

**BELCHICK  
FOR PRESIDENT**  
GEOFFREY NORMAN

the weekly

# Standard

OCTOBER 17, 2016

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**YES,  
MILITARY  
FORCE  
MATTERS**

**BY JEFF BERGNER**



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# Fact Checking the ‘Fact Checkers’

Readers of THE WEEKLY STANDARD have been treated over the years to countless examples of malpractice from so-called media fact checkers. Some of those fact checkers are worse than others. It’s an open secret, and one the media don’t want to acknowledge, that PolitiFact in particular is horribly biased. Surveys done by the University of Minnesota and George Mason University have shown that the supposedly impartial organization rates Republican claims “false” three times as often as Democratic claims.

But something even more troubling than liberal bias might be at work at PolitiFact. The Daily Caller News Foundation recently published a detailed investigation into a Clinton Foundation initiative to provide AIDS drugs in Africa and concluded that the program may have been responsible for dispensing ineffective “watered-down” drugs. PolitiFact turned around and “fact checked” the “conservative website,” saying it “wrongly ties the Clinton Foundation to bad HIV/AIDS drugs.” However, a subsequent response from the Daily Caller News Foundation pointed out quite convincingly that PolitiFact’s critique was riddled with errors.

And that’s not all. The Daily Caller News Foundation also dropped this bombshell: The Clinton Foundation initiative in question was funded with a \$1 million grant from eBay founder Pierre Omidyar and his wife Pamela. Their charitable foundation, the Omidyar Network, also gave a \$225,000 grant to the nonprofit journalism foundation the Poynter Institute, which oversees PolitiFact. And that grant was earmarked for a partnership between PolitiFact and another group “to fact-check claims about global health and development.”

A lot of liberal groups and nonprofits might end up sharing donors by happenstance, but this points to a pretty specific conflict of interest and one that PolitiFact should address. It doesn’t help that PolitiFact initially denied receiving any funding from the Omidyars. Besides, the conflict might help to explain why their attempt to undercut the Daily Caller News Foundation’s investigation was so shoddy. Doing favors for donors, after all, seems to be fast becoming the new American way.

Of course, conflicted or not, PolitiFact’s work has been generally atrocious this year. They rated

Hillary Clinton’s claim that she never sent classified information over her email “half-true” and later flip-flopped when details of the FBI investigation exposed their defense of her as nonsense. As another measure of just how off the mark they can be, they somehow managed to get a “fact check” of Donald Trump decisively wrong. It’s not as if he hasn’t said many untrue things. But they rated false his claim that crime is rising, and official FBI stats agreed with him. Most recently, they attacked Mike Pence for a line during the vice presidential debate in which he accurately characterized as “ransom” a \$400 million White House payment to Iran on the day four hostages were released.

PolitiFact publishes enough fact checks that it no doubt gets some right. But whether as a result of bias, incompetence, dubious financial incentives, or perhaps all of the above, PolitiFact has taken a wrecking ball to its reputation. It should be ignored altogether, but so long as PolitiFact remains a useful vehicle for applying a veneer of credibility to politicized judgments, the rest of the media will no doubt continue to cite it as an authority and use it as a cudgel. ♦

## The ROTC Freakout

The award for the week’s most depressing opening sentence in a news story goes to this gem by T. Rees Shapiro of the *Washington Post*:

The Army’s Reserve Officer Training Corps, a century-old military leadership program, has overhauled its weapons training procedures on the nation’s college campuses after cadet drills—including one at George Mason University—were mistaken for possible active-shooter attacks.

It seems that students at George Mason, the University of Texas, Michigan State, the University of

North Dakota, and other institutions of higher learning with ROTC programs have reported seeing large numbers of people in uniform carrying weapons or marching in unison on campus, panicked, and promptly called the police.

According to the *Post*, the recent incident at George Mason “resulted in police sweeping the campus in search of two armed men with rifles.” As it turned out, the “suspicious armed men lurking in the woods . . . were ROTC cadets participating in a field exercise. Police who arrived at the wooded area . . . found more than 100 cadets carrying black M-16s as part of the training drill; though the

guns look realistic, they are nonfunctional and made mostly of rubber.”

Today’s Army, of course, responded to this comic embarrassment in suitable Pentagonese: “Our training,” said Major General Christopher P. Hughes in a statement, “requires increased coordination, on and off campus, with appropriate authorities to enhance our safety and minimize misperception by civilian populace or local authorities.”

Which, roughly translated, means that, since undergraduates seem not to know what members of the armed forces do, or what they look like, or why they bother to wear uniforms and carry fake rifles—even the *Post*

reporter defines ROTC as a “military leadership program”—every effort must be made to insulate students from the sight of their future guardians in the process of learning how to protect their country and freedom.

THE SCRAPBOOK fully acknowledges that there have been tragic incidents of mass shooting on campuses—notably at Virginia Tech, 250 miles from George Mason—but the idea that students cannot distinguish between a lone gunman and future officers on training drill merely emphasizes the estrangement between civil and military life in America. And, for that matter, the estrangement between contemporary campus culture and reality: Last spring, panicked undergraduates at Indiana University mistook a hooded Dominican monk for a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

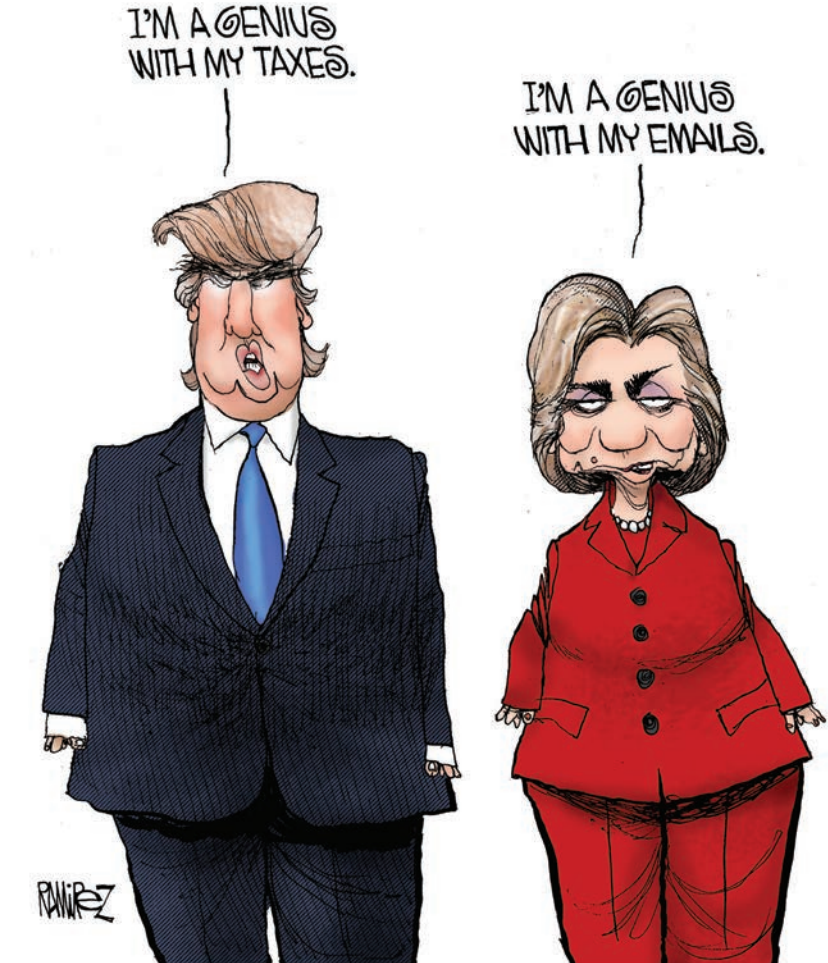
Now, at George Mason and elsewhere, those rubber M-16 replicas will be bordered in strips of orange duct tape to reassure frightened students (or so the Army hopes) and help them distinguish toys from the real thing. This is as close as we’ve come in modern times to the pre-World War II era when a cash-starved peacetime army drilled with broomsticks and wagons disguised as tanks. ♦

## Obamacare’s Days Dwindle Down

Obamacare’s days are really and truly numbered. Problems with the law are reaching critical mass. So the Obama administration has gone to extraordinary lengths to prop up the system—and by “extraordinary,” we mean illegal.

An inspector general report recently concluded that the Obama administration did not have the authority to give insurers billions in tax dollars to keep them docilely participating in the flawed insurance exchanges created by the law.

So the administration came up with a dubious and desperate tactic to pay off insurers—they would take an obscure Treasury fund designed to pay off lawsuits against the government, encourage insurers to sue for losses



incurred as the result of their poorly designed law, and then quickly agree to a massive settlement. In the wake of the inspector general report and public grumbling, the administration seems to be backing off of that plan. No surprise, then, that a number of major insurers, with mounting losses in the hundreds of millions of dollars, pulled out of Obamacare over the summer.

How bad are things? Bad enough that liberals, who have previously done backflips pretending that Obama’s key policy “achievement” is something other than a giant failure, are now openly critical of Obamacare. A recent article on page one of the *New York Times* matter-of-factly reported

that “Mr. Obama’s signature domestic achievement will almost certainly have to change to survive. . . . [H]ealth plans in the individual insurance market are still too expensive and inaccessible.”

While this raised some eyebrows, it was nothing compared with what former President Bill Clinton just said. Out campaigning for his wife, he had this to say about Obamacare: “So you’ve got this crazy system where all of a sudden 25 million more people have health care and then the people who are out there busting it, sometimes 60 hours a week, wind up with their premiums doubled and their coverage cut in half. It’s the craziest thing in the world.” The next day

he tried to walk back his remarks a bit, but even then he still said the law is hurting “small-business owners and employees.” The day after that, Chelsea Clinton said at a campaign stop, “we do need to work on the ‘affordable’ part of the Affordable Care Act.”

Bill is simply doing Hillary—and the rest of the Democratic party—a favor here. Obama took crushing losses in midterm elections where the GOP beat the law like a drum. Should Clinton win, she will take office as a much less popular president than Obama was, and one possible way to avoid another midterm bloodbath would be to take Obamacare off life support.

That raises another question. What would the abandonment of Obamacare mean for Obama’s legacy? It would mean an epic policy failure to add to the weakest economic recovery from a recession since the end of World War II and a foreign policy that’s a goat rodeo. In a word, abysmal.

Fortunately, *Politico* reports that he’s working to preserve his legacy in other tangible ways. The first lady’s vegetable garden, which is allegedly “recognized globally as a symbol of local food,” was recently ensconced in steel and concrete structures “as a way to dissuade, say, a President Donald Trump from scrapping it the way Ronald Reagan tore out Jimmy Carter’s solar panels after he moved into the White House.” Obviously, fixing the economy, seeing Obamacare repealed, and ensuring U.S. foreign interests aren’t steamrolled by homicidal mullahs are the most important priorities post-Obama. But if a future president decided to, say, order up a backhoe from the GSA and install a putting green where the garden was, we can’t say we’d care. ♦

## The Voice of the Resistance

SCRAPBOOK friend Mike Murphy, the political consultant extraordinaire whose travails at the end of the Jeb Bush campaign were memorably chronicled in these pages by Matt Labash (“Debriefing Mike Murphy,”

March 28 / April 4, 2016), has of late been hosting a wildly popular podcast called Radio Free GOP. Each week Murphy provides color commentary on the presidential race and interviews political personalities, getting their take on the election and why they chose this insane profession in the first place. Agree or disagree, Murphy’s analysis is thoughtful, entertaining, and, shall we say, quite vivid.

Here, for example, is Murphy’s description of Team Trump:

Trump doesn’t really have wise staffers. He has these kind of yes-men around him and women who try to nudge him in the right direction. I think Kellyanne [Conway] does to the extent of her abilities do that. But there isn’t really a strong staff with a strong campaign or any of the mechanics we normally have. There’s a traveling advance show and King Trump atop it all doing pretty much whatever he wants. So the idea that the media often has that “Oh, this will be the week the staff gets him on track. He’s going to pivot.” And how many times we hear that? All that stuff—it’s a fantasy based on what they’ve seen on other, more normal campaigns. You gotta remember the Trump staff are people who’ve never worked at the big time in American politics. Now that often isn’t the worst thing. You get fresh thinking with new people. But this staff is akin to, well, look. Let’s say here in Los Angeles, where our current undisclosed location is, we were to go out into the bright sunlight and take a little drive over to the San Fernando Valley, which is the headquarters of the mighty porn industry. And we were to pull up at, say, Vivid Video and climb to the second floor of their warehouse, ask for the person in charge, and say, “Hey, pornmeister. Guess what? You’re now the president of Warner Brothers.” Oh boy, the pornmeister would be happy. “Finally, they figured it out! I’ve been wanting that job. They’re finally going for some real talent—not those fools who think they know how to run a movie studio.” And the happy pornmeister would decamp to Warner Brothers and immediately make the world’s first \$500 million porno film. So that’s the Trump campaign.

And that was just the intro. For more, go to [radiofreegop.com](http://radiofreegop.com). ♦

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## The Write Stuff

Back in the day, I threw papers for the *Dallas Times Herald*, the city's afternoon daily. I was 12 years old when I took over a route of about 50 papers. I folded the papers and put them in a canvas bag about twice as big as a beach bag. I walked the blocks, pitching papers. Sometimes I'd ride my bike.

The work involved more than you might think. If you wanted your paper "stopped" for a week, you would tell me that, or tell the *Times Herald* to tell me that, and I would be the one who carried out the stop on the designated days.

It cost a little less than a dollar a month to subscribe. And I had two kinds of customers: Those who were PIAs—meaning they paid in advance by check to the *Times Herald*—and those who weren't. The latter paid me directly. Rarely did I have a delinquent subscriber or, for that matter, a delivery complaint.

I netted \$35 to \$40 a month in this ancient business. It took me no more than an hour a day to deliver my route. So I made slightly more than a dollar per hour. That was about what the city paid someone to mow and trim its lawns.

I liked to throw long, from the street, and one afternoon I threw a paper too long—and too hard. It made the porch, but it also broke a windowpane. The customer didn't bless me out, or demand to speak with my parents or my supervisor. She asked only that I do the right thing, which was to have the glass replaced. And so I did. As a (self-) preventive measure, I quit throwing this particular copy and instead began walking it up to the front porch.

The *Times Herald* had great subscription-sales contests. One year I won a free trip to Houston to see then-number-one Texas play Rice. We

stayed in the old Rice Hotel, and the game ended in a tie, 14-14.

I learned a lot, having a paper route. And I was proud to be working for a company that employed someone whose work I admired, the great sportswriter Blackie Sherrod, who died this year at the age of 96.

I was a sports nut (still am) and played sports (passably). In junior high, I started writing about them. So I looked to Blackie's stories and



columns to learn what I could about sportswriting. I fell into the habit of pulling a paper from my daily draw as soon as it arrived and searching for Blackie's byline. I was annoyed on those rare occasions when Blackie wasn't in the paper.

Eventually I had to give up my excellent paper route: There was too much else to do—including writing about sports for school publications. Fortunately, my parents started a *Times Herald* subscription, and that enabled me to keep reading Blackie. Years later my mother still mailed me clippings (today she would provide links) of Blackie's work; he remained consistently good.

William Forrest Sherrod was born

in 1919 and reared on a farm near Belton, in central Texas. He played football at Howard Payne University but gave it up due to injury. After he graduated, he served in the Navy during World War II as a torpedo plane gunner in the Pacific. After the war, he took a job with the *Temple Telegram*, the first of the four Texas newspapers he wrote for (the others being the *Fort Worth Press*, the *Times Herald*, and the *Dallas Morning News*) before he retired in 2003. He was voted Texas Sportswriter of the Year a record 16 times. He won just about every award he was eligible for.

Many years have passed since I was, for a time, a student of Blackie's work. I could see that he knew sports and could analyze games as well as anyone. But what made his prose lively and engaging, what inflected it with humor, were the similes and metaphors he conceived so easily, against deadline.

Thus, of Johnny Unitas, the great quarterback for the Baltimore Colts, Blackie wrote, "His face is a map of a hard path, forehead wrinkles, cascading furrows in his cheeks, small pockmarks dotting his lean serious cheeks. He is a day laborer who somehow fell into fame on his way to work and it impresses him not a whit."

And of sportswriting, it's "just like driving a taxi. It ain't the work you enjoy. It's the people you run into."

I met Blackie once. I was a high school senior about to apply for admission to a university that gave a full scholarship to the applicant deemed most likely to excel in sportswriting. I wanted a supporting letter from Blackie.

I introduced myself in a letter, he invited me over to his office, I brought some clips, we talked, and he wrote the letter, with a copy to me. I finished third.

Maybe I should have kept my old paper route and saved the money made from it for tuition.

TERRY EASTLAND



# Why Pence Matters

*Tim Kaine and Mike Pence: a debate the world will not long remember*

Vice presidential debates don't matter. Lloyd Bentsen was widely thought to have clobbered Dan Quayle in 1988; the Bush-Quayle ticket won easily. Vice President Quayle did well against Al Gore in 1992; the Bush-Quayle ticket lost.

So the world will little note nor long remember what Mike Pence said on Tuesday night against Tim Kaine. And, as is so often the case, you can't blame the world. The presidential candidates matter most; the vice presidential candidates matter little. You can't vote for Mike Pence without voting for Donald Trump, and very few people are going to vote for Donald Trump because of Mike Pence. The words of Pence count for little when compared with the reality of Trump.

