

**A WHITE HOUSE
ON A WAR FOOTING**
PETER J. BOYER

the weekly

Standard

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**HE CAME
HE SAW
HE TWEETED**

**CHRISTOPHER
CALDWELL**

**THOMAS
DONNELLY**

**REUEL MARC
GERECHT**

**on the president's
first foreign trip**

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NYT: Lather, Rinse, Repeat

The *New York Times* really, really wants you to behave yourself environmentally on your travels this summer. In March the paper published “How to Have a Green Vacation.” Come May (for those who may not have been paying sufficient attention in March) the *Times* published “Greening Your Summer Vacation.”

Here’s how the March article began: “With the United Nations designating 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, there has never been a better time . . .”

Here’s how the May article began: “The United Nations has proclaimed 2017 the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development with a goal of promoting . . .”

Not that everything in each of the articles was the same. In March the “director of sustainability for the luxury travel network Virtuoso” chirped, “Being greener on vacation doesn’t take a lot of effort . . .” Come May, “the executive director of the Center for Responsible Travel” warned, “The problem with doing responsible travel trips is that it does take a little bit of work.”

What kind of work? In March the *Times* was recommending you search out places such as the Three Camel

Lodge in Mongolia, “which composts its kitchen waste for use in a solar greenhouse producing fresh ingredients for the restaurant.” In May the *Times* recommended you search out places such as Lapa Rios in Costa Rica, where “pigs are fed restaurant scraps and produce the biogas that fuels some of the cooking stoves.”



Sustainability, Times-style

In March the *Times* urged its readers to “Say ‘No’ to Plastic Water Bottles.” In May the *Times* pointed readers to remote resorts that ban “plastic bottles and drinking straws.”

In March the *Times* said to enjoy

“meals that emphasize local ingredients.” In May the *Times* said to patronize tour companies “staffed by locals.” So, if THE SCRAPBOOK has this right, one should avoid eating at a Bangladeshi-staffed Kentucky Fried Chicken in Dubai—we think we can manage that.

But how do you manage to get to some plastic-free, jungle yurt where pig flatulence fuels the kitchen stoves without first assaulting the environment by getting on an airplane, with all the carbon-burning that entails? In March, the *Times* said, if you have to fly, “pick nonstop flights” and be sure to “use a reputable carbon offset provider.” In May, the *Times* quoted an expert that one should “try to travel on nonstops” and then be sure to buy carbon offsets.

If environmentalism is a sort of religion, as has often been suggested, then it strikes us that carbon offsets are a kind of indulgence—a way for the rich to buy off the guilt of their sins. But we expect that when the next article on green travel appears in the *New York Times*, the suggestion that one buy a carbon offset will be made again. After all, when it comes to reporting on the environment, the *Times* sure does know how to recycle. ♦



People of the Comic Book

Last week the government of Lebanon announced that it was banning *Wonder Woman*, the latest cinematic treatment of a comic-book superhero, a film that’s likely to be one of the summer’s big blockbusters. Is it because the Amazonian princess’s costume is a little too revealing for a Muslim-majority Middle Eastern country? Nope—THE SCRAPBOOK has seen swimwear around the pools of Beirut hotels that make Wonder Woman’s form-fitting outfit look like a burka.

The problem isn’t the character but the star, model and actress Gal Gadot. She’s Israeli. While lots of Lebanese would be happy to live in comity with the country to their south—or at least to watch movies starring some of their breathtakingly attractive neighbors—the Lebanese government is controlled by Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed militia at war with Israel. Accordingly, *Wonder Woman* will not be allowed to pollute the pure air that feeds the beating heart of the “resistance.”

It’s doubtful the film’s distributor Warner Bros. is sweating the boycott

TWS ILLUSTRATIONS: PIGGIE, BIGSTOCK; WONDER WOMAN, DC COMICS

much. Lebanon's film-going population is peanuts compared to the world's second-largest film market, China. And the Chinese are obsessed with Israel and the Jews—in a good way.

China, the world's second-largest economy, sees the Jewish state as a "powerhouse of innovation," says the director general of Israel's economy ministry Amit Lang. The Chinese are curious to know how the tiny Jewish state became so successful—not just surviving in a hostile environment, surrounded by lots of bellicose neighbors, but becoming a global powerhouse in the IT sector. The answer, the Chinese surmise, may be in Judaism itself.

As *Newsweek* pointed out years ago, books such as *Crack the Talmud: 101 Jewish Business Rules*, *The Illustrated Jewish Wisdom Book*, and *Know All of the Money-Making Stories of the Talmud* have been required reading for Chinese businessmen, entrepreneurs, and other aspiring masters of the universe who want to make it big, like the Jews.

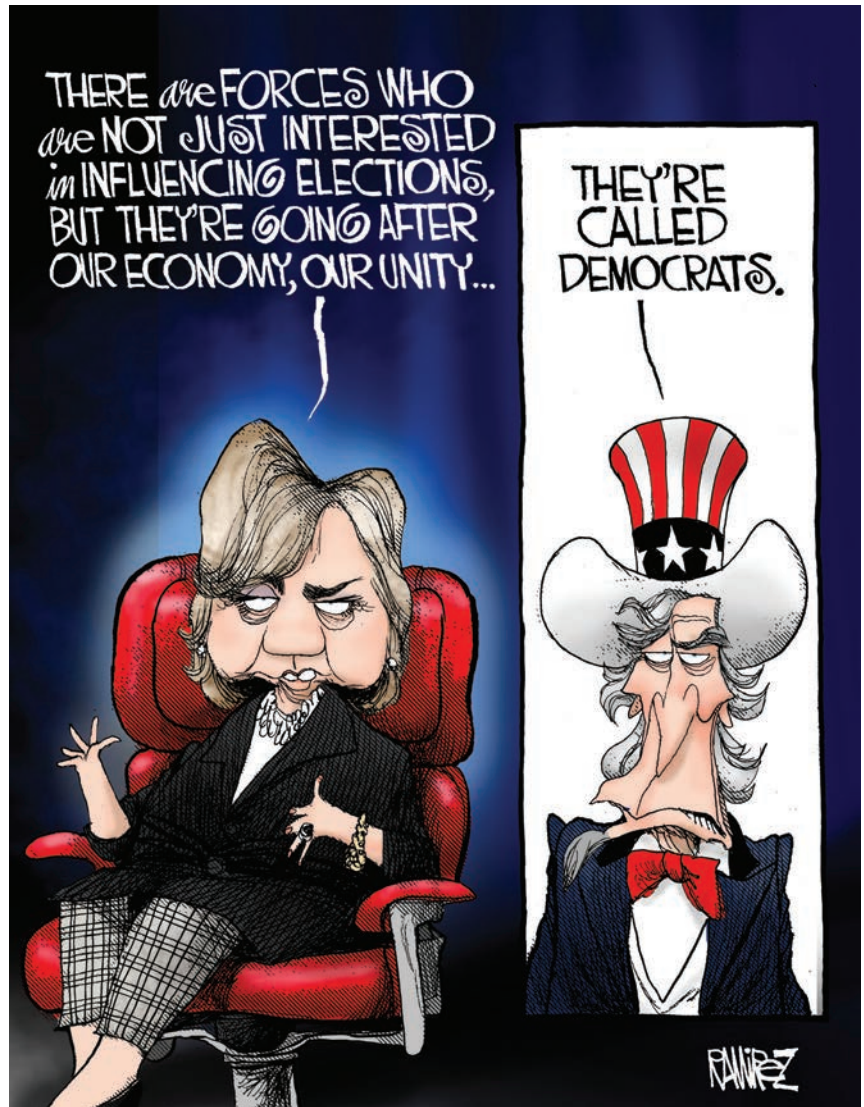
"Stereotypes and misinformation about Jews remain widespread in China. But they seem to have inspired admiration for Jews, rather than anti-Semitism," James Ross wrote in the 2016 book *The Image of Jews in Contemporary China*. "Despite the lack of a significant Jewish presence in China, Jews remain a model for success."

Given how sensitive Hollywood is to its huge Chinese audiences—due to overtake the U.S. market in 2019—one suspects that the filmmakers behind *Wonder Woman* knew exactly what they were doing in casting Gadot. She's not just a model playing a superhero, but maybe a model for super-success. ♦

Sentences We Didn't Finish

Resistance, *Rebellion, Life: 50 Poems Now* (Knopf) conveys the shock and dismay many esteemed poets—like many Americans—have felt since the presidential . . ."

—*Washington Post*



A Biologic Problem

Nancy Pelosi didn't tell us it would take this long: Congress passed Obamacare in 2010 and we're still finding out what's in it.

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a case next term, *Sandoz v. Amgen*; the justices will try to untangle devilishly complicated patent provisions buried deep in the Affordable Care Act. The relevant chapter of the ACA, known as the Biologics Price Competition and Innovation Act, is so obscure that seven years after

Obamacare became the law of the land, this is the very first case interpreting it.

The core issue involves patent protections for specially engineered drugs called biologics. Creating the drugs requires binding thousands of atoms together into massive molecules: Research and development is hugely expensive—not to mention the costs of getting FDA approval.

With most such innovations, production costs go way down after the initial invention. Once one



The pain continues.

BELOW, JASON SEILER

company figures how to make a biologic, others can copy the process and market the drug much more cheaply. This is why there are patents in the first place. As John Duffy reports at *SCOTUSblog*, Amgen, which developed the original drug in this litigation, wants more protection against imitators; Sandoz, which developed a generic version, wants less. The companies also disagree over how the FDA should regulate drugs that are similar to existing ones but not exact copies, what information the companies have to share with each other, when they have to do it, and how courts can enforce other provisions of the bill, if at all.

If it seems complicated, that's because it is. The federal circuit court judges grappling with the case wrote, "Winston Churchill once described Russia as 'a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.' . . . That is this statute."

Like the rest of Obamacare, the section on biologics was hastily drafted and is turning out to be a nightmare to implement. Maybe it's not such a bad thing that the Senate GOP is taking its time figuring out a replacement. But it's also a reminder that the ongoing mess known as Obamacare needs to be repealed. ♦

Ms. Katch Manages Up

Long before he was a senator, comedian Al Franken made his entry into politics with a couple of bestsellers, *Rush Limbaugh Is a Big Fat Idiot and Other Observations* and *Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right*. Franken found a ready audience for his political insult comedy. Now that he's a member of the World's Greatest Deliberative Body, one might think he would tone down the shtick, but if his latest book, *Giant of the Senate*, is any indication, one would be wrong.



And speaking of pain

For example, if you're looking for obscene jokes about Ted Cruz, this book is for you.

The book contains at least one feint at humility. Senate "hearings quickly emerged as one of my favorite parts of the job," Franken writes. "The only problem was that there was a fine line between showing up a jerk and being one myself." Franken goes on to tell the story of badgering a witness, "a guy named Tevi Troy from the Hudson Institute, a right-wing think tank in Washington, who was there to complain about the Affordable Care Act." It seems Troy's crime was citing a statistic that had appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* opinion pages. Was there a problem with the statistic? Well, no. Franken just doesn't like the opinions found at the *Journal*:

"You know," I sneered, "it's funny. The *Wall Street Journal* op-ed page sometimes—I don't know if you know this—uses statistics in misleading ways." There was laughter in the room as the witness squirmed, but my health care staffer, Hannah Katch, quickly pushed a note in front of me: "You're being an a—hole."

After the hearing, Franken praises his health care staffer and tells the rest of his staff that they shouldn't be afraid to tell him he's being a jerk. To which THE SCRAPBOOK asks, is this story supposed to make Franken look humble and self-effacing? Then why is Franken still so arrogantly dismissive of

Tevi Troy as just "a guy" from a "right-wing think tank"? Troy, of course, was deputy secretary of Health and Human Services in the George W. Bush administration, has written books of popular presidential history, and is acknowledged as one of the best health care policy experts of either party in Washington.

Clearly, Hannah Katch is better with short descriptions than her boss is. ♦

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I Don't Want a Bargain

So, one day I'm in an antique store, looking at a dresser. Now, there's no denying it's a pretty little thing: late 1800s, walnut burl, brass drawer handles, an elegant shape. But the sales sticker says \$4,800, which is more than a little out of my price range, especially for a dresser I don't need. Even for a dresser I do need. At \$4,800, I'd have to hide it beneath a chamois cloth and uncover it once a year—on my birthday, probably, with a glass of wine to toast its posh existence.

Turns out, however, that \$4,800 wasn't the actual price. While the friends who had dragged me into the store ooh'd and ah'h'd over glass knickknacks in a display case, a saleslady slid smoothly into place beside me and said, "Lovely, isn't it? How much would you pay for it?"

I said I couldn't pay anything for it, because I didn't need a dresser, but even if I had a use for another piece of furniture, I couldn't afford a \$4,800 dresser, especially one that didn't come with something like a chamois dustcover and a bottle of wine for my birthday.

I don't believe that I've ever seen anything as condescending as the knowing smile I got from the salesclerk in that antique store. "Oh," she told me, as gently as though she were trying to explain rocket science to a curious but backward child, "that's not the price."

I suggested that \$4,800 really did look like the price, what with the round sticker on the dresser reading \$4,800. And in reply I was treated to a small lecture on how things worked in the store—a lecture on how things worked "in the real world," she assured me. Price tags are never about price. They are opening bids

in a negotiation. If a customer is fool enough to pay the listed cost, all the better for the store (and the salesclerk's commission). But hardly anyone does pay that price. People who live in the real world know that they should always make a lowball offer in return. People who live in the real world know they need to bargain.

I think I missed the moment when America turned into Hollywood's pic-



ture of a 1940s street bazaar in Cairo. Oh, the salesclerk admitted that she usually didn't try to bargain at a supermarket or a fast-food restaurant. But in most other places, most other times, out-bargaining someone was part of the joy of buying and selling. Wearing someone down was the point.

She couldn't seem to hear any odd moral undertones in her praise of haggling. But, then, neither can many others. Every year or two, you'll see a newspaper column or light magazine essay about bargaining. Usually they're expressed in terms of empowerment: The authors were once too

fearful to ask for discounts, but then they found the courage to confront sellers and argue about price.

Is that all a distaste for haggling is? A cowardice to be discarded by the brave and the newly self-empowered? Fixed pricing was brought into general use by the Quakers, first in Great Britain and then in Pennsylvania. The success of Quaker-owned department stores in the 19th century spread the practice of price tags to nearly all retail sales in America. (Excluding horse-trading—and the manners and morals of horse-lots would pass in turn to car dealerships, where buyers and sellers alike expect to bargain.)

Moral concern drove the idea of openly displayed prices. Haggling was a species of lying: sellers dishonestly overvaluing their wares, and buyers dishonestly undervaluing them. The Friends were instructed to let their yea be yea and their nay be nay, using honest measures and holding to fixed prices. And thereby even the marketplace, the center of commerce, could be evangelized—freed from deceit and the cruelty of trying to get the better of other people.

On the whole, I'd rather live in the Quakers' world than the hagglers' world. Rather shop in the Quakers' markets than the antique store with the not-\$4,800 dresser. I don't think it's a matter of courage. It feels instead like a matter of not wanting to treat other human beings as adversaries to be out-bargained, outlasted, and outdone. It feels instead like not wanting to participate in lies.

My friends eventually decided they already had all the miniature glass animals one fireplace mantel could reasonably be expected to hold, and we left the antique store without buying anything. It was a relief to move on to a restaurant, where what was printed on the menu was the fixed price for the food—until I saw what hip urban restaurants charge for hamburgers these days. It was almost enough to make me want to haggle.

JOSEPH BOTTUM

Question Time



Occasionally you take a moment to look up from the day-to-day or hour-to-hour or tweet-to-tweet turmoil of the Trump presidency. You want a reprieve from the constant and enervating melodrama of the Trump era. You try to take a longer view.

But when you do, what you find are not answers but questions.

Among them: How does this end? Does it end early? If so, when and how? Where, in any case, does it all lead? What does it all imply about the future?

And these: Is President Trump a model for the future of American politics? Are we entering an era of celebrities and demagogues? Or is Trump an aberration? And what about Trumpism? Is it the wave of the future? Are we entering an era of unenlightened populism and illiberal progressivism? Or is Trumpism a dead end?

And more: What about the Republican party? And the conservative movement? Can either be saved? Should they be? How much reinvention of either is needed? How much is possible? What about a third party? A new center?

And yet: Is the new center just the old mushy middle? So is the task to reiterate the modern conservative case for markets, constitutionalism, and American global leadership? Or is fresh thinking needed on all fronts? Do technology and globalization produce fundamentally new challenges? Or is there really nothing that new under the 21st-century sun?

Lots of good questions. There are many who have spent time thinking about these questions over the last year, and especially over the last few months. We ourselves have some thoughts. Unfortunately, some of them are in tension with others. And we change our minds frequently.

So what's to be done in such uncharted waters, with no reliable compass available? The not entirely satisfactory conclusion we've come to is this: Say what you believe about the situation we face. But keep on thinking about the path ahead.

After all, you can have firm views on the merits of various aspects of the Trump presidency, on different legislative efforts and executive actions. You can take a stand in the present. But you can also take a look at the future—acknowledging uncertainty about its shape and keeping an open mind about what comes next.

Consider the Founders in 1776, or Lincoln in 1854, or Churchill in the 1930s. Each took a stand. Yet none knew what was to come next, and all understood that it would be foolish to try to prescribe the future with too much certainty. They knew how much would depend on unforeseen events and the reactions of others and the contingencies of history.

Needless to say, we in no way presume to compare ourselves to these men at those times. But their examples do remind us that while history is always contingent, statesmanship can be real. And as citizens of a democratic republic, we should all aspire to whatever level of statesmanship we can achieve.

