina

borrows her mentor's signature vocal trick, using several notes to sing a single syllable. Musicologists call it melisma. It is an old technique, common to Gregorian chants from long ago, but it's more familiar to contemporary audiences through the vein-popping exertions of the late Whitney Houston and countless singers who have kneecapped our national anthem before televised sporting events. As the singer slides around in search of the note to match the syllable, melisma can sound to the amateur ear—mine anyway—like someone handed a pennywhistle to a meth-head.

So it is with Christina Aguilera when she opens fire at "O Holy Night." The problem with melisma, at least as it's done now, is that it draws attention to the singer and away from the song, an effect that is especially crippling in Christmas music, which is, according to tradition anyway, supposed to be about something other than self. I know nothing of her religious convictions, but Christina Aguilera certainly sounds sincere, or enthusiastic at least. She takes some of her syllables—the "lee-ee-ee-ee" in "holy," for instance—on a roller-coaster ride of 9 or 10 quarter notes until her voice flies off the rails and goes crashing down on the next syllable: "na-ah–ah–ah–ttttt!" For the last 12 bars a gospel piano vamps behind her as she scats on "Jee-jeee-jeeeee-zuz . . . oh! . . . Jeeezzzussss uh-Churist . . . " You can't tell whether she wants to praise Him or date Him.

When it comes to Christmas, then, Mariah Carey and the other melisma mamas might be right to leave Jesus out of it altogether and settle instead into Santa's lap for three minutes of forelock tugging. Most singers and songwriters do the same, avoiding piety in favor of a frolic. This is the common course contemporary Christmas music has traveled over the last several decades. The most prominent trend has been toward what the music industry calls the "novelty song"—a ditty so insubstantial that it wobbles from funny to infuriating in 32 bars. Excellent examples of novelties in the secular songbook are "How Much Is That Doggie in the Window?" and "Disco Duck" from ye olden times on up to the more recent "Rock Me Amadeus" and "Crazy Frog." And so my all-Christmas station sputters with "The Chipmunk Song," "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer," "Here Comes Santa Claus," and "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus." If Weird Al Yankovic suddenly converted and took responsibility for writing all our new Christmas songs, he could do no worse than "Be Claus I Got High," "I Want a Boob Job for Christmas," or "Daddy Please (Don't Get Drunk This Christmas)."

If we insist that we treat Christmas with a secular levity, we might begin to believe that fun (pleasure, delight, enjoyment of the wonders of the world) is the opposite of religion. And come to think of it, most people already do believe this. Especially Christians.

In a way, these are simply successors to such non-Christmas Christmas classics as "Jingle Bells," "Silver Bells," "Let It Snow," and "Frosty the Snowman"—songs that, respectively, are about antique modes of transportation, seasonal decorations in a department store, the weather, and the creepy resuscitation of inanimate objects. The closest we get to the source of the holiday are Christmas songs that celebrate the celebration of Christmas, which is to say: songs that are at least two removes from the actual event. "The Christmas Waltz" tells us "it's that time of year when the world falls in love," but why does the world fall in love? We are told to have ourselves a merry little Christmas, but the song doesn't tell us why our Christmas, big or little, is supposed to be merry. And what's the significance of a winter wonderland, besides the new bird replacing the blue bird?

We live in a secular age, a post-Christian age. We attend "winter festivals," throw "holiday parties," use "season's greetings" as the all-purpose salutation. Our public schools, our government, and our retail outlets have purged Christmas of its religious meaning. Why not purge our Christmas music, too? But I think something else is going on as well. If we insist that we treat this religious holiday exclusively with a secular levity, through rock-and-roll come-ons and joke songs, we might get the impression that we can't use levity to treat religious matters. If singers and musicians think they can be jolly only by de-Christianizing Christmas, then we might begin to believe that the only way to appreciate its true significance is to sound as miserable as Christina Aguilera in full melisma mode. We might even begin to believe that fun (pleasure, delight, enjoyment of the wonders of the world) is the opposite of religion. And come to think of it, most people already do believe this. Especially Christians.

It's an old problem, of course—an old problem even for Christmas music. In the early church, Christmas replaced the baptism of Jesus as the preeminent celebration of the season because it stood as a happy rebuke to the Manicheans. Believing as they did in the absolute division of spirit and matter, no group of heretics has ever been gloomier. The celebration of Christmas was a way of telling the world: This really happened, to a real mother and a real child, made in flesh and blood, the coming together of God and man. And music itself is the natural expression of the union of spirit and matter, the physical act of plucking strings or hammering keys or thrumming vocal cords to

produce something that points beyond the physical. Unless you use a drum machine.

No other holiday is so intimately connected to music, so quickly evoked by a simple melody or even mere sounds—sleigh bells or the immense whispering of snowfall at night. The idea of Christmas as a musical celebration finally took hold when peasants and other lowly folk began adapting local dance tunes to the purpose. The origin of Christmas music in dance music is worth remembering. The tunes, outfitted with words of praise and the appropriate narratives of Jesus and Mary and Joseph, of the Three Kings and the shepherds, were an effusion of popular piety—and a rebellion against the grim impositions of church hierarchy throughout Germany and, later, England. A good carol, said the great musicologist Percy Deamer, "was witness to the spirit of a more spontaneous and undoubting faith." The effusions were organic, growing from the bottom up, and like the Gospels themselves, filled with metaphors taken from field and hearth:

The tree of life my soul hath seen
Laden with fruit and always green
The trees of nature fruitless be
Compared with Christ the apple tree.

Deamer traced the word "carol" back through old French to the Greek word for "an encircling dance." Movement and dynamism and joy were the essential attributes, inseparable from the religious meaning. The message of Christmas was the Christian message, too: the Light coming into the world and the darkness proving powerless against it. What's not to celebrate? Why not dance?

"To take life"—and hence Christmas—"with real seriousness is to take it joyfully," Deamer went on. "For seriousness is only sad when it is superficial: the carol is thus nearer to the truth because it is jolly." The opposite isn't necessarily true, by the way. "All I Want for Christmas Is You" might be described as jolly; no one would describe it as serious. "Joy to the World," on the other hand, is both. A Christmas carol is meant to liberate us from phony seriousness and phony good cheer.

In the past that lesson has often been lost, at times even more thoroughly than in our own day—a reminder that should cheer us up, if you'll forgive the expression. The serious joy, or the joyful seriousness, of Christmas is offensive to the grim Christian. When Oliver Cromwell's Puritans seized power from a pious English king, one of their first official acts was to ban Christmas observances of any kind. A pamphleteering divine named Hezekiah Woodward explained the reasoning.

Christmas Day, he wrote, is "the old Heathen's Feasting Day, in honor of Saturn their Idol God, the Papist's Massing Day, the Profane Man's Ranting Day, the Superstitious Man's Idol Day, the Multitude's Idle Day, Satan's Working Day, the True Christian Man's Fasting Day." With all that competition, the best option for a "True Christian Man" was to hunker down on Christmas Eve, forswear meat and drink, and wait for December 26. Singing—particularly singing songs of joy—was out of the question. "We are persuaded, no one thing more hinderest the Gospel work all the yearlong, than doth the observation of that Idol Day once in a year." Imagine what they would have done with Mariah Carey!