But this year's vice presidential debate may be notable in one respect. It reminded us of what a reasonably orthodox conservative, a relatively normal Republican, would have to say about the issues of the day. And what the conservative and Republican governor of Indiana had to say was reasonable, even at times compelling. Pence articulated with some success the outlines of a hawkish foreign policy; he criticized big government programs like Obamacare; he alluded to the need to reform entitlements; he defended the right to life. Much of what he said had little to do with positions Donald Trump has taken. But if Pence threw Trump under the bus, that's Trump's problem. And if Pence did a service to conservatism, that's to everyone's benefit.

A little over a century ago, the Italian intellectual Benedetto Croce wrote a book, once well-known, called *What Is Living and What Is Dead in the Philosophy of Hegel*. We at THE WEEKLY STANDARD don't stay up late at night pondering matters of life and death in the thought of Georg

Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. (Though this campaign has certainly reminded us of Marx's famous riff: "Hegel says somewhere that all great world-historic facts and person-ages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.")

But we do spend time trying to figure out what is living and what is dead in American conservatism. We've been inclined to the view that a fresh start will be needed after Election Day, that the task will be as much building anew as merely rebuilding. But Pence reminds us that there are already sturdy materials in the conservative toolbox to work with. American leadership in the world, limited and decentralized government at home, skepticism about progressive and liberationist claims—these staples of American conservatism remain true. More, they remain alive. Listening to Pence, we thought not only that any normal Republican or competent conservative would have defeated Hillary Clinton this year; we also were reminded that normal Republicanism and competent conservatism do provide building blocks for the future. And those blocks are not all or even mostly rotten or termite-infested.

But some are. This election cycle, and much else in recent years, points to some of the limitations and liabilities of modern conservatism. Here too, though, conservatism provides some guidance to its own renewal. It suggests that even as we take into account new facts and developments to deal with the world of 2017, we also should look back for guidance. It is in part thanks to the conservative recovery in the last three-quarters of a century of a tradition of liberal thought (if we may call it that), from Aristotle to Tocqueville, from the Federalist Papers to Hayek, from Burke to Strauss that we have resources aplenty.

So Mike Pence did something more important than outpoint Tim Kaine Tuesday night. He cheered us up. He showed us that the path ahead, while challenging, need not be overly discouraging. Hegel, if we may return briefly to him, famously wrote, “The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only at the falling of dusk.” It may turn out that contemporary conservatism’s owl of Minerva could take flight only after the shock and degradation of the Donald Trump candidacy.

But of course we will not be guided in 2017 by an owl of Minerva. The world-historical task of fashioning a post-Trump conservatism that can save our country and the West will be in our hands.

—William Kristol

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# Bill Clinton Was Right



Hillary Clinton doesn’t want to talk about Obamacare, but her husband clearly feels no such reluctance. Bill Clinton—who has his finger on the pulse of public sentiment to a greater degree than either President Barack Obama or Hillary—spoke rather freely about Obama’s signature legislation early in October. Talking about “what to do now on health care,” Clinton said the following:

[T]he current system works fine, if you’re eligible for Medicaid—if you’re a lower-income working person—if you’re already on Medicare, or if you get enough subsidies, on a modest income, that you can afford your health care. But the people who are getting killed in this deal are the small-businesspeople, and individuals, who make just a little too much to get any of these subsidies. Why? Because they’re not organized, they don’t have any bargaining power with insurance companies, and they’re getting whacked. So you’ve got this crazy system where all of a sudden 25 million more people have health care, and then the people who are out there busting it, sometimes 60 hours a week, wind up with their premiums doubled and their coverage cut in half. It’s the craziest thing in the world.

So the former Democratic president, the husband of the current Democratic presidential nominee, says that Obamacare—which was passed solely with Democratic votes—is a *crazy system* that spikes people’s premiums and cuts their coverage. The middle class are *getting killed*—*whacked*—and, all in all, it’s *the craziest thing in the world*.

JASON SEILER

Who says Bill Clinton isn’t worth his extravagant speaking fees?

He could, of course, have gone further, pointing out that Obamacare is a classic 90/10 program: About 10 percent of people may have their lives made better by it, but about 90 percent find themselves worse off. And that’s without even considering the increased federal spending involved for Obamacare’s exchange outlays and its Medicaid expansion—about \$100 billion a year and rising.

With all of the election talk about tax inequities, one of the biggest has gone essentially unmentioned. Millions of Americans get a welcome tax break for their job-based insurance, which isn’t taxed as income. But their neighbors who have to buy their own insurance generally don’t get a tax break and have to buy coverage with after-tax dollars. Obamacare hasn’t fixed this longstanding problem, but a good alternative to Obamacare would.

Take the typical 36-year-old single woman making \$36,000 a year who buys insurance on her own. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation health insurance marketplace calculator, none of Obamacare’s direct outlays to insurance companies are paid on her behalf. Nor does she get a tax break. Under the Obamacare alternatives such as the one I worked on at the 2017 Project and the Hudson Institute, and those released by Ed Gillespie, Tom Price, and Scott Walker, she would get a tax cut of \$2,100 in the form of a tax credit.

Under Obamacare, the single woman in question is being coerced into buying government-mandated insurance (and fined \$695 for the privilege of living in America if she doesn’t). Under the conservative alternatives, she’d be free to shop for insurance wherever she wants, would receive a tax break of \$2,100 for buying that insurance, and could pocket the difference if the plan she chose cost less than that amount.

But what does Bill Clinton—and, more important, his wife—think we need “to do now on health care”? They want *more* government. Amazingly, the former president declared that, when it comes to health care, “the [private] insurance model doesn’t work.” Thus, we need to “let people buy in to Medicare or Medicaid.” He added, “So, Hillary believes, we should simply let people who are above the line for getting these [Obamacare] subsidies have access to affordable entry into the Medicare and Medicaid programs. They’ll all be covered.”

That’s a pretty clear call for “single-payer” health care—at a time when federal spending is already nearly \$4 trillion a year, when we’re already nearly \$20 trillion in debt, and when Medicare’s runaway costs already pose the single greatest threat to our country’s long-term solvency. Neither those who want to be able to buy their own private insurance nor those—half of Americans—with employer-based insurance are likely to be too keen on handing off control of their health care to the politicians who brought us Obamacare.

—Jeffrey H. Anderson

# When You've Lost the Bushes . . .

The price of alienating the first family of GOP politics. BY FRED BARNES



Former President George W. Bush says every American citizen should vote in the presidential election, though he hasn't revealed whom he plans to vote for. But it won't be Donald Trump. We can be sure of that.

Trump has managed to alienate the Bushes: ex-President George H. W. Bush, former Florida governor Jeb Bush, and now the man known to friends as W. The senior Bush is voting for Hillary Clinton. Jeb Bush has announced he won't vote Trump or Clinton.

Trump may not be concerned about this, but he should be. His campaign is paying a price for losing the Bushes, the first family of Republican politics. Their influence is indirect. The Bushes don't command a wing of the

party. They haven't urged Republicans not to vote for Trump. But their aversion to Trump has had an impact.

The Bushes have sent a signal to Republicans, especially to those whose allegiance to the GOP is tenuous, that Trump is unacceptable. David Brady of Stanford University's Hoover Institution says this is a factor in Trump's failure to lock up the support of 90 percent of Republicans, the minimum needed to defeat Clinton.

Brady, a political scientist, is an associate in the polling firm YouGov/Polimetrix. Its CEO, Doug Rivers, is a professor of political science at Stanford and a Hoover fellow. In YouGov's polling, Trump is backed by only 72 percent of Republicans. (Trump has fared better among Republicans in other polls.)

The Bush factor in the election is most pronounced among Republicans involved in foreign affairs and national

security policy. Dozens of former officials in the administrations of the two Bush presidents have publicly criticized Trump as unqualified to be president and pledged not to vote for him.

Trump made an overture to the Bushes in late May when he met with Karl Rove, the strategist who helped George W. Bush win the presidency in 2000 and reelection four years later. The effort failed. The Bushes have said nothing even mildly supportive of Trump since then.

Given what Trump has said about George W. and Jeb, it's surprising that he thought any of the Bushes might say anything favorable about him, much less endorse him. His many expressions of scorn for the Bushes were bound to prevent any sort of détente.

Trump's dismissive treatment of Jeb Bush during the Republican presidential primaries is the least of their reasons for rejecting Trump. He referred to Jeb by a nickname, "low-energy Jeb." In February, he said Jeb was "having some kind of breakdown" and called him "an embarrassment to his family." Responding to criticism by Jeb, Trump said he's "a desperate person. He's a sad and pathetic person." Jeb dropped out of the presidential race in late February.

Far more damaging were Trump's attacks on George W. Bush. In 2007, he told CNN's Wolf Blitzer that Bush was "probably the worst president in the history of the United States." In 2008, he claimed Bush had prior knowledge of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, and lied about weapons of mass destruction to justify America's invasion of Iraq in 2003. Trump advocated Bush's impeachment.

In an interview in 2013, Trump said: "George Tenet, the CIA director, knew in advance there was going to be an attack, and he said so to the president, and he said so to everyone else who would listen. That came out." In truth, that never happened and nothing like it ever "came out."

In other comments, Trump has blamed Bush for the 9/11 attacks. In a GOP debate in South Carolina in February, he said: "The World Trade

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GARY LOCKE

Center came down because Bill Clinton [didn't] kill Osama bin Laden when he had a chance to kill him. And George Bush—by the way, George Bush had the chance also but he didn't listen to the advice of his CIA.”

In 2008, Trump told CNN he was “surprised” that Nancy Pelosi “didn't do more in terms of . . . going after Bush” when she was House speaker. “It just seemed like she was really going to look to impeach Bush and get him out of office. Which personally I think would have been a wonderful thing.”

In that same 2008 CNN interview, Trump said Bush “lied” about Saddam Hussein's possession of weapons of mass destruction. “Bush got us into this horrible war with lies, by lying. By saying they had WMDs, by saying all sorts of things that happened not to be true.”

In 2004, Trump told Chris Matthews he liked both Bush and his presidential opponent John Kerry. But he seemed to like Kerry more. “I love Bush's tax policy,” he said. Interviewed by Howard Stern, though, he said, “Kerry's a friend of mine. He's a very good guy. He's a very tough guy.”

Trump has never apologized to the Bushes for any of his comments about them. A political ally said Trump would probably reject apologizing to George W. Bush because it would show weakness.

Bush's comment last week on voting was made in a get-out-the-vote public service announcement. “Our future depends upon you casting a ballot,” he said. Several days earlier, his daughter Barbara attended a fundraiser for Hillary Clinton in Paris. ♦

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# Conscripting Doctors

Do harm—or else.

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

Should anyone outside the military be forced to kill? Most people would say no. But with the ubiquitous availability of abortion—and the push to legalize assisted suicide and euthanasia—doctors may soon find themselves required to take lives or risk being booted from the medical profession.

Let's call this threat “medical martyrdom.” Laws today generally protect doctors from being conscripted into the culture of death. But there is concerted effort to override the preferences of doctors who object to killing.

A “Consensus Statement on Conscientious Objection in Healthcare,” published recently by the University of Oxford's *Practical Ethics*, is a case in point. In the statement, prominent bioethicists claim that existing legal protections shielding medical doctors from forced participation in abortion and assisted suicide (where legal) are “indefensible.” They urge that the laws be amended to require all doctors either to perform legal medical procedures or, if conscientiously opposed, be compelled to refer to a doctor the dissenter knows is willing. In circumstances where such a doctor cannot be found or reasonably reached by the patient, the statement declares that objecting doctors should be forced to “perform the treatment themselves.”

That's not all. The statement advocates establishing “tribunals” before which objecting doctors would be forced to appear to demonstrate the

sincerity and depth of their objections. If excused from, say, performing euthanasia, the doctor would be required to perform community service, as if he had been convicted of a crime:

Healthcare practitioners who are exempted [by the tribunals] from performing certain medical procedures on conscientious grounds should be required to compensate society and the health system for their failure to fulfill their professional obligations by providing public-benefitting services.

As for medical students, unless they are willing to be trained in killing techniques, they had better find another profession:

Medical students should not be exempted from learning how to perform basic medical procedures they consider to be morally wrong.

And don't forget the reeducation camps! “Healthcare practitioners should also be educated to reflect on the influence of cognitive bias in their objections.”

The Consensus Statement is not an outlier in bioethics advocacy. An article just published in the *Journal of Medical Ethics* similarly laments the existence of legal protections for medical conscience and urges that dissenting doctors be treated like military draft resisters, with tribunals (again) set up to determine whether they should be exempted from medicalized killing.

Two internationally influential bioethicists, Julian Savulescu and Udo Schuklenk, have also joined forces in the journal *Bioethics* to claim that “Doctors Have No Right to Refuse Medical Assistance in Dying, Abortion or Contraception.” First, they

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deconstruct what little is left of medicine as a learned profession by arguing that “the scope of professional practice is ultimately determined by society” and that the doctor’s own views on right and wrong do not matter a whit:

If a service a doctor is requested to perform is a medical practice, is legal, consistent with distributive justice, requested by the patient or their appointed surrogate, and is plausibly in their interests, the doctor must ensure the patient has access to it. It is then irrelevant how defensible the doctor’s own moral take on the patient’s actions is.

Such arguments are fast becoming a staple of bioethics discourse and would transform access to lethal procedures such as abortion and assisted suicide into a legally enforceable right—meaning the government and medical associations would have a duty to *guarantee* that all qualified patients obtain these interventions from a doctor when requested. To

overcome resistance from the many doctors opposed to participating in these life-ending procedures, medical conscience protections would have to be repealed and dissenting doctors coerced by putting their medical licenses at risk.

**Medical martyrdom has already started. Victoria, Australia, legally requires all doctors to perform abortions when asked or, if opposed, find a willing replacement.**

Medical martyrdom has already started. Victoria, Australia, legally requires all doctors to perform abortions when asked or, if opposed to abortion, find a willing replacement. One doctor has already been professionally disciplined for refusing to refer for a sex-selection abortion.

After Canada’s Supreme Court conjured a right to euthanasia for

patients with a diagnosed medical condition that causes “irremediable suffering”—as defined by the patient—provincial medical colleges (akin to our state medical associations) enacted the very kind of participate-or-refer policies advocated in the articles quoted above.

Meanwhile, in Vermont, where assisted suicide is legal for the terminally ill, state bureaucrats have interpreted a law requiring that doctors counsel dying patients in all palliative care options as a legal obligation to provide information about assisted suicide. That interpretation is now the subject of litigation brought by Alliance Defending Freedom.

The accelerating anti-medical-conscience campaign in bioethics threatens to destroy the life-affirming values enunciated in the Hippocratic Oath that undergirded medical ethics for millennia. The ultimate goal is to force pro-life, orthodox Catholic, and other dissenting doctors either to kill or leave the profession. ♦

## Taking DOL’s Overtime Rule to Court

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

As the Obama administration continues a regulatory onslaught in its final months, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is taking the fight over its most burdensome and unprecedented new rules to the courts. Most recently, we filed a challenge to the Department of Labor’s (DOL’s) new overtime rule, which would raise costs for businesses, further stall economic growth, and reverse career and promotion opportunities for workers.

The rule will double—to \$47,476—the salary threshold under which workers are virtually guaranteed time-and-a-half pay when working over 40 hours a week. This dramatic increase exceeds DOL’s legal authority, which is why we’ve led a broad coalition of business groups in going to court over the rule.

We’re challenging it on the grounds that the excessive salary threshold increase

contradicts Congress’ intent for executive, administrative, and professional employees to remain exempt from overtime pay. Moreover, the rule includes an unauthorized provision that will cause the salary exemption to rise automatically every three years without going through the standard rulemaking process or comment phase.

At the Chamber, suing is always the last resort. In fact, the Chamber and its federation of state and local partners made good faith recommendations to DOL before the rule was proposed. Our advice was ignored.

The rule’s legal shortcomings are far from its only problems. It will also cost businesses a staggering \$1.2 billion every year and cause major compliance headaches. By raising costs for businesses, this rule will be an added drag on economic growth. And a good rule of thumb is that if it’s bad for economic growth, it’s bad for everybody.

How will it hurt workers? If employers can’t afford to increase salaries to maintain the exempt status of their employees, they’ll

be forced to reclassify workers from salaried to hourly wages, which is the opposite of how careers normally progress. While these workers will still be performing exempt duties, they’ll now be on the clock—likely meaning they will no longer be able to work remotely or travel for their jobs.

Although the Chamber has acknowledged that the salary threshold should be updated, DOL’s overtime rule will hurt the very people the department claims it’s trying to help. If you want to lift incomes, you must grow the economy—not hold it back by further hamstringing job creators.

From the disastrous implications for businesses and workers to the circumvention of Congress and written law, this rule is bad news any way you look at it. The Chamber sees no choice but to challenge it in court.



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# Another Abduction by North Korea?

Congress takes an interest in a missing American man. **BY DENNIS P. HALPIN**

Chris Stewart gave a simple explanation for introducing a congressional resolution on missing American David Sneddon: “As a parent, it seemed the right thing to do.” The Utah congressman’s own son was the one who told him that his friend had mysteriously vanished—the first U.S. citizen to disappear from China without a trace since President Nixon’s historic 1972 trip.