Where to begin? Why not with *Federalist* 1? Consider the argument for moderation:

Happy will it be if our choice should be directed by a judicious estimate of our true interests, unperplexed and unbiased by considerations not connected with the public good. But this is a thing more ardently to be wished than seriously to be expected. . . . So numerous indeed and so powerful are the causes which serve to give a false bias to the judgment, that we, upon many occasions, see wise and good men on the wrong as well as on the right side of questions of the first magnitude to society. This circumstance, if duly attended to, would furnish a lesson of moderation to those who are ever so much persuaded of their being in the right in any controversy.

But consider also that moderation doesn't mean indecision or irresolution:

I am convinced that this is the safest course for your liberty, your dignity, and your happiness. I affect not reserves which I do not feel. I will not amuse you with an appearance of deliberation when I have decided. I frankly acknowledge to you my convictions, and I will freely lay before you the reasons on

RAPHAEL MONTOLIU

which they are founded. The consciousness of good intentions disdains ambiguity. I shall not, however, multiply professions on this head. My motives must remain in the depository of my own breast. My arguments will be open to all and may be judged of by all. They shall at least be offered in a spirit which will not disgrace the cause of truth.

That we do not have the gift of prophecy should induce moderation. That we are not blind should embolden conviction. That the republic has survived greater challenges should give us confidence—or at least hope.

—William Kristol

Unhealthy Agency

Margaret Chan was quite taken by what she saw on her visit to Pyongyang in 2010. North Koreans had “something which most other developing countries would envy,” she noted: a first-rate medical system with plenty of doctors and nurses. Not only that, there were no obesity problems, she enthused, discussing a country with chronic food shortages where a famine in the mid-1990s had killed hundreds of thousands of people.

The musings of a cretinous fellow traveler or a naïve adventure tourist? No, this bizarre apologia for the world’s most repressive dictatorship was delivered by the director-general of the World Health Organization (WHO), a U.N. agency with an annual budget of around \$4 billion.

Chan’s decade-long tenure at the top of the WHO has just ended, and it can fairly be called disgraceful. She practiced what the Associated Press, in a remarkably vituperative article in late May, termed “the art of appeasement.” Over the years, the Hong Kong native praised the governments of North Korea, Turkmenistan, China, Russia, and Zimbabwe—human rights horror shows, all.

It would be one thing if these countries, despite their repressive political systems, actually did deliver high-quality public health. The same year Chan lauded North Korea’s medical system, an Amnesty International report called health services in the country “a horror,” citing understaffed hospitals unable to afford sterilized needles. The country faces huge shortages of medicines, patients often undergo surgery without anesthesia, and there is a tuberculosis epi-

dem. All of this escaped the director-general’s notice.

One of Chan’s last actions in office was a further slap in the face of democratic values: She refused to allow Taiwanese officials to even observe the World Health Assembly in Geneva in May. This move, taken despite protests from more than 10 countries, was to placate the Chinese government, which deeply resents the democratic island. After all, the very existence of free Taiwan gives the lie to Beijing’s propaganda that Chinese people aren’t “suited” to democracy. North Korea, though, was named a WHO vice president at the summit.

The WHO’s remit is to improve public health, largely by combating communicable disease. Under Chan, the organization badly flubbed its response to one of the worst public health crises in years: the 2014 West African Ebola outbreak. Even though cases were multiplying as early as December 2013, it wasn’t until the following August, when more than 1,000 people had died from Ebola, that the WHO declared an emergency. This sluggish response—“late, feeble, and uncoordinated,” in the words of a prominent public health advocate—likely cost thousands of lives.

Earlier in May, the Associated Press had reported that the WHO was overspending on lavish travel. “The United Nations health agency routinely has spent about \$200 million a year on travel expenses, more than what it doles out to fight some of the biggest problems in public health, including AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined,” reported the AP. “At a time when the cash-strapped health agency is pleading for more money to fund its responses to health crises worldwide, it has struggled to get its travel costs under control. Senior officials have complained internally that U.N. staffers break new rules that were introduced to try to curb its expansive travel spending, booking perks like business class airplane tickets and rooms in five-star hotels with few consequences.”

This is a shame, because the WHO’s mission is an important one. Diseases know no borders, and it is vital that the response to outbreaks like Ebola be globally coordinated. With Chan’s departure and the respected Ethiopian physician Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus taking her place, it is a moment for reform.

Of the roughly \$900 million in global government funding that the WHO receives each year, about \$100 million is provided by U.S. taxpayers. (The rest of the WHO’s budget is covered by philanthropic donations.) This is what’s known as leverage. The Trump administration should condition further funding on major reforms at the organization: chiefly, more transparency and a respect for democratic rule. That means no praise for repressive dictatorships and no more kowtowing to Beijing’s demands.

—Ethan Epstein



Out with the old: Ghebreyesus and Chan

A White House on a War Footing

The Trump response team takes shape.

BY PETER J. BOYER

As the 2016 presidential campaign neared its final throes, the journalist Salena Zito offered an elegant explanation of the chasm between the political-media class, which beheld Donald Trump as an unelectable clown, and those Americans propelling him toward victory. “[T]he press takes him literally, but not seriously,” she wrote; “his supporters take him seriously, but not literally.”

As a means of accommodating Trump’s unusual traits as a politician, however, the seriously/literally construct became inoperative on January 21, with the utterance of the words, “I, Donald John Trump, do solemnly swear . . .” Any president, even this one, must be taken seriously *and* literally.

Trump himself, were he so inclined and able, might have learned this early in his tenure. One obvious opportunity presented itself in the aftermath of Trump’s impulse on the morning of March 4 to declare via Twitter: “How low has President Obama gone to tapp my phones during the very sacred election process. This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!”

Trump’s defenders, who’d conditioned themselves to looking past his actual words to a discernment of what he must have really meant, took little offense. After all, Trump had been harried by a series of laser-targeted leaks, many from sources described as “former government officials,” who, presumably, had worked in the Obama administration. But to Democrats (and many Republicans) and most of

the press, Trump had *literally* accused his predecessor of wiretapping him—an “explosive allegation,” as the *New York Times* put it, that dominated the news cycle for weeks. The shades of Watergate were aroused.

That Trump did not seem to learn from that experience became alarm-



Robert Mueller

ingly apparent in the days after his May 9 firing of James Comey as director of the FBI on the pretext that Comey’s termination had been prompted by a scathing assessment of the director’s performance by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein. Two days later, on May 11, Trump told NBC’s Lester Holt that he’d actually decided to fire Comey before Rosenstein’s report was even written. He asserted a dissatisfaction with the former director’s handling of the investigation into Russian efforts to influence the 2016 election.

Having fully summoned the ghosts of Watergate, Trump then applied the finishing touch—via Twitter, of course—saying that “James Comey better hope that there are no ‘tapes’ of our conversations before he starts leaking to the press!” The phrase “obstruction of justice” became a staple in the news, and on May 17, Rosenstein appointed Robert Mueller, the former director of the FBI, as special counsel, charged with overseeing the Russian investigation.

Some in Trump’s circle sensed real peril—not because evidence of collusion with Russia was likely to be found, but because of things that Trump might do, or say, in pique that could further fuel the investigation.

While Trump was abroad on his first foreign trip as president, May 19-28, a plan was hatched inside the White House to turn the presidency around and to shield the president—not only from the risks inherent in a special counsel inquiry, but also from himself.

The model was the “war room” approach employed by the Clinton administration during the Whitewater crisis. To counter the inquiry of the special prosecutor’s team (and the inevitable leaks), Clinton brought in his own special counsel, Lanny Davis, to whom questions about the investigation were directed. This had the effect of separating the scandal from the daily business of the presidency, thus effectively consigning Whitewater to the realm of “politics.” Clinton also set up a rapid response team, to aggressively spin developments related to the inquiry.

The Trump version of a crisis survival plan began to take shape this week. For the rapid response team, the White House reached out to two hardballers from the 2016 campaign—Trump’s first campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, and deputy campaign manager David Bossie. They figure to form the heart of the team. Trump also summoned his longtime lawyer, Marc Kasowitz, from New York, and he spent May 31 at the White House with associates from his firm, according to a source familiar

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MARK WILSON / GETTY

with the plan. That firm, Kasowitz Benson Torres, had already lost a name partner to the Trump administration in December when David M. Friedman was named ambassador to Israel.

The hope is not just to contain the Trump-Russia controversy, but also to fully convince the president of its gravity. If calm prevails, they can shore up the Trump base by making good on as many campaign promises as possible (hence, the announcement of the withdrawal from the Paris climate accord on June 1) and reassure Congress that it's safe to try to advance the Trump agenda.

There are reasons to be skeptical about whether the Clinton Whitewater approach can work for Trump. For one thing, Clinton benefited from a supremely disciplined Democratic party, which defined the Whitewater scandal as a witch hunt conducted by sex-obsessed Republicans and stuck with that mantra until the end. It helped that it was a narrative to which many in the press were not unfavorably disposed.

Congressional Republicans are not similarly united in this president's defense (nor, it sometimes seems, on much of anything), and the news media do not seem likely to respond to Trump's defenses sympathetically.

More important, it is far from clear that this plan will succeed in governing Trump's own impulses. Noting the recruitment of Kasowitz into the effort, the *Wall Street Journal* observed on May 31 that Trump "is the root of dysfunction" and editorialized that "Mr. Kasowitz is a babe in the Beltway. . . . Mr. Trump needs to hire a lawyer experienced in Washington political and legal cases and then deputize him to handle everything regarding special counsel Robert Mueller and the Russian question."

As it happens, there are such plans afoot in the Trump circle, and one of D.C.'s legal heavy hitters, sources say, is being considered for the role: Stephen J. Brogan, the managing partner of the mega-firm Jones Day.

The firm has already placed a dozen lawyers in the Trump administration, including White House

Counsel Donald F. McGahn II. Jones Day also represented David Bossie, the victorious plaintiff, in the Citizens United campaign finance case. Brogan did not respond to requests for comment on his possible involvement with a Trump defense.

During the campaign, Trump

assured voters that "I can be more presidential than anybody—if I wanna be, I can be more presidential than anybody." His supporters probably took him seriously, at the time. Now, many may find themselves wishing that the president would give them reason to take that vow literally, as well. ♦

The Road to Victory in Virginia

Can Ed Gillespie pull it off this time?

BY FRED BARNES

Alexandria, Va.

Ed Gillespie is the Republican with the best prospects for winning the Virginia governor's race this fall. However, it's anything but a cinch. Gillespie has to win the GOP primary on June 13, and he's heavily favored to do so. Then he would face a Democrat who is certain to portray him as President Trump's alter ego.

It's a rough road ahead. And Trump isn't the only problem. For decades, Virginia was a Republican state—that is, until Barack Obama won in 2008 and 2012 and Hillary Clinton whipped Trump in last year's presidential race. No Republican has won statewide since 2009.

"Virginia is a blue-tinged purple state," says political science professor Larry Sabato of the University of Virginia. Democrats think they have the advantage for another reason. The last four Republicans who won the governorship concentrated on running against a Democratic president elected the year before. It worked every time. Gillespie doesn't have that luxury.

What makes Gillespie, 55, a strong candidate are his conservatism,

demeanor, and political skill. He's fortunate Virginia voters no longer insist their governor hail from the state. He grew up in New Jersey.

He's compensated for that by becoming a Virginia chauvinist. "You cannot find anyone who loves Virginia more than I do," Gillespie says. "It's impossible. Virginia is inside me."

Gillespie is a center-right conservative. You could call him a Bush conservative. He's for a 10 percent cut in the Virginia income tax rate. In his TV ads, the cut is labeled "conservative," and it is. On immigration, he's backed a centrist position that would provide illegal immigrants a path to legal status but not citizenship.

The distinction here is that his conservatism appeals to mushy moderates and right-wingers. It's designed to work that way. And it did in 2014, when he came within an eyelash of defeating Democratic senator Mark Warner, then regarded as the most popular politician in the state.

The near-miss elevated Gillespie to the front of the GOP bench. It wasn't merely because he came so close. That he ran a brilliant, disciplined campaign, the best since Bob McDonnell's in 2009, was a factor. McDonnell was elected governor by 17 percentage points after thwarting

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a bid by the *Washington Post* to stigmatize him over a college paper he'd written. He had President Obama to run against.

A senior Republican says McDonnell and Gillespie are two peas in a pod: "He's like Bob McDonnell. They are very positive. They're not confrontational. They've got policy ideas. They always have a grin on their face. They're never scary." He forgot to mention both are conservatives.

That wasn't the case with Trump in 2016 and Ken Cuccinelli in 2013. Trump lost to Clinton by 5 percentage points, Cuccinelli to Democratic governor Terry McAuliffe by 2.5 points. "They got clobbered in Northern Virginia," the Republican says, "because they came across as scary. Cuccinelli was angry. Trump wanted to clean the swamp" in a region filled with government workers and immigrants who are part of the swamp.

Gillespie ran a patient race against Warner in 2014. He slowly and unobtrusively gained ground, then rallied in the closing weeks and took Warner by surprise. If the GOP Senate campaign committee had spent money on Gillespie's finishing kick, he might have won.

At the moment, Gillespie has to deal with two annoying primary opponents. Corey Stewart, the chairman of the Prince William County Board of Supervisors—it's in the exurbs of Washington—attacks Gillespie noisily as "Establishment Ed." Gillespie was Republican national chairman from 2003 to 2005 and a counselor to President George W. Bush from 2007 to 2009.

Gillespie rarely responds. He leaves it to his press secretary Abbi Sigler to engage his rivals and reporters. Last week, Stewart accused him of "smuggling illegal aliens into this country. He's complicit in human trafficking." Gillespie's Washington

lobbying firm had been retained by Tyson Foods, which was charged with smuggling Mexicans across the border. Sigler responded by email. Tyson was later acquitted.

Gillespie couldn't ignore Stewart and the third Republican candidate, state senator Frank Wagner, a conservative from Virginia Beach, in their three debates, five forums, and twelve joint appearances. At a Lynchburg debate in April, Stewart claimed Gillespie favors an individual mandate for health insurance. "Google 'Corey

Ed Gillespie to come up with no kind of comments."

Indeed, it is. Gillespie avoids being linked to Trump. He has nothing to gain from it. His aides say he's never asked about Trump—except by the press. But Sabato says Trump is a "giant burden for the GOP nominee." Mark Rozell of George Mason University told the *Post* that Republican candidates "will carry the negative taint" of Trump and his administration. They can't avoid it.

Rather than squabble with Stewart and Warner, Gillespie is saving his ammunition for the Democratic nominee. If Tom Perriello wins, he would be the most left-wing candidate for governor of Virginia ever. He's been endorsed by Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren, and Valerie Jarrett. He's dragged his rival Lt. Governor Ralph Northam to the left behind him.

Gillespie is armed and dangerous whether it's Perriello or Northam. Gillespie has done his homework. Perriello is for repealing the state's popular right-to-work law and Northam is leaning that way. They're for a mandatory \$15-an-hour minimum wage. They identify with the "Resistance," the left-wing crazies

who've mobilized against Trump. And there's much more.

Winning in Virginia comes down to one county, Fairfax. It's just outside D.C., has 1.2 million people, and is wealthy, educated, very diverse, and Democratic. A Republican doesn't need to win Fairfax, but being blown out there means you lose the state. Stewart and Wagner have no chance. But Gillespie lives in Fairfax, knows how to campaign there, and got 41.5 percent of the county's vote against Warner in 2014. Fairfax by itself is why Gillespie is the Republican with the best chance of becoming governor. Probably the only one with a chance, too. ♦



Stewart lies' and you'll be amazed at all that pops up," Gillespie replied.

Though he insists on focusing on Virginia issues, Stewart, the two Democratic candidates, and the media are obsessed with Trump. They want to pressure Gillespie into embracing Trump or spurning him. He does neither. He drives his opponents crazy by lingering on the fence.

When Trump fired FBI director James Comey, Gillespie was silent, but his campaign put out a statement in his name. The firing raised "many questions and concerns . . . and I look forward to learning more about its timing and rationale," it said. "Wishy-washy," Wagner huffed. "It's typical of

Merkel Makes an Enemy

It may pay to pick a fight with Trump.

BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

Not since 2011, when Italian premier Silvio Berlusconi was captured on a wiretap disparaging the size of her backside, has Angela Merkel suffered so grievously from the boorishness of allies. Donald Trump, on his first diplomatic visit to Europe, strong-armed the prime minister of Montenegro. He neglected to praise Article 5 of the NATO charter in a speech. He lectured European leaders about the need to contribute more to Western defense. These lapses, if they were lapses, don't seem like biggies. But the Western media have treated them as if they were the biggest diplomatic catastrophe since the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia.

Merkel seems to agree. At a beery Bavarian campaign meeting on Sunday, May 28, she threw oil on the fire.

"The times when we could fully rely on others are kind of over," she said. "I experienced that in the last few days, so I can only say, we Europeans really need to take our fate into our own hands—naturally in friendship with the U.S.A. . . ." It sounded like she was declaring Germany's intention, on the basis of a lack of confidence in Donald Trump, to pull the countries of continental Europe out of the transatlantic alliance. Trump took it that way. On Tuesday morning, May 30, he fired off an angry tweet: "We have a MASSIVE trade deficit with Germany, plus they pay FAR LESS than they should on NATO & military.

Very bad for U.S. This will change."

Merkel's defenders were quick to say Trump had gone too far. She was a friend of the United States. She had backed the Iraq war. It's only logical that as America moves from being a custodian of global order to pursuing the interests of "America First," there will be slack to pick up. Perhaps, three



Merkel and Trump at the G7 summit in Italy, May 26

months away from election, she was showing her usual political mastery, playing to the gallery with a bit of subtle anti-Americanism. Perhaps she was even trying to *help* Trump, by finding a way to coax the Trump-hating German public to spend more on the military.

No. Trump was right to sense that Merkel means business. For the third time in her chancellorship she has announced a shift in her country's strategic orientation seemingly on a whim. She committed Germany to eliminating nuclear power in the days after the 2011 Japanese tsunami. She invited Middle Eastern refugees into her country by the hundreds of thousands in 2015.