"Yule tide is fool tide," went the Puritans' dismissive slogan (which was truer than the Puritans knew, probably, if you give "fool" the meaning St. Paul gave it when he told us to be "fools for Christ's sake"). And once in a while, at Christmas, buried in tinsel and credit card receipts, a practicing Christian might be tempted to agree. It's a familiar human paradox that the phony good cheer of secular Christmas increases even as the genuine joy of Christmas recedes; the music of the holiday grows more insistent and frenetic even as it moves further away from its origin in true delight. The question is why a secular culture bothers to write and sing and play Christmas music at all.

G. K. Chesterton wondered the same thing. How does music sprung from the loam of Christian observance survive the banalities of the post-Christian age? One answer—Chesterton's answer—is that we don't live in a post-Christian age after all, not really. More to the point, it's impossible to live in a post-Christian age. Some things can't be undone, and chief among them is the Light that was lit the first Christmas morning, while choirs of angels sang above. It can be ridiculed and parodied, satirized and scoffed at, obscured and sentimentalized, but it won't be extinguished. So even a secular age continues to go through the motions, singing the same songs, sometimes the old songs, without quite knowing why.

"The great majority," Chesterton wrote, "will go on observing forms that cannot be explained; they will keep Christmas with Christmas gifts and Christmas benedictions; they will continue to do it; and suddenly one day they will wake up and discover why."

Who knows when or how? But every now and then an image pops to mind when I listen to my all-Christmas radio station. I like to think of a sophisticated fellow, impatient with religion and educated in the contemporary manner, walking, let's say, past a church in a December twilight, maybe musing about Mariah's snowsuit or wondering how Grandma got run over, and then perhaps he will linger for a moment and sneak a peek at the manger scene, throw a glance into the crib, and hear the strains of the carol from within: *Mild, He lays His glory by, / born that man no more may die.* And suddenly he will wake up and discover why.

"Wait a minute!" he will say. "All I want for Christmas is You!" ♦

Playing to Our Strengths

A visit to an Ohio-class submarine redesigned for counterterrorism

BY ANN MARLOWE

Key West

It's one thing to read debates about Navy budget decisions and the aging of our submarine fleet, and quite another to visit one of our 71 submarines and see what the fuss is about. This November, I spent 24 hours on the USS *Georgia*—one of four *Ohio*-class subs redesigned in 2004 for counterterrorism, with Tomahawk cruise missiles replacing nuclear warheads and some missile silos retrofitted as lockout chambers to allow Navy SEALs to exit in combat zones. I came away with a profound respect for the submarine culture.

Many of my expectations were wrong. Happily, I didn't feel claustrophobic for a minute. In fact, being on the 560-foot-long *Georgia* was blissful compared with *getting* on, which involved a rough trip of about an hour off Key West on a "rigid inflatable boat" out to the surfaced sub, then a short scramble up a well-worn rope-and-wood ladder. Topside, you've got 18,750 metric tons beneath you, and it feels very stable indeed.

The USS Georgia *arrives at Souda Bay on the Greek island of Crete.*

U.S. NAVY / MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST 3RD CLASS JOHN MARTINEZ

Public affairs officer Lieutenant Lily Hinz (who accompanied me on my visit) and I descended from topside through a hatchway about 20 feet down a narrow fixed metal ladder in what's called the port lockout chamber (another former missile silo). We were led to our bunkroom: very compact, but not much tighter than a sleeping compartment on a train. Down the hall was the "head" with two stalls and a shower; a sign on the door could be shifted from "Male" to "Female." The ceilings hold a jungle of wires, cables, and pipes, but the *Georgia*'s faux wood paneling and speckled tan linoleum tiles reflect its 1979 vintage.

Then we climbed up a longer internal ladder to the cockpit, where the officer of the deck leads the ship when on the surface. This is part of the bridge—the area that includes the *Ohio*-class sub's two periscopes, one visual and one digital. Captain David Adams and Lt. J.G. Jake Christianson were standing on the top, on what's called the sail, tethered to the periscope tower. A junior officer, Ensign Laura Wainikainen, was getting certified for a "man overboard" recovery. Ensign Wainikainen would be directing the crew in the control room below to stop the submarine and reverse course to enable recovery of the "man" (a foil-covered box). This was accomplished in about 15 minutes in rough seas.

I was able to visit the *Georgia* because she was certifying for combat readiness, and boats were going out to her almost daily, bringing SEALs and others involved in training. I saw some drills that did look claustrophobic: A group of SEAL divers spent hours in a lockout chamber and then entered a tiny sub, called a SEAL delivery vehicle (SDV), that was playing damaged. The SDV holds six divers, submerged in water, breathing from air tanks. Again, the crew had to turn the *Georgia* abruptly to find and lasso the SDV.

Ohio-class subs are facing mass retirement now, just as military budgets are under pressure. Their estimated useful life has been extended 10 years, to 40 years, because the Navy's ship-building budget is $17 billion a year, and building one *Ohio*-class sub is estimated to cost $7 billion.

This sounds ridiculous, until you see what a complex, profoundly unnatural ecosystem such a sub is. To put the cost in perspective, the $25 billion the United States spent training and equipping Iraqi troops who ran away from the fight would have bought three new *Ohio*-class submarines. The argument can be made that putting more of

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our military budget into technology and less into training dubious foreign fighters is a vote not only for American industrial might and innovation but for American military culture. In fact, the Navy is arguing for a special budget just for the *Ohio*-class replacements.

Adams points out that the more reluctant the United States is to commit boots on the ground, the more sense it makes to rely on precision-guided missiles and on special forces delivered from stealthy platforms like the retrofitted *Ohio*-class subs. The *Georgia*'s sister ship, the *Florida*, fired more than 100 Tomahawks on March 19, 2011, at the start of Operation Odyssey Dawn in Libya. These took down some of Qaddafi's air defenses.

From left, lieutenants Alex Nester, Arianna Pybus, and Emma McCarthy in the control room of the Georgia

U.S. NAVY / CAPTAIN DAVID A. ADAMS

"Our advantage is massive underseas," Adams says. "We can take on anyone, though China has a lot of good subs and is gaining. Why not play to our strengths?"

The *Georgia* will be deploying in the general direction of the Middle East this spring, relieving the *Ohio*-class USS *Florida*, with which she rotates deployments, and she could well be used to support U.S. operations against the Islamic State.

Besides us, only the United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, and India have nuclear-powered submarines. Our new nuclear submarines don't have to refuel during their estimated life of 30 years; conventional diesel-and-battery-powered submarines must keep returning to the surface for oxygen, limiting their ability to stay at depths where they can lurk undetected.

Submarines are zero-tolerance-for-error workspaces. As Adams put it, "The people are the platform. One man can kill all of us here by making a mistake." (The United States hasn't lost a submarine since 1968, when the USS *Scorpion* suddenly disappeared in the Atlantic under circumstances that remain unclear.)

So it makes sense that submariners are a tiny elite, just 6 percent of the Navy, 20,500 people in all including 2,500 officers. You have to be in the top half of your Annapolis class to apply for billets on submarines or nuclear surface ships, that is, aircraft carriers. You also must be interviewed in person by the top sub officer, a four-star admiral. There's no other service where this is the case.

After commissioning, whether through Annapolis, ROTC, or Officer Candidate School, all officers go through six months of Naval Nuclear Power School and Naval Nuclear Prototype School to learn to run the nuclear reactors, then a three-month Submarine Officer Basic Course in Groton, Connecticut, to learn to drive the ship. So they have 15 months of graduate school before they even deploy on a sub.

