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IRAN

Sly Sy

National Review
By John J. Miller
4/10

EDITOR'S NOTE: Seymour M. Hersh is one of the most lionized reporters in the liberal media, but in recent years his journalism has been noteworthy mostly for its antipathy toward the Bush administration and the war in Iraq. His latest dispatch, appearing this week in *The New Yorker*, claims that the president is considering the possibility of nuclear strikes against Iran. (Here's a much more sober-minded account of the administration's deliberations and options on the Iran threat, published in yesterday's *Washington Post*.) In 2001, however, NR's John J. Miller showed that Hersh's bold claims are best treated with enormous skepticism; we've reprinted the story below.

"At *The New Yorker*, each article undergoes an extensive fact-checking process: Quotes are confirmed, details authenticated, the spellings of names verified, and so forth," write that magazine's editors in their November 12 issue. "This is well known." With jaw-dropping piety, they go on to note that their "grueling procedure" applies even to cartoons.

It is *The New Yorker's* reputation for rigorous fact-checking that made a story appearing in the same issue such a sensation. Seymour M. "Sy" Hersh, one of America's most celebrated investigative journalists, reported stunning new information about the military's nighttime raid, on October 20, of Taliban leader Mullah Omar's compound in Afghanistan. Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had said the mission "overall was successful." Hersh, however, labeled it "a near-disaster," and provided astonishing details: "Twelve Delta members were wounded, three of them seriously." It was the first time anybody in the public at large had heard this. Hersh's article was the talk of the Sunday news shows on November 4, before copies of *The New Yorker* had even hit the newsstands; he made a number of media appearances to explain his version of the events.

If Hersh's account is correct, it is deeply troubling. It not only conjures up images of botched special operations of the recent past, such as the Desert One mission in Iran (1980) and the "Black Hawk Down" catastrophe in Somalia (1993), but also suggests that the Pentagon won't provide basic facts about the war, even when doing so poses no reasonable threat to national security.

But if the claims coming out of the Pentagon deserve close scrutiny-and they do-then the same must go for Hersh's reporting. It turns out that key assertions in his article are very probably wrong, even as Hersh uses them to opine on the airwaves about how the war should be fought.

Hersh, of course, is no ordinary reporter. Over the past 30 years, he has won just about every journalism award there is, including the Pulitzer, which he took home for uncovering the My Lai massacre in Vietnam. His articles and books are full of revelations. In the first *New Yorker* piece he wrote after September 11, for instance, he reported that an unmanned aircraft had a clear shot to kill Mullah Omar on the

first night of the bombing-but that a military lawyer forbade the attack.

This was disputed, just as virtually everything Hersh writes is disputed. It's become a ritual: Hersh publishes an eye-popping story, and then the complaints pour in. Sources say they weren't quoted properly. Others claim Hersh takes material out of context and ignores facts that don't comport with the point he wants to make. According to a Vanity Fair profile of Hersh, A. M. Rosenthal, the former executive editor of the New York Times (where Hersh worked in the 1970s), once heard him "practically blackmailing" a person he was supposed to be interviewing.

Hersh has admitted mistakes in the past. His 1991 book *The Samson Option*, which said the Israelis owned nuclear missiles, relied for much of its information on a man Hersh now admits "lies like people breathe." In an interview three years ago with *The Progressive*, Hersh said, "If the standard for being fired was being wrong on a story, I would have been fired long ago."

His methods came under severe criticism following the publication of his 1997 bestseller *The Dark Side of Camelot* and its negative portrayal of John F. Kennedy. While conducting his research, Hersh came across what looked like his biggest scoop since *My Lai*: a cache of unknown JFK documents offering apparent proof of an affair with Marilyn Monroe, among dozens of other tantalizing factoids. Hersh gained access to them through Lawrence X. Cusack, a man who claimed his father was a lawyer for Kennedy. The papers eventually were shown to be forgeries-Cusack is now in prison-but Hersh refused for months to disbelieve them, coming up with desperate rationalizations for skeptics who wondered why documents containing ZIP codes were dated before ZIP codes even existed. Hersh was so eager to get his hands on the papers, he wrote a letter to Cusack stating that he had "independently confirmed" the relationship between JFK and Cusack's father. This was a lie. "Here is where I absolutely misstated things," testified Hersh during Cusack's trial. Assistant U.S. attorney Paul A. Engelmayer accused Hersh of playing "a little fast and loose with the facts."