Those initiatives may have been spur-of-the-moment. This one was

long-hatched. Since November Merkel has made Trump swallow one insult after another. Her contemptuous congratulatory note after his election victory promised cooperation, provided the United States managed to respect "democracy, freedom, . . . the rule of law and the dignity of each and every person, regardless of their origin, skin color, creed, gender, sexual orientation, or political views." Her participation in a forum in Germany with former president Barack Obama during Trump's NATO summit visit was a humiliation. Worse, the insults were delivered to a gallery of like-minded Trump-haters in a tone of knowing, nodding confidence that he would be too slow-witted to pick up on them. But egotists are always attentive when the talk is about them. It may be that Merkel has

simply misplayed Trump. More likely she sought his enmity. She seems to have acquired it, along with *Spielraum* for her government and some potential problems for her country.

A writer in the Green newspaper *taz* accused Trump of wrecking the G7 and NATO summits. It would be more accurate to say he is the only Western leader who treated them as real, pre-Internet Age gatherings, where projects are

hatched and fights picked. Tops is the trade deficit. The United States exports \$49 billion a year to Germany; Germany exports \$114 billion to the United States. German experts say that the size of the deficit is wildly magnified by the U.S. tax code—U.S. exporters, who would be taxed at prohibitive rates if they tried to repatriate their profits, often take them in more tax-friendly jurisdictions abroad. Economists differ on whether that is a problem. Americans have adjudicated the dispute in their usual democratic fashion.

Germany is also free-riding on Western defense, on which the country spends 1.2 percent of GDP—below the 2 percent NATO guidance and well below the 3.6 percent the United States spends. Like many countries in the

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modern West, Germany needs every penny it can spare to buy social peace, particularly since it must now house and police more than a million mostly nonworking young men newly arrived from the Middle East. What really saps Germany's military spirit is that since the defeat of the Soviet Union a quarter of a century ago, the benefits Germany draws from NATO are less directly evident to its frugal voters.

Such differences can be hashed out. Germany does not seem to be interested. The break with Trump is being announced not in sorrow but in a spirit of outright exuberance, across the political spectrum. Merkel's Socialist rival for the chancellorship in September, Martin Schulz, has described Trump as the "destroyer of all Western values." Her foreign minister Sigmar Gabriel says, "The West has become smaller"—as if the United States had recently seceded from it. The weekly newsmagazine *Der Spiegel* calls Merkel "the leader of the free world."

Most often the word "values" is a synonym for empty rhetoric. Not now. Over the past decade a gap has opened up in all Western countries between a ruling elite and a part of the public that feels itself frozen out of its country's democracy. The United States is the first country in which the frozen-out classes have taken power. There now *are* big differences between the United States and certain of its allies, especially Germany, and they concern the most important political matter of all: sovereignty.

Many Germans, the chancellor among them, want the international order to operate as a kind of human-rights club. This divergence was masked during Barack Obama's presidency because Obama's guiding principle was also human rights. Human rights, as the club understands them, mean that where certain immutable values come into conflict with the will of the people (as expressed through its votes), the values should prevail. In this sense, the postwar German Federal Republic has evolved into what U.S. occupying forces in the wake of World War II hoped it would be. The country has been bound for seven

decades by treaties, laws, and customs that were *designed* to thwart the public will. Merkel became the first chancellor for whom the American imperial order was not a purgatory or a probation but a normal state of affairs. So normal, in fact, that it no longer appears to require America.

The systems of liberal democracy that prevailed a generation ago have come unraveled. Liberalism and democracy are no longer zippered together like strands of DNA. Now they are alternatives. Trump came to power at the head of a democracy movement. This does not make him a champion of the liberal order, though, and the privileged classes in his own country, with that as grounds, are sparing no effort to overturn their country's democratic verdict. Merkel does stand for liberal values. She also stands for the de-democratization of Germany's sphere of influence. She wants a post-national kind of

sovereignty. She wants to strengthen the (undemocratic) European Union at the expense of the (still democratic) European nation-states.

"If we take our values seriously we can meet any challenge," Merkel said in the wake of the Trump dustup. The problem is that Europe has two sets of values—a consequence of the wildly different outcomes the EU has produced for its creditor and debtor countries since the financial crisis of 2008. The euro is too strong for Greece and Italy, hurting their exports and blocking their recovery. But it is weak enough to allow Germany to run its massive trade surpluses year after year. Half the countries in Europe view Germany as their financial slave-master. Merkel's vision of a Europe going it alone would require new votes and treaties transferring powers from these countries to Brussels, and thus indirectly to Germany. It probably won't go over big. ♦

Rolling Back the Obama Rules

Why a Michigan farmer thinks D.C. is 'running like a well-oiled machine.' BY TONY MECIA

When Laura Campbell heard about new water regulations emanating from President Barack Obama's Environmental Protection Agency a few years back, she started calling up maps on her computer.

The EPA was proposing to give itself the authority to regulate any water feature within 1,500 feet of a stream, and Campbell, who manages the agricultural ecology department for the Michigan Farm Bureau, wanted to see how far that authority would reach. Michigan—set amongst

the Great Lakes—has lots of water, and thousands of miles of tributaries run in every direction. When she tried to overlay a 1,500-foot buffer onto a map of Michigan's streams on her office computer in Lansing, it took too much processing power. Everything froze. She finally succeeded in printing out maps on smaller scales and sent them out to the affected farmers.

About 4,000 farmers inundated Campbell with comments and questions. Some sent maps and photos of their fields, wondering if they would need to apply for permits for the fertilizers, pesticides, and plowing involved in everyday farm life. The expansion of the EPA's jurisdiction,

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she realized, would put “so much of our farmland under federal control that it would make it difficult for farmers to farm at all.”

The Obama EPA issued the final rule, known informally as the “Waters of the United States” or WOTUS, in 2015. Eighteen states, including Michigan, sued to stop it. Federal courts immediately put the regulation on hold, noting that the new definitions might violate Supreme Court guidance and that the EPA appeared not to have followed proper rule-making procedures.

In February, with the WOTUS rule still in legal limbo, President Donald Trump signed an executive order directing the EPA to take a new look at it—beginning the process of killing it. In a White House ceremony, Trump called it a “massive power grab” and “one of the worst examples of federal regulation.”

A two-year-old EPA rule that never took effect might not sound particularly important in these times of almost daily political earthquakes. But Trump’s young presidency has seen dozens and dozens of tactical skirmishes against the regulatory state, fights that Trump and his cabinet have been largely winning. It’s not difficult to imagine a scenario under which Trump, battling low approval ratings and investigations, achieves few legislative victories during his presidency and instead points to executive regulatory moves as a major accomplishment—much as Obama in 2014 declared, “I’ve got a pen, and I’ve got a phone” when Congress refused to accede to his plans.

Those in favor of new regulations often frame them as baseball and apple pie issues that nobody could oppose, things like improving water quality or enhancing worker safety. But such efforts come with costs, and those bearing the burden of the rules say that the time and expense of complying with them should play a greater role in government decision-making.

Barring major legislation, the government has two main ways to roll back regulations: executive orders,

which usually set in motion a long process for agencies to review rules, and the Congressional Review Act, which allows new rules to be immediately overturned following a vote by Congress and the president’s signature. Trump has signed around a dozen executive orders related to Obama-era regulations and has undone 14 more through congressional acts. In the Obama years, regulators added 488 economically significant rules, according to George Washington University’s Regulatory Studies Center.



Area shown at right

A Michigan Farm Bureau map showing areas of the state (in royal blue) falling under federal waterway regulations imposed by the EPA under Obama

The regulations being repealed or reviewed by Trump appointees cut across a wide range of industries. Construction companies cheered the overturning in March of the so-called “blacklisting rule,” which required companies seeking federal contracts to report allegations of labor violations. Energy companies applauded executive orders designed to expand offshore oil exploration and boost coal plants. Tech and telecom companies supported the repeal of rules forcing them to require permission before using customer information to tailor online ads. There have been occasional setbacks, too: The Labor Department said last month that it would allow the “fiduciary rule,” an investment-advice regulation opposed by the financial services industry, to

take effect in June even though “it may not align with President Trump’s deregulatory goals.”

Many of the rescinded regulations sound insignificant—like WOTUS. But to Michigan farmers, the promise of erasing the Obama water regulations is “absolutely huge,” Campbell says. “If you are a farmer, a builder, a golf course manager, if you’re trying to do work out on the landscape, then this is dominating your life. If you’re not—if you live in the city and you work in the service industry—then it’s probably not something that’s hit your radar. But it’s still affecting you.”

In Bay County, about 120 miles north of Detroit, Mike Mulders worried about the effect the WOTUS rule would have on his farm, where he grows potatoes, tomatoes, melons, sweet corn, and other vegetables. Like the other farms in the area, his 600 acres include a series of ditches built to drain the fields and collect rainwater, which is then pumped to irrigate the crops. Water from the ditches eventually drains into Saginaw Bay, part of Lake Huron. If the EPA has the power to regulate the water in his ditches, he worries he would need a permit to apply pesticides to crops within 1,500 feet of a ditch.

“If there’s an invasive insect or fungal disease, we can’t wait two, three, four weeks for a permit, or the entire crop would be lost,” he says. “It’s a significant issue. Our business would not be able to survive.”

Supporters of the rule say farmers’ fears are overblown and that the regulations include protections for ordinary farming. But farmers say they never know how the EPA will interpret and enforce a rule until it actually does.

In southeastern Michigan, Kevin Robson is encouraged by the regulatory rollback and what it means for his family’s fourth-generation greenhouse operation, which grows plants and vegetables across 10 acres.

He’s not so interested in water regulations like WOTUS, but rather the EPA’s stance on chlorpyrifos, an insecticide used on fruits and vegetables.

AREAS IN BLUE, MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU

Environmentalists want it banned, citing some studies that suggest but do not prove that the insecticide could inhibit brain development in children. Robson says there's no alternative pesticide for some crops and that banning it would wipe out Michigan's onion industry. He says he wants decisions based on "sound science," not scare-mongering. EPA administrator Scott Pruitt said in March that no determination on chlorpyrifos would be made until at least 2022.

Robson sees Pruitt's decision as a stark contrast to the ways of the Obama administration. "For the previous eight years," he says, "there was nothing growers would get excited about. When you said 'EPA,' they'd say, 'What's the next regulation they are going to slap on me?'"

And now?

"Things are moving and things are happening and things are positive," he says. "Even though you read everything in the news about 'Trump tweeted this,' all that stuff hasn't sidelined anything. D.C. is running like a well-oiled machine. Things are getting done. We've seen that. We've witnessed it."

It's hard to match that enthusiasm in Washington itself. Dan Mitchell, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, agrees that the Trump administration has headed in the right direction, and he is encouraged by the installation of free-market champions atop big regulatory agencies. But he's skeptical that the rollback will continue. Big changes will require legislation, he says. And he's unsure that the administration will have the courage to withstand the predictable howls of media outrage. The reversals so far, he notes, are minuscule compared with the immense regulatory burden.

"They are doing the right things, and I can't complain about any of the steps they've taken so far," he says. "But I'm waiting to see how much follow-through there will be to keep the process going. . . . If you're driving in the wrong direction and hit the brakes, that's good. But you're still on the wrong side of town. It would be nice to put it in reverse." ♦

Corruption as a Way of Life

Sometimes Congress acts like a cartel.

BY JAY COST

Last week the *Washington Free Beacon* reported that roughly half of Congressman Luis Gutiérrez's campaign expenditures were paid to his wife, who serves as his campaign manager. What is most noteworthy about this is that Gutiérrez does not really need to worry about campaigning.

Illinois's Fourth Congressional District, which Gutiérrez represents, is gerrymandered precisely to create a Latino majority. So refined are the district lines that its two halves are connected in one place only by I-294. In his 13 successful races for the seat, Gutiérrez has never received less than 75 percent of the vote. In 2016, unopposed, he received 100 percent. Gutiérrez has no worries about reelection, yet his wife received \$12,000 in compensation in the first quarter alone.

It is legal for members of Congress to employ their family members in their campaigns, but it is an ethical gray area. Individual donors and interest groups are permitted to give to reelection campaigns, but not to members personally. Employing one's spouse or relative can serve as a way around this restriction. The practice is unfortunately common. In 2011 *Roll Call* reported on several members of Congress who have paid their spouses or relatives—including current members Joe Barton of Texas, William Lacy Clay of Missouri, Mike Doyle of Pennsylvania, Hank Johnson of Georgia, Dutch Ruppersberger of Maryland, and Bobby Rush of Illinois.

This can obviously be a way for members of Congress to monetize their

careers—transforming election campaigns into cash for themselves and significant others. There are numerous ways members can cash in on public service, and this is one of the easiest.

Spousal lobbying is another such strategy—and again, it is common. In 2014, an investigation by the *Chicago Tribune* found that Loretta Durbin, the wife of Senator Dick Durbin, lobbied on behalf of clients who "received federal funding promoted by her husband." Durbin is hardly the only senator who has a spouse or family member working as a lobbyist. A CBS News investigation from 2010 found 19 federal lobbyists "closely related" to members of Congress.

And spouses who do not lobby can still get in on the action. In 2013, the *Huffington Post* reported that then-Louisiana senator Mary Landrieu's husband, a real estate agent, had worked with campaign donors and lobbyists. Again, it is perfectly legal, and Landrieu was not even required to report the contacts in her Senate ethics disclosures.

Prior to the 2008 financial collapse, Fannie Mae, the Federal National Mortgage Association, elevated this kind of practice into an art form. They opened branches across the country and employed relatives of well-placed members of Congress, like the son of then-Utah senator Bob Bennett, who held a key position on the Banking Committee. Fannie Mae's foundation also lavished contributions on charities connected to members of Congress.

Members do not even need a spouse or family member to cash in. In his 2005 book *Do Members of Congress Reward Their Future Employers?*, political scientist Adolfo Santos

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documented what acute observers have always suspected: Members of Congress who plan to retire and join the ranks of lobbyists often use “their positions to send signals to prospective employers, or [reward] their future employers with favorable legislation.”

Some of these overlaps are no doubt innocent. Maybe most of them are. The problem is, it is impossible to differentiate the blameless from the crooked. Influence-peddling can be a subtle process, one that does not necessarily require an intent to misuse one’s authority. People who travel in the same economic, social, religious, and cultural circles often develop the same views on issues and the same sense of right and wrong—meaning that in the minds of congressmen, the difference between special interests and the public interest can become blurred.

Members of Congress have been cashing in since the very first days of our government. Alexander Hamilton unveiled his groundbreaking *Report on the Public Credit* in January 1790—an ambitious plan to repay the national debt in full and assume the state debts. Plugged-in speculators received advance notice of its contents prior to its submission to Congress, bringing about a rapid increase in the price of government securities. Many members of Congress were in on the action—dispatching agents to the Carolinas to buy up state debts from holders who did not yet know of Hamilton’s plan.

Andrew Craigie, apothecary general in the Revolutionary War, recorded in his diary that Congress suspended debate on the debt assumption plan “because their private arrangements are not in readiness for speculation.”

Members of Congress are tempted to use their political authority for private gain because they are human beings—and such temptations are embedded in our very nature. Writing

in 1787, James Madison argued that there were three reasons people sought positions in government: private gain, personal ambition, and concern for the general welfare. “Unhappily the two first are proved by experience to be most prevalent,” he wrote, and those who feel such impulses are often “the

14th Congress was one of the most vigorous in American history, but in 1816 it voted to give itself a pay increase, which the voters did not take kindly to, sweeping out many incumbents. More recently, the Pennsylvania legislature gave itself a pay raise in 2005, voting in the dead of night without an opportunity for public review of the law. Realizing their mistake, legislators quickly repealed the law, but many incumbents lost reelection.

Still, these temporary outbursts of voter frustration are hardly sufficient to police bad behavior among legislators. Unfortunately, the issue of public corruption is one where the party system inhibits rather than enhances the public discourse. On many issues, the parties—by taking open, divergent, and (seemingly) principled positions—offer voters a real choice between competing alternatives. But the parties can also function as a cartel. By taking the same position, or by refusing to discuss an issue openly, they can effectively foreclose the public from having a say on the matter. Congressional ethics are one such area of cartel-like behavior—members of both parties engage in the same dubious activities, and neither party ever tries to raise a ruckus over it.

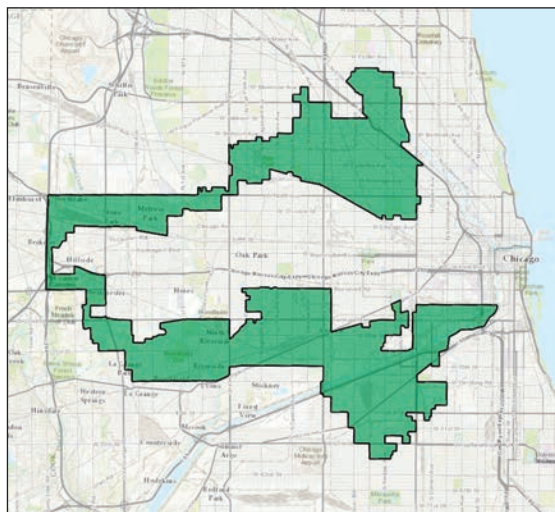
Voters, of course, are capable of disentangling these threads, even if the parties are not aiding them. But this requires more work than most citizens are willing to put into civics. People everywhere love

to complain about the rot at the heart of the American body politic, but hardly anybody does the research to see if his own representative is complicit in the corruption. Thus, the same problems persist, year after year.