Ohio-class subs have two separate 160-person crews, "blue" and "gold," which spell each other so that the sub can spend as much time as possible deployed. The crew I met, the blue crew, will leave the *Georgia* in early December and return to Kings Bay, Georgia—the home port of the *Georgia* and *Florida*—for training, while the gold crew takes the sub to its next deployment, usually about six months. After that, the blue crew will take over again. Since the *Florida* can't come home until the *Georgia* relieves it, pressure was on the *Georgia* blue crew to certify as combat-ready as soon as possible.

Unlike the Army's brigade combat teams, where enlisted personnel, NCOs, and officers deploy as a unit, submarine officers rotate on and off (in groups) every six months or so, while the enlisted sailors and chief petty officers ("chiefs") may remain attached to the same submarine for five or six years. Sub officers serve three years on a submarine, then two to three years off, then three years on. This puts a premium on a unified culture throughout the submarine service, so that everyone can quickly find his or her place—and it attracts the kind of people who have no sharp edges.

Every submariner I interviewed on the *Georgia* said that the main reason he or she applied for the submarine service was the caliber of people.

Lieutenant Emma McCarthy, a 2011 Naval Academy grad and the *Georgia*'s strike officer, has been on the *Georgia* for three years.

"[Submariners] held themselves to a very high standard," she said. "For me it was either Marine Corps or submarines, and in 2010 the first group of women were authorized to be on submarines. I had an engineering degree, which helps." She'd only spent one day on a submarine when she made her career choice, but it turned out to be a good fit: McCarthy has won one of four scholarships

for graduate study awarded to submarine officers annually and plans to use it to get an MBA.

As McCarthy took me around, I realized that life aboard is relentlessly disciplined and focused. Copies of *Travel + Leisure* and *Popular Mechanics* in the head and two enlisted sailors watching a boxing video for a few minutes in the evening were about it for amusement. I got glimpses of the bunkrooms of the female officers, and they were almost devoid of personal decorative touches, unlike the Army officer tents I'd seen in Afghanistan.

The *Georgia* is also as close to a social-media-free zone as one finds these days. Underway, subs get communications from shore only every 12 hours. At periscope depth—about 80 feet—the captain can send and receive email, slowly, but when I was on the *Georgia* it was usually around 200 feet under the surface. (It has an unclassified depth limit of 800 feet.)

So the young people—average age 23—who run the *Georgia* spend their spare time working their way through loose leaf binder paper manuals explaining every aspect of the operation of a 560-foot-long traveling nuclear reactor carrying up to 154 3,000-pound, 20-foot-long Tomahawk missiles as well as a reverse-osmosis water treatment plant.

The *Georgia* has four levels and three compartments (engine room, missile compartment or MC, and forward compartment or FC), but you can't simply walk all the way up or down on one set of ladders or stairs, nor can you walk all the way through any level from bow to stern. This is to prevent fire or flood from spreading. The control room is on the top level, 1L, while the torpedos are on the bottom level, forward compartment, FC4L. Enlisted men bunk in MC3L, and some visiting officers are housed there. Enlisted mess is on FC3L. The captain and second in command bunk on FC2L, as do the female officers.

Young officers begin working in the engine room, where standing watch means monitoring machinery. I wasn't allowed to visit the engine room, which includes the nuclear reactor, but I did get to see the Tomahawk silos in the missile compartment in the center of the sub, with well-maintained pieces of aerobic exercise equipment and weight stations nestled among them. Along the walls of the missile compartment are the enlisted bunkrooms.

Six of the *Georgia*'s 19 officers are women, and like other *Ohio*-class subs she will receive her first female enlisted sailors in a year or two. The presence of women on the *Georgia* seems a nonissue, though there was a flurry of attention when we became the first nation to allow women to serve on nuclear submarines in 2011. The reason, Captain Adams points out, wasn't to be politically correct, but to deepen the talent pool for this very selective service. To a woman, the six said they had not met with any hostility on the *Georgia*, though a couple mentioned instructors at the Naval Academy who opposed women's presence on submarines. Navy women are currently 17 percent of active-duty officers and 18 percent of enlisted. All new ships are built for habitation by both sexes.

While the drills were taking place, most of the officers, even those who were not on watch, converged on the compact control room to follow the action. It takes two crew members just to adjust the ballast, allowing the submarine to go up and down or maintain a level position. Another group steers—this involves monitoring lots of screens. One, a sonar picture of the *Georgia*'s (and nearby ships' or large fishes') passage through the underwater landscape over time, eluded my efforts at understanding. Passive sonar (listening) is the main way the *Georgia* makes her way around without bumping into the sea floor or surface ships.

A Navy diver and member of SEAL Delivery Team 2 train outside the USS Florida*, twin sister of the* Georgia.

U.S. NAVY / SENIOR CHIEF PETTY OFFICER ANDREW MCKASKLE

I wanted more time to learn more; basic questions were occurring to me just as it was time to leave the ship. (Who cleans the heads? Answer: everyone, including officers. This is called Field Day. Does the crew ever get to go swimming? Answer: Yes, occasionally when the sub is on the surface the captain orders a "swim call," and people jump off and climb back up on ladders. How does the *Georgia* get rid of trash? Answer: They shoot it into the sea, except plastics, which are recycled. Do submariners still adhere to the traditional naval sleep schedule of 6 hours on watch, 12 hours off, where you rotate your sleep times? Answer: No, the Navy recently moved to a watch schedule where each man goes to sleep around the same time every night, though there are still three different watches.)

I left wishing more people had the chance to visit a submarine. A complex, thriving system like the *Georgia* inspires respect not just for the Navy but for American culture, with its rigorous standards, openness to newcomers, and commitment to teamwork. ♦

GETTY / DIANA WALKER

Brent Scowcroft, George Bush, John Sununu, Dan Quayle (1989)

Bush the Elder

A partisan's perspective on a statesman's career. BY THOMAS J. DUESTERBERG

This massive new biography of George H.W. Bush serves as both a portrait of the man and a sort of quasi-confessional for him. Bush is a decidedly reticent man about his own accomplishments, which Meacham ascribes to his traditional Yankee upbringing; but he allowed the author unfettered access to his diaries, submitted to countless hours of frank interviews, and encouraged his family and associates to open up to Meacham. What emerges is an often-moving life story of what the *New York Times* once called a "serious, able and likable man," and a sweeping summary of his accomplishments as a dedicated and selfless public servant. What is less convincing is Meacham's analysis and presentation of the political context in which Bush operated and which, ultimately, will largely define his place in history.

Thomas J. Duesterberg was assistant secretary of commerce for international economic policy in the George H.W. Bush administration.

Destiny and Power
The American Odyssey of George Herbert Walker Bush
by Jon Meacham
Random House, 864 pp., $35

Jon Meacham is one of the most assiduous practitioners of popular history in the United States, along with a pantheon of others who appear on the back cover to praise this work: David McCullough, Michael Beschloss, Doris Kearns Goodwin. In a certain sense, they perform a service in writing compelling narratives about American (sometimes more global) history and fill a vacuum left by academic historians. Too often the latter delve into narrow and politically correct arenas of the past, of little interest to the general reader or student.

The newer breed of popular historians are more straightforward in their approach, and reach huge audiences which otherwise would be left to wonder what happened to the story of American democracy and leadership in the world, economic growth and innovation, and related themes. In contrast to France or Great Britain, where trained historians familiar with the vast array of learning on specific periods—Fernand Braudel,

Martin Gilbert, Robert Skidelsky, Niall Ferguson—turn to popular history, few professional scholars in America can escape from their ideological blinders to reach a larger audience.