Sneddon, then 24 and a student at Brigham Young University, disappeared in August 2004 on a trip that included hiking through southern China’s Tiger Leaping Gorge. Chinese officials said he most likely died from drowning in a river during the hike. Family members and State Department officials encountered eyewitnesses who reported subsequently seeing David, however, including in a Korean restaurant that may have been frequented by North Korean agents. Thus some suspect he was abducted by North Korea.

Representative Stewart, who serves on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, explained that the resolution has two primary objectives: to meet “a moral obligation” to the Sneddens, who have been left wondering for over a decade what happened to their son and brother, and “to hold North Korea accountable” if it has mistreated a U.S. citizen. Stewart, speaking in his Capitol Hill office, remarked that while the Sneddens are

not his constituents, “Utah is a small place, like one large family.”

The resolution, which “directs the Department of State and the intelligence community to jointly continue



David Sneddon

investigations” into the disappearance, unanimously passed on a voice vote before the House adjourned for the upcoming election. As a press release from Stewart’s office notes, “The resolution specifically asks them to investigate the possibility that the North Korean government may have abducted Sneddon.” Utah senator Mike Lee has introduced an identical resolution in his chamber that the family hopes will pass after the election.

That agents of a foreign government would knowingly abduct a U.S. citizen may sound implausible. But not for North Korea, which has a long track record of kidnapping foreign nationals in order to train its spy network. The resolution specifically

cited North Korea’s program “to kidnap citizens of foreign nations for espionage purposes.”

This nefarious abduction activity was confirmed by none other than late North Korean leader Kim Jong-il himself in a now-famous September 2002 summit in Pyongyang with Japan’s then-prime-minister Junichiro Koizumi. Kim acknowledged that “overzealous” members of his security forces, who were subsequently “punished,” had kidnapped 13 Japanese citizens—Tokyo believes the number is significantly higher—in the 1970s and 1980s to obtain teachers of Japanese language and culture and to make use of their identities by North Korean agents. One abductee, Yaeko Taguchi, was forced to train the female North Korean agent involved in the terrorist bombing of Korean Air Flight 858, which killed all 115 passengers and crew, prior to the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

In one of the greatest diplomatic miscalculations in history, Kim and his underlings thought that fessing up to the Japanese abductions would lead swiftly to a normalization of diplomatic relations and the release of hundreds of millions of dollars in assistance, similar to the \$800 million South Korea received as “economic cooperation” from Japan when relations were normalized in 1965. Instead, the subsequent public outcry in

Japan over the blatant abuse of its citizens put Japanese-North Korean relations in the deep freeze.

Some observers insist that North Korea, while a serial abductor in its day, has learned its lesson and left the kidnapping business, but more recent examples suggest otherwise. U.S. permanent resident Kim Dongshik was spirited across the Chinese border in January 2000 while providing assistance to North Korean refugees. Despite the repeated efforts of his U.S. citizen spouse and fellow Korean-American congregants from a Chicago-area church to determine what happened, the case remains unresolved. Those efforts included a 2005 letter from the Illinois congressional

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delegation, organized by the late congressman Henry Hyde and signed by then-senator Barack Obama, that demanded answers from the North Korean U.N. Mission in New York. The letter compared Reverend Kim to abolitionist Harriet Tubman, whose pre-Civil War Underground Railroad was a precursor for the one aiding North Korean refugees on the run in China. Later reports out of North Korea indicate that Kim succumbed to starvation and torture and that his remains are being held at a North Korean military base.

Then there was the March 2009 abduction of two American journalists, Laura Ling and Euna Lee, who were in the border area along the Tumen River, seeking to interview refugees. Pyongyang insisted the pair illegally entered North Korean territory. "When we set out, we had no intention of leaving China," they wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*, intimating that their guide purposely led them onto North Korean soil. "Feeling nervous about where we

were, we quickly turned back toward China. . . . We looked back and saw two North Korean soldiers with rifles running toward us. Instinctively, we ran. We were firmly back inside China when the soldiers apprehended us."

**It might be hard to imagine Chinese officials being caught up in a web of deceit with their North Korean allies in order to abduct an American citizen, but local officials in China are known to be susceptible to bribes.**

Stewart's resolution notes, "The Government of the People's Republic of China allows North Korean agents to operate throughout the region to repatriate refugees." American citizens are widely known to have been involved in the Underground Railroad on China's southern border. The

most famous is Mike Kim, whose book *Escaping North Korea* details the four years he spent helping North Korean refugees inside China, beginning in 2003, just before Sneddon vanished. These activities included guiding them on mountain trails from China into Laos. Chinese security officials and North Korean agents in the area could certainly have come to the assumption that another young, Korean-speaking American, David Sneddon, was also involved in assisting refugees and needed to be stopped.

It might be hard to imagine Chinese officials being caught up in a web of deceit with their North Korean allies in order to abduct an American citizen, but there is an old Chinese expression: "The mountains are high and the emperor is far away." Local officials in China are known to be susceptible to bribes. A case that drew congressional attention around the same time as Sneddon's disappearance was the death of American citizen Darren Russell in Guangzhou on April 14, 2005. He



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died mysteriously after a contractual dispute with the administrators of an English-language “sweatshop” known for exploiting foreign teachers. His parents were initially told that he died in a late-night traffic accident, but an autopsy conducted after the return of his remains to the United States found that the cause of death was “homicide” by “blunt force trauma to the head and brain.” Local Chinese officials appeared to have collaborated closely on the case with the language school.

Roy and Kathleen Sneddon, both retired academics, went to Guangzhou and took an unusual course of action after their son David disappeared. For two years, they served as volunteers, teaching English technical writing to Ph.D. candidates at South China University of Technology. They hoped that if China had detained David by mistake, their service would soften hearts within the government and open doors to enable David’s return. Teaching these graduate students was, according to Roy, “one of our highlights as a retired couple.”

Rep. Stewart believes China knows how seriously the United States takes David’s disappearance. During a congressional visit to the U.S. embassy in Beijing last spring, he said, senior embassy officials indicated that they have discussed the Sneddon case with Chinese authorities.

Stewart’s resolution passed after recent reports of a sighting of David in Pyongyang from a North Korean defectors’ organization in Seoul. North Korea expert Chuck Downs found the source to be “highly credible.” The most sensational accounts suggested Sneddon could even be the English tutor of leader Kim Jong-un himself. Unbelievable? Perhaps, but remember that what Kim wants, Kim gets. Kim Jong-un’s father, Kim Jong-il, a notorious movie buff, thought nothing of having a famous South Korean director and his actress wife kidnapped from Hong Kong and brought to Pyongyang to make movies at his personal whim in 1978. The couple escaped while attending a film festival in Vienna eight years later—so there remains hope for David Sneddon yet. ♦

# Getting Juiced by the Roadside

A plan for keeping up with the Teslas.

BY CAMERON SMITH



Greenville, Alabama, is a small city of about 8,000 right off I-65, south of Montgomery. It’s best known for Bates House of Turkey, a popular lunch stop on the way down to the white-sand beaches of the Gulf Coast. It’s also an important stop on the map for Tesla owners.

During a business trip, I happened to stay at the Greenville Hampton Inn. Arriving late at night, I saw a phalanx of gleaming white sentinels standing beneath the humming lights of the parking lot. My first reaction was to wonder if aliens had established a spaceport in Greenville. (It wouldn’t be unreasonable for Bates’s turkey to have an interstellar cult following.) Upon further inspection, I noticed the

*Cameron Smith is state programs director and general counsel for the R Street Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based free market think tank.*

word “TESLA” in red letters on each of the six slender machines.

These were “superchargers,” a new sort of electrical fuel pump that gives a Tesla electric car a battery charge, in just 30 minutes, sufficient to get to the next charging station. Limited range being the single biggest drawback of plug-in electric vehicles, Tesla is tackling that problem head-on: Instead of waiting for gas stations to build the electric infrastructure, the company is providing its customers with their own network of charging stations across the country.

Tesla’s charging infrastructure is crucial for the vehicles to be able to drive cross-country. But the “supercharger” stations, like so much in the world of electric vehicles, are buoyed by federal tax credits and, in many parts of the country, state incentives too. Conservatives have been dubious about plug-in electric vehicles given

JEFF CHIU/AP

the policy experience they've had with them thus far, which has all been about government meddling in markets. There's no shortage of subsidies and tax incentives for buying electric. Buy a plug-in vehicle and the federal government picks up \$7,500 of the cost through an income tax credit. It's hard to justify such subsidies—particularly for products such as Teslas that most people can't afford even after taxpayer help.

The hope is that by expanding its charging network, Tesla will expand

**Buy a plug-in vehicle and the federal government picks up \$7,500 of the cost. In expanding its charging network, Tesla hopes to expand its customer base to the point that the subsidies will no longer be needed for the business to make sense. But even then, Tesla's supercharging stations only serve its own customers.**

its customer base to the point that the subsidies will no longer be needed for the business to make sense.

But even if it does, Tesla's supercharging stations only serve its own customers. If average Americans want to buy an electric vehicle, there isn't a network of superchargers to serve their needs. That makes electric vehicles less practical. Consumers' choices are limited not by technology, but by infrastructure.

For all the progress that has been made with plug-in technology, electric cars may not be beyond the need of incentives to sell at all. Take the Nissan Leaf, the bestselling all-electric vehicle in America. With a base price of slightly less than \$30,000 before all the subsidies, it doesn't have much range, just some 84 miles per charge. By comparison, Nissan's Altima costs \$7,000 less and can drive cross-country, stopping only for quick gasoline fill-ups. The Leaf limps along with

107 horsepower; the Altima's base-model four-cylinder engine produces 182 horsepower. It's a measure of the market's eagerness for electric cars that they have sold at all.

How do the makers of electric vehicles compare with other disruptive technology companies? Uber and Lyft have radically disrupted the taxi and limousine business. Airbnb is a force in hospitality. But these these new businesses have done their disruption without government subsidies—indeed, in the case of Uber and Lyft, much of their progress has been accomplished in the face of government regulators trying to hobble them.

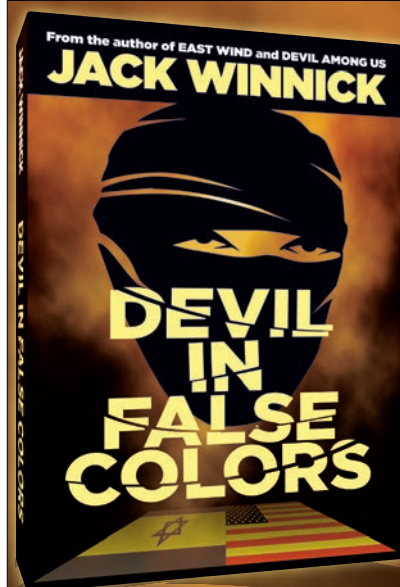
But if we want to see a functioning free market in electric vehicles, one free from distorting subsidies, credits, and incentives, we should at the very least look to remove federal regulations that throw up unnecessary roadblocks to the new technology.

For example, an obvious place to install electric-vehicle chargers is at highway rest stops. But such commercial charging stations would be against federal law. Section 111 of Title 23 of the U.S. Code severely restricts commercial activity at interstate rest stops (with exceptions for service plazas built before 1960), limiting rest-stop commerce to such things as vending machines and travel information.

Why not allow charging stations at rest stops, permit providers to charge customers, and generate tax revenue in the process? Electric-vehicle drivers would have a predictable, secure, familiar location to charge their cars on lengthier trips. And instead of subsidizing the stations, governments might charge rent. It would be a bipartisan change: Republicans could support cutting government restrictions on commerce and Democrats could support emission-free vehicle technology without pushing yet another subsidy.

We ought to look for ways to free the marketplace and encourage competition by removing hurdles to innovation. It's a harder path than subsidies or tax credits, but it's the difference between eradicating market distortions and imposing new ones. ♦

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# What Good Is Military Force?

*We have forgotten how useful it can be*

BY JEFF BERGNER

**A**n observer of this summer's party conventions would get the idea that the use of military force is almost always and everywhere wrong and ill-advised. Any reference to the use of force was drowned out at the conventions by chants of "America First" and "no more war." With the exception of Donald Trump's open-ended threat to "knock the hell out of ISIS," there seems to be a political consensus that the use of force is almost never a good idea. On the campaign trail both candidates have reinforced this view, often promoting a false choice between rebuilding America and being the world's policeman.

Is the use of force a defensible foreign policy tool and, if so, when and why? There are two main arguments against the use of force, either in specific instances or as a more general policy. The first is pragmatic. Are the goals of the use of force vital to America's national security? If so, are these goals important enough to justify the likely costs in terms of American lives and treasure? And if they are, can policymakers be relatively confident the use of force will achieve their aims, without unintended and destructive consequences beyond the immediate military objective? These are serious questions, to which we shall return.

The second major argument against the use of force is a moral one. This argument holds that the United States has no legitimate basis to intervene in the affairs of other nations, including nations ruled by tyrants. This argument offers clear-cut operational guidance: It is wrong for the United States to intervene abroad with force. And by implication, nonintervention is the morally sound choice.

Though clear-cut, this latter argument is so simple as to be simple-minded. Was American nonintervention in the Rwandan genocide of 1994 a moral policy? More than 700,000 Rwandans were hacked, burned, or otherwise

tortured to death and more than two million others were displaced. If the United States could have prevented most of these deaths at little cost in American lives and dollars, would this not have been a legitimate, moral use of military force? Bill Clinton later said his failure to respond to this genocide was one of his presidency's greatest failings. He said that intervention could not have prevented the violence but could have reduced it substantially. Of his choice not to intervene, he later concluded, "I regret it."

There might have been solid pragmatic reasons to stay out of Rwanda. Occurring only a handful of years after the demise of the Soviet Union, the Rwandan genocide offered an early case in which local instability had no larger geopolitical implications. During the Cold War, every instance of violence or instability was seen through a zero-sum lens: If the United States did not intervene, a fertile field was opened up for Soviet expansion. Why, in this new world, should Washington risk even one life or one dollar? Why risk another Somalia-like disaster if there is no American cost to inaction? Though it is hard to find any moral grounds on which to defend President Clinton's inaction, these practical considerations remain a matter of judgment.

Much the same could be said today about President Obama's policy toward Syria. There might well be good practical reasons not to get caught up in a complex military intervention in Syria. But moral grounds for declining to do so are not among them. Upwards of 470,000 Syrians have been killed in the last five years and millions have been displaced to often squalid refugee camps or fled the region for Europe. Generations of Syrians will suffer the consequences of nonintervention by Western forces. American military engagement in Syria is fraught with far more difficulties than Rwanda, and differing degrees of engagement must be weighed carefully in light of American interests. But among these considerations it is hard to find a superior moral orientation.

The United States often has solid pragmatic reasons not to intervene in the affairs of other nations, but moral grounds are seldom among them. Indeed, it is from the

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*Jeff Bergner, author most recently of *Against Modern Humanism*, served as staff director of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and assistant secretary of state. He teaches at the University of Virginia.*

moral deficiency of absolute nonintervention that the “responsibility to protect” doctrine evolved. The U.N. World Summit Outcome Document, agreed to in 2005 by U.N. members including the United States, specifies that peaceful means to address genocide and other crimes against humanity must first be employed. But if these means are not successful, members have not only a right but an affirmative responsibility to use military force to protect people against these grave crimes. Whatever one might make of this doctrine (it is unlikely to replace pragmatic considerations about using force), it demonstrates that belief in the moral superiority of certain uses of force is not confined to overly hawkish neoconservatives but finds resonance across the international political spectrum.

### PRAGMATIC ARGUMENTS

**A**bstract theorizing provides less concrete guidance than an evaluation of the successes and failures of the use of force in recent history. Let’s consider the period from the end of direct U.S. military involvement in Vietnam in 1973 to the present. The lengthy and ultimately unsuccessful American involvement in Vietnam caused deep national soul-searching about the use of force. The loss of more than 58,000 American lives spoke to the need for great caution in undertaking costly, large-scale military involvement in the affairs of other nations; it informs policymakers’ thinking to this day.

Moreover, in 1973 Congress enacted the War Powers Resolution (WPR). This legislation codified the congressional hope that future uses of force would be determined by the collective judgment of the president and Congress. Though all presidents have regarded portions of the WPR as unconstitutional, the Supreme Court has never ruled on this (and is unlikely ever to do so), and it remains the law of the land. Finally, no post-Vietnam conflict has seen combat by American conscripts. The all-volunteer military exercises a subtle, but marked effect on U.S. decisions to employ force.

So what does the contemporary American way of war look like? In the 43 years since 1973, presidents have

notified Congress (“consistent with the WPR”) of the deployment of U.S. forces no fewer than 187 times. Granted, many were pro forma notifications concerning alterations to the U.S. force structure in ongoing conflicts rather than discrete events. On the other hand, these 187 deployments do not include U.S. covert operations or routine training or stationing of forward-based U.S. troops.

The vast majority of these deployments were undertaken to evacuate U.S. citizens from danger; provide additional security to embassies abroad; transport allied forces engaged in humanitarian or rescue missions; provide security for humanitarian relief efforts; or provide intelligence, logistical support, and training for friendly foreign forces. Of the 187 U.S. force deployments since 1973, most have been relatively brief, exposed U.S. forces to limited risks, prompted (with exceptions) little or no congressional concern, and have been widely supported. Most of these operations have not been opposed by even the most isolationist critics. These uses of force, initiated entirely by presidents, by the way, are likely to remain uncontroversial and to continue under any future president.