Corrupt as it may often be, our government is still premised on the republican principle of majority rule—meaning that we get the kinds of leaders we deserve, for better or for worse. ♦



Luis Gutiérrez appears with Illinois senator Dick Durbin, left, June 13, 2014. Below, a map of Gutiérrez’s Chicago congressional district.



most industrious, and most successful in pursuing their object.” When they comprise a “majority in the legislative Councils,” they can “join in a perfidious sacrifice” of the public interest for their personal interests.

The saving grace of republican government is that power originates from the people, who can always throw these sorts of bums out. Public rebukes are not unprecedented. For instance, the

ABOVE: SCOTT OLSON / GETTY; BELOW VIA WIKIPEDIA

The Known Wolf

Salman Abedi's trajectory, from Manchester to Tripoli and back. **BY DOMINIC GREEN**

In the week following Salman Abedi's suicide bombing at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester on May 22, a great deal was revealed about the perpetrator, most of it deeply unsettling.

By Tuesday, May 30, 14 suspects were in police custody, one of them a recent immigrant from Libya who had just obtained a pilot's license. Eighteen different sites were undergoing forensic investigation. Three European states—Belgium, France, and Britain—now have soldiers on their streets. Two foreign intelligence agencies have supplied details of Abedi's career as an Islamist. The number of Abedi's accomplices is not known.

In response to Abedi's attack, the Home Office began issuing "temporary exclusion orders" to prevent British Islamists now outside the country from returning home. Yet when asked on May 28, Home Secretary Amber Rudd was unable to say how many citizens who have fought or received training in Syria have already returned to Britain. Rudd also admitted that members of Abedi's network were "potentially" still at large.

Abedi was not a "lone wolf" who had "self-radicalized" on the Internet or been "inspired" by ISIS. Within hours of the attack, NBC and CBS carried a leak from an unnamed American source identifying the 22-year-old Abedi as an Islamist of interest. France's interior minister, Gérard Collomb, announced that Abedi had "proven" links to ISIS, and

that British and French intelligence services had information that he had been in Syria in 2015. Even before the British police confirmed Abedi's identity, they admitted that he was "known to the authorities."

Just after the bombing, one of Abedi's friends told the *Times* of London

that Abedi had left for Libya "three weeks ago" and returned "recently, like, three days ago." On May 18, four days before the bombing, Abedi flew back to Manchester from Istanbul via Düsseldorf. It is not known how Abedi traveled to Istanbul from Libya. He was free to make his return journey because he was not on an international list of terrorist suspects. Should he have been free to make the outward journey from Britain?

Abedi's was among the approximately 20,000 names on the list of Britain's Islamist suspects, but he was not one of the 3,000 under "active investigation." A senior U.S. security source has claimed that the U.S. warned MI5, Britain's domestic security agency, in early 2017 that Abedi belonged to a "terror gang" of North African supporters of the Islamic State. MI5 investigated him and his friends but concluded that he was not about to "go kinetic." If, as seems probable, Abedi acted with the support of a terrorist cell, this represents a serious security failure.

Abedi also eluded Britain's wider counterterrorism program. As many as five people, including a Muslim community worker, neighbors, and possibly a family member, had denounced Abedi, some of them using the

government's anti-terrorist hotline. Two of them had warned as long as five years ago that Abedi had said "being a suicide bomber was OK." Others had warned that Manchester's Libyan community was breeding fanatics and terrorists. When an imam at the local mosque denounced ISIS, Abedi had insulted him with a command of local vernacular that suggests he was not wholly alienated from English society: "You're talking bollocks."

Yet on May 30, Ian Hopkins, chief constable of Greater Manchester, said that Abedi was "not known to the Prevent program." Prevent is the first element of a four-part Home Office anti-terror approach—the other elements are Pursue, Protect, and Prepare. Prevent might equally be called Preempt, for it aims to counter Islamist ideology, identify potential terrorists, and deradicalize penitents. Britain's security services, primed by the long war against Irish Republicanism, are perhaps Europe's best. So it is surprising that Abedi did not command more attention.

In the aftermath of the bombing, the security services launched some preemption of their own. An unnamed "Whitehall source" informed the public that five Islamist plots had been thwarted since this March, when Khalid Masood attacked pedestrians and policemen at the Houses of Parliament. And MI5 has already announced two inquiries into its handling of Abedi.

In some respects, Abedi has the background of a typical Euro-jihadist. The son of immigrants, he dropped out of college and into adolescent criminality, before sinking further into the redemptive fantasies of Islamist violence. Chief constable Hopkins, clearly not an aficionado of "broken windows" policing, said that Abedi was known to the Manchester police only for "relatively minor matters," including theft, receiving stolen goods, and, after punching a woman for wearing a short skirt, minor assault. Yet Abedi's case is more complex than the usual tale of immigrant alienation or, as in Khalid Masood's case, hard drugs and "radicalization" in prison.



Salman Abedi on a security camera the night of the bombing, May 27

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Abedi grew up with Islamic “radicalism” and was always known to the authorities. He was born in Manchester in 1994, to parents who had sought asylum from Qaddafi’s Libya. His father Ramadan Abedi is described as a “security officer.” In Manchester, this means a night watchman; in Libya, it denotes more sinister work, perhaps in one of Qaddafi’s many security services.

Ramadan Abedi sought sanctuary in Britain because he was an Islamist, and thus an enemy of Qaddafi. The British authorities granted asylum because Qaddafi was Britain’s enemy too. This was before 9/11, and the reversals of allegiance that followed—when the Islamists became the enemy, and Qaddafi an improbable ally.

In the nineties, a large Libyan exile contingent gathered in south Manchester. Ramadan Abedi, who is said to have received religious instruction in Saudi Arabia, was a stalwart of the mosque in nearby Didsbury, honored with issuing the call to prayer. He was

also a member of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG).

The LIFG was founded in 1995 by Abdelhakim Belhadj and other Libyan mujahedeem who had fought the Russians in Afghanistan and wanted to overthrow Qaddafi and create an Islamic state in Libya. Its personnel and ideology overlapped with those of other Sunni Islamist groups, notably the Taliban and al Qaeda, and latterly the group Ansar al Sharia, which took part in the deadly 2012 sacking of the U.S. installation in Benghazi.

With the outbreak of the Libyan civil war in early 2011, British security services lifted the “control orders” that restricted the lives of the Libyan Islamists in Manchester and returned their passports. Buoyed with arms and money from Qatar, LIFG members returned from exile and joined the fight in Libya. Ramadan Abedi went to Tunisia with his teenage sons Ismail, Salman, and Hashem, where he organized logistical support for LIFG fighters in western Libya. Akram

Ramadan, who fought with Ramadan Abedi, told the *New York Times* that “everybody went” with “the Manchester fighters,” even “drug dealers.” When the “Tripoli Revolutionary Brigade” advanced on the Libyan capital that summer, Ramadan Abedi posted a photo on Facebook in which his 15-year-old son “Hashem the lion” was holding a machine gun.

In August 2011, the rebels took Tripoli, and the LIFG’s leader Abdelhakim Belhadj became commander of the Tripoli Military Council. Belhadj showed foreign journalists documents retrieved from Qaddafi’s security services. These confirmed that Qaddafi’s post-9/11 anti-Islamist collaboration with the CIA and MI6, Britain’s external security agency, had continued for nearly a decade, up to the outbreak of the Libyan civil war. Questions were asked in the House of Commons. An inquiry into alleged torture by British security services was already proceeding under retired judge Sir Peter Gibson, and Prime Minister David

As Cyber Threats Mount, Businesses Mount a Defense

THOMAS J. DONOHUE

PRESIDENT AND CEO
U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Businesses around the world and across a wide range of industries continue to reel from the biggest ransomware attack in history. The WannaCry ransomware attack hit more than 230,000 computers in over 150 countries, holding data hostage from hospitals, global shipping businesses, entertainment companies, and more. It’s a stark reminder of the digital risks facing *all* levels of government and *all* businesses and institutions in the digital age—and yet another reason for American businesses to step up their cybersecurity efforts.

While large businesses invest heavily in defense systems, many smaller firms often lack the tools or resources to protect themselves. To help close this gap, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is continuing our Cybersecurity Awareness Campaign with regional events around the country. The campaign is geared toward educating small and midsize businesses about cyber

threats and best practices to defend their systems against intrusion. Originally launched in 2014, the campaign is in its fourth year. We kicked off our 2017 efforts in March hosting a conference with the Salt Lake Chamber and followed up with an event in South Carolina last month. The Chamber will hold three more regional roundtables leading up to our Sixth Annual Cybersecurity Summit in October.

The Chamber also continues to urge all businesses to use the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) *Framework for Improving Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity*. The framework, which was updated earlier this year, provides practical guidance for companies to reduce network weaknesses.

While businesses take steps to protect themselves, the government must play a role too. The Chamber was encouraged that President Trump signed an executive order last month bolstering our nation’s cyber defenses. The measure emphasized the importance of strengthening public-private partnerships, which has

long been a priority of the American business community. The Chamber will continue working with the administration to address cyber challenges, including streamlining the bureaucratic hurdles that impede private sector security efforts and promoting real-time information sharing between business and government.

It’s clear that this challenge will only grow in scope and sophistication—and businesses must prepare accordingly. Five years ago, people thought of cybersecurity mostly as an IT issue. More recently, it’s become a hot topic in boardrooms and a priority in the C-Suite. Today, cybersecurity must be a core management issue for *all* businesses—from the Fortune 500 to the mom-and-pop shop to the micro-entrepreneur. Every business must take steps to protect data, assets, and consumers. Doing so will promote a strong, secure, and resilient economy.



Learn more at
uschamber.com/abovethefold.

Cameron instructed Gibson to add Libya to his inquiry.

In late 2011, Belhadj sued Britain's security services, the ex-foreign secretary Jack Straw, and Sir Mark Allen, the ex-director of MI6's counterterrorism program. Belhadj alleged that in 2004, the CIA, acting on a tip from MI6, had arrested him and his pregnant wife at Kuala Lumpur Airport in Malaysia, taken him to Bangkok for rendition in a secret CIA facility, and then passed him to Qaddafi. Belhadj was held for seven years at Abu Salim prison, a maximum security site in Tripoli, notorious for torture.

In early 2012, the London *Telegraph* reported that the British government was offering to settle Belhadj's case out of court for one million pounds. Belhadj demurred, but in December 2013, a judge ruled that though Belhadj had a "well-founded" case that he had been unlawfully kidnapped, tortured, and imprisoned, the case could not be heard because to do so would damage the national interest, and especially relations with the United States.

In the same week, Sir Peter Gibson issued an interim report. The U.K., Gibson said, "may have been inappropriately involved" in renditions. Meanwhile, some of the "Manchester fighters," like Ramadan and Hashem Abedi, stayed in Libya. Others, like Ismail and Salman Abedi, returned to Britain. Ismail, who worked as a tutor at Didsbury mosque, is currently assisting police with their inquiries.

On May 29, Fawzi Haffar, a trustee of the Didsbury mosque, admitted to the BBC that the leaders of Manchester's Muslim communities had "a lot to learn." They needed "proper policies" if "mistakes" were to be avoided. The same might be said of Britain's security services.

Like the sword of Islam, the blade of MI6 has two edges, the harsh and the merciful. In the nineties, the LIFG's English exiles benefited from the merciful edge and found asylum in Manchester. After 2001, when Qaddafi became the friend of MI6 and the CIA, the LIFG felt the harsh edge. After 2011, the blade turned again, as

NATO threw its support behind anti-Qaddafi rebels in Libya, regardless of their deep-seated Islamism.

The national interest can change with the political tides. It was in Britain's interest to shelter anti-Qaddafi Islamists, then to betray them, and then to support them once again. Today, Libya is on the verge of disintegration.

Islamists like Salman Abedi are a danger to the British public, but Islamists like his father Ramadan are perceived as potential assets abroad. Did Salman Abedi slip through the net of the domestic security services or fall through the cracks between MI5 and MI6—the cracks between domestic and foreign priorities? ♦

Political Islam in Indonesia

Another year of living dangerously?

BY PAUL MARSHALL

Despite having the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia seldom troubles others and so draws little attention in the West. But last month's imprisonment of the governor of the capital, Jakarta, on charges of blasphemy has properly brought it to the front pages. It may signal that the world's third-largest democracy is sliding into authoritarian or Islamist rule.

The jailed governor is Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, universally known as "Ahok," who is ethnic Chinese in a country with abundant anti-Chinese prejudice and Christian in a country that is 88 percent Muslim. Nevertheless, last year he had a 70 percent approval rating and was widely expected to return to the governor's mansion in this April's election. You can find an abundant assortment of photographs on social media,

including some from the courtyard of the Great Mosque in Mecca, featuring people with signs that declare, "I am a Muslim and I support Ahok."

However, at a campaign rally last September Ahok referred to al-



Ahok in Jakarta, September 21, 2016

Maidah 51, a verse of the Koran warning Muslims against taking Jews or Christians as allies, which he said was being misused by some clerics to assert that Muslims may not vote for him. Several days later, a mendaciously edited video of the talk, omitting some of his key words,

went viral on the Internet. The semi-official Indonesian Ulema Council issued a fatwa accusing him of blasphemy, and the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI)—a radical group hitherto noted mainly for attacking Muslim minorities, churches, and liquor stores and nightclubs that didn't pay them enough protection money—called for demonstrations demanding that he be tried and imprisoned, or executed. One demonstration drew over a million people in Jakarta, and Ahok was charged and tried, though he continued to canvass votes, commuting daily between the campaign trail and the trial.

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IMAGES: NEWSCOM

The campaign was ugly. Anies Baswedan, a comparatively moderate former education minister and Ahok's chief opponent, took to wearing conspicuously Islamic clothing and gave a speech at the FPI's headquarters, sitting alongside its leader, Rizieq Shihab. Radical preachers declared that Muslims were forbidden to vote for a non-Muslim, and several mosques displayed signs stating that Ahok voters could never have an Islamic burial. The governor continued to seek votes, but on April 19, he lost 58-42 percent.

The day after the vote, when it could not help him politically, the prosecution dropped some of the charges against Ahok and recommended that he be given the very light sentence of probation plus a one-year suspended jail term. But on May 9, the five judges ignored the prosecutors' recommendation and sentenced Ahok to two years in prison. The following day, three of those judges were promoted by the Indonesia Supreme Court.

The verdict has split the country in a way not seen in decades. There are widespread demonstrations defending Ahok, but many of his supporters are too afraid to speak out. The president and the national police have been at odds with the military. Tensions within divided families are so high that people may refuse to be in the same room with one another or attend each other's weddings. There is widespread fear that Indonesia may lapse into authoritarian government.

The Islamist surge has exposed growing radicalization in Indonesia's population, especially among the young, and especially in the universities, with the exception of the State Islamic Universities, which are usually bastions of moderation. This radicalization is often led by a well-funded Saudi network of schools, scholarships, imams, and mosques determined to wrest Indonesians away from local interpretations of Islam, which have usually encouraged democracy and peaceful relations between religions. The country's two largest Muslim organizations were formed a century ago as explicit counters to Saudi Wahhabism, and they have urged the

government to curb Saudi influence.

The national police have been cracking down on radicals. In the last few months, Rizieq Shihab, FPI's leader, has himself been investigated for blasphemy after reports that he denigrated the Holy Trinity. He has also been questioned concerning allegations that he insulted Pancasila, the official state ideology, Sukarno, Indonesia's revered first president, and Indonesia's currency (by claiming that the new banknotes featured Communist symbols). Rizieq has spent the last month in Saudi Arabia, partly to avoid police questioning, but on May 30, the police charged him under the pornography law for allegedly sending sexually explicit messages to Firza Husein, who has been arrested for treason



Pro-Ahok protest in Bali, Indonesia, May 11

on suspicion that she was trying to orchestrate a coup through her role as an organizer of the mass demonstrations. Meanwhile, the government has announced that it will ban the radical group Hizb ut-Tahrir.

But the opposition to Ahok extended beyond radicals. Many ordinary Muslims believed that he had deliberately insulted them and this genuine religious sentiment has been manipulated by senior politicians, the military, and other elites, who also likely funded the radicals. The FPI does not have the money or other resources to organize massive demonstrations with thousands of buses, lunch boxes, and neatly printed signs and T-shirts.

These machinations were also aimed at Joko Widodo, Indonesia's president and Ahok's former running-mate, who was rumored to be considering Ahok as his vice-presidential

candidate for the 2019 national campaign. Jokowi, as he's known, is the first Indonesian president from outside the military and political establishment, and in the 2014 presidential election he defeated Prabowo, son-in-law of the last dictator Suharto and a former special forces general accused of human rights abuses. Prabowo and some of Suharto's children are thought to be setting the stage for another presidential run, hoping to return Indonesia to a more authoritarian system with a larger role for the military. They may also hope that Indonesia's current unrest will increase demand for expanded security services and a firm political hand.

There are other tensions between the president and the military. Jokowi reportedly reprimanded General Gatot Nurmantyo, chief of the Indonesian Military (TNI), after the latter unilaterally declared a suspension of defense cooperation with Australia. General Nurmantyo has also publicly contradicted the National Police chief, General Tito Karnavian, a Jokowi ally, about whether there has been anything treasonous in the recent demonstrations. Some regional TNI commands have even given military training to FPI members.

Indonesia has many strengths. Despite Wahhabi inroads, its dominant forms of Islam remain open and tolerant, and can be important allies in the struggle against Islamist terrorism and extremism. Muslims from Indonesia are still 20 times less likely than Muslims from America to try to join ISIS, and 50 times less likely to do so than Muslims from England or other parts of Europe.