Sometimes, however, what is gained in clarity from the new historians is lost in rigor. Meacham has skillfully exploited the huge trove of records modern technology (and, let's face it, the vanity of political actors) now affords historians. The personal records, diaries, oral histories, public records, and interviews used by Meacham offer an opportunity for understanding that historians of, say, Napoleon or George Washington can only dream about. Meacham uses 84 archives, interviews with 106 relevant actors, and 170 pages of notes.

Meacham's overarching focus is on the family background that so influenced the character formation of George Bush, and how the resulting competitiveness, combined with modesty and good judgment, created the measured man who mastered both business and politics. The "destiny" of Meacham's Bush is, indeed, his character as an exemplary product of the Eastern establishment culture, born in business success for many generations and refined through a form of noblesse oblige that was drilled into him from an early age. So much does Meacham insist on this as the driving force in Bush's life that it becomes a sort of genealogical determinism. The competitive spirit and sense of duty and fair play, he argues, "never could end, except at the summit of American life: either great riches in business, or, in politics, with the Presidency."

Such formation is, perhaps, a necessary condition for reaching the pinnacle, but hardly sufficient. The drive, intelligence, and judgment of Bush comprise the leitmotif for the narrative of his dazzling series of successes that are nicely captured by Meacham's strong and unaffected prose. And these characteristics resulted in the crowning achievements of his political life: the deft management of the fall of the Soviet empire and the Kuwaiti crisis of 1990-91.

Meacham's portrait of Bush is enriched by copious excerpts from his diaries and by personal revelations, especially in exploring his rich and caring family and social life. But character and drive cannot explain all the successes along the way, and Meacham's account of the transitional points in Bush's life—such as the move to Texas, and his success in national electoral politics after two defeats as a Senate candidate—are not especially persuasive.

Meacham, like most contemporary popular historians, tends to underestimate and misunderstand some of the larger forces in the political world in which Bush operated, whose currents help explain his rise to power. The best examples come from Meacham's abbreviated account of the 1980 presidential election and the Reagan presidency. While we get a full account of the "inside" politics that led to Bush's selection as Reagan's running mate, the contours of the political battleground, and the policies of Ronald Reagan, are viewed from a decidedly unsympathetic and formulaic viewpoint, which follows the consensus, left-of-center perspective.

Not once does the phrase "misery index," or some sustained statistical analysis of the dismal state of the economy in the late Carter years, appear in Meacham's narrative. He dismisses supply-side economics largely as a failure because of the rise in federal deficits during the Reagan years, with no reference to the economic resurgence that was, at least partly, a result of Reagan's policies.

Nor does Meacham explore the costly military build-up of those years (supported by a broad spectrum of political actors), prompted by Soviet adventurism and Iranian terrorism, or the difficulties of reaching consensus on spending with a divided Congress. These problems certainly contributed to the budget gridlock, which, Meacham concludes, could only be addressed by Bush's breaking of his "read-my-lips" pledge on taxes. Meacham also fails to mention Reagan's boldest attempt at arms control, at the Reykjavik summit. George Bush's ascent to the presidency owed much to the success of the economic and foreign policies of the Reagan years, which of course he loyally supported.

Meacham's project to establish the historical record is evident, as well, in his treatment of Newt Gingrich and the conservative political movement that emerged in the 1970s: "By 1979-80," he writes, "the movement conservatives were driven by God, Mammon, and an absolutist view that American strategy toward the Soviet Union should be rollback, not détente." He blames the rise of uncompromising, "ugly" partisanship in American politics squarely, and exclusively, on the right, especially on Newt Gingrich. Meacham illustrates the transition from the collegial Congress of the 1960s (in which Bush served) with the downfall of the venal and corrupt speaker Jim Wright. No mention is made of Sen. Edward Kennedy's brutal personal attack on Judge Robert Bork when Bork was nominated to the Supreme Court.

Meacham's ultimate judgment of Bush's record rightly emphasizes his deft foreign policy in guiding the world to a safe transition from the Cold War, and in standing up to Saddam Hussein. But his view of Bush as a counterweight to conservatism—"the forty-first President represented the twilight of a tradition of public service in America—a tradition embodied by FDR, by Eisenhower, and by George H.W. Bush"—is inconsistent with what Bush himself always expressed. This probably explains Meacham's lengthy discussion of Bush's life after his 1992 reelection defeat, where the focus is on well-publicized assertions about the influence of Bush's longtime rival Donald Rumsfeld, and Dick Cheney, on the presidency of George W. Bush.

The message is obvious: a partisan narrative about the Republican party's gallop toward supply-side economics and hardline foreign policies since the middle way of George H.W. Bush. But of course, Bush himself is more "conservative," as he records in his diaries, than Jon Meacham would like to believe—and for the Bush story to be fully told, conservatives will have to do the same hard work Meacham has done in mining the rich trove of records now available and framing the narrative for future generations. ♦

B&A

Updike in Verse

Has justice been done to a lifetime of poetry?

BY JOSEPH BOTTUM

No, this is a disappointment. To read the 132 poems chosen by this volume's editor, Christopher Carduff, is to realize that John Updike is not a poet well served by the popular impulse that reduces a large body of work to a greatest-hits anthology.

Of course, there was a time when critics claimed that Updike wasn't much of a poet at all, his poems dismissed as the effluence of a literary talent that properly manifested itself only in the prose of his novels and short stories. Updike himself once described his verse as his "oeuvre's beloved waifs," and X.J. Kennedy explained that the novelist writing poetry was "like some designer of Explorer rockets who hasn't enough to do, in his spare time touching off displays of Roman candles."

Those days are gone, for the most part. It's hard to find a critic willing anymore to wave off Updike's poetic work. The man was a major literary figure, after all, who worked for more than 50 years at his poetic craft. The first book he published, *The Carpentered Hen and Other Tame Creatures* (1958), was poetry, as was his last, the posthumous *Endpoint* (2009). In all, he wrote 8 collections of verse—to go along with his 21 novels, 4 children's books, 18 short story collections, and 12 nonfiction books. (Was there ever a more productive writer working at his level?)

The turning point in the critical reception of Updike's poetry seems to have come with the publication of his *Collected Poems* in 1993. At that point, he had six full volumes of poetry—both his more seriously toned work

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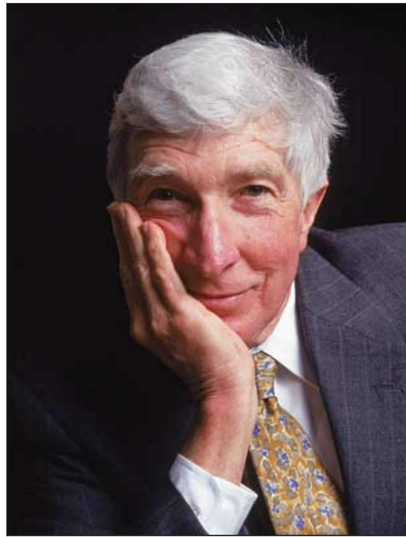

GETTY / FRANK CAPRI

Selected Poems
by John Updike
edited by Christopher Carduff
Knopf, 320 pp., $30

and his light verse—and the bulk of it proved too much to ignore. The key word there is *bulk*. In *Selected Poems*, Carduff had not only the *Collected Poems* to work with, but also the two subsequent volumes of poetry Updike wrote before his death in 2009.

Carduff's selections are not unreasonable. The better-known, sometimes-anthologized poems are all here: "Ex-Basketball Player," "Telephone Poles," "Hoeing," "Saying Goodbye to Very Young Children." And he covers the breadth of Updike's career, from the fascinated observer of the world in *The Carpentered Hen* through the self-conscious author of *Endpoint*, all too aware of his rapidly descending death.