The more interesting cases, of course, are the substantial uses of military force, cases in which Congress has invoked, or at least considered invoking, the WPR. Twelve such instances provide a solid set of cases for evaluating the use of force since 1973. In only two of these cases—both relatively minor in scope and occurring more than two decades ago—was the use of military force clearly a failure. In the other 10 cases military force was successful in achieving its intended goals; the costs justified the use of force; and problems that arose were not the result of the application of military force but the result of either the *insufficient* application of force or of a mistaken set of assumptions that had little to do with the use of force itself.

### TWO FAILURES

**T**wo cases resulted in failure. The first was the deployment of U.S. Marines to Beirut by President Reagan. By August of 1982, Lebanon had descended into sectarian violence, and U.S. troops were deployed as part of a multilateral peacekeeping force to



*Skulls of victims from the Rwandan genocide of 1994; below, the ruins of Aleppo, Syria, October 5, 2016*



oversee the evacuation of PLO forces and to preserve order. When this mission was accomplished, U.S. forces were withdrawn in September—only to return within the month.

Marines came under hostile fire during their second deployment in late 1982 and 1983. President Reagan sent three reports to Congress, though none mentioned hostilities that would arguably have triggered the termination clause of the WPR. At that time, Congress was eager to defend its prerogatives and intended to trigger the WPR when significant hostilities first occurred. The president and Congress negotiated an understanding: Congress passed and President Reagan signed legislation stating that the WPR had gone into effect on August 29, 1983, but authorizing the U.S. troop presence in Lebanon beyond 60 days for a full 18 months. In signing this first-ever invocation of the WPR, President Reagan stated that nothing within it detracted from his constitutional powers as commander in chief.

On October 23, 1983, U.S. Marine barracks near Beirut International Airport were attacked with a massive truck bomb, killing 241 servicemen. After several months of sporadic responses, on February 7, 1984, President Reagan ordered a withdrawal of U.S. forces, which was completed more than a year before the 18-month authorization was to expire.

Although the motivation for deploying U.S. troops was admirable, the mission itself was fraught with problems. It was open-ended, with no specific goal in sight. There was no peace to be kept, so the peacekeeping moniker itself was misleading. The Marines were positioned dangerously, especially after unfriendly forces took control of surrounding hills, and the rules of engagement were poorly thought through.

In short, the goal of U.S. intervention was vague, the operation did not justify the toll of American lives, and it is hard to discern any measure by which this operation could be called anything but a failure.

A second failure occurred a decade later. President George H. W. Bush sent U.S. military forces to Somalia to protect U.N. personnel delivering food to starving Somalis. President Bush acted under a U.N. Security Council resolution, and he reported the deployment of American forces to Congress on December 10, 1992. In his report, he noted that hostilities were not expected, making clear his view that this action would not trigger the WPR. This mission continued until May 1993, successfully delivering food in massive quantities. Violence was minimal and as many as an estimated 100,000 Somali lives were saved.

Based on this success, the U.N. passed a resolution broadening the scope of the mission considerably. U.N. forces were now to aim for a reconciliation of warring parties in Somalia; factions were to be disarmed, infrastructure

was to be repaired, and Somalia was to be set on a course toward democratic government. These nation-building missions were actively supported by President Clinton, who had been inaugurated four months earlier, though U.S. force levels were drastically reduced at the very time the scope of the mission expanded.

Somali leaders like Mohammed Farah Aidid, who had had no objection to food deliveries, resisted the growing U.N. takeover of local power centers. In June 1993, 24 Pakistani peacekeepers were killed by Aidid's forces and the United States ramped up efforts to hunt down Aidid. Numerous clashes occurred, including a bombing that killed four Americans. On October 3, 18 U.S. servicemen were killed in Mogadishu, an event later memorialized in the movie *Black Hawk Down*.

Throughout the period of escalating violence, Congress was unable to come to agreement about the WPR. On February 4, 1993, the Senate authorized the use of force in Somalia, and the House subsequently adopted a conditional authorization. The two chambers, however, did not reconcile their legislation, and the WPR was never invoked. Four days after the death of the 18 servicemen President Clinton announced the end of combat operations and his intent to withdraw U.S. forces no later than March 31, 1994. Congress adopted this date in legislation that cut off funding for U.S. forces in Somalia. All U.S. forces were withdrawn from Somalia in advance of this date.

Though the initial deployment of U.S. forces was successful in preventing a far-reaching humanitarian disaster, the expanded U.N. mission was not. The scope of the wider mission was not thought through, and the mismatch of a smaller U.S. footprint with a much wider mission made no sense. American expectations of widespread Somali gratitude were unmet, an experience repeated later in Iraq. The mission was ill-defined, not a vital national security interest, and failed to achieve any of its stated goals. Somalia today is no better for it, and it is hard to judge this operation as anything but an abject failure.

## SIX SUCCESSES

Other uses of U.S. military force have been far more successful. Consider the invasion of Grenada ordered by President Reagan in the fall of 1983. Grenada had descended into chaos after an internal struggle among its Marxist leaders led to the assassination of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop. Fearing the consolidation of power under hardline Marxist Bernard Coard, Reagan ordered 7,600 U.S. troops to invade Grenada on October 25.

Left unchecked, Grenada was rapidly becoming an ally of Soviet proxies. The small island hosted more than 700 armed Cubans, some of whom were constructing an airport

suitable for heavy military aircraft. The prospect of a second Soviet beachhead in the Caribbean ran directly against the national security interests of the United States. The American invasion was intended to establish a new interim government in Grenada leading to democratic elections—which is exactly what occurred. Fighting ended within several days, with 19 U.S. servicemen killed. The invasion was broadly supported by the American people and, as polls revealed, by the Grenadian people as well.

President Reagan reported to Congress, consistent with the WPR, but without reference to the section that would trigger the 60-day termination feature. The House and Senate quickly passed bills fixing the beginning of the 60-day period on October 25. These bills, however, were never reconciled and sent to the president. For his part, President Reagan committed to removing U.S. combat forces from Grenada within 60 days, which was completed by December 15.

The Grenada invasion was the first rollback of a Communist government by military force. Though the invasion was opposed by the president's friend and ally Margaret Thatcher and by a U.N. General Assembly vote of 108-9, no lasting diplomatic damage was done. Grenada established a democratic government, and Soviet influence in the Caribbean was diminished.

Six years later, the United States used military force in Panama to remove Manuel Noriega from power. Noriega had a longstanding relationship with U.S. government agencies, but that relationship began to fray as he used his office to support hemispheric drug trafficking. When pressured by the United States, which maintained a permanent military force in the Canal Zone, Noriega warmed increasingly to Cuba and Nicaragua. In 1989 he overturned the legitimate election of Guillermo Endara as president in order to retain power. Acting on behalf of Noriega, the Panamanian legislature declared war on the United States. Then several U.S. servicemen were killed in an incident provoked by Noriega's forces.

President Bush responded on December 20, 1989, with an invasion force of 27,000 troops. Fighting ended within days. Twenty-three Americans were killed; Noriega surrendered to U.S. forces on January 3 and was deported to the

United States to stand trial on drug-related charges. President Bush reported the use of force to Congress on December 21. Congress had gone out on recess on November 22 and did not return until January 23, shortly before the last U.S. combat forces were withdrawn from Panama. Once again, Congress took no action with regard to the WPR.

Endara became the president of Panama, and Panama subsequently enjoyed successive rounds of free elections and the transfer of power between political parties. Though the U.N. General Assembly opposed the invasion by a vote of 75-20, polls suggested most Panamanians supported the U.S. action, which was also highly favored by the American public. The invasion achieved the goals of protecting American citizens in Panama, ensuring the security of the canal, ending a government-run drug cartel, and restoring democratic government to Panama.

President Bush was to deploy a far more massive military force less than a year later. In August 1990, Iraq's Saddam Hussein invaded and quickly took control of neighboring Kuwait. The United States had maintained a complicated relationship with Saddam Hussein for many years, though that relationship became increasingly difficult following the end of the Iran-Iraq war. In response to Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, President Bush sent 200,000 American troops to Saudi Arabia and supplemented that force by 150,000 several months later. He notified Congress on both occasions,

though noting that the deployments were for defensive purposes. Saudi leaders were deeply concerned that Saddam might take control of oil fields that were in striking distance of his forces.

The U.N. Security Council passed Resolution 678, demanding that Iraqi forces withdraw from Kuwait no later than January 15, 1991, and authorizing U.N. members to use "all necessary means" to secure that outcome. President Bush argued that he did not need congressional authorization to use force against Iraq, though he welcomed what he called a congressional vote of "support." The House and Senate, consistent with the requirement of the WPR, passed legislation to authorize the use of force against Iraq, which was signed by President Bush. Following an air campaign of several weeks, U.S. forces invaded Iraq and within

**In Lebanon, the goal of U.S. intervention was vague, the operation did not justify the toll of American lives, and it is hard to discern any measure by which this operation could be called anything but a failure.**



*American Marines search for survivors and bodies in the rubble, October 24, 1983.*

four days decisively defeated Iraqi forces and freed Kuwait. There were 148 American battle-related deaths.

Tactically, the war was a great success. It also secured the larger goals of American foreign policy: removing Iraq from Kuwait, affirming the idea that conquest of neighbors was unacceptable, and securing vital Saudi oil production facilities. Following the American withdrawal from Iraq, the United States enforced a U.N. mandate to restrain Saddam's forces, largely by establishing no-fly zones in the north and south of Iraq. These enforcement actions were motivated less by military requirements than by humanitarian concerns about Shiite and Kurdish populations in Iraq.

Early in the Clinton administration a disintegrating Yugoslavia spiraled out of control. Was it in the U.S. national security interest to intervene in a struggle among the Croats, the Bosnians, and the Serbians? Why not let the situation unfold on its own, or at least let other European nations deal with a problem on their own continent? Apart from the humanitarian dimension of the conflict, this was the first post-World War II use of violence to rearrange boundaries on the European continent. Twice before in the 20th century, the United States had been drawn into major European conflicts. United States policymakers saw a significant interest in setting out a clear marker against the use of force in Europe. The goal of a Europe whole, free, and at peace was a national interest of the United States.

In the complex series of U.N. peacekeeping missions in the former Yugoslavia between 1992-1995 and afterward, the United States military played a variety of roles including delivering supplies, enforcing a no-fly zone against Serb forces, and serving on the ground as peacekeepers. In all, Presidents Bush and Clinton notified Congress of changes in U.S. troop deployments in the region no fewer than 27 times. For its part, Congress produced a series of contradictory votes for and against these actions, in support of the troops, and against the insertion of U.S. ground forces. Overall, Congress seemed relatively content to allow President Clinton to use air assets as he wished, but sought to authorize in advance any deployment of ground forces.

Following the Dayton Agreement between the warring parties in December 1995, President Clinton sent more than 30,000 U.S. troops to the region—without congressional authorization. Because these troops were part of a NATO-led force, designed to secure what looked like a genuine peace, Congress lost its initial inclination

to authorize the use of ground forces. Despite nearly five years of air patrols, airstrikes, aerial combat, and the deployment of U.S. ground troops, Congress once again never invoked the WPR.

Throughout its actions during these years, the United States suffered only one fatality. Peace was secured and leadership of the peacekeeping operation was passed to European nations. The military deployment was a tactical success, and the overall policy goals were achieved at relatively little cost.

In Haiti, a military coup led by General Raoul Cédras ousted the democratically elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Under pressure from the United States and other nations, in July 1993 Cédras and Aristide reached an agreement to permit Aristide to return to

power. President Clinton dispatched 350 American troops to Haiti to reinforce this understanding, stating that no hostilities were expected. A U.S. Navy ship arriving on October 11, however, encountered resistance, and it appeared the agreement to allow the return of Aristide had fallen apart. In response, the U.N. Security Council voted for an embargo against Haiti. Congress adopted a nonbinding “sense of the Congress” resolution that no funds could be used for military action in Haiti without prior congressional authorization. Despite

this, President Clinton chose to enforce the embargo.

The Security Council then raised the ante, authorizing “all necessary means” to remove Haiti's military government. President Clinton prepared to invade Haiti. He said he would welcome a congressional vote of “support” but that he did not require authorization to proceed.

The invasion was called off when a U.S. negotiating team secured agreement from General Cédras to step down. President Clinton then deployed U.S. forces in Haiti not as combatants but to enforce this agreement. President Clinton ultimately deployed 21,000 U.S. forces to Haiti. Several minor skirmishes took place but no significant violence. Congress did not invoke the WPR. It did, however, pass a resolution stating that the president “should have” requested congressional authorization and calling for the “prompt withdrawal” of U.S. forces.

The United States suffered one military fatality in its multiyear deployment in Haiti. The threat of force (which was no bluff in this instance) achieved its immediate goal. This was not a nation-building exercise; it aimed only to

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**Tactically, the Gulf war was a great success. It also secured the larger goals of American foreign policy: removing Iraq from Kuwait, affirming the idea that conquest of neighbors was unacceptable, and securing vital Saudi oil production facilities.**

restore the deposed president. The goal of returning democratic rule to Haiti was achieved.

In 1998 parties in the former Yugoslavia again went to war. The Kosovo Liberation Army and the Serb-run Federal Republic of Yugoslavia engaged in intense fighting, replete with mass atrocities, especially on the Serbian side. President Clinton said in June that this situation was an “unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.” Was it? Aside from significant humanitarian concerns, there was once again the prospect of violence to settle disputes on the continent of Europe. In response, NATO-led forces including the United States conducted bombing missions against the Serbs from March 24 through June 10, 1999.

Both sides agreed to a negotiated cessation of violence and the deployment of U.N. peacekeepers. Under a Security Council resolution, a NATO-led force (KFOR) was deployed to Kosovo. The goal was to move Serb forces out of Kosovo, bring in peacekeepers, and disband the Kosovo Liberation Army. A total of 39 countries provided 50,000 peacekeeping troops, including 7,000 from the United States. A total of 168 coalition lives were lost including 18 Americans, only 4 of which occurred in hostile encounters.

President Clinton and his successors reported 12 times to Congress on the deployment of U.S. forces to Kosovo, and an additional 16 times as part of broader reports on the worldwide deployment of U.S. forces. Though Congress seemed once again to oppose the introduction of U.S. ground forces without prior congressional authorization, Congress did not invoke the WPR.

KFOR troops including the American contingent accomplished their goal of ending the violence between Serbs and the KLA. Serb forces—and many Serb civilians as well—left Kosovo and hundreds of thousands of Kosovar refugees returned.

## TWO HARD CASES

**A**fghanistan and Iraq offer much harder cases. The length of these conflicts is nearly unprecedented in American history. The Afghan deployment is now in its 15th year, making it the longest-running war in American history. The deployment in Iraq lasted from 2003 to 2011 and has recently ramped up again. The loss of life in these two wars has been far greater than in all

other post-Vietnam conflicts combined. The goals of both conflicts widened over the years to encompass broad-scale nation-building that was not envisioned in the original decision to go to war. Finally, and importantly, the outcome in both cases remains uncertain. It is not clear, for example, that the current Afghan government would outlast a U.S. departure by even a month. And in Iraq the long-term relationship between Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish populations is still a work in progress.

Following the 9/11 attack, the United States demanded that the Taliban government of Afghanistan turn over the perpetrators of 9/11 and close terror training camps. When these demands were rejected, the United States invaded Afghanistan to hunt down the perpetrators and replace the regime that gave them sanctuary. The CIA- and military-led effort quickly carried out these limited objectives.

Within two months, the Taliban government had been driven from Kabul and planning was underway to install Hamid Karzai as interim president. American fatalities in the early years of the Afghan conflict were surprisingly low—7 in 2001, 30 in 2002, and 33 in 2003.

Given the Taliban’s refusal to cooperate, the use of military force was more or less inevitable. Not to respond to the murder of more than 3,000 civilians on 9/11

would have been unthinkable. As evidence of this, the congressional authorization to use military force against those directly and indirectly responsible for 9/11 was passed 420-1 in the House and 98-0 in the Senate.

Had the United States chosen to withdraw from Afghanistan after putting Karzai in place, the war would have been brief and casualties minimal—but Afghanistan would have quickly descended into chaos and likely seen a speedy return to power of the Taliban. Indeed, the Taliban insurgency had already ramped up by late 2002, leading to the first of several U.S. troop surges to counteract it.

Here Washington faced a dilemma, much the same as it did soon afterward in Iraq and again more recently in Libya. To leave without setting in place the conditions for a stable post-Taliban government would have struck a blow against the 9/11 perpetrators but fundamentally changed nothing in Afghanistan. Was this a desirable outcome? Would it have been preferable to do as we later did in Libya, helping to oust Qaddafi but then leaving the country to its own devices?