But growing radicalization and a push for authoritarian rule is eroding Indonesia's democracy and comparatively peaceful social order. If this gubernatorial election becomes the paradigm for the next presidential contest, then they may collapse. Indonesia is the world's third-largest democracy and the only Muslim-majority country in the ten largest economies in the world. If it succumbs to Islamic radicalism or authoritarian rule, it will be a dark day not just for Indonesians. ♦

'Principled Realism'

Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Trump

BY REUEL MARC GERECHT

Donald Trump's recent sojourn in the Middle East leaves the United States where it was before the president departed: His administration remains committed to containing Iran while philosophically adopting a pre-9/11 approach to combating Sunni Islamic militancy. Sunni Arab leaders have reason to be content. However much Candidate Trump wanted to avoid wars and costly alliances, President Trump clearly isn't going to

Iranian election, quieted Arab anxiety about crafty Persians, an alluring Iranian marketplace, and whispering pro-Iranian Russians. Trump's willingness to sell lots of American weaponry to Sunni Arabs (a longstanding bipartisan American reflex) and his disinterest in the human-rights abuses of those attending the Saudi king's anti-Iranian conference also reassured Arab leaders that Trump won't be, à la George W. Bush, a double-edged sword, cutting Arab authoritarians even more than Persian mullahs.

Yet Trump's "Principled Realism" is no more likely than Barack Obama's politically correct, fearful realpolitik to check Tehran's clerical regime where it matters most, in Syria. Trump appears ideologically too handicapped to target the Islamic Republic at its weakest point—internally, where serious pro-democracy dissent rumbled beneath this year's presidential campaign. And Trump didn't publicly mention once, in either Riyadh or Jerusalem, Obama's nuclear deal, which the White House has decided to maintain. For those wanting Trump to downgrade the deal's strategic importance, to keep it from dominating Middle Eastern foreign policy as it did under Obama, that has to be a disconcerting sign. No countries were more loudly fearful of Obama's atomic handiwork than Israel and Saudi Arabia; none would have been more welcoming of a Trump critique of the agreement's continuing dangers.

Of course, it's possible when the Trump administration finishes its Iran policy review, which should be no later than August, the White House will boldly tackle the Islamic Republic's Shiite imperialism, its development of long-range ballistic missiles, and the ticking time bomb that is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which guarantees that Tehran can develop industrial-size uranium enrichment within 13 years. Except this isn't how Washington works, even in our current contrarian age. The administration isn't going to spend months certifying that the mullahs have sufficiently complied with the terms of the atomic accord and then, at the end of a multi-agency review, go the other direction. Bureaucratic inertia and the Pentagon's obvious fear of Iranian-directed, vengeful Shiite militias targeting U.S. soldiers in Iraq,



Donald and Melania Trump are welcomed by Saudi Arabia's King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, right, in Riyadh, May 20.

abandon the southern Middle East to Iranian aggression. His Riyadh "Islam speech," which was more about the Islamic Republic than anything else, signaled that Trump wasn't particularly moved by the reelection of the foreign-investment-loving Iranian president Hassan Rouhani.

Gulf Arabs, who have had no idea how to check a resurgent Iran that commands Shiite militias in the Levant and Iraq, were consumed with fear that Washington would again fall victim to back-channel messaging from "moderates" in Tehran. Trump's oration, given two days after the

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where around 6,000 serve, should be more than enough to maintain the deal, barring the unexpected, through 2020.

The regional calculus plays to the accord's advantage. The administration has already become accustomed to the Iranian-Russian axis behind the Syrian dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad. It has become accustomed to tens of thousands of Syrian children dying by conventional munitions (death by gas jarred the White House; death by barrel bombs less so). It appears even to have become accustomed to Iranian dominion in Iraq—an obvious flashpoint for the national security adviser, Lt. General H.R. McMaster, who did much to save Iraq from a savage insurgency 10 years ago. The notion that the administration will in the autumn play hardball with the Iranians and the Europeans, who now clearly care more about Iran's commercial promise than they do the menace of the nuclear deal's sunset clauses or Iranian complicity in mass murder, and demand a renegotiated or supplemental accord to eliminate the JCPOA's weaknesses seems farfetched. This would be a multi-front task requiring enormous concentration of presidential will. Even assuming President Trump intellectually is in agreement, and is prepared to meet head-on the international blowback, temperamentally this just seems too challenging. As the Council on Foreign Relations's Ray Takeyh has pithily put the durability of the JCPOA: "Revision delayed is revision denied."

Trump's approach among the Arabs also suggests that a hardline Iran policy won't solidify. Though unremarked in the media, the president emphasized burden-sharing as much in Riyadh as he did in Brussels. It would be unfair to suggest that Trump aims to create a new Arab-heavy Baghdad Pact aimed against the Islamic Republic (the original anti-Soviet alliance, formed in 1955 and ineffective from birth, never really had American buy-in), but not *that* unfair. It just beggars the imagination to believe that the Saudis and the Emiratis, the bankrollers of the anti-Iranian Arab cause, could or should play any substantive role in the confrontations between Sunnis and Shiites in the northern Middle East. They may have, through their needlessly destructive bombing campaign in Yemen, converted Houthis, hitherto a not particularly radicalized or globalized Shiite sect, into foot-soldiers for Iranian ambitions. The hodgepodge Sunni Arab Saudi-led alliance in Yemen is bogged down. The Saudis have shown no bravery on the battlefield; the Emiratis briefly threw themselves into it before showing that they, too, cannot take casualties.

And competence and steadfastness aside, how do Gulf Arabs raised on Wahhabism, the most virulently anti-Shiite branch of Sunni fundamentalism, advance a healthy outcome in either Syria or Iraq? The Saudis, Qataris, and Emiratis have all supported various radical Sunni groups in Syria. They do so not just because the savagery of the war has left them few effective options. Without doubt, the oddest moment of President Trump's speech in Riyadh was when he called upon the Saudis, among others, to cast out the extremists in their midst. Sounding a bit like a godfather calling out Satan at a baptism, Trump implored his listeners to "DRIVE THEM OUT of your places of worship. DRIVE THEM OUT of your communities. DRIVE THEM OUT of your holy land. And DRIVE THEM OUT OF THIS EARTH." (The White House provided the capitalization.) Most Saudis unquestionably want no part of terrorism aimed at the West—Israel being the possible exception. But Saudi society is a cornucopia of hatreds, bigotries, and harshness that Wahhabis, more than members of any other Sunni creed, have nourished for over 270 years. The Saudi royals have become accomplished ethical contortionists. Good Wahhabis exiling Bad Wahhabis, however, would be a push.

A good argument can be made that a sound American policy in the Middle East ought to reassure the Saudis and other Sunni sheiks of the Persian Gulf that Washington has their backs so they will cease deploying their assets and ideology throughout the region. There is certainly a place

for the Saudis and the Emiratis in finance and commerce to ensure that Iran's ruling elite and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the military pillar of the regime and the cutting edge of Tehran's military adventures, are starved of foreign investment. There are clever ways for them to deploy their considerable financial leverage with European banks to discourage financing of major Iranian projects. But on the ground in the Middle East, we should always want the Saudis to do less, not more, in any alliance with the United States. This isn't, of course, in sync with President Trump's transactional approach to foreign affairs.

We don't know yet what the White House really wants the Saudis to do in the Middle East. We probably don't know because the administration's better strategic minds, let alone the president, haven't thought through what a Sunni Arab-American partnership against the Islamic Republic means. No matter how one turns it, however, it's

Most Saudis want no part of terrorism aimed at the West—Israel being the possible exception. But Saudi society is a cornucopia of hatreds, bigotries, and harshness that Wahhabis, more than members of any other Sunni creed, have nourished for over 270 years.

difficult to see how Saudi military support, unless channeled and controlled by American soldiers, won't turn counterproductive, abetting the so-far-successful Iranian effort to create a sectarian realignment in the Middle East. Heretofore in Syria against the Islamic State, the Trump administration has let others—primarily Kurds and Syrian Sunni Arabs—carry the battlefield burden. The Pentagon and the National Security Council are certainly aware that the Syrian Kurds have de facto aligned themselves with Damascus. The Syrian Kurdish war against the Islamic State, like the Iraqi Kurdish war against the Islamic State, has already strengthened Kurdish popular opinion, especially in Iraq, in favor of independence if not statehood. There is a decent argument to be made now for an Iraqi Kurdish homeland. It's not clear that Washington realizes that Kurdish Judgment Day and a monumental storm with Iraqi and Syrian Arabs and the Turks may be around the corner. Our short-term interests—keeping U.S. force commitments low—poorly prepare us for an outcome that could oblige Washington to make a decisive, convulsive choice on strategic partnerships throughout the region. With Trump, more of these strategic choices seem inevitable.

The president's comments in Riyadh suggest that the White House has little intention of pressuring Iran through proxies. This part of the president's speech may be revealing: "Until the Iranian regime is willing to be a partner for peace, all nations of conscience must work together to isolate Iran, deny it funding for terrorism, and pray for the day when the Iranian people have the just and righteous government they deserve." If this is a lens into Trump's mind, the future of American Iran policy will revolve, once again, around sanctions.

That is the least confrontational approach, at least with the Iranians. It does imply, however, that Trump is willing to risk the nuclear agreement to punish Tehran for its baleful regional actions. The JCPOA hinges on one thing: atomic restraint in exchange for sanctions relief. If Trump and Congress resolve to pound economically the Iranian regime for its nonnuclear behavior, and new congressional sanctions legislation targeting the Revolutionary Guards continues to move forward with bipartisan support, it will be evident that the administration has decided to make the nuclear agreement subservient to a larger anti-Iranian Middle Eastern strategy. Since U.S. sanctions are now unlikely to change Iranian strategic ambitions and tactics, Trump would be signaling that he is in fact willing to reintroduce American hard power against Tehran, though elsewhere he's been showing that he isn't. This apparent contradiction will in all probability remain until the president decides whether to approve the \$17 billion Boeing sale to Iran, which, if rejected, would presumably also down the multibillion-dollar Airbus sale to Iran, given the use of

American parts in the European planes. If he allows the Boeing deal, which would sustain thousands of U.S. jobs, President Trump's Iran policy will become just a rhetorically harsher, more intellectually confused version of President Obama's Iran policy.

Which would leave Trump's approach to Sunni militancy the only area of possible divergence from his predecessor. However, here, too, the president will likely accomplish the reverse of what he intends. In Riyadh, Trump gave Gulf monarchs and Egypt's president-for-life Abdel Fattah el-Sisi a green light to continue to pummel dissent. Such oppression always creates its Muslim nemesis: Politico-religious opposition will grow. It is no accident that after Trump's speech in Riyadh, Sisi signed a new law essentially criminalizing all nongovernmental organizations. It is no coincidence that Egyptian radicals aligning themselves with the Islamic State have increased in number and ferocity since Sisi's coup in 2013 against the democratically elected Muslim Brotherhood government of Mohamed Morsi.

Many on the American right are comfortable with what Trump tried to do in Riyadh: rally the Sunni Arabs from their Obama-induced depression and let the clerical regime in Tehran know that America is no longer going to give it a free pass. If in that transaction Washington abandons any pretense of concern about how Sunni Muslims states are ruled, that is a price worth paying so long as Trump doubles down on the Islamic Republic. There is a certain intellectual fatigue on the American right with discussions about the root causes of Islamic terrorism that don't derive from the Muslim faith. President Trump's distaste for traditional American moralism—"We are not here to lecture—we are not here to tell other people how to live, what to do, who to be, or how to worship . . ."—certainly has fans among those uncomfortable with George W. Bush's emphasis on democracy and freedom. After eight years of President Obama's political correctness about Islam, Trump may still be to many a breath of fresh air. But the president is well on the way to exhibiting an unpleasant truth: Trump may prove no better than Obama in grappling with Islamic militancy. Odds are decent he will do worse.

Iran is the wild card, the one place Trump might make a big difference. As the Dartmouth scholar Misagh Parsa shows in his insightful book *Democracy in Iran*, an examination of the 38-year tug-of-war in the Islamic Republic between the people and theocracy, Iranians have been after far more than a "just and righteous government." That would be the biggest irony of them all: if an American president who cares so little about democracy and freedom abroad convulsed the clerical regime, letting loose the counter-revolution that's been building like a magma pool under a volcano. Odds aren't good. But as each day reveals, the Trump presidency is always in flux. ♦

Retreat from Reliability

America's allies are worried and unsettled.

So what else is new?

BY THOMAS DONNELLY

Campaigning in a Munich beer tent on May 28, German chancellor Angela Merkel reflected upon Donald Trump's blitz through Europe at the tail end of his first trip outside the United States. "The times when we could fully rely on others are kind of over," she said. "We Europeans really need to take our fate into our own hands. . . . We have to fight for our own future, as Europeans, for our destiny."

Merkel was reflecting on the antagonistic approach to multilateral trade regimes and the Paris climate change agreement Trump had displayed at the NATO summit in Brussels on May 25 and a subsequent meeting of the G7 in Italy. But the underlying message was more general and more disturbing: Our allies and adversaries are coming to the conclusion that the United States is no longer interested in leading the world. This can only end in calamity and conflict. The genius of the post-1945 Pax Americana is that it subsumed the destinies of any great and would-be great powers into our own. Whenever Germany and other Eurasian nations, even the most liberal ones, have tried to take destiny in their own hands, the result has been catastrophic.

You'd think Germans would be especially reluctant to return to anything like the multipolarity that made Middle Europe a battleground for a millennium. The original problem was German weakness; the German-speaking peoples were parceled out into hundreds of palatinates and principalities, prey to Habsburg, Bourbon, Romanov, or Napoleonic ambition. From unification in 1871 to Hitler's fall in 1945, the problem was German strength. The distance from

self-reliance to *lebensraum* was a short one, but Germany was simply repeating the bids for European domination launched in previous centuries by Spain and France; each was strong enough to believe it could become the dominant power but too weak to attain such a position. Imperial Japan made a similar bid for mastery in East Asia during the first half of the 20th century, with similar results.

These failures highlight the greatness of America's achievement. Victory was won in World War II with a big boost from Great Britain and the Soviet Union—which

paid by far the largest cost in blood in defeating Nazism. But it was the United States that sustained the effort through the Cold War and beyond, creating for the first time in history a comprehensive international order that provided security and created the conditions for historic rises in prosperity and liberty. For 70 years, much of the planet—certainly all of the "Free World"—has relied on the United States to guarantee that order. They can only look

at our growing abdication of responsibility with dismay.

FROM OBAMA TO TRUMP

Donald Trump is barging his way through a door opened by Barack Obama. The main difference between "America First" and "nation-building at home" is who gets the blame; Trump thinks the rest of the world isn't good enough to warrant much American sacrifice where Obama acted as though America was not good enough for the world. Both philosophies have little interest in the messy business of policing the global commons.

Lest we forget, the original premise of Obama's rise to national political stardom in 2002 was his stand against a "dumb war" in Iraq and the "cynical attempt" by neoconservatives "to shove their own ideological agendas down our throats." While admitting that Saddam Hussein was a "bad guy," Obama said he could live with him and his regime



G7 leaders, including two EU officials, meet in Sicily.

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until, “in the way of all petty dictators, he falls away into the dustbin of history.” He ran for the presidency promising to “end” the war in Iraq—meaning, really, to end American involvement. He moved slowly once in the White House, but well before his re-election bid, he could declare his mission accomplished. “Today I can report,” he announced in October 2011, “that, as promised, the rest of our troops in Iraq will come home by the end of the year.”

Even more telling was Obama’s handling of Afghanistan. Candidate Obama had contrasted the “good” war in Afghanistan against the “bad” war in Iraq, claiming that as president he would “make the fight against al Qaeda and the Taliban the top priority that it should be.” Yet through three extended “strategic reviews” of Afghan strategy over the course of 2009, Obama agonized about the need to send more troops. Perhaps not surprisingly, the result was incoherent. To begin with, he tried to split the difference between counterterrorism and counterinsurgency, fatally matching high ambitions with restricted troop levels. Nor was he willing to undertake needed reforms in the Afghan government, thus undercutting American efforts from the start. And, fearing to “lose all the Democratic party” rather than the war itself, Obama promised that the “surge” of 30,000 extra troops he ordered would be brief, making sure to bring the troops home before election night 2012.

Obama’s faint heart was especially jarring to the former Soviet satellites that have joined NATO. Many of these Eastern European countries had been so anxious for American approbation that they had broken with Germany and France and sent troops to fight in Iraq. In the context of Obama’s Russia “reset” and the 2009 renegeing on missile defense agreements with the Czech Republic and Poland, questions about American strategic reliability arose.

These became more vocal during Obama’s second term. The president had been overheard telling Russian president Dmitry Medvedev that he would enjoy greater latitude once he no longer had to face voters, but no one imagined that would mean “leading from behind” on Libya or turning away from the proclaimed “red line” in Syria. The Syria failure resonated globally. An Australian defense white paper went so far as to imagine the prospect of American regional decline. The Chinese were so encouraged they embarked on an aggressive program of dredging “islands” in the South China Sea to build military outposts.

The psychological effect of Obama’s policies exceeded their material import. No one failure did much to change the actual balance of power. The structures built over seven

decades were resilient; allies had become dependent on them and adversaries sought only to undermine them at the margins, not supplant them. It was hoped and expected that the passing of Obama’s presidency might make for a return to normal.

Donald Trump doesn’t do normal. The purpose of his eight-day globetrot was to reassure allies unsettled by Obama. But even had Trump not blown up in Europe—berating our NATO allies for failing to meet defense budget pledges, claiming arrears for past U.S. military spending, and haranguing the Germans for their export-focused trade policies—his trip would have been a failure. Trump’s transactional approach to international affairs does nothing to calm our friends’ fears. The Saudis, for instance, were quite happy to pay up: inking a \$110 billion arms-sales package, making a \$40 billion investment in Trump’s “public-private” infrastructure plan, and, along with the United Arab Emirates, pledging \$100 million to Ivanka Trump’s suggested World Bank fund for women entrepreneurs. But they know they’re renting for the short term with Trump and not investing in any long-term relationship with an American leader. Trump, for his part, hailed the arms deal as good for Saudi security and American jobs, and never mentioned U.S. national security.