What's wrong with *Selected Poems* is the project itself. In his *Collected Poems*, Updike sharply distinguished what he called his "light verse" from what he called his "poems," and Carduff honors the distinction by excluding from this selections all of Updike's light verse, together with the poet's "verse for children, poems in translation, found poems, and lines written for family birthdays." Carduff's task was undoubtedly made easier by a principle that refuses even to consider a considerable body of work, but it proves a mistake: Updike was often at his best—as both a craftsman and a lively, interesting intellect—in his light and comic verse.

Even within the confines of what the author designated as "real poems," a selection hides the best effect of his work. As a poet, Updike was a singles hitter. He was the Rod Carew of verse, not the Dave Kingman. Video highlights of their baseball careers would make Kingman look better than he was (all those towering home runs—but edited out, all the accompanying strikeouts). And it would make Carew look far worse than he was (boring base hit after boring base hit, unable to convey that at the end of the season he would lead the league). Even without his light verse, we need Updike whole to appreciate what his poetry achieves.

Partly that's because of the wry, quiet voice that hides from the reader even the cleverness of its sometimes startlingly brilliant sound effects. Gavin Ewart once wrote that Updike's poetic talent lay in his power "to make the ordinary seem strange," and the reader can appreciate Ewart's point just from the titles of such Updike poems as "Replacing Sash Cords" and "The Beautiful Bowel Movement."

And yet, even more than making the ordinary world seem strange, Updike has a curious power, when his poetry is read as a whole, to make language itself feel peculiar and out of kilter. The sheer ordinariness of his diction, phrasings, and rhythms masks the extraordinary weirdness of words that his poetry contains. In one of his many poems about golf, he laughs at the play of golfing words: *When winter's glaze is lifted from the greens, / And cups are freshly cut, and birdies sing*. In the careful sentimentality of "Dog's Death," he makes the final words of an

ordinary phrase, *Good dog*, an almost unbearable plaint. And in "Requiem," one of his final poems, he backs away from death in irony—only to have the language itself smash back at him:

> *It came to me the other day:*
> *Were I to die, no one would say,*
> *"Oh, what a shame! So young, so full*
> *Of promise—depths unplumbable!"*
>
> *Instead, a shrug and tearless eyes*
> *Will greet my overdue demise;*
> *The wide response will be, I know,*
> *"I thought he died a while ago."*
>
> *For life's a shabby subterfuge,*
> *And death is real, and dark, and huge.*
> *The shock of it will register*
> *Nowhere but where it will occur.*

Are any of these poems from John Updike inescapable monuments, towering in the art of English verse—permanent hits permanently playing on the oldies stations of freshman poetry anthologies? Probably not. Even a poem as good as, say, "Seven Stanzas at Easter" is more a triple than a home run. But put together a career with enough triples, plenty of doubles, and a whole lot of singles, and you have a life's work that looms in the imagination, larger and better the more that readers come to know it. ♦

Newark's Lesson

How reform can help everyone except the students.

BY MAX EDEN

The Prize
Who's in Charge of America's Schools?
by Dale Russakoff
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 256 pp., $27

Newark, New Jersey, may have been an idyllic American pastoral in the days of Philip Roth's youth, but you wouldn't want to be a kid there in this century. Drugs, gangs, and the 70 percent single-motherhood rate aside, education had become ancillary to the purpose of Newark public schools. Described by one observer as "a candy store that's a front for a gambling operation," the money that came with control of the schools was the "prize" that urban Democrats fought to possess.

Mayor Cory Booker promised to be a new breed of Democrat and saw in the Newark schools a new kind of prize: a laboratory to test and prove the promise of radical education reform. Republican governor Chris Christie was eager to shake up the status quo and challenge the teachers' union. Booker pitched Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg that, with $100 million, they "could flip a whole city!" In September 2010, the troika appeared on Oprah Winfrey's television show to present and accept the gift.

For education reformers convinced that poverty could be solved given the will and the money, it was a dream come true. With Booker as mayor, the schools under Christie's stewardship, and Zuckerberg's money in hand, reformers could bring in hard-charging leaders to reorganize the district, renegotiate a "game-changing" teacher contract to allow principals to hire, fire, and pay based on merit, and launch new charter schools, funded by the state but run by private organizations.

Dale Russakoff, a veteran education reporter, was given a front-row seat to it all, and *The Prize* is her balanced and incisive chronicle of how the reformers' dreams turned into a political nightmare. Booker insisted publicly that he'd pursue "bottom-up" reforms, but actually relied exclusively on thousand-dollar-a-day consultants. When the consultants' plans were leaked, public opposition flared, as much for the process as the substance. Reactionary critics often call reformers "neo-colonialists," and to Newark residents, this all seemed like a plot by rich white outsiders to run their schools and make a profit.

Hopes for a game-changing teacher contract were quickly dashed, as reformers learned that teacher tenure protections were enshrined in state law. New, high-quality charter schools were launched, but Booker had no plan for the public schools as the students left for charters and money followed them. He blithely assumed that they were "going to flower, just like the cherry blossoms in Branch Brook Park." Inevitably, public schools had to be closed, sparking harsh political backlash. Booker was largely absent from the day-to-day management, yet he was omnipresent on Twitter and television, earning the nickname "Mayor Hollywood." He could captivate an audience, but when it came to running a city, one city hall aide reflected, "Everybody who comes to work here arrives with a hard-on or a crush, and then at some point you say, 'WTF?'"

At a Newark public school board meeting, six proposals to open specialized schools were voted down to a crowd chanting "Cory fails! Cory fails!" But New Jersey's commissioner of education, Chris Cerf, overruled the board's decision, telling Russakoff: "I can't have any more talks about 'respecting the community.' ... They're literally not entitled, not entitled to have their voice taken seriously. At the end of the day, I have to do what's right."

Condescending, neocolonialist, even —but at least Cerf is honest. Listening to his plans, a former Newark school board member objected, "I get nervous when we're talking about schoolchildren and you say, 'Change is going to have casualties.' I don't want to take risks with children." But Cerf and his colleagues barreled ahead.

Surveying the path left in their wake, Russakoff faults the reformers for not taking the time to understand the needs

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of the community and concludes that, five years on, "there was at least as much rancor as reform." It's a depressing diagnosis, but it may be a bit too sanguine to imply that the reforms could have been received without rancor.

Even if Cory Booker were the world's greatest mayor rather than a showboating schlemiel, all reform runs risks. No matter how many casualties are claimed by the status quo, parents will always be risk averse. Any meaningful school reform will be hotly contested, especially when it is directed by outsiders, involves closing down schools, and is opposed by a powerful and entrenched teachers' union. And it's not just the unions holding back change, as one mother said at a school board meeting:

> In the inner city, we're of the mentality that the government should take care of us, and when they don't, we yell and get mad and go home and think we've done our job.

Reformers often wave away the import of parental neglect and assume that they can fix poverty through improving schools. That may be a skewed social perspective; but Russakoff's reporting offers anecdotal evidence that good schools *can* actually change parents. Princess Williams, the teacher-heroine of *The Prize*, at first refused to abandon her public school for a charter. Armed with extra money from the reforms, she spearheaded a school improvement effort centered on engaging with parents and offering wrap-around services for families. Her successes bringing parents in and helping them help their children were truly inspiring. But she grew frustrated with the district's inflexibility and finally decided to leave for a charter school. Williams concluded that charters were simply better able to allocate resources where they're needed.