Ultimately Hersh stepped back from the brink. He tried to develop a television documentary about the JFK papers, and his partners were able to prove convincingly that they were fakes. The final version of his book did not cite them. But critics complained about the material he did use, because of its thin sourcing and its treatment of speculation as fact. "In his mad zeal to destroy Camelot, to raze it down, dance on the rubble, and sow salt on the ground where it stood, Hersh has with precision and method disassembled and obliterated his own career and reputation," wrote Garry Wills in *The New York Review of Books*. Conservatives enjoyed the controversy, because it involved liberals attacking each other and made JFK look bad. Yet Wills was essentially correct in his assessment.

Hersh defended his interest in Kennedy's sex life. "I put in all the sex stuff because it goes right to his character, his recklessness, his notion of being above the law," he told the *New York Times*. Hersh did not apply this same standard to what he called the "Clinton sex crap." One year later-and a month before Bill Clinton's impeachment-he lambasted the press for "climbing into the gutter with the president and the Republican radicals . . . the same Republicans who say you can't have Huckleberry Finn in libraries." When he did criticize Clinton, it was always from the left, for "what he's done to welfare, what he's done to the working class, what he's done to habeas corpus."

Hersh saves his real ire for Republicans, accusing the GOP of having a racist foreign policy: "Ronald Reagan found it easy to go to Grenada, and Bush found it easy to go to Panama, to the Third World, or to people of a different hue. There seems to be some sort of general pattern here." The war in Afghanistan must only confirm these prejudices.

The latest New Yorker story quickly became the latest Hersh controversy. Top military officials have denied its primary claim of a disastrous mission that included serious casualties. "That's not true," said Gen. Myers on Meet the Press, when Tim Russert asked him about the article. "My belief is that every soldier that came back from that particular raid is back on duty today; none of them seriously injured, certainly none of them injured by the Taliban." Rear Adm. John Stufflebeem concurred: "The reports I have seen just don't support that article's supposition." Army Gen. Tommy Franks added, "We had a bunch of these young people who, you know, had scratches and bumps and knocks from rocks and all this sort of stuff. And so, it's-it's probably-it's probably accurate to say that maybe-maybe five or maybe 25 people were, quote, 'wounded.' We had no one wounded by enemy fire."

Clearly, somebody's not telling the truth. Perhaps the matter might have cleared up if Hersh had confronted the generals with his information before reporting it. This is Journalism 101-let everybody involved have a chance to comment-and yet Hersh chose to consider only one side of the story.

It is difficult to double-check Hersh's work because of its heavy reliance on anonymous sources. Perhaps in time the full truth of October 20 will come out. For now, though, there is a single assertion in Hersh's story whose truth can be independently assessed. Hersh writes: "The mission was initiated by sixteen AC-130 gunships, which poured thousands of rounds into the surrounding area but deliberately left the Mullah's house unscathed."

The Pentagon won't discuss operational details, but it's extremely unlikely that the mission involved 16 AC-130 planes. The Air Force has only 21 of them, and a number of these are set aside for training in Florida. More important is the fact that these big planes, full of firepower, don't fly in such large clusters. During the invasion of Panama in 1989, the Air Force used only seven of them at once. In the Gulf War, only a few were in the air at a time. Would 16 of them lead a relatively small special-forces operation in Afghanistan? "It makes zero sense," one Air Force officer told me.

When I asked Hersh about this apparent discrepancy, he was dismissive. "I wasn't there. Somebody could have misspoke. I could have misheard. It's possible there weren't 16," he said. "If I'm wrong, I'm wrong." He did admit that he had made an error during his November 5 interview on CNN, when he said the mission involved "sixteen helicopter gunships" rather than 16 AC-130s. "That time I did misspeak," he said.

Although The New Yorker says it assigned several fact-checkers to Hersh's article, it would seem that Hersh is once again playing fast and loose with the facts. And what does that say about his central claim of twelve men wounded, three of them seriously? "That's what my source told me," he says.