In turning away from entangling alliances and overseas commitments, Trump and Obama tapped into a vein of U.S. public opinion. The 2016 primary season was littered with the corpses of traditional, peace-through-strength candidates, and not only on the Republican side. Hillary Clinton did all but “lose the Democratic Party” to Bernie Sanders. In retrospect it might be that the distaste for the Iraq war expressed symptoms of a disease deeper than simple opposition to “stupid” approaches to the Middle East. Trump, Obama, and their political bases share a visceral dislike of the foreign-policy establishment, the “blob” as Obama adviser Ben Rhodes described it. Barack Obama hoped, in pushing for further arms control measures and climate agreements, to transcend the creaky mechanisms that made up the “international system” of nation-states; Trump wants to pull it down and redevelop it in the name of American sovereignty.

Trump is barging his way through a door opened by Barack Obama. The main difference between ‘America First’ and ‘nation-building at home’ is who gets the blame.

THE COMING MULTIPOLARITY

Thus we are well down the path toward a more competitive and “multipolar” world, one more prone to conflict.

Political scientists and historians of the “realist” school

see the period between the 1815 Congress of Vienna, which concluded the Napoleonic wars, and the outbreak of World War I in 1914 as a successful multipolar arrangement. They tend to depict a Europe shepherded by wise statesmen striving to maintain a balance of power. But you have to squint hard to see it that way. The European great-power balance was wobbly by 1864, when the Prussians and Austrians snatched the duchies of Schleswig, Holstein, and Saxe-Lauenburg from the Danes. Two years later, the Prussians turned on the Austrians and in the Seven Weeks' War began the unification of the German states. In 1870, the new North German Federation invaded France and by January of 1871 had occupied Paris and declared a German Empire. The period was rife with colonial and proxy conflicts, too, perhaps most strikingly the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), with Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm goading the Russian Czar Nicholas to be the "savior of the white race" against the "yellow peril" in Asia, and the British backing the Japanese, who scored impressive victories on land and sea.

It isn't hard to imagine the scramble for power, influence, and advantage that would follow the crumbling of the current international order. A rising China is likely to set the pace: Increasingly wealthy and militarily powerful, shamed by two centuries of European exploitation, and with Han nationalism supplanting Communist doctrine, Beijing has means and motive. But even if the United States were to grant China its own sphere of influence in maritime Southeast Asia, Japan would contest it. Indeed, under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan is much farther down the road to strategic self-reliance than Merkel's Germany or the EU, and is prepared to make military investments—perhaps even nuclear ones.

Vladimir Putin built his career as Russian leader around exploiting uncertainties about American commitment, beginning in Georgia in 2008 and continuing through Ukraine and the Baltic states. He saw an opportunity in Bashar al-Assad's distress, a low-cost move that got Russia back at the table in the Middle East and put pressure on Europe. Meddling—or appearing to meddle—in the 2016 U.S. election has been a Powerball-sized win, too. Yet American leaders always seem ready for a "reset" that will make Putin a partner for stability.

This was Obama's bet on Iran, too. There is an abiding school of thought in Washington that Iran is our natural

partner in the Middle East, especially in contrast to the Saudi royal family and its strict Wahhabi views. But with the prospect of regional hegemony in sight and a military built around zealous sectarian militias and ballistic missiles, Tehran is far more likely to step up its anti-American efforts than become a contented partner. Trump, like Obama before him, has made the defeat of ISIS the first order of business for America in the Middle East, a fight in which Iran is our partner. Secretary of Defense James Mattis recently announced a shift from "attrition tactics" to "annihilation." If that mission is accomplished, will not Iran simply fill the power vacuum?

Western Europe has the most to lose in pursuing a path of self-reliance in place of American power. This is especially so in the wake of Great Britain's vote to leave the European Union. History is again revealing: Absent the hand of an English "offshore balancer," the continental balance of power has always been precarious. The problem will once again be weakness—both German and French. Europe is something akin to a geopolitical retirement home and thus very vulnerable to the bully on its borders.

The greatest costs of multipolarity will be measured in lost prosperity and lost liberty. Brookings Institution scholar Homi Kharas has estimated that the "global middle class" now numbers 3.2 billion—almost half the planet's population. Perhaps not coincidentally, the acceleration of prosperity correlates strongly with the end of the Cold War; in 1985 the global middle class was only 1 billion people. There is also a similar correlation between American power and free governments, not least here at home. So, far from creating a repressive national security state, the period from 1945 onward has seen a steady expansion of civil and social liberties of all kinds—in matters of race, gender, sexual orientation, and more—in the United States.

Yet, to many Americans, the U.S. government is an increasingly unreliable partner, no longer an engine of progress and growth but a mechanism to fence out "losers" and "deplorables." Wearying of burdens abroad, we tire of each other at home, seeking a separate rather than shared destiny. Barack Obama stoked an insidious form of identity politics in his eight years in office, and Donald Trump has taken that art form to a new level. Thanks to their efforts, identity politics are on the verge of supplanting the liberalism of the last 70 years on the international stage. ♦



Outreach partners at 2016's G7 summit in Japan await Obama.



Jefferson's bedroom at Monticello

Prodigy of Freedom

Thomas Jefferson, Virginian and American. BY GORDON S. WOOD

Most Americans have thought about Thomas Jefferson much as our first professional biographer, James Parton, did. “If Jefferson was wrong,” wrote Parton in 1874, “America is wrong. If America is right, Jefferson was right.” Unfortunately, Jefferson at present looks to be more wrong than right, at least among most academic historians, and therefore America has become more wrong than right, especially on matters of race. As John B.

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Jefferson
Architect of American Liberty
 by John B. Boles
 Basic Books, 640 pp., \$35

Boles points out in this good, solid, generally fair-minded biography, Jefferson was “once lauded as the champion of the little man,” but “today he is vilified as a hypocritical slave owner professing a love of liberty while quietly driving his own slaves to labor harder in his pursuit of personal luxury.”

“Surely,” writes Boles, who is professor of history at Rice and the long-time former editor of the *Journal of*

Southern History, “an interpretative middle ground is possible, if not necessary.” Boles has attempted to find that middle ground by writing a biography that “is admittedly sympathetic but critical when appropriate.” He aims to set Jefferson “within the rich context of his time and place.” Our third president “was not a modern man,” and we cannot make him one of us. He is a tragic figure who hated the institution of slavery but found himself caught up in circumstances he could not control or overcome.

Boles realizes that the “issues of race and slavery are so important to us today that they almost overwhelm our view of Jefferson.” Although he says

STEVE HELBER/AP

that he wants to deal frankly with Jefferson's views of race and slavery, and he has a very full and honest chapter on these subjects late in the book, sometimes he allows his sympathy to get the better of him. To write that "for Jefferson, owning slaves was a means to an end—improving and sustaining Monticello—and never an end in itself" doesn't seem to be much of a defense of Jefferson's presumably benevolent slaveholding. Yet Boles is right in contending that we impoverish our understanding of Jefferson if we do not recognize as well his great contributions to political liberty and religious freedom.

As a prominent member of the Virginia slaveholding planter elite, Jefferson was an unlikely spokesman for equality and liberty. Although his father, Peter Jefferson, was only a substantial planter, his mother was a Randolph, perhaps the most prestigious family in all of Virginia. Jefferson, who was born in 1743, was only 14 when his father died, and he was thus raised by the Randolphs, something that Boles does not make much of.

Indeed, Boles spends very little time exploring Jefferson's personality or explaining why Jefferson did certain peculiar things—for example, decide to build his home, Monticello, on a remote mountaintop where water and building materials were hard to come by. Instead, his biography concentrates on the exterior events of Jefferson's private and public lives and weaves them together in a straightforward, clearly written narrative. It is the fullest and most complete single-volume life of Jefferson since Merrill Peterson's thousand-page biography of 1970. Boles differs from Peterson largely in accepting Sally Hemings as Jefferson's concubine who bore at least five and perhaps six of his mixed-race children—children whom he virtually ignored. Boles goes on to suggest that the relationship was "consensual, founded on shared tenderness and love," even though Jefferson, unlike many other masters with slave concubines, never acknowledged the relationship and indirectly denied it.

It is obvious that Jefferson was one of the wealthiest slaveholding plant-

ers in Virginia, especially after his father-in-law in 1773 left him 11,000 acres of land and 135 slaves. Yet this rich aristocrat became a devout radical, dedicated, as he later put it, to the eradication of "every fibre . . . of ancient or future aristocracy" in the state of Virginia. In 1776, in the Virginia legislature, he set about abolishing the legal devices of primogeniture and entail that he believed supported this aristocracy. He worked to end the Anglican religious establishment in the state and to create real religious liberty—an unprecedented separation of church and state whose radicalism still takes the breath away. He planned a modern three-tiered, publicly supported educational system. He set out to reform the state's legal system and to extend the suffrage to all white property owners, offering 50 acres of land to anyone who did not have that many. And finally, he proposed the abolition of slavery in a society 40 percent of which was enslaved. He made all these radical proposals, most of which were rejected by his aristocrat colleagues, without alienating them in any meaningful way.

Despite his desire to get rid of every fiber of aristocracy, his fellow aristocrats admired him, respected him, and elected him to every major position they could: to the legislature, to the governorship, and to the Continental Congress. Jefferson was unique not just among his Virginia colleagues but among all the major American leaders. "No other Founder," says Boles, "was so ideologically supportive of a democratic society." Although Jefferson's "ideas were way ahead of his time," his fellow slaveholding aristocrats did not hold his ultra-progressivism against him; indeed, most revered him. Boles is aware of the problem and suggests an explanation. He notes that Jefferson was always polite, "almost to a fault," and "never had the unrelenting demeanor of a radical." Perhaps more important was his colleagues' realization that they had in their midst a genius who knew more about more things than anyone else in North America, Benjamin Franklin included.

Since Jefferson had written the most radical pamphlet, *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* (1774), that existed prior to Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* (1776), it was not surprising that he was assigned the drafting of the Declaration of Independence. When he wrote "all men are created equal," Boles, following the line of most historians, says that "he was referring to the equal possession of inherent rights, not equality of any other kind." Actually, Jefferson and most of his colleagues seemed to have taken the idea of equality at birth more literally than that. In good enlightened manner, following the philosophical principles of John Locke, they assumed that everyone—or at least every white man: Jefferson and many other Southerners thought blacks were a different order of being—was born with the same blank slate, and that the obvious differences among people that developed during the course of their lives came from the circumstances of the environment operating on their initial blank slates.

The slaveholding planter William Byrd, who was as much of an aristocrat as Virginia was ever to know, had read widely and was a learned member of the Royal Society. Despite his great distance from the common man, however, he wanted to be thought modern and enlightened and thus could not help affirming, in 1728, that "the principal difference between one people and another proceeds only from the differing opportunities of improvement." In other words, what counted was nurture, not nature. This is the reason Jefferson and most of the revolutionaries placed so much importance on education, as we still do today. The possibility of improvement is the basis of America's democratic faith.

Jefferson eventually did get heavily criticized by many of his contemporaries, not for his views on race or slavery but for his religious views. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, the only book he ever wrote, he said that it did him no injury if his neighbor believed in 20 gods or no god; it neither picked his pocket nor broke his leg. And then, in the preamble to his famous Bill for Religious Freedom that was enacted

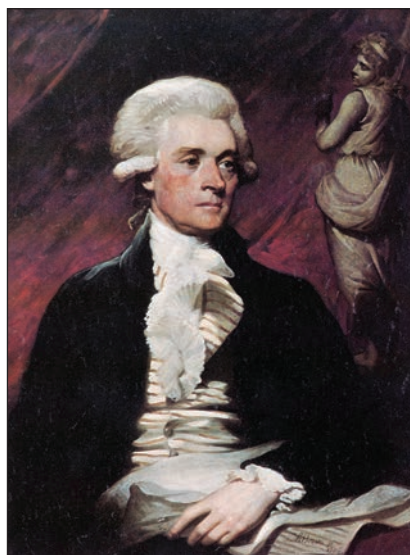
in Virginia in 1786, he declared that “our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, any more than our opinions in physics or geometry.” Not only did most of his countrymen passionately disagree with that position, they also believed that religion was not just a mere matter of opinion but a matter of faith. Jefferson soon learned to confine expressions of his radical religious views to the private dining rooms of like-minded friends. To salvage his reputation he later cut up and reassembled the New Testament, omitting all mention of miracles and emphasizing Jesus’s statements about loving one’s neighbor. This enabled him to call himself a real Christian.

He was likewise criticized for his support of the French Revolution, support that was extraordinarily intense and untiring. Even reports in 1793 from his protégé William Short in Paris about how many of his former aristocratic French friends were being guillotined did not lessen his ideological fervor. He told Short that he would rather see half the earth desolated than have the French Revolution fail: “Were there but an Adam and Eve left in every country, and left free, it would be better than as it is now.” Boles dismisses this infamous letter as an example of Jefferson’s writing “hyperbolically” to intimate friends, a kind of symbolic language not to be taken literally. Yet Jefferson sincerely believed that the success of the American Revolution was tied to the success of the French revolution, and his and his followers’ passionate commitment to that Revolution eventually brought the nation to the brink of war.

Jefferson and his followers, who formed an opposition Republican party in the 1790s, became fearful that the Federalists, as the governing party led by Alexander Hamilton called themselves, were trying to create a strong fiscal-military state in emulation of Great Britain. It was not a false fear, as many Federalists, including Vice President and later President John Adams, were indeed talking of moving the United States in a monarchical direction. By 1798, the Federalists had developed

their own fears, fears that France was threatening to invade the United States and, with the aid of fifth columnists (Jefferson and his Republican party), turn the country into a puppet republic just like those that Napoleon’s army was creating all over Europe.

The threat of a French invasion seemed real, and the Federalists, like Americans in 1942 fearful of a Japanese invasion, overreacted—in the Federalists’ case, passing the Alien and Sedition Acts. Admiral Nelson’s destruction of the French fleet at the Battle of the Nile in 1798 ended the invasion scare and, with the Federalists thoroughly discredited, Jefferson rode to victory as president in the election of 1800.



Thomas Jefferson by Mather Brown (1786)

Jefferson saw his election as a new beginning. The spirit of 1776, he said, had finally been fulfilled and the United States could at last shine as “the world’s best hope” for the spread of liberty and republicanism. With Napoleon’s assuming the office of consul for life, and the apparent stifling of the French Revolution, America’s role as the sole emblematic republic became all the more important. It was Jefferson, more than any other single figure, who created the idea of American exceptionalism.

Jefferson set about reversing a decade of Federalist policies that had expanded the size of the national government way beyond anything he and

the Republicans thought proper. He eliminated all internal taxes, cut the bureaucracy (which was minuscule by modern standards), and severely reduced the Army and Navy. The only thing he couldn’t touch was Hamilton’s Bank of the United States, protected as it was by its charter; but the Republicans allowed that charter to lapse in 1811. Much to Jefferson’s chagrin, the courts remained in the hands of the Federalists. No one hated more the efforts of the federal courts to expand the authority of the national government through judicial activism. More thoroughly than any subsequent president, Jefferson preached the doctrine of strict construction of the Constitution, although as president he sometimes did not practice it.

Although Boles doesn’t make very much of it, Jefferson’s vision of his “empire of liberty” was very expansive. Not only did he want the Floridas, New Orleans, and all of the territory west of the Mississippi for the United States, but he also had his eye on Canada, Mexico’s provinces, and even the island of Cuba. His purchase of Louisiana from France in 1803 fulfilled his greatest dream. Now America could provide land for successive generations of yeoman farmers who, he believed, were the only incorruptible basis for republican government. Like other enlightened liberals, he thought war bred monarchy and big government. Consequently he sought alternatives to the use of military force, experimenting with the withholding of American commerce, what we today call economic sanctions, that climaxed with his controversial Embargo Act of 1807.

Boles doesn’t capture much of the despair and anxiety Jefferson felt during the last years of his retirement. Jefferson turned inward and became much more parochial and sectional-minded than he ever had been before. The Missouri crisis of 1819 over the right of Congress to prohibit slavery in the West unnerved him. He wondered what “the Holy alliance, in and out of Congress,” aimed to do “with us” Southern slaveholders. He railed against the aggrandizing force of the federal government and what it meant for the South. He became a more

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strident defender of states' rights than he had been in 1798 when he penned the Kentucky resolution justifying the right of a state to nullify federal law. He feared a breakup of the United States but declared that "submission to a government of unlimited powers" was much worse than a dissolution of the union.

Boles says that Jefferson's near-fanatical assertions of states' rights had nothing to do with his "defending the institution of slavery." But this is hardly convincing. Jefferson made it clear that the Missouri crisis and Northern aggression threatened those "states afflicted with this unfortunate population" of slaves. Were "our slaves to be presented with freedom and a dagger?" he asked John Adams in 1821. "For if Congress has a power to regulate the conditions of the inhabitants of the states, within the states, it will be but another exercise of that power to declare that all shall be free." Jefferson became as much of a fire-eating supporter of the most dogmatic, impassioned, and sectional-minded elements in Virginia as the arch states-rightists Spencer Roane and John Randolph.

During the last year of his life, when he felt "a kind of uneasiness I had never before experienced," he was pathetically reduced to listing his contributions during 61 years of public service in order to justify a legislative favor. His fellow Virginians didn't seem to appreciate all he had done: "All, all dead!" he told a Northern friend, "and ourselves left alone midst a new generation whom we know not, and who know not us."

Abraham Lincoln, more than anyone, rescued Thomas Jefferson from his identification with Southern sectionalism and turned him into a national icon. "All honor to Jefferson," declared Lincoln on the eve of the Civil War. By setting forth the explosive idea that "all men are created equal," Jefferson, said Lincoln, had created "a rebuke and a stumbling block" to the emergence of future tyranny and oppression. "The principles of Jefferson," said Lincoln, "are the definitions and axioms of free society." That's the Jefferson, the architect of liberty, that we rightly celebrate. ♦

BCA

Darkness at Noon

The interrupted journey of Weldon Kees.