She's right. Newark public schools spend $19,650 per pupil, but only $9,604 reaches the classroom. Charters spend $16,400, but $12,664 reaches the classroom. Students in Newark charter schools learn roughly twice as much in a year as kids in public school. After all the dust settles, the charter schools launched with Zuckerberg's money will be left standing: By 2017, 10,000 children who would have been in public schools will be enrolled in charters.

Zuckerberg, apparently chastened by his experience in Newark, recently announced plans for $120 million in grants to high-poverty communities in San Francisco for programs that will work with communities rather than try to reform systems. Russakoff, though fair and balanced throughout, seems to endorse his decision.

His money will likely do good there, and will certainly not create a public-relations disaster. But it's far from clear that he learned the right lesson. Philanthropic money is ultimately a bucket tossed into the sea. Sustainable change will help schools spend public money better. For all of the reformers' dashed dreams, the one thing Mark Zuckerberg's money certainly accomplished was a leveraged buy-out to grow the charter sector in Newark and shrink the public school district. The right lesson might be to focus less on top-down efforts to fix the public system and more on starting new and better schools.

That might not flatter the sensibilities of technocratic reformers, convinced they can fix everything and help everyone, but it could mitigate the rancor. Still, so long as we live in a world of scarce resources, charters will cause casualties and the fight will turn ugly. But just because that approach is ugly doesn't mean there is a prettier one: Decades of failing urban school districts suggests that there's not. It would be a shame if the example of Newark and the fear of epithets dissuaded future philanthropists from making more bids at the prize. ♦

Burning Bridge

When Turkey cleansed its lands of Christians.

BY THOMAS JOHNSON

The Great Fire
One American's Mission to Rescue Victims of the 20th Century's First Genocide
by Lou Ureneck
Ecco, 512 pp., $28.99

Though the release of *The Great Fire* was probably timed to coincide with the hundredth anniversary of the Armenian genocide, this scholarly yet engaging account is concerned with the September 1922 burning of Smyrna, following its occupation by the Turkish nationalist army, and the mass slaughter of between 10,000 and 100,000 Christian Greeks and Armenians.

Lou Ureneck, who teaches journalism at Boston University, laments that "the story of Smyrna . . . seems to have left no strong impression on the world's collective memory," arguing that it "contains lessons about current-day conflicts between the West and Islam; about oil diplomacy; about the uneasy balance between national strategic interests and advocacy of human rights," while also being "a surprising tale of individual men and women—of ambition and brutality, bumbling statecraft, extraordinary military and political leadership, and unlikely heroism."

His thesis sets our expectations high, and to his credit, Ureneck largely manages to give each of these features of the Smyrna atrocity its due. One of his strengths as a storyteller is the skill to provide detailed portraits of Smyrna's numerous victims, perpetrators, bureaucratic abettors, and ordinary saviors in a manner that elicits our sympathies—or antipathies. His divergent descriptions of George Horton, the American consul in Smyrna, and

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Greek and Armenian refugees flee the burning city of Smyrna (1922).

AP / BETTMANN / CORBIS

of Mark Bristol, the U.S. high commissioner to the Ottoman Empire, leave us in no doubt about what to think when the two come into conflict over American intervention. Horton is described as making "a formal first impression, but ... actually a sociable old gentleman, a little florid in his language"—a vestige of his past as a scholar of classical poetry—who sagely predicts "a disaster [in Smyrna] from the start." Bristol, by contrast, is described as someone who "liked to think of himself [as] firm, but fair ... as [a] man who dealt in facts." The focus on Bristol's opinion of his own character prepares us for the revelation that he is actually a "blustering" bully who lacks professional objectivity—a fault that stems from his prejudice against Greeks and Armenians and affinity with the Turkish nationalist movement.

But Ureneck is also committed to understanding figures involved in the crisis and its aftermath who cannot be so easily categorized. Captain Arthur J. Hepburn, the naval chief of staff at Constantinople, who is tasked by Bristol with the purposefully restrictive mission of protecting American lives and property in Smyrna, finds himself "strugg[ling] with his conscience" when given the opportunity to support "a combined American-Allied rescue effort" for thousands of imperiled Greeks and Armenians in Smyrna "in defiance of the Turkish authorities." Captain Hepburn is pragmatic insofar as he "had no intention of destroying his career to take a chance on saving refugees," but altruistic enough to direct a subordinate to attempt to persuade a French general to support a British plan of evacuation of the persecuted minorities.

Where Ureneck demonstrates how Hepburn's careful professionalism constricts his ability to act, he speculates that the professional shortcomings of Lieutenant Commander J.B. Rhodes might have indirectly abetted humanitarian efforts. The "laxity and sometimes drunkenness" that had blighted Rhodes's naval career prior to Smyrna, he writes, may have made him more willing than Hepburn to exceed the narrow scope of Bristol's directive. Meanwhile, another naval officer, Lieutenant Commander Halsey Powell, is shown in direct contrast to Hepburn. Powell is a figure whose status as "a genuine war hero ... [gave him] the confidence to operate from a sense of right and wrong without the blurring considerations of rank or career," using his position in the naval hierarchy to abet the humanitarian and evacuation efforts of Reverend Asa K. Jennings.

Jennings, a Methodist missionary who worked at the YMCA in Smyrna during the crisis, is the main protagonist here: He sets up and oversees a series of safe houses for Armenian and Greek refugees, mostly women and children, in abandoned mansions along the waterfront. Later, he travels to Mytilene and persuades high-ranking Greek naval officers and the Greek prime minister to help him enlist merchant ships to travel to Smyrna in flotillas, under Jennings's command. Jennings is simultaneously "reassuring and endearing" in his diminutive stature and superhumanly heroic in his perseverance.

One of the benefits of the author's focus on Jennings is the central thread he provides to follow a narrative that encompasses myriad major players. Structurally, *The Great Fire* can be confusing, spreading its discussion of personal backgrounds over multiple chapters. A discussion of the oil industry's possible influence on the Harding administration is also bifurcated across two chapters placed more than a hundred pages apart. But given the scope of the atrocity that was Smyrna, these minor defects are more than forgivable. This is a comprehensive yet intimate work of scholarship, reminding readers of a horrific moment in modern history now largely forgotten. ♦

B&A

Gem of the Oceans

A glorious past does not guarantee a glorious future.

BY ALEXANDER B. GRAY

The U.S. Navy
A Concise History
by Craig L. Symonds
Oxford, 152 pp., $18.95

The United States Navy, like its sister services, is first and foremost a war-fighting organization. Its reason for being, boiled down beyond recent recruiting slogans touting it as "a global force for good" or highlighting the Navy's important work in disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, is to locate, engage, and defeat the nation's enemies. It is from this imperative that everything else the Navy does must follow.

Understandably, any account of America's Navy will thus center around naval warfare and the epic battles that define its 240-year history. From the romantic frigate duels of the War of 1812, to the iconic encounter of the *Monitor* and the *Merrimack* in the Civil War, to legendary World War II engagements such as Midway, the Coral Sea, and Leyte Gulf, the Navy's feats of derring-do fill volumes.

Craig L. Symonds, one of our most distinguished naval historians, has tried a somewhat different tack in this slim and aptly named "concise history." While it does not neglect the Navy's fighting feats, it is emphatically not a battle history. The Battle of Midway, one of the most significant naval encounters in history and the turning point of the Pacific war, merits less than one full page. The naval war in Vietnam, one of the most difficult and frustrating campaigns in the Navy's history, is covered in just a few paragraphs.