*Remains of an Iraqi convoy bombed as it departed Kuwait, February 28, 1991*

Staying on indefinitely was understandable, as one incremental decision led to the next, but it was not a necessary or inevitable result of the quick U.S. military victory. Most of the 2,380 American deaths in Afghanistan occurred many years after the 2001 invasion; in the four years of the first Obama administration, from 2009-2012, more than 1,500 U.S. servicemembers were killed. In 2009 General Stanley McChrystal estimated that defeating the Taliban would take a multiyear commitment of as many as 240,000 Afghan soldiers, 160,000 Afghan police, and an increase of at least 30,000 U.S. forces to supplement the 68,000 already there. Today the United States maintains 9,800 troops (and 26,000 military contractors) in Afghanistan, a force that is obviously inadequate to defeat the Taliban insurgency. One might fairly ask what U.S. troops are accomplishing in Afghanistan today, beyond buying enough time for Barack Obama to pass this problem along to his successor.

The initial military attack on Afghanistan was tactically brilliant and accomplished its immediate aims at low cost. The U.S. experience in Afghanistan since 2003 has proven how difficult and time-consuming it is to construct a new Afghanistan. Building a new nation in the midst of an ongoing insurgency is a nearly impossible task.

We have experienced much the same in Iraq. The use of force to remove Saddam Hussein from power was remarkably quick and efficient. The American bombing campaign began on March 20, 2003, and by April 9 Baghdad had fallen to American forces. Tikrit, the last significant holdout, was subdued on April 13. In the month or so after the invasion, 139 U.S. military service personnel were killed. From a tactical standpoint, the conquest of a nation the size of Iraq and the removal of its government so quickly was an indisputable success.

But why did the invasion occur in the first place? The Iraq war has served as Exhibit A for critics of the use of American force; it has been called a “war of choice,” unrelated to U.S. national security interests. Is this true? The pros and cons of this question have been dealt with extensively elsewhere. Saddam Hussein had regularly—increasingly—violated U.N. resolutions establishing no-fly zones to protect elements of the Iraqi population. In response, President Clinton had struck Iraqi targets more than 130 times during his administration. Saddam Hussein had also prevented U.N. inspectors from examining

sites suspected of producing weapons of mass destruction. And he had engaged in systematic human rights violations against Iraqis.

Were these sufficient grounds for going to war? There was certainly plenty of agreement to do so. The war was conducted to enforce U.N. Security Council resolutions. The war was fought by troops from dozens of nations. Congress voted heavily in favor of it, the House 296-133 and the Senate 77-23. Interestingly, congressional support for the war, which included senators Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden, and John Kerry, was far stronger than the 1991 authorization of the Gulf war, where the House voted in favor 250-183 and the Senate 52-47.

It is easy enough to point to post-invasion mistakes.

Given Iraq’s longstanding culture of absolute rule from the center, it was difficult to get ordinary Iraqis to assume responsibility for anything. Policymakers overestimated the degree to which Iraqis would welcome U.S. control of Iraq, even if only temporarily. It should perhaps not have been surprising that Sunnis accustomed to running the country would resent their demotion. This problem was magnified by the mistaken decision to fully de-Baathify the new government, causing roughly 100,000 Iraqis who might have helped to stabilize and remake Iraq to lose their jobs. This decision exacerbated

already deep fissures between Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds, which came to the fore once they were no longer suppressed by Saddam Hussein’s brutality. But these errors speak less to the decision to use military force than to decisions made once it succeeded.

Moreover—and this is seldom noted—the Afghan and Iraq wars deserve a degree of credit for several positive developments elsewhere. Iran at least briefly moderated its nuclear weapons development program and, more decisively, Muammar Qaddafi gave up entirely his chemical weapons program and moved to align himself with the United States. Having seen how quickly the U.S. military could topple regimes in the neighborhood, neither wanted to offer any unnecessary provocations.

U.S. casualties in Iraq occurred largely after the invasion was complete. The great preponderance of America’s 4,486 military deaths occurred while trying to stand up a stable government in Baghdad, mediate sectarian conflicts, pacify the countryside, ramp up oil production, and return

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**General Tommy Franks had outlined a list of objectives in the Iraq war, and most of these goals were accomplished by the invasion itself. It was the last goal listed—establishing the conditions for a stable, functioning representative government—that detained the United States for many years beyond 2003.**

Iraq to a “normal” state. More than 3,400 American lives were lost between 2004–2007.

The decision to stay on in Iraq beyond 2003 was understandable, each incremental decision building upon the last. But the commitment to stay well beyond the successful military invasion was not implied in the invasion itself. General Tommy Franks had outlined a list of objectives in the Iraq war that included removing Saddam’s regime, eliminating any weapons of mass destruction, removing any terrorists, providing humanitarian relief, ending the embargo, protecting the oil fields, and establishing the conditions for a representative government. Most of these goals were accomplished by the invasion itself. It was the last one—establishing the conditions for a stable, functioning representative government—that detained the United States for many years beyond 2003.

There were always reasons to be more hopeful about Iraq than Afghanistan. Iraq was far more developed economically. Moreover, vast Iraqi oil reserves were capable of generating the money to fund a central government and large-scale economic development programs. This is an advantage that Afghanistan simply does not have. Finally, while it is easy to point to the many costs of the Iraq war, these should be balanced not against an alternative of perfection but against the many possible bad scenarios had Saddam Hussein remained in power.

To further prove the utility of military force, we have only to look at the troop surge in 2007. The U.S. military was able to create improved conditions of stability and far lower sectarian violence. The reversion to sectarian violence that occurred with the rise of ISIS in 2013 arose not from the application of military force but from its insufficient and too brief application. Staying in Iraq for eight years after the invasion was not foreordained. But once made, the decision to achieve a stable representative government argued for a commitment to stay long enough to succeed.

## STILL UNFOLDING

In March of 2011, U.S. naval and air forces joined in enforcing a naval embargo and no-fly zone against Libya. What was America’s interest in sending U.S. forces into harm’s way in Libya? One could make a case that Libyan ruler Muammar Qaddafi had changed his spots by 2011. Qaddafi had evolved from active terrorism against American forces and civilian airliners to working

more closely with the United States. He was one of the first world leaders to denounce the 9/11 attacks. He agreed to eliminate his entire stockpile of chemical weapons (and followed through). By 2007 the United States and Libya were moving toward reconciliation including diplomatic relations, a new American embassy in Tripoli, and the exchange of ambassadors, a process delayed only by legal claims related to the bombing of Pan Am 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988.

Why would the United States attack Qaddafi in 2011? What was America’s interest? The main reason offered by President Obama was humanitarian: Qaddafi’s forces were approaching Benghazi to put down opposition forces, and there was fear of a bloodbath. Although President Obama referred to American national security interests, his argument for intervention spoke more about ideals than interests, specifically pointing to the urgent responsibility to prevent the slaughter of thousands of Libyans.

The United States acted in support of a U.N. Security Council resolution calling for “all necessary measures to protect civilians” and participated as a member of NATO implementation forces. NATO forces were successful in preventing a bloodbath in Benghazi and—though never stated explicitly as a U.N. goal—in removing Qaddafi from power. The military campaign lasted from March to October of 2011, when Qaddafi was killed by Libyans. The U.N. mandate expired on October 31, 2011. In the course of this six-month campaign, no Americans were killed. The United States spent roughly \$1 billion.

Once again, Congress was unwilling to assert its prerogative in a situation where no U.S. ground forces were involved. Though the military campaign lasted a full six months, Congress never invoked the WPR and President Obama acted without congressional authorization.

Was this military deployment a success? Tactically, yes. However, post-conflict Libya illustrates what happens when, unlike in Afghanistan and Iraq, a dictator is toppled and his country is left more or less to its own devices. With no Western forces in post-Qaddafi Libya, the country descended into chaos and violence from which it has not yet emerged. The death of Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans in Benghazi was one of the fruits of this chaos and, if anything, pointed to the need for not less, but more military force in the aftermath of the conflict.



*U.S. Marines pull down the statue of Saddam Hussein in the center of Baghdad, April 9, 2003.*

Another fruit of the absence of Western forces was the rise of ISIS in ungoverned areas of Libya. If one were to judge the outcome of the Libyan conflict today, it would be mixed at best. Potential large-scale violence has been replaced by ongoing lower levels of violence and by the emergence of ISIS terror cells.

A more hopeful view, however, is possible. U.S.-backed Libyan government forces are closing in on ISIS in Libya. If the emerging Libyan government is able to eliminate ISIS, restore order, and govern with a degree of stability and moderation, it may yet be possible to say that the Libya campaign was successful in terms of both American interests and American ideals. But it is worth noting that this favorable outcome once again depends very much on the use of American military force, this time to support the Libyan government against ISIS.

Today the United States is using military force in many locations beyond Libya, including Somalia, Yemen, and Pakistan. By far the most extensive use of force is against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Coalition forces have conducted more than 13,000 airstrikes since August 2014. The national interest in defeating ISIS seems generally accepted: The unparalleled barbarism of ISIS, its destabilization of the Mideast, the worldwide reach of its claims, and its ability to motivate terror attacks in America and elsewhere provide readily understandable reasons. The question is not so much *why* as *how* to address the problem of ISIS.

American airstrikes in support of Iraqi, Kurdish, and other ground forces have had a positive effect; ISIS has lost about half its territory in Iraq and 20 percent of its territory in Syria. But so long as ISIS holds population centers like Mosul and Raqqa from which it can work safely, shrinkage of ISIS-held territory around the fringes will not make a significant difference. There is no way to bring an end to the multiple threats ISIS poses other than dismantling its control of these urban areas and eliminating any sanctuary for the group. This will be difficult, it will be costly, and it will require a change in the American configuration of forces.

In this regard the Obama administration has recently expanded the American troop presence in Iraq and is working ever more closely—and ever closer to the front lines—with Iraqi and Kurdish forces. These incremental steps are likely to be only the first such steps required to destroy ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

Though the United States has used force against ISIS for a full two years, Congress has not invoked the WPR. This is despite the fact that the Obama administration is

not only using stand-off weapons from the air and the sea, but has deployed American troops on the ground as well. Apparently, the emerging congressional position that it would invoke the WPR only if there are to be “boots on the ground” has been further eviscerated. Ground forces have become more narrowly defined as troops specifically outfitted and configured for combat. As the Obama administration continues to increase ground forces in the region—there are now more than 5,000 U.S. troops in Iraq—Congress is making itself ever more irrelevant.

To eliminate the threat of ISIS to the United States—a threat more real and immediate than in any of the cases we have discussed so far—there is no alternative to military force. We cannot negotiate an end to ISIS, we cannot out-propagandize ISIS, and we cannot persuade our Mideast allies to play a larger combat role without a greater U.S. military presence. A Libya-like solution is not in the cards. The defeat of ISIS is in America’s national interest, and to this end the application of greater military force against ISIS is not only useful but necessary.

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**Military force has been employed many times since 1973 and most of these times it has been successful. There have been outright failures such as Beirut and Somalia, but the use of force remains an indispensable policy tool.**

## CONCLUSIONS

What can we conclude? It is certainly not that the use of military force is or should be a first resort. To the contrary, it is the last resort and even referring to

the loss of life as a “cost,” as this article has done, can be dehumanizing. The good news is that American presidents do not resort quickly to the use of force. In all the cases we have considered, presidents first sought alternative, diplomatic ways to address the national security threats they encountered. Those who allege that presidents rush to use force are guilty not only of untruth but libel. Anyone familiar with presidential meetings with the families of the fallen, personal notes to these families, or visits with the severely wounded at Walter Reed would know better.

But for all of that, military force has been employed many times since 1973 and most of these times it has been successful. There have been outright failures such as Beirut and Somalia, but the use of force remains an indispensable policy tool.

Second, the notion that the United States uses force unilaterally and without regard to the views of other nations is a canard. Of the 12 cases reviewed here, 11 were prosecuted under U.N. auspices, or with NATO, or with non-NATO allies, or in some cases all three. United States actions in Beirut, Somalia, the Gulf war, Bosnia, Haiti, Kosovo,

Afghanistan, and Iraq all enforced U.N. Security Council resolutions. NATO has been deeply involved in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and the fight against ISIS. Even the invasion of Grenada took place with prior agreement from neighboring Caribbean countries. Only the invasion of Panama, where the United States historically maintained a sizable military presence, was a unilateral American action.

Third, it is often said that the American public has become “war weary.” Of exactly what is the American public weary? The burdens and sacrifices of war have fallen entirely on a very small slice of the populace—those who fight in America’s all-volunteer military and their families. What wearies the other 95 percent of Americans? They have not served, they have not sacrificed, and they have not expended a dime in new taxes (the government preferring, as it always does, to borrow the money). Ninety-five percent of Americans could not name a single way in which they have been even modestly inconvenienced by any of America’s post-1973 conflicts.

The casualties of war have fallen entirely on those who serve. To put this in context, in the 43 years since the end of America’s role in Vietnam, in which 58,000 lives were lost, American combat deaths have totaled about 7,500. The average American is 200 times more likely to know someone who has been killed in a traffic accident than in combat abroad. As painful as each of these losses has been, this is hardly the record of a blood-soaked imperial power.

Fourth, there is much to be learned from our long-lasting conflicts, particularly Afghanistan and Iraq. The duration of these wars should instruct us that remaking a nation in an image entirely foreign to its history is not easy. It is far more feasible to *rebuild* nations (as with the Marshall Plan or certain disaster relief efforts) than it is to build them in the first place. There is no reason to doubt that representative democracy is the best form of government or that freedom, toleration, and economic opportunity are good for all people. But these cannot be achieved in a brief time frame. The United States has kept military forces in Germany, Japan, and Korea for decades. But these troops were not going out on nightly combat-support missions against armed insurgents. Our experiences in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya should teach us there is no easy way to build from the outside stable, friendly governments, much less free and prosperous ones. In this regard, we might ask ourselves just what we are hoping to accomplish in Afghanistan in the 15th year that we did not accomplish in the 14th.

Fifth, the record of Congress has been sketchy at best. To its credit, and consistent with the requirement of the War Powers Resolution, Congress authorized the three most extensive uses of force—the Gulf war, Afghanistan, and Iraq. While it is unclear (and a bit of a constitutional

nightmare) what might have happened had Congress voted to oppose any of these wars, it is surely preferable to have the president and Congress in agreement regarding major uses of force abroad. With the exception of Beirut in 1983, however, Congress’s role in the other conflicts since 1973 has been dismal. The WPR was designed in part to check presidents but also to compel Congress to step up and take a position on the use of military force. This it has not done.

Technological developments are likely to exacerbate Congress’s irresponsibility. Increasing reliance on drones and other stand-off weapons offers presidents a way to fight wars with minimal casualties. These are precisely the kinds of conflicts with which Congress struggles the most. If Congress is to be involved in any way in decisions to go to



*U.S. Navy commander Putnam H. Browne, lower right, addresses sailors aboard the carrier USS Carl Vinson, August 11, 2011.*

war—as the Framers wished it to be—it will require serious thinking about how this can happen. Meanwhile, the case of ISIS remains before us. This conflict will inevitably draw in additional United States forces not only in the air, but on the ground. For Congress to continue to shirk its role here would be a disgrace.

Finally, judgments about the use of force should not assume that inaction is always cost-free. Had George H. W. Bush not driven Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, who can say what would have occurred? Would Saddam have moved on the Saudi oil fields and cornered a vast share of Mideast oil reserves? The real world never remains static for very long and responsible policymakers must balance the likely costs of action against the likely costs of inaction, however well or little known. Inaction is generally politically safer than action. But to secure American national interests, the use of military force is not always the worst option. Sometimes it is the only option. ♦

# A Real Winner

*Come November, I'm writing in Bill Belichick*

BY GEOFFREY NORMAN

Variations on the same basic conversation are, no doubt, taking place all over the country: people asking, rhetorically, “How has it come to this?” Agonizing over what, if anything, can be done. Wondering, “Does it *really* have to be one of these two?” Sooner or later you come to the dead-end answer, which is . . . “Yes, it seems it does.”

So you begin to fantasize. Wouldn't it be great if it could be—and here you fill in the blank. Someone, say, from history. (My first choice would be Calvin Coolidge.) Or someone from the à la carte menu of contemporary politicians. This would include all the usual suspects, according to one's ideological tastes: Elizabeth Warren, Bobby Jindal, Mitt Romney, whoever.

But what if you cast a much wider net. Made a choice that was truly unorthodox. Off the wall, outside of the box. How about, say, Chuck Norris? He'd give Congress 30 days to get the deficit slimmed down or else he'd roundhouse kick them into shape. Or how about Tom Hanks, who would have a hard time getting his personal approval numbers below 90 percent? Or why not Bill Gates, since this seems to be the season for billionaire businessmen?

Or, as someone said to me while we were exchanging texts on a lazy football Sunday, “How about Bill Belichick for prez? You want a winner and someone who knows how to deal with the media . . . he's your guy.” (For the uninitiated, Belichick is the most successful pro football coach of our generation.)

“Ur rite,” I texted back. “Brilliant. Guy has forgotten more about ‘winning’ than Trump ever knew.”

The person I was texting had spent time in Iraq and had both a professional and a personal interest in the war on terror. She hates the way things are going over there and texted back, “Belichick would never say he wouldn't put boots on the ground. He wouldn't give away anything about what he might—or might not—do. He'd keep em guessing . . . and very, very worried.”

“Absolutely,” I texted back. “Gives the enemy no help.

He won't even say who he is starting at quarterback until the rules say he has to. Always keeps them guessing.”

“Right,” my correspondent texted back, fast and furious. “But if he did put boots on the ground, they would stomp the bad guys into a puddle and then stomp the puddle dry. Belichick isn't about sending signals. He is about stealing yours and using them to beat you.”