BY CHRISTOPHER J. SCALIA

When Weldon Kees disappeared, at the age of 41, he seemed on the verge of becoming one of the more prominent American poets of his generation. He had three collections to his name, and his work had been published in such periodicals as *Sewanee Review*, *Poetry*, *Harper's*, and the *New Yorker*. But on July 19, 1955, his car was discovered near the Golden Gate Bridge. Although his body was never found—unless you believe the handful of people who claim to have seen him since—and he had told friends that he'd like to start a new life in Mexico, it is safe to assume that he killed himself, in part because he often seemed half in love with easeful death.

Kees's work has maintained a small but loyal following since then. He may even have influenced the most recent Nobel laureate: The phrase "idiot wind" appears in his poem "June 1940." Dana Gioia, one of Kees's most prominent admirers, pointed out in 1995 that while many poets were inspired by and wrote about Kees, academics neglected him.

I'm informed by my sources deep within academe that Weldon Kees is still rarely considered by scholars, though there was a burst of interest about 15 years ago, when a collection of essays and an excellent biography, James Reidel's *Vanished Act*, were published by University of Nebraska Press. John T. Irwin's *The Poetry of Weldon Kees: Vanishing as Presence* is the first scholarly monograph about Kees. Although it is a flawed book, it may be an important step forward in bringing

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The Poetry of Weldon Kees

Vanishing as Presence

by John T. Irwin

Johns Hopkins, 120 pp., \$32.93

Kees's poetry to the attention of scholars and a general audience.

Kees was born in Beatrice, Nebraska, in 1914, the only child of loving and supportive parents. His father owned a hardware factory and store; Kees's friends teased him for being a mama's boy. He graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1935 and, over his remaining 20 years, lived in Denver, where he got married and directed the Bibliographical Center for Research, Rocky Mountain Region; in New York City, where he wrote for *Time*; in Provincetown, where he organized art exhibitions and moderated cultural forums; and in San Francisco, where he got divorced, worked at a psychiatric clinic, and brainstormed a book about suicide.

His artistic talents were expansive. He painted, played and composed music, produced films, and wrote drama, fiction, and—most important—book reviews. His friends and associates included James Agee, Phyllis Diller, Pauline Kael, Hans Hoffman, Kenneth Rexroth, Conrad Aiken, and Malcolm Cowley. He had Don Draper hair and a Clark Gable mustache. But Kees was obviously a troubled person. Rexroth said that he "lived in a permanent and hopeless apocalypse," which his poetry often reflects.

John T. Irwin provides a bracing description of Kees's poetry when he says: "In a Kees poem it is never a question of whether we win or lose. We all lose. We all die, and death is an annihilation." This poetry is often



Weldon Kees in California (1953)

darkly humorous; it is occasionally beautiful; it is rarely, if ever, cheerful. For example, Kees's strong reputation among poets rests in large part on a series of poems about an alienated man named Robinson whose aimless life we see in fragments, as in "Aspects of Robinson."

*Robinson walking in the Park, admiring
the elephant.
Robinson buying the Tribune, Robinson
buying the Times. Robinson
Saying, "Hello. Yes, this is Robinson.
Sunday
At five? I'd love to. Pretty well. And
you?"
Robinson alone at Longchamps, staring
at the wall.*

The Robinson poems demonstrate what Irwin aptly calls "the depressing sense of meaningless repetition, of a quotidian predictability and soul-killing boredom" so often at the center of Kees's work. Kees conveys all of this with impressive formal skill, deriving power and even humor from repetitive forms (villanelles, sestinas, and a variation on the rondeau) and phrases. The opening to the first of his "Five Villanelles" captures the frequently off-

putting, but enchanting, strangeness of his repetition:

*The crack is moving down the wall.
Defective plaster isn't all the cause.
We must remain until the roof falls in.*

*It's mildly cheering to recall
That every building has its little flaws.
The crack is moving down the wall.*

On some occasions, Kees's darkness is trite, and his attempts to shock readers with juxtaposition and sudden changes in tone come across as pretentious cynicism. His early sonnet "For My Daughter," for example, begins as a meditation on the subject's mortality, devolves into a harsh consideration of her impending disappointments (*the cruel / Bride of a syphilitic or a fool*), and ends with a jolting couplet: *These speculations sour in the sun. / I have no daughter. I desire none.* Note that Kees drops a syllable in the last line to underscore the newly revealed absence. That's the sort of technical subtlety other poets admire about him, but in this case, it does not compensate for the poem's contrived and sudden twist.

Irwin uses Kees's suicide as the start-

ing point for his consideration of the poet's work. (Some guidance for young writers: If you kill yourself, there's a good chance that your work will only be interpreted through your suicide.) In fact, he considers the suicide itself as an aesthetic performance and seeks to understand what the poet "intended th[e] act to convey about his life and work." It strikes me as a bit morbid to perceive suicide as an artistic statement, but Irwin insists that "Kees likely staged his death as his final aesthetic act, [and] that act provides a lens through which to detect and interpret the structures, motifs, and images that accumulate with an obsessive force in his poems." In his first chapter, Irwin considers writers who may have inspired Kees to consider running away to Mexico or kill himself, and devotes the second to analyzing the books that Kees left in his bedroom—Dostoyevsky's *The Devils* and Unamuno's *Tragic Sense of Life*—as a suicide letter for literary sleuths, "to be read only by an act of intertextual interpretation."

As the book progresses, however, Irwin's emphasis on Kees's disappearance itself vanishes, replaced by interesting but disconnected topics. For example, he offers interpretations of how Kees's poetry treats human knowledge, but never quite relates this analysis to the poet's "final aesthetic act." Irwin is also very good at showing how Kees's poetry engages with work by Hart Crane (another poet who jumped to his death), Wallace Stevens, Albert Camus, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Butler Yeats, and others, but often without making strong claims about what this interaction means for our understanding of Kees or the other artists. The book also has unusual research standards: It is the first I've ever read from an academic press that cites Wikipedia as a source.

On the other hand, Irwin avoids academic jargon and theories du jour; calling the book "the eventual fulfillment of a lengthy admiration" for Kees, he is clearly eager to share that esteem not only to fill a gap in academic literature, but also to bring this fascinating and overlooked poet to more readers. I hope he succeeds. ♦

Sharing the Wealth

Charter schools succeed when they learn from other charter schools. BY WILLIAM MCKENZIE

Expanding school choices for parents remains a heated debate, from states providing families vouchers for their children to attend private schools, to school boards creating magnet schools and other public alternatives, to states and districts granting charter schools freedom to innovate the way schools serve children. You may or may not like those choices, but they stem from a common and important instinct: give parents more options for their children, especially parents whose neighborhood schools suffer from low expectations and children not learning at the appropriate grade level.

Richard Whitmire, a former *USA Today* editorial writer and author of *Why Boys Fail* (2010), reports on one of the most central elements in the debate: charter schools. Specifically, the strategies that top charter schools use. He emphasizes, at the outset, that *The Founders* is not about all charters, which are public schools that states or school districts grant freedom from numerous regulations so that they can experiment to improve student achievement. He pointedly, and rightly, says that many charters should be shut down.

That is one reason why this book matters. *The Founders* is clear that some charters fail, and authorities should close them. But by conceding at the outset that not all charters are good, Whitmire establishes himself as something other than an ideologue: His voice carries authenticity when he pivots to explain why quality charters succeed.

The first, counterintuitive lesson is that the best charter school opera-

The Founders
Inside the Revolution to Invent
(and Reinvent) America's Best Charter Schools
 by Richard Whitmire
 74 Media, 196 pp., \$4.99 (Kindle)

tors freely share strategies with each other, and the broad and accepted sharing among leading charters of “secret sauce” (as Whitmire puts it) is remarkable, going back to the late Harriet Ball, a Houston schoolteacher who influenced Knowledge Is Power Program (KIPP) cofounders Dave Levin and Mike Feinberg. Yet KIPP, arguably the nation’s best-known charter management organization, didn’t start that way. It began in Houston with Levin and Feinberg searching for ways to improve education for disadvantaged youth. Ball was a key factor in their quest, informing them about such strategies as using musical chants to teach mathematics. She implored her disciples to share with others what they knew.

As one example, we learn that top charters from the East and West coasts gathered on a weekend in Denver in 2004 to consider solutions. The Walton Family Foundation sponsored the meeting to see if common strategies could be identified so a successful charter model could be brought to “scale,” where innovators search for ways to apply proven strategies in a broader way. One key finding was that breakthrough charters are not solo operations: They often are part of charter management organizations, or CMOs. Equally important, CMOs tend to be led by people who embrace sharing best practices.

“The sharing among charter founders in that Denver meeting, more than any other factor,” Whitmire writes, “explains the very wide gap between the

top 20 percent of charter schools and the rest of the field.”

This top 20 percent, which includes such operators as Uncommon Schools in New Jersey, Massachusetts, and New York, IDEA in Texas, and Green Dot in California, are driving achievement. By 2015, Whitmire reports, leading charters were “adding a year-and-a-half of learning for every year a student spent in their schools.” And studies of effective charters in places like Washington, Boston, and Denver confirm their impact on achievement. Let’s be clear, of course: There is no magic answer in education, and that includes charters. But there are strategies that make a difference, and one is using data to guide classroom instruction, particularly where students need interventions.

KIPP looked at its data and saw that its schools were succeeding in getting students into college but not getting serious numbers to graduate from college. Charter managers acted on that concerning data and modified their strategies, working with experts in the emerging field of social and emotional learning to change some of their regimented ways. The point is that successful charters don’t run from bad data: They use it to keep searching for the best strategies and do not blame the results.

Charter opponents like to argue that charters skim off the best students and ignore those beset by poverty. *The Founders*, however, reveals how many successful charters operate in low-income communities from Boston to the Rio Grande Valley to Los Angeles. One example is the Noble Street network of charters in Chicago. According to Whitmire, Noble’s students are 95 percent minority and 89 percent low-income. Yet the network also ranks as one of Illinois’s better school districts, with Noble students outpacing Chicago public school students on ACT scores.

Some districts offer charters as part of their portfolio of schools. Some traditional schools and charters exchange strategies. And some districts and charter operators learn from each other in side-by-side arrangements, even on the same campus. All to give families a choice, and in the case of leading charters, a very good choice. ♦

William McKenzie is editor of the Catalyst: A Journal of Ideas from the Bush Institute.

On to Atlantis!

The fictional version of a nonexistent world.

BY MICHAEL DIRDA

In 1882, a Minnesota writer and politician named Ignatius Donnelly published *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World*, perhaps the most popular work of pseudo-science of the 19th century. Its opening pages confidently set forth 13 propositions about the legendary island kingdom—notably that Atlantis was real, that it was an advanced civilization with colonies in ancient Egypt and South America, and that it invented the alphabet and writing, practiced monotheistic sun-worship, and possessed sophisticated scientific know-how. Regrettably, as Donnelly wrote, “Atlantis perished in a terrible convulsion of nature, in which the whole island sunk into the ocean, with nearly all its inhabitants.”

Atlantis has always been a potent myth, ever since Plato first described it in the *Timaeus* and *Critias*. There he suggests that the cataclysm that ultimately destroyed this “great and wonderful empire” was punishment for religious delinquency and growing decadence. From such hints, and extensive, albeit wrongheaded, archeological research, Donnelly (in the words of E.F. Bleiler) built up “a vision of a golden past, of soaring adventurers spreading civilization around the world, of Edens that once existed, were let perish—and should be a lesson to all of us.”

These days, Atlantis is usually thought to reflect a confused memory of Minoan civilization—and yet the possibility that this neverland might have existed still nags at our imagination. Just recently, for instance, National Geographic aired a lavish documentary with James Cameron,

Michael Dirda is the author, most recently, of *Browsings: A Year of Reading, Collecting, and Living with Books.*

The Lost Continent

by C.J. Cutcliffe Hyne
CreateSpace, 240 pp., \$12.95



C.J. Cutcliffe Hyne

called *Atlantis Rising*. Deep down, though, we don’t want paltry evidence of some vanished Bronze Age culture; we want Ignatius Donnelly’s magic kingdom in all its cinematic glory, a shimmering fantasy island where science merges with sorcery, where priests and adepts employ inexplicable powers, and the ruler is a sister of Cleopatra and She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed. As it happens, this is just what C.J. Cutcliffe Hyne gives us in *The Lost Continent*, first published in 1900 and still the most exciting novel ever written about Atlantis. It’s also witty, slyly tongue-in-cheek, and just waiting for Hollywood.

The book opens with a prologue, set in the present: Two men are exploring some caves in the Canary Islands when they unearth a carefully hidden document written in what looks like ancient

Egyptian. When deciphered, it turns out to be nothing less than the memoir of an Atlantean named Deucalion. While its opening and closing pages are lost, what remains presents a succession of adventures, battles, and marvels. Chapter one begins *in medias res*, yet tantalizes from the first:

The public official reception was over. The sentence had been read, the name of Phorenice, the Empress, adored, and the new Viceroy installed with all that vast and ponderous ceremonial which had gained its pomp and majesty from the ages.

In short order, we discover that Deucalion, after 20 years away as the governor of Yucatan and Mexico, is being called back to Atlantis. We quickly learn that he is plain-spoken, Spartan in his habits, a superb fighting man, and a member of an elite order of wizard-like priests. He is also sorry to be giving up his longtime posting abroad in part because Atlantis is now ruled by the upstart Phorenice, about whom he has heard disturbing things. The child of a swineherd, she has risen to power by her strategic brilliance as a general and—versatile woman—as the inventor of rifle-like “fire-tubes.” Now she holds sway over her followers through her charismatic beauty, forceful character, and the bold assertion that she is actually a daughter of the gods.

As the reader soon learns, Hyne can write action scenes as exciting as anything in Robert E. Howard (creator of Conan the Cimmerian) yet is equally accomplished at evocative description. We start to gain a sense of Deucalion’s primordial world of volcanic fire, earthquakes, and meteor showers when he recounts his homeward voyage:

The dangers of the desolate sea are dealt out as the Gods will, and man can only take them as they come. Storms we encountered, and the mariners fought them with stubborn endurance; twice a blazing stone from Heaven hissed into the sea beside us, though without injuring any of our ships; and, as was unavoidable, the great beasts of the sea hunted us with their accustomed savagery. But only once did we suffer material loss from these last, and

that was when three of the greater sea lizards attacked the *Bear*, the ship whereon I travelled, at one and the same time.

Deucalion earns admiration from the tough captain of the *Bear* when he singlehandedly kills one of these pleiosaur-like creatures. Atlanteans know how to protect themselves against dinosaurs, cave-bears, and gigantic snakes, while the primitive tribes of Europe and Africa huddle fearfully at night “in earth crannies and the higher tree-tops.”

Following a sea battle with an outlaw fleet, Deucalion finally reaches Atlantis’s main port, where the Empress Phorenice, reclining in a luxurious howdah borne on the back of her pet mammoth, eagerly awaits him. Officially, she has sent for Deucalion to help put down a rebellion and, more personally, because she is weary of the fawning adoration of her courtiers. As Phorenice says, “You at least will not lose your head through weak infatuation for my poor looks and graces.”

This obvious coquetry is soon ratcheted up to actual brazenness. To underscore the seriousness of the rebellion, the empress loosens the top of her dress to show “just below the curve of the left breast a bandage of bloodstained linen.” The arrow wound, though, isn’t what she hopes Deucalion will be looking at. Irked at his apparent indifference to her physical charms, Phorenice orders her attendant to hook up the dress, saying, “My lord Deucalion has seen wounds before, and”—one can’t miss the vexation—“there is nothing else here to interest him.”

As the novel proceeds, Deucalion observes that Phorenice has beggared the citizens of Atlantis to support an extravagant court and her own penchant for precious gems and luxurious finery. The streets teem with the indigent while the elites dine on rare delicacies inside the royal pyramid. The defiant, prophet-like priest Zaemon does appear at one lavish feast to warn Phorenice to mend her ways, else suffer the consequences. He is one of the Three and, conjointly, they possess a doomsday weapon “that was forged in no mortal smithy, whereof

the key is now lodged in the Ark of the Mysteries.”

By now, Deucalion feels distinctly torn: Should he be loyal to his beautiful sovereign or obey his stern old teacher?

Understandably, Phorenice grouches about the stiff, rather puritan Deucalion, whom she has decided to marry, and keeps seeking ways to thaw his reserve. At one point, the two of them wander into a rough part of town and the empress’s jewels and beauty attract a gang of would-be robbers. When Deucalion grabs his sword to defend against attack, Phorenice jumps out of her litter to join him: “Your back to mine, comrade,” she cries with a laugh, while drawing forth her own blade and shield. It turns out that the all-powerful mistress of Atlantis thrills to battle, and she and Deucalion are never so emotionally, almost sexually, close as when fighting together for their lives.

Crue! sacrilegious, inflexible, never daunted, petulant, and consistently the smartest person in the room—Phorenice is utterly mesmerizing, often frightening, and not anyone to trifle with. On the day she proclaims herself divine, she calls down a lightning strike from the otherwise-cloudless heavens. In a quieter moment, she remembers various would-be lovers:

My poor face seemed to please them; at least they all went into raptures over it. And for ten pleasant words, one of them cut off his own right hand. We made the bargain, my Egyptian gallant and I, and the hand lies dried on some shelf in my apartment to-day as a pleasant memento.

Note the word “some.” There’s nothing sentimental about Phorenice.