Instead, Symonds concerns himself with naval policy and strategy, peering down from the highest level to tell the story of the Navy's (and America's) rise to "Great Power" status. If Symonds relegates the clashes of ships and airplanes to a few sentences, he is eloquent and incisive on the strategy, resources, and personnel decisions that allowed the Navy to achieve its many victories.

Beginning with the rebellious colonies' slapdash efforts to counter Great Britain's overwhelming predominance at sea during the revolution, Symonds shows how the early history of the Navy was characterized by a militia mentality whereby the Navy was expanded rapidly in wartime but allowed to hollow out as soon as peace arrived. From 1775 until the late 19th century, the Navy mostly mirrored American foreign policy: an inward-looking nation focused on economic expansion and internal divisions but capable of impressive martial prowess when roused to action.

Inevitably, this hedgehog's approach had considerable drawbacks, leaving the Navy almost invariably unprepared at the outset of conflict. Thomas Jefferson's antipathy toward standing armies and navies resulted in the mass construction of small, coastal defense gunboats—which proved useless against the British in 1812. Our chronic unpreparedness made Abraham Lincoln's 1861 declaration of a blockade against the Confederacy a source of amusement in European capitals; only an unprecedented wartime buildup resulted in a Navy capable of assisting the ultimate Union victory. Even after Theodore Roosevelt—a believer in Alfred Thayer Mahan's assertion that a powerful navy was required for national greatness—propelled the Navy into the 20th century, it frequently found itself languishing between wars.

While Symonds brushes past the details of specific battles, he is scrupulous in detailing the ups and downs of the Navy's fortunes. In this tale, the president and Congress are as important as vessels and admirals. John Adams's decision to create a formal Navy Department in 1798 marked the first step toward a professional, permanent force. Benjamin Harrison and his Navy secretary (a former Union Army general named Benjamin Tracy) persuaded Congress to bring the fleet out of its post-Civil War doldrums, and laid the foundation that Theodore Roosevelt would transform into his Great White Fleet. Working with congressman Carl Vinson of Georgia, Franklin D. Roosevelt began preparing the Navy for its rendezvous with destiny through a series of legislative expansions in the years before Pearl Harbor. While this story may lack the drama of ships at war, it was fundamental to the Navy's success in wartime.

Today, the legacy of naval victories past is in the most parlous condition in decades. Symonds notes that the fleet, now around 270 ships, is at its smallest size since World War I. Yet he is quickly dismissive of these numbers, arguing that the service retains far greater capabilities than any potential rivals. And he mentions only in passing the challenge posed by China's burgeoning interest in seapower, a development that is changing the Asia-Pacific region before our eyes.

This optimism is belied by Symonds's own thesis: namely, that policymakers have a choice whether to maintain a Navy commensurate with the country's needs or not. Since the Reagan era, both parties have often chosen the well-worn path of neglect, living off the naval successes of the past without investing for the future. Should the country fail to correct the relative lack of interest in seapower shown over the last generation, the familiar tale of unpreparedness in war that Symonds documents here is all too likely to repeat itself. ♦

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B&A

Del Sarto Rising

Two shows prompt a reassessment of the Renaissance master.

BY JAMES GARDNER

Andrea del Sarto:
The Renaissance Workshop in Action
The Frick Collection
Through January 10

Andrea del Sarto's Borgherini Holy Family
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Through January 10

New York

Andrea del Sarto is the perfect example of an artist for whom modernity has no use. That he was an excellent painter is universally acknowledged by anyone who has bothered to look at his art. But his originality was not so potent as to compel the attention of our listless age: It was a tactical originality that arrived at certain stunning compositional and chromatic solutions, rather than the titanic originality of a Michelangelo or a Raphael, his contemporaries, who conjured into being new worlds and new ways of seeing.

Nevertheless, two eminent New York institutions, the Frick Collection and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, have staged simultaneous shows of del Sarto that may prompt a general reassessment of the artist. Today, he survives in an unenviable purgatory: People have heard of him and they know that he is important, but they are not certain why.

Some of them may recall that Robert Browning wrote a tedious poem in which, echoing Vasari, he described del Sarto as The Faultless Painter. That assessment, of course, was the kiss of death: Faultlessness is one of those qualities, like celibacy and thrift, that are admirable in theory, but have lost the moralistic glow they once possessed.

'The Medici Holy Family'

PALAZZO PITTI

However that might be, Browning's assessment of del Sarto has always seemed wrong: Although he viewed the Florentine as an artist of considerable competence but limited inspiration, in fact del Sarto was a painter of great style whose eccentricities sometimes got the better of his skills.

Browning and his generation would not have known or understood the term, but del Sarto was what today we would call a Mannerist. The 19th century perceived only his formal grace and the sturdy competence of his art, without appreciating the shadows and flickering instability of his worldview. Born in 1486, three years after Raphael, he used distorted colors and poses to express what was only implicit in the works of Raphael and the earlier Michelangelo. Like all Mannerists, he saw the world through a film of artifice and imbued everything with an air of rarefied theatricality.

In the great frescoes that he painted on the walls of the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano, the figures move, not in the static postures of the Quattrocento but, rather, in a formalized dance first set in motion by Michelangelo, from whom many of del Sarto's figures derive. As regards the colors and paint textures, the Met's *Borgherini Holy Family* exhibits a feathery, fidgety *tocco* or touch whose suppression of details cannot be entirely attributed to the painting's imperfect state of preservation. The colors as well achieve an unnatural degree of saturation in the Prado's *Sacrifice of Isaac*, while the faces in *Medici Holy Family* are so heavily imbued with Leonardo's *sfumato* or smokiness that they seem almost overripe.

But if the two New York shows confirm these convictions about the artist, they also challenge them. Neither show is a retrospective. The Frick exhibition, a slightly abbreviated version of a show that began at the Getty, is centered around the artist's drawings, with only a scattering of paintings. The Met has mounted one of those focus shows that it does so well, consisting of its own *Holy Family with the Young Saint John the Baptist* (the

James Gardner's latest book is Buenos Aires: The Biography of a City.

'Study for the Head of St. John the Baptist'

'Study of a Young Man'

'Study of the Head of a Young Woman'

'Study of the Head of an Old Woman'

'Study for the Head of Julius Caesar'

Borgherini Holy Family), as well as the closely related *Charity* from the National Gallery in Washington and a *Madonna and Child* from a private collection.

In the drawings upon which the paintings were based, the drawings that form the bulk of the Frick exhibition, that film of artifice has been removed. One has almost a sense that del Sarto's paintings were created in a controlled, but slightly febrile, ecstasy that infused every particle of the observable world with the radiance of an altered state. But in the drawings, more often than not, the painter's gaze returns, almost reluctantly, to reality. A sober-sided vision takes over and, with it, a disabused focus on what presents itself to the corporeal eye, rather than to that eye of the mind, that Platonic idea that was so central to the entire Mannerist movement.

Compare the five studies for a lunette of *Virgin and Child* with the stylized fresco painting in Santa Annunziata in Florence that resulted from them: In the former, we have the vivid sense of del Sarto standing, pencil in hand, before a real mother and her son who, impatient at having to sit still for the artist, struggles to break free from his mother's embrace. In del Sarto's *Study for the Head of Julius Caesar*, we intuitively feel that a creature of flesh and blood is rising up before us.