And so on.

Bill Belichick isn't going to be president, of course. He has no discernible interest in anything beyond seeing his New England Patriots teams win. Still, you can't help wishing that some of our silver-tongued pols would copy his style when it comes to dealing with the press. His monosyllabic answers to rote questions frustrate the journalists who think that he owes them more. And . . . so what? There is never any uncertainty about who is in control. His job is to win football games and their job is to write stories. Nowhere is it said that he has to help them write their stories. They certainly don't help him win football games. He gives just as much as he has to and no more. This isn't to say that the man cannot mobilize language when he wants to. Compare Hillary Clinton's insipid and ubiquitous “Stronger together” with this from the coach: “There is an old saying about the strength of the wolf is the pack, and I think there is a lot of truth to that. On a football team, it's not the strength of the individual players, but it is the strength of the unit and how they all function together.”

I texted that quote back to the other member of the “Draft Belichick” movement.

“Yeah,” she texted back. “Yeah . . . *wolves*. That's what I'm talking about. You think Bill Belichick would spend five seconds talking about some babe in a beauty contest and how fat she is . . . or isn't?”

It is hard to win games in the National Football League. Hard even when you have your best players on the field. Harder when you are missing one of them and that one is among the best quarterbacks of all time. And much harder still when his backup is hurt and you are reduced to starting a rookie against the Houston Texans, a team known for a punishing defense that has feasted on quarterbacks a lot more experienced than someone named Jacoby Brissett. But the New England Patriots made it look easy, in a recent Thursday night yawner, winning 27-0.

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An upset, perhaps, but not a surprise when the coach is Bill Belichick, and coaching counts for more in football than in any other sport.

They used to say about the University of Alabama's Bear Bryant that he was so good, "He could take his and beat yours. And then he could take yours and beat his." The great coaches have that. They win with what they are given, whether it is Tom Brady, Jimmy Garoppolo, or Jacoby Brissett. They make the system fit the players and they get the players to believe.

Easy as that.

Except . . . very few have it, and it cannot be copied or learned. Many of Belichick's assistant coaches have gone on to take head coaching jobs. Almost all of them have failed. Evidently, whatever it is that Belichick has, it cannot be imitated.

But it is undeniable. He has been the head coach of the New England Patriots for 15 seasons and in that time the team has appeared in six Super Bowls, winning four of them. Four and counting. And in one of those years when the Patriots lost the big game, they won all the others. No team had ever gone 18-0 before the Patriots did it. No team has done it since.

There are various statistical measures and proofs of Belichick's greatness. So many that it would be tedious to list them. Sufficient to say that he is the greatest in the game today at doing what he does. And, arguably, the greatest ever.

And he has done it in utter opposition to the celebrity zeitgeist. Everything about the man seems intended to reduce his celebrity quotient, not least the clothes. He wears hoodies with cut-off sleeves, and you'll see better-dressed men down at the carwash. The clothes, like the rest of the public face, seem designed to deflect attention rather than attract it. We have all become accustomed to the sloppy use of the word "charisma," which has been reduced to meaning "star power." (It actually means something quite a bit more than that, but this is not the place for a discussion of Max Weber's seminal essay.)

But let's concede that "charisma" has come to mean fame and star power. Well, then, Bill Belichick is the

anti-charismatic leader incarnate and, Lord, we could use a little more of that in these trying times.

Just imagine a president for whom it is not always "about me." Barack Obama lusts after the camera and is utterly in love with the sound of his own voice. In these final days of his regime, he and his team are obsessively cultivating his "legacy." It's all about him. Always.

And somewhere along the way, that's what happened to our national politics. Norman Mailer saw it coming with John F. Kennedy and wrote it up in his prophetic *Esquire* essay "Superman Comes to the Supermarket":

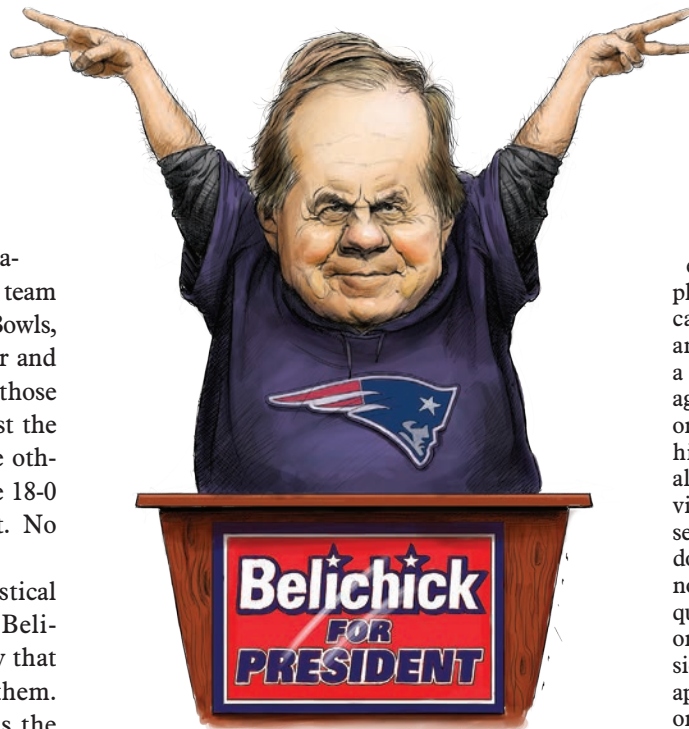
He had the eyes of a mountaineer. His appearance changed with his mood, strikingly so, and this made him always more interesting than what he was saying. He would seem at one moment older than his age, forty-eight or fifty, a tall, slim, sunburned professor with a pleasant weathered face, not even particularly handsome; five minutes later, talking to a press conference on his lawn, three microphones before him, a television camera turning, his appearance would have gone through a metamorphosis, he would look again like a movie star, his coloring vivid, his manner rich, his gestures strong and quick, alive with that concentration of vitality a successful actor always seems to radiate. Kennedy had a dozen faces. Although they were not at all similar as people, the quality was reminiscent of someone like Brando whose expression rarely changes, but whose appearances seems to shift from one person into another as the minutes go by, and one bothers with this comparison because,

like Brando, Kennedy's most characteristic quality is the remote and private air of a man who has traversed some lonely terrain of experience, of loss and gain, of nearness to death, which leaves him isolated from the mass of others.

Since that time, we have become somehow psychically dependent on our presidents. And they have become more powerful and "charismatic." Or not, in some cases, for which we cannot forgive them.

So we have arrived at a place where we have to choose between a couple of narcissists, both badly flawed and plainly unable to resist the approval of crowds and cameras which, for them, is the only measure of success.

We become less as they become more.



**T**hat is the trouble with charismatic leadership. You end up worshiping power and surrendering to it. Belichick, the anti-charismatic man, does not appear ubiquitously on magazine covers. You do not read “items” about him in the gossip columns. He is not a frequent guest on late-night television. He goes to work. Does his job. Gives his obligatory press conferences in which he answers questions with a kind of phrasing and demeanor that is guaranteed to take any stray electricity out of the room. Consider this from a recent post-game press conference:

Q: Was the biggest problem on offense the play of the offensive line?

BELICHICK: I didn't think anything was good enough. Nothing was good enough at any position, in any phase of the game. It just wasn't good enough.

He delivered these lines with all the animation and passion of a clerk at the Department of Motor Vehicles telling you that your name appears nowhere in their records.

But his team wins, and that really is statement enough. And besides, there is a game next week and he has to get back to work.

There is one other aspect of the Belichick record that has pertinence here. His tenure as head coach of the New England Patriots has not been without scandal. First, there was something that came to be called “Spygate.” This offense, for which Belichick was personally fined \$500,000 by the National Football League, involved using cameras to steal the signals opposing teams used to call plays and formations. How bad was it?

Plenty bad, as the size of the fine would indicate. But not bad enough to keep the Patriots from winning football games. They did lose the Super Bowl in 2008, in the immediate aftermath of the scandal. They lost it on the famous “helmet catch” by David Tyree of the Giants, which ruined that perfect 18-0 season in an almost transcendent case of poetic justice. After Belichick apologized and paid up in 2008, the Patriots went to two more Super Bowls. They lost one of them—to the Giants, again. They won the other, against the Seattle Seahawks. In the long aftermath of “Spygate,” perhaps the most telling insight into the scandal comes from the man who dropped the dime on the Patriots and Belichick. That would be Eric Mangini, who was, at the time, head coach of the New York Jets. He had been one of Belichick's assistants on three of the Patriots' Super Bowl teams.

“I think when you look at the history of success that [the Patriots] had after that incident,” Mangini said, “it's pretty obvious that it didn't play any type of significant role in the victories [the Patriots] had or the success that [the Patriots] had.”

And then there was “Deflategate.” This one revolves

around the pounds per square inch of air pressure in a properly inflated football. The Patriots were accused, two seasons ago, of using soft footballs so their quarterback, Tom Brady, could get a firmer grip and throw a tighter spiral. There were all the usual investigations. Brady denied knowledge or involvement. Still, he was suspended for four games by the league commissioner. Brady played a full season while the suspension was on appeal and went into the judicial system, where at one point it appeared it might even go all the way to the Supreme Court. That didn't happen and, for the first four games this season, Brady was not allowed to take the field as quarterback of the New England Patriots. Was not, in fact, permitted any contact with the team. He couldn't drop by the locker room or the practice field to make a few throws, get in a little workout, talk trash with some of his teammates. He was in exile.

Since Brady is still on the payroll, though, Belichick could not afford to go out and buy himself an expensive quarterback to fill in. So he had to make do with back-ups, and it was generally felt the Patriots would be doing well to win two of those first four games. In their opener, they beat the Arizona Cardinals, who had gone deep into the playoffs last season. Then they beat the Miami Dolphins, assuring that they would do no worse than 2-2 in those first four games. But they lost Garoppolo, their second-stringer, to injury and would be starting Jacoby Brissett against the Texans.

They won that one easily, 27-0. So it appeared conceivable that Belichick might have them at 4-0 when Brady returned. The question was asked, here and there, who counts more for the success of the Patriots, Belichick or Brady?

This is one of those pointless hypotheticals that provide fuel for talk radio. Still, it's interesting to consider that if the Patriots had started the season 4-0, Belichick's record without Brady since he became the starting quarterback would have been 15-5. That works out to a .750 winning percentage. With Brady as the starter the number is .771.

The Patriots, as it happens, proved they are only human, and lost, 16-0, on October 2. And the beating was worse than the score suggests. Belichick gave a typically cryptic press conference. He didn't sugarcoat it. Didn't pass the buck. He said, essentially, that it was a team effort. He was refreshingly downbeat:

Every week is a challenge in this league. We all know that. We just have to perform better. We have to coach better. We have to play better in all three phases of the game. It's like that every week in the National Football League. If you don't perform well, you don't do well. Every team is good in this league.

He wasn't asked if he would consider a write-in campaign for president.

Pity. ♦



Tom Wolfe (2016)

# Origins of Speech

*How Tom Wolfe gets us talking.* BY ELIZABETH POWERS

Noam Chomsky would seem an irresistible figure for lampooning by Tom Wolfe, whose career has been devoted to eviscerating the preening of America's *bien pensant* class. Since the Vietnam war, when he looked like nothing less than Dennis the Menace's father, Chomsky has been the very model of left-wing indignation. In *The Kingdom of Speech*, Wolfe places him among the *brave* intellectuals of that era "willing to leave the office, go to the streets, and take part in antiwar demonstrations"—yet whose arrests "were of the token variety that seldom caused

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## The Kingdom of Speech

by Tom Wolfe

Little, Brown, 192 pp., \$26

the miscreant to miss dinner out." Beginning with his essay "The Responsibility of Intellectuals" (1967), Chomsky has churned out hundreds (make that thousands) of grim, anticapitalist pronouncements and accusations of the United States as a murderous one-party state ruled by a managerial elite.

Yet it is not Chomsky's role as a left-wing gadfly that is Wolfe's major brief here. Before there was Chomsky the political icon there was Chomsky the linguist. His current outsized status is a case of what economists

call the multiplier effect. Beginning in the late 1950s, Chomsky awakened the world to the issue of language, providing "the entire structure, anatomy, and physiology of language as a system." His authority moved linguistics from its position as "a satellite orbiting around language studies" to "the main event on the cutting edge." By 1960, linguists were reduced "to filling in gaps and supplying footnotes for Noam Chomsky."

Why the fuss over language, anyway? And why on earth does Tom Wolfe care? It comes down to evolution, a theory embedded in "the very anatomy, the very central nervous system, of all *modern* people." Wolfe grants the opposable thumb, but not the notion that human speech sprang from the loins of orangutans. Language, in Wolfe's account, is

BEBETO MATTHEWS / ASSOCIATED PRESS

an artifact created by man and, like all of man's tools from slingshots to iPhones, has allowed *Homo sapiens* to take control of the world. It is the sine qua non of being human. Wolfe's final words, literally, on the subject: "To say that animals evolved into man is like saying that Carrara marble evolved into Michelangelo's *David*."

Before reaching that point, Wolfe tells two interconnected stories. One concerns the way an idea comes to hold an exalted position over men's minds and changes our ways of thinking about the world. Wolfe's examples of such power are Jesus, Muhammad, John Calvin, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Charles Darwin. The second story is about the institutional power that transfixes, multiplies, nails down the idea in men's minds—and marginalizes, Palinizes, and slanders those who emerge from low-lying swamps with a different narrative.

Darwin's big idea was the Theory of Evolution. Darwin didn't dare to go so far, but everyone knew that *On the Origin of Species* (1859) concerned the evolution of humans. Despite the outrage of clerics, the idea was massively promoted by individuals such as Thomas Huxley, who didn't even believe in evolution but was an out-and-out materialist, i.e., atheist. (Understanding the power of language, Huxley wisely coined "agnostic" to describe himself.) Before long, "At the higher altitudes of society, as well as in academia, people began to judge one another socially according to their belief, or not, in Darwin's great discovery." Sound familiar?

It was, of course, language itself that promoted, then institutionalized, Darwinism in newspaper reviews, learned societies, and scholarly articles. Nothing in the fossil record, however, explained the miracle of human communication. Even Alfred Russel Wallace, whom Darwin finessed on the priority issue, denied an animal genealogy for speech. From the get-go, the size of the human brain—which allowed people to think abstractly, to plan ahead (of which no animal is capable), to comprehend space and time—"was so far beyond the boundaries of natural selection" as

to render that term meaningless "in explaining the origins of man." In *The Descent of Man*, his sequel to *Origin*, Darwin sought to prove that humans were simply very smart parrots, hardwired for speech, thereby bringing the missing *Homo sapiens* into "the big picture of evolution." The Oxford linguist Max Müller, although without ever naming Darwin, referred to the notion that language had evolved from animal sounds as the "bow-wow theory." Despite his name and birthplace, Müller was also a certified English Gentleman and insisted on a "hard and fast line between man and brute," a "Rubicon." There the matter rested, and studies of the origins of language fell into dogmatic slumber by the turn of the 20th century.

Enter Noam Chomsky, who revived the notion of the biological origin of language by identifying—*eureka!*—the device in the brain where the capacity for speech was stored. Maybe not an actual device, or gadget, or thingamabob, but it had a name: language acquisition device, or LAD. Again, we are in "hard-wired" territory, as the LAD represented an "innate" capacity of the human brain. The instant a child, whether in Timbuktu or in Paris, is exposed to human speech, the hypothetical LAD goes into operation. It is programmed with a universal grammar, which likewise does not have to be taught. In the early 1960s, Chomsky's theory acquired the name transformational grammar, or TG, as linguists worked out the theory by churning out analyses that described the rules by which ever-more-complicated linguistic constructions are generated. Thus, "Mary is liked by John" might be considered a *transformation* of "John likes Mary," generated from an underlying deep structure. All languages, whatever their surface structure, work the same way, and humans easily recognize such variations and are also able to distinguish and to disambiguate—"What annoyed John was being ignored by Mary"—all because of that little LAD.

Chomsky's theory, like Darwin's, was based on what Wolfe calls an "uncontroversial" assumption: that language had

evolved, that the human mind had an innate capacity for language, and that all languages share certain universal forms. Chomsky's institutional power has been such that no one has been able to weaken that edifice—even if, Mao-like, Chomsky has revised and retrofitted his doctrine to the point that it resembles a Rube Goldberg device. Despite millions of dollars in funding and decades of research, however, a "language organ" has never been located, while Chomsky's earlier oracular pronouncements simply fall into a deep well of oblivion.

One of Chomsky's updates to the arsenal of universal linguistic features was recursion, unveiled in 2002. An example: "Mary suspected that John's failure to arrive for their date meant that he could not be counted on to get them to the airport on time." By my count, that sentence nests at least five separate thoughts.

Enter Daniel Everett, who, beginning with a 25,000-word article in 2005, debunked Chomsky's language organ, along with LAD, universal grammar, and deep structure. Unlike Chomsky and his acolytes, Everett actually went out into the field—indeed, into the remotest Amazonian rain forest—where he lived for several decades with the exceedingly isolated Pirahã tribe. Their isolation is reflected in the archaism of their language: Not only does it lack recursion, but it also has no words for "yesterday" or "tomorrow," no way of expressing the past or the future. Thus, while the Pirahã sing and dance and hunt, they create no epics and, aside from the bow and arrow and a primitive scraping tool for making arrows, they produce no artifacts. They do not draw and have no conception of gods or of numbers. (This state of affairs led the Smithsonian Channel to produce a documentary entitled "The Grammar of Happiness" in 2012.) The Pirahã are fully evolved in the physical sense, but in their remarkable isolation, they represent "the most basic prototype of *Homo sapiens*."