This is more than a simple matter of getting facts straight. Hersh has taken his contentions and used them as a basis for blasting the conduct of the war. "The

operation was much too big. . . . It was noisy. It was slow," he said on his round of TV interviews. "Delta Force is so mad that they think-the language is that this time we lost twelve. Next time, if they do it again the same way, we're going to lose, you know, dozens. We can't operate that way."

The next time he seems to break a big story in *The New Yorker*, though, it's important to remember that General Hersh wasn't there-and also to recall a line from Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop*, in which an editor advises a war correspondent: "If there is no news, send rumors instead."

--John J. Miller is national political reporter for *National Review* and the author, most recently, of *A Gift of Freedom: How the John M. Olin Foundation Changed America*.

Iran, Now

National Review

By The Editors

4/13

Four years ago, George W. Bush said his administration would not "permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons." Yet precisely that is about to happen. With Iran's announcement this week that it has begun uranium enrichment, we know that the world's most dangerous regime--a sponsor of global terror and sworn enemy of the United States that openly threatens the annihilation of Israel--is on a fast track to building an atomic bomb. If we don't want that to happen, we must recognize that our Iran policy has failed and change it--now.

Or, to be more precise, the Bush administration must recognize that it never had an Iran policy. It chose instead to second the policy devised by France, Germany, and Britain, which rested on the premise that Iran's rulers could be bribed and browbeaten into submission. This was never a reasonable assumption. Since its birth in 1979, the Iranian theocracy has shown pure contempt for the norms that govern relations among sovereign states: by permitting the seizure of the U.S. embassy in Tehran; by declaring a fatwa on a British subject; by orchestrating a 1994 massacre at a Jewish center in Buenos Aires; by murdering 19 U.S. airmen in the Khobar Towers bombing of 1996; by subsidizing terror attacks and armed militias in Lebanon, Israel, Iraq. Is there now--was there ever--any reason to think the mullahs will play by the rules?

The problem with Iran is precisely not its nuclear program. The problem is the regime. We have every reason to think this regime would use its arsenal to threaten the U.S. and its allies, and to extract concessions inimical to our interests. Nor can we exclude the possibility that the mullahs would actually launch their nukes. Consider Hashemi Rafsanjani, that celebrated "moderate," exulting that the Muslim world will "vomit [Israel] out from its midst," since "a single atomic bomb has the power to completely destroy [it]." Nuclear deterrence operates on the assumption that your foe is rational. Things start to break down when a significant part of its ruling establishment fancies itself on divine mission to evaporate the Zionist Entity in a mushroom cloud, roll back the Great Satan, and usher in a paradisiacal rule by sharia. That's not a regime to bargain with. The goal must be to remove it from power.

This does not mean invasion and occupation. But it does mean getting serious about supporting the Iranian democracy movement. The contradiction of Iran is that its people, the most educated, moderate, and pro-Western of the Muslim Middle East, are ruled by the most aggressive Islamists in the world. It wouldn't take a large expenditure to catalyze that tension. President Bush routinely declares his support for the cause of Iranian democracy--something that, according to a dissident inside Iran who recently spoke to National Review Online, has made a deep impression on his countrymen. Why, then, has Bush's administration failed to give material aid to the Iranian democrats?

There are three things we should begin doing now. First, supporting Iranian labor unions. The Iron Curtain would not have fallen without Lech Walesa and Solidarity, and unions could play a similar role in Iran. As recently as three months ago, Iran's rulers had to dispatch the goons to crush a strike among Tehran's bus drivers, who were protesting not just their work conditions but also the oppressive nature of their government, and were joined by demonstrators from all walks of Iranian life. The mismanagement of the Iranian economy--particularly its lack of refinery capacity--is such that a well-planned strike in the right sectors could bring the country to a standstill. Some will object that American support would discredit the unions, but let's not forget that similar things were said of Solidarity, or that there are ways of directing funds through nongovernmental channels.

None of this is guaranteed to spark a revolution, but it has better odds than doing nothing.