Deucalion, it goes without saying, falls for someone else. While visiting the main gate of the city, he happens upon an arena where two cave-tigers maul to death captured rebels. Against his inclinations, he is forced to watch as one prisoner, resigned to his fate, is torn apart. A second, however, decides to fight. The naked young woman picks up a bone from the arena and uses her teeth to give it a point. Instead of waiting for one of the big

cats to spring, she attacks the tigress, stabbing the sharpened bone at its eye—but misses. Then, as Deucalion writes, fleeing from the now-incensed animal’s charge,

She sped forward, running at the full of her speed across the moonlight directly towards that shadowed part of the encircling wall within whose thickness I had my gazing place; and then, throwing every tendon of her body into the spring, made the greatest leap that surely any human being ever accomplished, even when spurred on by the utmost of terror and desperation.

The young woman manages to seize the sill of the arrow-slit through which Deucalion is watching. But as her clutching fingers begin to loosen, she is about to fall back into the arena when “I shot out my hand and gripped hers by the wrist.” What happens next readers may discover on their own.

As the novel moves inexorably toward its apocalyptic climax, Hyne takes Deucalion into rebel camps, tests his self-control with a life-or-death dilemma, relates various mystical encounters with the shaman-like Zaemon, and finally rises to the epic defense of a narrow place against crushing odds and a revelation of the full magnitude of Atlantean magic. By then, Phorenice will have discovered the secret of immortality—but also shown herself perfectly willing to cast aside her life as if it were a bauble she had tired of.

What a book! And we owe much of it to Ignatius Donnelly. Pseudoscience, like fake news, can be powerful stuff. More than a hundred years ago, the Harvard astronomer Percival Lowell peered through his telescope and saw “canals” on Mars. Before long, people began to speculate about the existence of an advanced race on the red planet. Wishful, or fearful, thinking? Whichever the case, without that mistaken theory would H.G. Wells have written his *War of the Worlds* or Edgar Rice Burroughs the swashbuckling *A Princess of Mars*? Donnelly’s panoramic vision of a gorgeous antediluvian Atlantis inspired Cutcliffe Hyne to produce this terrifically enjoyable, deliciously over-the-top adventure novel. ♦

Separate and Unequal

A Northerner's excursion to the segregated South.

BY JAMES HILL

Ray Sprigle probably had no idea when he set out for the assignment of a lifetime that his journalism would become, to quote the overused cliché, “the first rough draft of history.”

His 1948 series in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*—“I Was a Negro in the South for 30 Days”—shocked readers in western Pennsylvania. Through syndication in 14 other newspaper markets around the nation it sparked a lively debate, especially among some Southern editors who were appalled that a Yankee reporter, disguising himself as a black man, could tell them what was obviously wrong (everything) with separate-but-equal segregation. And it drew praise from liberals such as former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

Still, by the time the civil rights movement was in full bloom in the 1960s, Sprigle’s groundbreaking journalism was largely forgotten, perhaps the ultimate victim of that other journalistic cliché from the print era: Yesterday’s news is tomorrow’s fish wrap.

Whatever. Bill Steigerwald brings the story back to life with the highly readable and impressively researched *30 Days a Black Man*. It is as if he had found the missing link to one of the greatest exercises of nonviolence in human history, and he makes us all vividly aware of Sprigle’s contribution to the eventual triumph of right over wrong.

Not that Sprigle was setting out to be a civil rights icon. As Steigerwald notes, the *Post-Gazette*’s star reporter was just looking for a good story when he came up with the idea to go undercover and investigate conditions in Dixie that everyone seemingly knew existed but

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30 Days a Black Man
The Forgotten Story That Exposed the Jim Crow South
by Bill Steigerwald
Lyons Press, 336 pp., \$26.95



Durham, North Carolina (1940)

few wanted to do anything about. “For an old newsman with muckraking in his heart, the Jim Crow idea was a no-brainer,” Steigerwald writes.

The times were changing as well. World War II had exposed the inequity of African-American soldiers being forced to follow the rules of both de facto and de jure segregation in the armed forces, and when they returned home. The Swedish journalist Gunnar Myrdal had published his study of American race relations in 1944. John Gunther’s *Inside U.S.A.* had highlighted Southern poverty in 1947. Harry Truman had already formed a President’s Committee on Civil Rights and, in 1947, became the first chief executive to address the NAACP national convention.

“The routine legal, social, and economic abuse of millions of citizens in the South by their own governments was not news, sadly,” Steigerwald writes, “but it was an ongoing American travesty. It had been crying out for an in-depth, first-person exposé by a skilled writer and reporter, yet no major North-

ern newspaper or magazine had ever done so.”

Enter Ray Sprigle. His status in the *Post-Gazette* newsroom allowed him to mix both fact and opinion in his articles. Going undercover to get a story was one of his trademarks; he had also impersonated a coal miner working as a “scab” during a strike, and checked himself in as a patient to detail the conditions of Pennsylvania’s state mental hospitals. He also won the Pulitzer Prize in 1938 for reporting that the Supreme Court justice Hugo Black had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

Yet nothing he had done would prove as challenging as his foray into the Deep South. For one thing, he was white. (To pass as black, he sunburned himself.) For another, he would need a guide to help him navigate the treacherous journey. This came in the form of John Wesley Dobbs, a Masonic leader in Atlanta recruited by Walter White, the NAACP president, to show Sprigle the parts of the South that weren’t whistling “Dixie.”

His series, Steigerwald reports, “hit the front page of the *Post-Gazette* like an atomic bomb.” More fallout ensued: Southerners reacted angrily, with newspaper editors, like the dilettantish Hodding Carter Jr. of the *Delta Democrat-Times* in Greenville, Mississippi, taking particular umbrage. (Carter would appear with Sprigle on a nationwide radio broadcast, and later in a follow-up debate, and never missed a chance to discredit him in print.) None would carry his series when it was offered through syndication, but plenty saw it as an example of Northern hostility, a publicity ploy, and affront to their way of life.

In truth, they had one thing right: Sprigle had no use for white supremacy. His days as a black man taught him that the Jim Crow system could not last, and was collapsing under its self-imposed weight. “By going undercover and passing as a black man,” Steigerwald writes, “Sprigle was seeing, hearing, and feeling things that gave his first-person journalism the depth and credibility it needed to rise beyond a stunt.” And, as the author makes clear, it was something we should never forget. ♦

JACK DELANO / PHOTO QUEST / GETTY IMAGES

Market Rules

IP is the key to success, except when it isn't.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ



David Beckham (foreground, with moussed hair) as Trigger in 'King Arthur: Legend of the Sword'

The Arthurian legends are among the most enduring stories in history. But when a \$175 million film version casting Arthur as the lowlife foster son of a prostitute battling dragons and a campy Jude Law bombed at the box office, the reason for the movie's failure, in Hollywood's eyes, was simple: King Arthur was "very old IP." See, it wasn't fresh IP, like the upcoming *Emoji Movie*, which is about those little yellow graphics that began flooding your text messages in 2010. It wasn't IP from 30 years ago, like *Baywatch*—the movie version of the 1980s TV show people thought would be a monster hit when it opened a week after *King Arthur: Legend of the Sword* but was actually a huge flop.

No, *King Arthur* was IP from a millennium ago. That IP is older even than Bernie Sanders. I know, I know. You want to know: What the hell is IP?

IP stands for "intellectual property." It's the term of the moment in popular culture. You see, no longer is a movie a movie, or a television show a television show, or a book a book. Such terminology is too limiting, too unambitious,

because anything nowadays can theoretically spawn a franchise that will extend the reach of a story—taking it from the big screen to the small screen to the computer to the cell phone (in the form of games) to an amusement-park ride to a toy.

Forget "source material," or even "a good idea for a fun movie." That's so 20th century.

The name of the game is IP, and your goal is to *control* it. You need to harness its power, to direct it to spread like a weed throughout the Land of the Millennials, capturing them in an ever-expanding net of purchasing and upselling and repurchasing and rebranding and re-releasing until that original IP spawns children and grandchildren and an entire IP universe of endless cash flow.

Disney is the wonderland of IP. Its animated films have been the founts of direct-to-video sequels, turned into theme-park attractions, stitched into princess dresses, and repurposed into Broadway musicals before the ultimate IP triumph: returning once more to the silver screen as live-action versions of the original cartoon. So brilliant has Disney been at exploiting its IP that it purchased Pixar,

Lucasfilms, and the Marvel comic book catalog—and has planned out its respective IP exploitations and expansions through the middle of the next decade.

Alas, for Warner Bros., it has learned to its regret that, as the website *Vulture* recently pointed out with hilarious earnestness, "All IP is not good IP." True, the tales that are the wellspring of almost all adventure quest stories just don't stack up to emojis and Legos. "There seems to be a certain category of IP that seems particularly ill-suited to a contemporary remake," says *Vulture*. "Audiences may be colloquially aware of the story, may have even seen another version of it at one point, but they have no opinions or strong feelings about the concept, the characters, and the world."

The problem wasn't that the advance word was bad, the poster was ugly, the catchphrase on the poster was absurd ("from nothing comes a king," a phrase that sounds like my Yiddish-speaking grandmother wrote it in 1932), its director Guy Ritchie is a dreadful hack, the trailers were bad, and the reviews were terrible. The problem was that the IP wasn't famous enough!

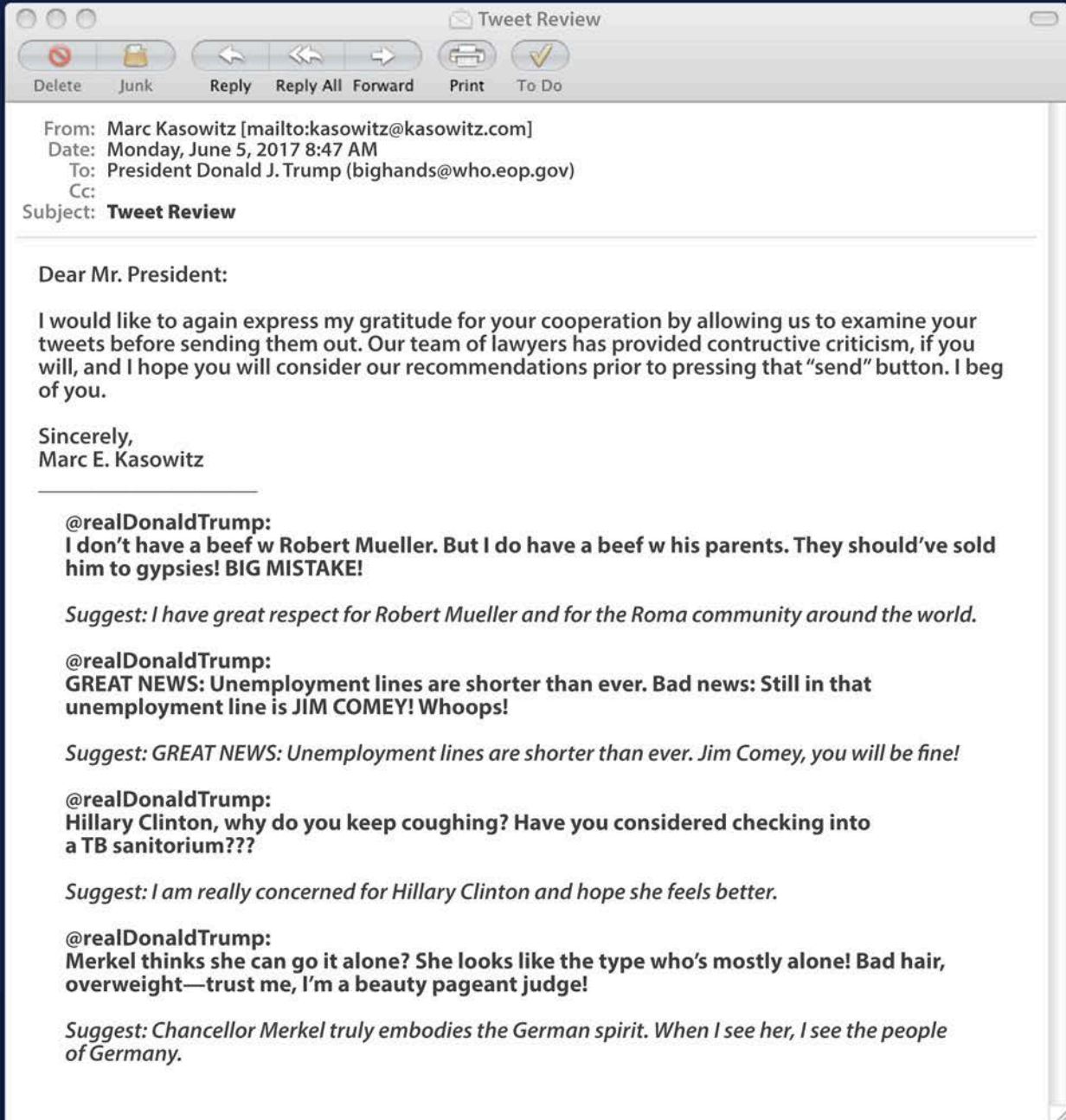
This doesn't make sense, because the only reason it was made in the first place was that it was very old IP. King Arthur was, in theory, the most wonderful kind of IP because (like Disney fairy tales) the source material is free. The legends are in the public domain, given that Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* was published in 1485. So there was no need to worry about paying Malory a royalty or giving him a cut of the proceeds. That's so much better than what Warner Bros. had to put up with from J.K. Rowling; she's cost the studio hundreds of millions of dollars due to her arrogant ownership of the original *Harry Potter* IP. Much easier to deal with a writer who's been dead for 500 years. No wonder the studio was willing to throw \$175 mil at *King Arthur*.

The movie failed because it had no reason to exist other than that Hollywood pooh-bahs have become relentless seekers of exploitable intellectual property rather than the backers of creative people who are engaged in the effort to tell stories onscreen that might actually resonate with an ordinary person. ♦

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

“One major change under consideration would vet the president’s social media posts through a team of lawyers, who would decide if any needed to be adjusted or curtailed. The idea, said one of Mr. Trump’s advisers, is to create a system so that tweets ‘don’t go from the president’s mind out to the universe.’”
—Wall Street Journal, May 26, 2017

PARODY



AMERICA IN PERIL

Attacking the Heroin and Opioid Addiction Crisis America: Enforcement, Prevention and Education

By Christopher B. Smithers

Dr. Toby Cosgrove, CEO of The Cleveland Clinic and member of President Trump's Strategic and Policy Forum, vividly described a country on the brink of disaster when he noted in a television interview that during the entire Vietnam War America lost 53,000 people. "Last year," he went on to say "52,000 people died of opioid abuse."

"A Vietnam War is taking place in our country every year," he said.

I could not agree more. This is a war that knows no geographic or demographic boundaries. From desperate inner cities through, wealthy urban enclaves, middle-class suburbs, and out to our poorest rural areas regardless of age, race, education, marital status, political leanings or even athletic ability, any way you measure it we are under attack from cheap heroin and easily obtainable opioids.

We have come to a point where the New York City Mayor Bill DeBlasio has authorized newspaper advertisement telling people to purchase and carry doses of Naloxone to administer in case they come across someone who has overdosed, as if it is such a common event that you might see your next door neighbor passed out on his lawn. It would be satire if it was not so frightening.

First responders throughout the country have been carrying Naloxone for some time now and law enforcement has shown determination and innovation for their part. The NYPD recently started an "Opioid Squad" to join its cadre of specialized squads like homicide and arson units. In 2016 there were four times as many heroin overdoses as murders in New York City.

However, we agree with the experts that law enforcement's efforts alone are not the answer.

We support the use of targeted advertising. The national anti-smoking television ads proved very effective in the ongoing struggle to reduce smoking among teenagers. Those ads are effective because they show the horrible effects of a lifetime of smoking. They picture people struggling to breathe, they tell stories of youngsters who lose their parents to smoking, they show real life examples of people scarred and deformed by the effects of a lifetime of addiction to nicotine.

We need television ads like those aimed at drug abuse. We need to demonstrate to our youth the horrors that await them if they continue on a path that often starts with alcohol abuse, to experimenting with drugs they find in their parent's medicine chests or are over prescribed to them by a doctor. The irresponsible use of these powerful drugs, some are used to put elephants to sleep, can lead to brain damage, physical disability and death.

These advertisements must be crafted in a way so the

message is one of deterrence rather than stigmatizing those suffering the illness of heroin and opioid addiction. They must also be constructed to specifically target young people.

The "Journal of Health Communication" in 2002 reported that, the most successful anti-smoking campaigns were those that specifically targeted youth with their message rather than the broader audience. In advertising the "one size fits all" approach is widely recognized as unsuitable.

The medical profession, the treatment community and law enforcement knows all this. The challenge is to get our young people to understand it. Advertisements on all media platforms; television, social networks and newspapers is a way to go that has not been fully exploited. We support any of these efforts.

At the same time we must continue our research into addiction. Learning how it works will lead us to more ways to controlling it. The Smithers Foundation has had great success in the field of alcohol abuse education, research and treatment and we are here to lend our support to similar work in the battle of the opioid epidemic.

Parents, clergy, teachers and school guest instructors all play a significant role in educating young people about the devastating effect heroin and opioid use and addiction will have on their lives. This must continue but more must be done.

Schools at all levels should include in their curriculum a structured course of study that teaches the dangers of experimentation with drugs and how it can lead to a life of addiction. The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) firmly supports the idea of schools developing a required course focusing on the multi-faceted and dangerous world of drugs and drug use.

A growing number of colleges and universities around the country now offer at freshman orientation, sessions on the risks of binge drinking. These sessions should be expanded to include the dangers of drug abuse. Studies show that alcohol abuse by young people leads them in search of the greater high. Given the availability of prescription drugs and the relative inexpensive cost of heroin, that greater high is not hard to find.

America is in the throes of an epidemic. Heroin and opioid abuse is destroying individuals, destroying families and destroying communities across our great country. We have an obligation to see to it that those addicted are treated, those who traffic arrested and prosecuted AND those who have never touched a pill or never used a heroin in any form get the message that those drugs will kill you.

Christopher B. Smithers

president of The Smithers Foundation

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