Like the clerics in Victorian England, Chomsky's bulldogs sought to shoot down Everett; but he outflanked

them with a bestselling account of his life among the Pirahã (*Don't Sleep, There Are Snakes*) in 2008, followed by *Language: The Cultural Tool* in 2012, which, according to Wolfe, shows that language did not evolve from anything; it was “a ‘cultural tool’ man had made for himself.”

Wolfe advances a theory of mnemonics to explain how humans created this artifact. I have not seen any references in the linguistics literature to such a theory, and Wolfe offers no notes; but to my mind, it suggests a very cumbersome way of language processing. I am one of those folks more impressed with a theory that is simple. Yet there may be something to it: Humans, after departing East Africa, did have 100,000 years or so to work out the details, not forgetting that ancient peoples had more prodigious memories than us moderns, even larger than Victorian polymaths.

Although Tom Wolfe does not connect the two, it strikes me that the notion of a linguistic deep structure tells us much about Noam Chomsky's politics. A century ago, Chomsky would have been an unorthodox figure among linguists: Aside from his native English, he is proficient in only a single foreign language, Hebrew, learned as a child. Before the so-called revolution in linguistics that he inaugurated, the field was mostly devoted to recuperating and describing the world's languages. Scholars, and missionaries in particular (such as Daniel Everett), spent their lives traveling in the most wicked and inhospitable terrains—if not to bring the Word, at least to document the rich variety of the earth's tongues. Chomsky, in contrast, disdains fieldwork: As Wolfe notes, he sits instead up high, “very high, in an armchair in an air-conditioned office at MIT, spic-and-span . . . [and] never leaves the building except to go to the airport to fly to other campuses to receive honorary degrees . . . more than 40 at last count.”

Thus, the theory of transformational grammar rests on not a single natural language, but purports to offer insight into the functioning of the mind itself. Deep structure, in this theory, is a place in the mind where abstract linguistic functions (nouns, verbs, subject, object,

passive voice, etc.) live. These functions resemble Immanuel Kant's conceptual categories, also constituents of the human mind—of all minds, thus “universal.” Chomsky has acknowledged his indebtedness to the 18th-century rationalist philosophers, and, of course, the power of their thinking lives on in one of the greatest affirmations of Enlightenment universalism: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Very beautiful—but very abstract, and the United States has spent two-and-a-half centuries seeking to realize these truths.

When he inveighs against the United States, Chomsky is resurrecting Voltaire, railing at the obscurantism of the church or at people who believe in witches. For such hyper-rationalists,

there are truths that the mind *knows*, indeed all minds know: that we should be tolerant of others, should practice what we preach, should love others as we love ourselves—and would do so if our minds were not distorted and diminished by the lying propaganda we so willingly imbibe from self-serving authorities.

Chomsky's vicious attacks on America draw on what is apparently a lifelong revulsion at the disparity between the democratic ideals on which the United States is founded—our deep structure—and what he considers the murderous hypocrisy of our actual behavior—our surface structure. And although Chomsky repeatedly says that he is against all authoritarian governments, his vast linguistic provincialism has blinded him to the full variety of the world. He can only see the sins of the United States of America. His legacy has been misanthropic, indeed antihuman. ♦

BCA

# Leaning Toward God

*The ministry to the Manhattanites revealed.*

BY ALICE B. LLOYD

A recent *New York* magazine profile of the Manhattan minister Timothy Keller lists the types of congregants filling his auditorium pews: “A cross-section of yuppie Manhattanites—doctors, bankers, lawyers, artists, actors, and designers, some of them older, most of them in their twenties or thirties.”

*Huh?* We raise our eyebrows. How could this be, when the city runs on secular selfishness? Or at least, secular selfishness drives the creative class and their upwardly mobile professional counterparts to pursue material success and swami-organic “self-actualization.” The traditional mainline Protestant denominations may be

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**Making Sense of God**  
*An Invitation to the Skeptical*  
by Timothy Keller  
Viking, 336 pp., \$27

mostly dead, making way for the ongoing rise of a new orthodox evangelicalism. But in Manhattan?

Timothy Keller's Redeemer Presbyterian, with its three Manhattan congregations, is an immensely popular church. His ministry, not strictly evangelical (Keller prefers “orthodox”), only grew with his first book, *The Reason for God*, a bestseller in 2008. Now, with his fourth and latest, he reaches further for the unreachable: the modern secularist. *Making Sense of God* grew out of Keller's regular meetings for Christ-curious skeptics.

His sales pitch: Christian faith cures the cosmic seasickness of an all-too-common arrogant atheism. Rising numbers of Christian converts (although mostly in Africa and East Asia) testify to a universal human need to seek and find a satisfying answer. If the educated atheist's ego-driven ailment is mostly confined to wealthy Western nations, so might be the perception of its pervasiveness.

Always kindly, Keller dismisses the idea that Christianity has no more claim on educated and accomplished men and women in this age of science. Believers in man's capacity to tame the mysteries of heaven and earth take on a sublimely awful burden. The ego strains under the weight of a comprehensible universe. In a godless world, "we are liberated to construct our own individual meanings for our lives." Keller argues, almost in the form of a mathematical proof, that "such created meanings are much more fragile and thin than discovered meanings." No single mind can explain away the loose and unsatisfied core feeling of a lonely soul.

His range of cultural references targets a certain audience of seekers. He quotes Martin Heidegger and the Netflix series *Fargo* within the same hundred words. This borderline-bathetic blend of high and low reveals a charming and attractive 21st-century intellect. Being neither a chummy lightweight nor an esoteric stiff, he strikes the right tone for educated skeptics. And his quiet, learned charisma endears him to the elite.

Keller may preach to all walks of life, but remarkably many among the political power class join his flock and seek his private counsel. (Indiana governor and vice-presidential nominee Mike Pence is reportedly a fan.) They come to him having worked their way to the top, only to find something's missing. They ask, "Is That All There Is?" And yes, Keller quotes Peggy Lee.

Public servants loosely committed to human-rights doctrine will feel the absence of a firm faith in God more consequentially than most. John Locke would be shocked by secular self-determination because (as Keller points out)



'God the Father Almighty' (Italian, 15th-16th century), Museo Diocesano D'Arte Sacra, Orte

"he was a Christian who believed in moral truths and obligations that were independent of our minds and feelings and which limited our freedom." Can a Lockean democracy function absent any secure moral foundation?

Secular conviction that a vague humanist ethic and healthy living are the light and the way also requires a leap of faith, Keller argues. It's a diluted Christian morality, and we're convinced it's elective. Happiness eludes modern men and women: Encaged in the "freedom to be you and me," we're cut off from God's love and trapped in a quest to know and to improve ourselves.

While a yogi might offer meditative release, "an experience of Christ's grace strikes a fatal blow to our egocentricity," Keller declares. "The sight of Jesus dying for us out

of love destroys both pride and self-hatred at the same time." Keller reads like a self-help guru, or a 12-step sponsor; but his is the same old Christian pitch for an identity unconfined by ego.

The truth remains: Megachurches from the Upper West Side to the Bible Belt draw mega-congregations. For Episcopalians, who can't stomach evangelicalism, the rule is attraction rather than promotion. As empty pews and dwindling parishes testify, gospel-as-metaphor doesn't attract troubled souls, particularly when the 21st-century's troubled soul wants to know *what's it got to do with me?*

It's not news that yuppies, creatives, and masters of the universe have immortal souls, too. In 2016, it might take a minister like Timothy Keller to remind us what that means. ♦

# Sort of Life

*John Aubrey gets the John Aubrey treatment.*

BY MALCOLM FORBES

Antiquities, said Francis Bacon, are “remnants of History, which have casually escaped the shipwreck of time.” The 17th-century English biographer and antiquarian John Aubrey was born in the year Bacon died, read his *Essays* as a child, and included him in his who’s-who compendium of famous greats, *Brief Lives*. He offered a variation of his words when looking back on his own achievements: “I have rescued what I could of the past from the teeth of time.”

Aubrey was a collector, a curator, and a chronicler, an enthusiastic preserver of England’s heritage and tradition. Born in Wiltshire in 1626, he lived through an age of social and political upheaval—constitutional chaos, civil war, religious intolerance—but also one marked by daring experimentation and scientific breakthroughs. Aubrey kept “ingenious company,” hobnobbing with the sharpest minds in the country, and when he became a fellow of the newly founded Royal Society in 1663, he began to share his knowledge publicly and contribute to the advancement of learning.

However, unlike his illustrious contemporaries (and Bacon before him), Aubrey was not fully recognized for his accomplishments during his lifetime. Later generations of antiquaries, historians, and archaeologists dusted him off and issued posthumous praise for his pioneering work. He saw only

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**John Aubrey**  
*My Own Life*  
by Ruth Scurr  
New York Review Books, 544 pp., \$35



one of his books published—the silly occult primer *Miscellanies: A Collection of Hermetick Philosophy*, not the groundbreaking compilation of potted biographies upon which his reputation now rests. It wasn’t until 1898, 200 years after Aubrey’s death, and following several abridged, bowdlerized, and pale anonymous imitations, that a near-complete edition of *Brief Lives* appeared.

Finally, readers could witness, and appreciate, Aubrey’s successful efforts to get at “the plain and naked truth, which is exposed so bare that the very pudenda are not covered.” By eschewing large,

lavish, gushing personal histories for smaller, subtler, warts-and-all character sketches, Aubrey brought eminent writers, philosophers, doctors, and statesmen captivantly alive. In the process, he ensured his own posterity.

In this masterly and original biography, Ruth Scurr calls Aubrey England’s first great biographer. As a fitting tribute to a man who reinvented the form, Scurr has devised a novel way of telling Aubrey’s story. *John Aubrey, My Own Life* is composed of Aubrey’s notes, manuscripts, and letters, all edited and arranged in chronological order so as to read like the diary that Aubrey never wrote. At first glance, it seems an audacious enterprise—a crudely stitched-together patchwork, a haphazardly cut-and-pasted collage—but Scurr has so meticulously researched her subject that each “diary” entry, from early recollections in 1634 to dying days in 1697, coheres and convinces as the intimate testimony of an exceptional man.

At the beginning, we encounter a young Aubrey already in possession of a curious mind. He delighted in exploring local sites: visiting a glass painter’s workshop with Sir Walter Raleigh’s great-nephews, trawling the library of Wilton House, and admiring “that stupendous antiquity” Stonehenge. He lost himself in books and drawing and was routinely saddened by the casual mistreatment of manuscripts: “It hurts my eyes and heart to see fragile painted pages used to line pastry dishes, to bung up bottles, to cover schoolbooks, or make templates beneath a tailor’s scissors.” He went on to follow the recommendation of his older and wiser friend Thomas Hobbes by heading to Oxford, where he indulged in learning behind its cloistered walls and “cut a sparkish figure in the town.”

Aubrey’s studies, however, were interrupted by civil war. Sent home to endure “sequestered rural life,” his frustration was compounded by the sight of battle-scarred landscapes and

irreparably damaged ancient monuments. But the more noble buildings and stately ruins Aubrey came across, the more compelled he was to delve into their history. And so, in 1654, he took the step of entering “philosophical and antiquarian remarks into pocket memorandum books.” This became a habit, a self-enforced duty—“No one else will make these records in my place”—which he sedulously kept up for the rest of his life.

From this point on, Aubrey started collecting and collating in earnest. He joined clubs and societies, befriended Isaac Newton, Christopher Wren, and Robert Boyle, and classified handwriting, ordered shells, dated buildings, and rediscovered the Avebury stone circles. (“It seems to me,” he noted, “that Avebury excels Stonehenge as a cathedral does a parish church.”) Not that the course of his life ran smoothly. He was besieged by all manner of “treacheries and enmities,” sued by a lover, hounded by “catchpoll crocodile” creditors, and harangued by well-wishing friends to take holy orders.

“But, fough! The cassock stinks,” he wrote.

It was when Hobbes died in 1679 that Aubrey turned to writing of a different kind. After completing an account of his friend’s life, Aubrey compiled a list of other possible luminaries whose biographies could be included in a single volume. He got to work on his project, writing up “minutes of Lives” swiftly, “playingly,” and “tumultuarly, or as they occurred in my thoughts.” He viewed his literary endeavor—his cataloguing of “worthy men’s names and notions”—as similar to his investigating and archiving of antiquaries: Both were means of safeguarding and showcasing cultural legacies, of preventing England’s treasures from being tarnished or “swallowed by oblivion.”

The Aubrey that emerges from Ruth Scurr’s pages is a man who was mild-mannered and self-effacing. At a particularly low ebb, he belittles his talents, declaring that he has been “a whetstone to other people’s achievements. Nothing more.” But Aubrey was also clever, convivial, and passionate about his pursuits. It is a joy to behold him going

about his labors of love, whether making pilgrimages and “perambulations” across counties to survey grottos, sepulchers, medicinal wells, and abbeys, or dilating on the merits of urns, coins, astrological charts, and other rarities and curiosities.

Interestingly—and in contrast to Samuel Pepys in his diary—what Aubrey scarcely comments on is the turmoil and carnage around him: the Great Plague, the Great London Fire (or, as he terms it, the Great Conflagration) of 1666, and, of course, the English civil war. It is a pity, as the detail he does give, when not perfunctory, is revealing, akin to the minute, gem-like observations that stud each of his brief lives. He has this to say of Charles I’s execution:

*He viewed his literary endeavor as a means of safeguarding and showcasing cultural legacies, of preventing England’s treasures from being tarnished or ‘swallowed by oblivion.’*

“On this day, the King was executed. It was bitter cold, so he wore two heavy shirts, lest he should shiver and seem afraid.”

Years later, once peace has been restored, he witnesses the coronation of James II and notices how “the crown tottered extremely.” The only signs of the times Aubrey regularly mentions are notable scientific discoveries or social developments, such as London’s first coffeehouse, where he stays late conversing with his ingenious friends and enjoying a drink that “will prevent drowsiness and make one fit for business.”

If there is fault to be found here it lies not in what Aubrey divulges but the way he does so. In her introduction, Scurr tells us that she has modernized Aubrey’s words and spellings. Thus, this original line from his brief

life of Shakespeare—“His Comoedies will remain witt as long as the English tongue is understood”—is fine-tuned into “His comedies will remain wit. . .” Scurr has also added words of her own to elucidate or “offset the charm of Aubrey’s own turns of phrase.” She deserves credit for all her deft tinkering: For Aubrey to live and breathe, and for us to appreciate “one of the finest English prose writers there has ever been,” he should be comprehensible.

For the most part, Scurr maintains a discreet presence, but sometimes we can detect her involvement. Here is Aubrey marveling at the ever-changing color of a new turquoise ring: “Today I noticed that it has become nubilated, or cloudy, at north and south.” (That explanatory “or cloudy” is Scurr’s helping hand.) On other occasions, though, Aubrey’s language is either so opaque or so specialized it cries out for simplification:

Here at Draycot is a great deal of vitriol ore. Petrified periwinkles and also belemnites are frequently found in the ground. The water in the wells is vitriolate, and with powder of galles it turns a purple colour. It is not good for tucking or fulling mills because it tinges the cloth a little yellowish.

And yet there are instances where Scurr judiciously resists any kind of tweaking. “All my business and affairs are suddenly running kim kam!” Aubrey announces—and with it, Scurr gives us the option: to either read between the lines or be contentedly befuddled.

Graham Greene claimed that the autobiography, which opens after a birth and closes before a death, is merely “a sort of life.” Scurr’s imagined autobiography of John Aubrey fits that description, with Aubrey glossing his beginnings (as a newborn he was “very sickly, likely to die”) and anticipating his demise: “My candle burns low.” (He was later buried in an unmarked grave.) Scurr’s account is only a sort of life because it is a radically new way of presenting a life. Bold, innovative, and consistently absorbing, *John Aubrey, My Own Life*, manages the dual feat of dramatizing a brilliant biographer and reinterpreting the art of biography. ♦

# The Builder's Art

*A novel reveals the key to the Ottoman cityscape.*

BY ARAM BAKSHIAN JR.

Survivors of the old Ottoman Empire, my paternal grandmother included, were accustomed to beginning bedtime stories with a rather puzzling stock opening: "Once upon a time, there was and there was not . . ." Contradictory on its face, it actually made a lot of sense, especially when prefacing a folk tale grounded in truths but formulated as fable. It could also apply to historical fiction.

Although the Turkish novelist Elif Shafak doesn't begin her sprawling, moving—and only occasionally exasperating—tapestry of a novel with these words, she well might have, and she does allude to them later in her text. *The Architect's Apprentice* is both a richly evocative historical narrative and an exercise in sheer fantasy, a work equal parts Arabian Nights, magical realism, formulaic whodunit, and chronicle of a lost empire at its zenith—an intriguing mixture of things that did, and did not, happen.