But no sooner have we perceived this naturalism than we find that we may also need to reassess many of del Sarto's paintings. For underneath that film of artifice lies an enduring substructure of tough and committed observation of the real and tactile world. To take one example—but a magnificent example—consider *Portrait of a Young Man* from the National Gallery in London and now on view at the Frick. Both the tour de force of the man's lavender sleeve and the theatrical murkiness of his bony face make this, at first glance, a textbook example of Mannerist distortion. But the longer you look, the more commanding and unmediated his presence becomes, rising up with startling ferocity from the surface of the painting.

That face is every bit as faultless as Browning believed, but it is so much more. And as these exhibitions make abundantly clear, Andrea del Sarto repays far closer inspection than he has received in many years. ♦

IMAGE CREDITS, CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT: NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART; GALLERIA DEGLI UFFIZI; GALLERIA DEGLI UFFIZI; ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM OF ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY; METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

B&A

Life of a Salesman

Willy Loman: rule or exception? BY STEPHEN MILLER

When I first read Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, which many critics consider to be one of the greatest American plays, I was puzzled. "What's Willy Loman's problem?" I said to myself. He was not like any salesman I knew—and I knew many because my father was a salesman, and so were most of his friends. My high school English teacher, who had assigned the play, said it was a profound commentary on American life. I thought it was corny. Salesmen get fired if they don't make their sales quotas.

What's the big deal?

Willy Loman apparently was based on an uncle of Miller—a salesman who had committed suicide. My father was fired from at least a dozen jobs, but he didn't fall apart like Willy Loman. If my father was depressed, I never noticed it. He always got another job in a few days. I guess you could call him resilient.

My father was not a complicated man. When he came home from work, he would have a Manhattan straight up. After dinner, he usually watched a sports event, baseball or boxing. On weekends, he polished his car and played cards with his salesmen friends. He also enjoyed playing the piano at parties. He lacked the discipline to become a good pianist, but he could pick up a song on the piano if someone hummed the tune.

My father, who left school after the eighth grade, was a traveling salesman for most of his life, his territory usually New Jersey and upstate New York. I can't remember all the things he sold. There was expensive Belgian cookware and English bone china; there were ceramic wall decorations and humorous greeting cards. In our crowded one-bedroom apartment in the West Bronx, boxes of his samples filled the foyer. He occasionally worked in retail, selling men's clothing in stores in Manhattan and suburban New Jersey.

He never made much money. If he had a good month on the road, we would go out to dinner at a Chinese restaurant. His highest-level job was serving as the American sales representative for an English dinnerware company. There was a write-up about him in a trade journal, with a picture. But the company was not a success in the United States, and my father was out of a job in six months. If my mother hadn't worked as a secretary, we would have had trouble making ends meet.

My father liked buying and selling so much that he also did it on the side. He would often buy a car, keep it for several months, and then sell it. He would do the same thing with pianos. Coming home from school, I sometimes would see men removing a piano from the townhouse in suburban New Jersey that my parents bought when I was 14. A few months later, he would buy another piano. The neighbors got annoyed with all the traffic, so he had to stop.

In his mid-sixties my father went into business for himself: He rented a used-car lot in a sketchy neighborhood in Paterson, New Jersey, bought cars for $200 at an auction and sold them for around $400. His slogan was "Rely on Eli," but his cars were unreliable—and not only the ones he sold but the ones he bought for his own use. On vacation trips, our car would often break down.

For that matter, selling used cars in Paterson was dangerous. Once I answered the telephone at my parents' house and a man asked, "Is Eli there?" I said he wasn't, but I could take a message. "Tell the *** that if he doesn't give me my money back I'm going to kill him." My father always dismissed such threats, but he decided to get out of the used-car business when he came to the lot one morning and found all the windshields smashed.

Though my father gave up the used-car business, he continued to make deals. He would read the want ads with a red pen, circling things he might buy. The strangest deal he made was the trailer home he bought in Florida. When my brother first visited my parents, he noticed that there was something odd about the furniture.

"Dad, why is the furniture so low?" he asked. "It came with the trailer," my father replied. "Yeah, but who would want such low furniture?" "I bought the trailer from a sky-diving dwarf," my father said. "I got a good deal."

Five years later, my father decided to move north to be near my mother, who was in a nursing home in the Washington area because she had Parkinson's Disease. So I went to Florida to help him with the move. He had sold the trailer, but he was still in it, selling off almost everything he owned. We were down to odds and ends. A woman who had done a lot of favors for him wanted a metal bookcase. My father liked this woman, but he was in his deal-making mode: "You can have it for ten dollars." "Dad" I said, "give her the damn thing for free."

He relented. He knew he had gone too far.

In *Death of a Salesman*, his wife says of Willy Loman: "Attention must be paid" to him. Why don't writers pay more attention to the pleasures of deal-making? The only American writer I know who describes it well is John Updike. In *Rabbit Is Rich*, Harry Angstrom talks about how good a used-car salesman his father-in-law is: "By the time he had sold a car to a customer, the poor bozo thought he was robbing old Fred blind when the fact is the deal had angles to it like a spider web."

The world of commerce is a tough world where suckers never get an even break; but many people enjoy making deals, even though some deals don't turn out well. My father's life as a salesman had many ups and downs, but it was, for the most part, a happy life. ♦

Stephen Miller is the author, most recently, of The Peculiar Life of Sundays.

"If Donald Trump wants to be president of the United States, he's really hurt himself."

—*Chuck Todd, host of* Meet the Press, *on* MSNBC Live, *December 8, 2015*

PARODY

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, JANUARY 31, 2016

ONE DOLLAR CHEAP

TRUMP SUPPORT SURGES ON EVE OF IOWA CAUCUS

Tops 60 Percent After Internment Speech

By JIM OLSEN

DES MOINES — The latest CBS/New York Times poll shows Donald Trump registering 62 percent support among Iowans on the eve of the caucus and following a major address, in which the presidential candidate laid out a controversial plan to place Muslims in internment camps.

Speaking to a crowd of more than 70,000 at the University of Iowa's Kinnick Stadium, Mr. Trump explained that he would round up members of the Muslim faith in a "humane" and "organized" fashion. "It'd be a piece of cake. I'd use the National Guard, following a purge of any Muslims in the military. I understand there's a few," he said. "We'd then place them into camps divided by sex. We don't want to have them procreating, but that's another story." The presidential candidate also emphasized that despite the camps' locations in and around Death Valley, he had nothing punitive in mind. "There will be three hots and a cot," he said. "I'm a generous man. I'm just following in the footsteps of my hero, FDR," he reassured voters.

Since he demanded a ban last month on Muslims entering the United States, Mr. Trump has continued to defy the polls and the pundits. Over the past three weeks, the tycoon has called for an end to celebrating Cinco de Mayo ("Hold the Mayo!" he exclaimed), offered to pardon former New England Patriot Aaron Hernandez, and even belittled Olympians who have won silver and bronze medals. "Second-best is like first-worst," said Mr. Trump. "And bronze? You might as well have stayed home, you losers." When asked to clarify, he said he was only referring to the Special Olympics.

But after each and every instance, polls have shown Mr. Trump rising in popularity. "Little dogs, like the kind that fit in a purse, they should be euthanized," he said recently. "Or sell them to China: 'We want meat!'" Just before the new year, Mr. Trump announced a shortlist of possible running mates, which included actor Gary Busey and former Subway spokesman

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MARK WALLHEISER / GETTY

Flyoverlanders greet Donald Trump's call for reviving the use of tar and feathers.