The architect of the title, though little known to most American readers, is one of history's greatest master builders, Sinan, chief architect to three Ottoman sultans beginning with Suleiman the Magnificent. The latter expanded Ottoman influence to its height during a reign of nearly half-a-century (1520-66) and was arguably the most talented and powerful monarch in an era of compelling rulers. At the time, the Ottoman Army was the most efficient and best disciplined in the world, and it was from within its ranks, where he served as a military engineer, that Sinan, son of a humble Christian stone mason in

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## The Architect's Apprentice

by Elif Shafak  
Viking, 432 pp., \$27.95

Anatolia, and of Greek or Armenian descent, first rose to prominence.

He was a product of the *devshirme*, the Ottoman levy of the strongest, most promising boys and young men from among the empire's Christian subjects. Young recruits like Sinan, whose Christian name was Joseph, were renamed and became mandatory converts to Islam, nominally "slaves" of the sultan. The brightest among them, trained in the army or rigorous palace schools, would end up as senior military commanders and government officials, sometimes rising to the highest rank of all, grand vizier. Thus, with each passing generation until the end of the *devshirme* in the mid-17th century, the leadership of the nominally Turkish Ottoman Empire became less and less Turkish by blood, just as Ottoman sultans—usually mothered by Circassian, Slavic, Greek, Armenian, or European concubines—became less and less Turkish themselves. The there-was-and-there-was-not formula applies to the very nature of the empire itself.

Probably the greatest of all the sons of the *devshirme*, Sinan was responsible for the building of 79 mosques, 34 palaces, 33 public baths, 19 tombs, 55 schools, 16 poorhouses, 7 Muslim seminaries, 12 caravansaries, and numerous granaries, fountains, bridges, aqueducts, and hospitals. He also supervised a major restoration of Santa Sophia. Dying in his hundredth year, Sinan's legacy set the standard for Otto-

man public architecture until Western styles, usually adapted by Western-oriented Armenian palace architects, came into fashion after the 1800s.

Around this very real historical figure, Elif Shafak arranges a fictitious quartet of apprentices vying for the master's favor, including the human protagonist Jahan, who is both an architect-in-training and mahout for Chota, a white elephant from India, gift of the Great Mogul to Suleiman, and the novel's four-footed co-protagonist. (While the elephant is genuine, Jahan falls into the was-and-wasn't category, a Turkish cabin boy on the ship delivering the elephant who, when the real mahout dies at sea, passes himself off as Chota's Indian attendant.)

Which leads us to the palace, to a fictional, unconsummated love affair between Jahan and Princess Mirimah, the real-life daughter of Sultan Suleiman, a beautiful and (according to one historian) "laughter-loving" princess for whom Sinan built one of his finest Istanbul mosques. With a colorful supporting cast of good and evil courtiers, scheming eunuchs, wicked harem beauties, a rollicking band of gypsies, and side trips to Rome and India, the reader soon learns to overlook the author's many historical liberties and occasional anachronisms. At one point, she has the Kapi Aga, the Sultan's chief white eunuch, tap the roof of his carriage with a walking stick in the manner of a Victorian gentleman in a hansom cab, while her dialogue for Istanbul's lower social orders resembles 19th-century cockney parlance more than anything one would have heard on the shores of the 16th-century Bosphorus. Nonetheless, it is a most enjoyable literary ride.

Things are seldom what they seem, and some of the twists and turns of the plot stretch credibility, but the historical atmosphere Shafak evokes—the sights, sounds, smells, and emotions of the greatest city of its day with layers of history ranging through ancient Greece, the Age of Alexander, and the Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman empires—conveys a lot of truth even when it strays from the strictly factual. ♦

# Lockn' Roll

*Jam band culture comes to Virginia.* BY JOSEPH HOLT



Warren Haynes and the Allman Brothers Band at the 2014 festival

Arrington, Va.

**B**ack in 1989, when the Grateful Dead released their final studio album, its title served as a fair reminder of the band's improbable survival and enduring relevance: *Built to Last*.

As it happens, last year, the Grateful Dead once again found themselves among the top worldwide musical acts. Over five dates in mid-summer 2015, they put on a series of concerts in Santa Clara and Chicago collectively billed as *Fare Thee Well*. Promoted as their 50th-anniversary celebration, and the final performances together of its "core four"—bassist Phil Lesh, guitarist Bob Weir, and drummers Bill Kreutzmann and Mickey Hart—the five shows sold upwards of 360,000 tickets and grossed more than \$52 million, garnering an additional 400,000 pay-per-view subscriptions.

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Yet the concerts proved more than just an enormous commercial success. The music was good—*great*, even. The percussion was precise, the bass, guitars, and keyboards were expressive, and the vocals were rustic but true to form. Neither the songs nor the musicians seemed to show signs of age, and following the final encore, it seemed hard to imagine the band members were ready to hang up their instruments and mosey on down the golden road.

And of course, they didn't. With a slightly varied lineup, they continued touring throughout the fall and following summer as *Dead & Company*. As for the fans, they're still out there, as well, and there may have been no bigger convergence of Deadhead culture than the recent Lockn' Festival, held the final weekend of this past August on Oak Ridge Farm in Nelson County, Virginia, about 150 miles southwest of Washington, D.C.

Now in its fourth year, Lockn'

brands itself as the primary music festival for jam bands—groups whose concert performances often feature long-form improvisation. These bands are known for following the Grateful Dead ethos: ceaseless tours, different set lists each night, and free-access taping policies. Although jam bands generally fall under the broader category of rock, it's common for musicians to incorporate elements of blues, funk, bluegrass, or electronica. And the key elements are those jams, the instrumental variations that stretch a song beyond its original structure.

Fans find these jams exciting, immersive, and ethereal. Critics, however, find them aimless and indulgent. If a studio track is perfectly edited and engineered, why make it longer live? Although it's hard to account for musical tastes, the continued popularity of jam bands attests to the value of live music in the digital age: When everything else seems neatly packaged and tightly choreographed, live music still compels fans with its promise of variety, risk, and surprise.

When Lockn' organizers announced that more than 30,000 people attended this year's festival, it meant the population of Nelson County had effectively tripled for those four days in August. With such an influx of transient music fans—and fans of a genre that, whether fairly or not, is often associated with recreational drug use—one might think the local citizens would be wary of Lockn's impact on the region, economic boost aside.

"There was some concern in the community for the first festival, because it was an unknown," says Bonnie Holliday, development director of the North Branch School in Afton, about 25 miles west of Charlottesville. "With that many new people coming in, I think there's some apprehension." But now, in the fourth year of Lockn', has the community accepted the festival? "Not only accepted," Holliday says. "Most of the community now embraces it."

Holliday was attending Lockn' not as a concertgoer but as a community representative: North Branch School is an independent, project-based

learning academy serving about 125 students from pre-school through eighth grade. At Lockn', Holliday and her North Branch colleagues were among the groups on Participation Row, a line of booths at one edge of the main concert field representing nearly 20 social-action and nonprofit organizations, most of them local.

This sense of community consciousness ruled at Lockn', where local breweries and food vendors were given prime real estate on the show field, not far from a family-friendly zone and collaborative art space. Elsewhere, there were yoga sessions, guided bike rides, and river tubing excursions. Camping accommodations were available for people with disabilities; a nearby Episcopal church offered meditation space and welcomed attendees to its Sunday-morning services. The festival even had its own daily newspaper, the *Lockn' Times*, edited by staff from *Relix* magazine and *Jambands.com*.

For the most part, many of the counterculture and hippie fashions held true: tie-dyed T-shirts, Chaco and Teva sandals, sun-faded tattoos. Occasionally you would spot a hula-hoop dancer or stick twirler. The oddest thing I saw might have been one fan near the main stage dressed in a ghillie suit—the type of camouflage outfit used by hunters and nature photographers that replicates dense foliage—so that when he/she danced it appeared as if a six-foot-tall garden shrub had come to life with the music. The merchandise vendors catered to this crowd as well, selling patches and stickers, hat pins, dashikis and batik-print dresses, crystals, geodes, and gemstones.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, most attendees were white and middle-aged—myself included—since most jam bands have been composed strictly of white male musicians. It may be worth noting, then, that this year's musical lineup featured a fair amount of diversity.

In the end, however, there was no escaping the shadow (and the melodies) of the Grateful Dead. At one point, you could hear the song "Shakedown Street" three different

times within a 24-hour period—first during a late-night set by the percussion-led tribute band Joe Russo's Almost Dead, the next morning by the bluegrass musicians Keller William's Grateful Grass, and later that night by original Dead bassist Phil Lesh & Friends.

Grateful Dead iconography pervaded as well, especially the "Steal Your Face" logo—the red-and-blue image of a skull intersected by a bolt of lightning. The most topical bootleg T-shirt stated: "Make America Grateful Again." One food vendor offered Philafel with Hummus—its sign featuring an eighties-era Phil Lesh playing bass on a background of tie-dye—and even the merchandise vendors referred to Deadhead themes and lyrics: Bear Necessities, Loose Lucy's, Uncle John's Outpost, Pop-Pop's Terapin Station.

Only Phish, the Vermont quartet that recently celebrated 30 years together, approached the Grateful Dead in fan devotion. Phish headlined two of the four nights and, as such, had more stage space to work with, room for more gear, as well as the support of their vivid and intricate visual backdrop. Without argument, Phish is the largest draw in the jam band scene. Both their shows at this year's Lockn' filled the concert field hundreds of yards deep with fans, nearly all of them dancing instinctively to the beat and knowing just when to sing along, launching glow sticks in unison.

Late one night, I spoke with an ophthalmologist from Atlanta, an amateur guitar player who told me his musical tastes aligned more with classic rock: The Beatles, Bob Dylan, the Allman Brothers Band, and, of course, the Grateful Dead. He praised Phish's musicianship—"I couldn't tell where all those sounds were coming from"—but lamented that Phish doesn't have a lyricist on the order of the Grateful Dead's Robert Hunter or John Perry Barlow.

It's a valid point: Phish had just concluded their final set with a 20-minute performance of "You Enjoy Myself," a song over which fans debate not what the lyrics mean

but what the lyrics actually are. In some Phish songs, the vocals serve as another instrument, and sometimes the vocals simply get out of the way as early as possible, allowing space for the band members—bassist Mike Gordon, keyboardist Page McConnell, drummer Jon Fishman, guitarist Trey Anastasio—to jam.

That ophthalmologist's comment about lyrics got me comparing Phish and the Grateful Dead. In terms of legacy, the Grateful Dead's accomplishment was in writing songs that could be adapted and reshaped as tributes by newer artists. Their *Day of the Dead*, a 59-track album compilation of cover songs released this past May, would seem to bear this out: The Grateful Dead songbook has been absorbed into the Great American Songbook.

By contrast, Phish's accomplishment might be in creating songs that cannot be replicated. They create music more idiosyncratic, playful—and willfully obscure. Much of Phish's output is conceived in the moment. I'd wager Phish won't spawn nearly so many offshoots and tributes in the years to come. They seem entirely inimitable.

The last night at Lockn', Phish concluded their encore and closed out the festival with a faithful rendition of the Rolling Stones' "Loving Cup." The fans dispersed to the sfood vendors, the parking lots, or the sprawling tent villages, leaving behind a concert field piled with glow sticks and smashed plastic cups, cigarette butts, the occasional pair of shattered sunglasses or collapsed camping chair.

It was no enviable job to clean up. Two staff members in yellow jackets stood near the stage, each shaking open an industrial-sized garbage sack.

Did you enjoy the music? I asked them. "Oh, sure," they replied in unison. Anyone in particular? "This last band, Phish, lot of sounds going on," said one staffer. "And Gary Clark Jr., I liked his band," added the other. How about the Grateful Dead? I asked. Are you guys fans of the Grateful Dead? "They weren't here, were they?" No, I guess they weren't. But in spirit, undoubtedly. ♦

# Grossed Out

When a movie about children is unsuitable for children to see. BY JOHN PODHORETZ

**M**iss *Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* is the name of a children's book published a decade ago, heavily influenced by the Harry Potter series. My oldest daughter read it when she was 9, along with its sequels; she liked it, didn't love it, never really talked about it. She's now 12, and last weekend I took her and her younger sister, just 10, to the movie version—a prestige project by Tim Burton, one of the most successful directors of the past 30 years.

And here's what we saw. We saw monsters plucking out the eyes of children. We saw a group of humanoid monsters eating raw eyeballs. We saw a kid with the power to reanimate the dead make an eyeless child zombie pop out of a bed and speak. These were not hinted at; they were shown, graphically and in close-up.

My 12-year-old buried her head in the seat at our local multiplex, which fortunately reclined so that she could twist her body away from the screen. My 10-year-old whimpered and grabbed at me for dear life. These girls are not generally fearful. They happily ride upside down and backwards on rollercoasters. But they were alternately terrified and grossed out by this film. I hadn't noticed that it is rated PG-13; I assumed from the source material it would be fine. The posters and the trailers suggested it was the Harry Potter knockoff the book's publishers had wanted people to think it was.

It's not the fact that *Miss Peregrine* tries to scare kids that bothers me. Children were terrified in *Snow White* and the *Seven Dwarfs* back in 1937

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

## Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children

Directed by Tim Burton



Eva Green (left), Asa Butterfield (right)

when the queen transforms into a crone. And few movies have scenes as disturbing as the one in Walt Disney's *Pinocchio* (1940) when the truant boys are turned into donkeys. What's so striking about this one is the fact that it is nakedly and unashamedly graphic in its violence. Had *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* been released in, say, 1972, it would have been rated R. The advertising copy would have been awash in lurid warnings about how doctors were standing by in case people had heart attacks and how the theater managers were handing out barf bags to all the patrons. And no children would have been anywhere near the place.

Of course, had this been 1972, *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* would have been called *The Corpses Have No Eyes*, would have had a budget of \$200,000, and been the work of enterprising young men desperate to catch a break in the movie business rather than a major fall release that cost \$110 million to make.

As Jason Zinoman relates in his fine book *Shock Value* (2011), the success of microbudget horror movies like *Last House on the Left* and *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* convinced Hollywood 40 years ago that graphic horror was a selling proposition beyond the drive-ins and urban grindhouses. That's still true today. But the market for such fare was clearly supposed to be teenagers looking for thrills and adults who can take it. It was never supposed to be marketed to kids or hidden away inside fare intended for kids. In that sense, *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* is an immoral bait-and-switch.

And it's not even good. It's long and quite dull, and once again for inexplicable reasons, Hollywood saw fit to cast a young British actor named Asa Butterfield in a lead role as an intense kid undergoing a grueling apprenticeship. Butterfield was the orphan living in the train station in Martin Scorsese's *Hugo*. He was the young genius recruited to fight an interstellar war in *Ender's Game*. In the upcoming *The Space Between Us*, he's a kid born on Mars who comes to Earth and is sickened by the gravity. And here he's Jake, the neglected son of a type-A mother and a wastrel father whose beloved grandfather is awash in dementia.

The problem is that Butterfield—I'm sorry to say, because he's a 19-year-old kid and it's really not his fault—is one of the most charmless performers ever to hit the screen. He's glum and humorless and without any twinkle or sparkle of life. He either has the world's best agent or he does something at auditions that he cannot bring to the actual movies he gets cast in. Whatever the case, you put him at the center of a movie and the movie has a sinkhole at its center.

There are moments of real beauty and power here, especially in the way Burton makes it clear that Butterfield's suburban Florida suburb is weirder and more unsettling than the Welsh island where the supernatural home of the title is located. But that hasn't become the stuff of my daughter's nightmares: The eyeballs did. Thanks a lot. I hope the producers lose their shirts. ♦

**"Far from being regarded as a tax avoider, Giuliani insisted, Trump was to be compared to . . . Winston Churchill."**

**—New Yorker, October 2, 2016**

**PARODY**

1501

*His Majesty's*

13 May 1940

**HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT.**

2.54 p.m.

**THE PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Churchill):**

I would say to the House, as I said to those who have joined this tremendous Government: I have nothing to offer but amazing, tremendous things, believe me. For one, I offer my blood, and I have very good blood. My doctors say I truly have some of the best blood they've ever seen. Way better blood than Chamberlain, who, frankly, I've heard had some not-so-great blood. Just what I heard. So ... blood ... number one.

Also, in addition to great blood, I can offer some toil. I'm a great toiler. Everybody is amazed at how much toiling I can do, and let me tell you, I will be toiling so much more now it will make ... your head ... spin. And when I toil, it always works out very, very, very well.

So, one: blood. Two: toil. Three: I can offer tears. Now, don't get me wrong. I will not give a lot of tears, because I'm not some kind of lady or something. I'm very manly, and I've been told by many of the most beautiful, sexy women on earth how manly I am. So not a lot of tears. But I will give some tears, and when I do they will be just the most huge, tremendous tears you've ever seen.

And finally I can offer you sweat. Not my sweat, because I never sweat, which may sound not great, but my doctor says I'm very healthy. So, I can't offer my sweat, but I will give you Crooked Hitler's sweat. Crooked Hitler is going to sweat so much you won't even believe it, let me tell you.

So, to wrap up ... I'm offering you four things: blood, toil, tears, and sweat. Pretty good, huh? And if you want to know my aim, I can answer in one word: It is victory. Because Britain doesn't win anymore: We lose to Germany, we lose to Italy, we lose to France. But believe me, now that I'm in charge, Britain is going to win so much and so fast and so suddenly that you are going to be

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