Second, we should do everything we can to help Iranian student groups. Roughly 70 percent of Iran's population is under 30. These youths are the most pro-Western segment of Iranian society--and they happen to be mad as hell at Iran's rulers, who they think have isolated them from the modern world. The U.S. could galvanize that sentiment to its advantage if only it tried. A good place to start would be opening channels of communication with their leaders and repeating their message at every opportunity.

Which brings us to the third point: We should massively increase our pro-democracy broadcasts into Iran, both by funding U.S.-based Farsi satellite-TV networks and by exercising a modicum of intelligence in our Voice of America programming. VOA officials act like they're running the Columbia School of Journalism, but "balance" should count for a lot less than inspiring the Iranians to rouse themselves against tyranny and explaining to them the value of what we have over against what they don't have. We should also send them the message--through both broadcasts and the utterances of our diplomatic establishment--that Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons will only isolate them and entrench the mullahs they so despise.

None of this is guaranteed to spark a revolution, but it has better odds than doing nothing. Indeed, these efforts should have begun years ago. Instead, we've waited for centrifuges to start spinning at Natanz. The sad consequence of that delay--and the world's indifference--has been to make military action against Iran much likelier. The U.N. Security Council's resolve to confront Iran looked serious for all of 15 minutes. Then China and Russia made it clear they'd block any resolute move to punish Iranian intransigence. There is talk of America's joining the EU-3 in targeted economic sanctions, but these would almost surely be ineffective. Not only does Iran's wealth come from oil--which no importing country is ascetic enough to deny

itself--but there is no clear precedent of sanctions' having reformed a regime that already perceived itself as the enemy of those doing the sanctioning. The most likely consequence of sanctions would be to tie our hands and stop us from taking effective measures.

That leaves air strikes. We know where the nuclear facilities are; we have the means to target them; and we should not hesitate to do so if we reach a point where there is no other way to thwart the mullahs' atomic ambitions. While a massive bombing campaign can't stop Iran from eventually building nukes, it would delay that outcome by several years. But then what? If the mullahs stay in power, all that will change is the intensity of their lust for a bomb and the brazenness with which they export terror. Any air campaign should therefore be coupled with aggressive and persistent efforts to topple the regime from within. Accordingly, it should hit not just the nuclear facilities, but also the symbols of state oppression: the intelligence ministry, the headquarters of the Revolutionary Guard, the guard towers of the notorious Evin Prison.

Make no mistake: This is not a good option. Iran would probably retaliate with terrorist attacks against U.S. interests around the world, as well as aggressive efforts to destabilize Iraq. But the alternative--letting the mullahs go nuclear--is incalculably worse. For a quarter-century those mullahs have been fighting an undeclared war against the West with the only weapons they had: terrorism and a poisonous ideology. For a quarter-century we have failed to respond. They now stand on the brink of getting a new weapon--and this one will let them threaten the incineration of millions of infidels at the push of a button. Is this something that we--that anyone--should be willing to live with?

A Radioactive Dilemma

Newsweek
By Michael Hirsh
4/24

In the minds of some Bush administration officials, the solution to America's new foreign-policy crisis lies with people like "the Larry King of Iran." That's what Ahmad Baharloo's executive producer, Maryam Velgot, calls the ruggedly handsome host of the Persian-language show "Roundtable With You" on Voice of America. Baharloo, an Iranian exile in Washington, will soon be a prime instrument of the administration's new democracy-promotion campaign in Iran. Of the \$85 million President George W. Bush has requested from Congress for the campaign, about \$50 million will go to expanding Farsi television programs on VOA, and Baharloo is a star performer.

Beginning in June, Baharloo's interview-and-call-in show will be beamed into Iranian homes seven days a week instead of just one. The goal: to blanket the repressive, cleric-run state with open dialogue and glad tidings from America. Asked whether any Larry King-type character--even the real one--could do much to engender democratic revolution, Velgot says, "Well, he's more like the old, serious Larry King." She adds that there is much more coming, like a fast-paced news-magazine show with a chic, comely host named Luna Shad that "can be likened to Anderson Cooper's '360°.'" That will also move from one day a week to seven.

Bush won't call this policy "regime change." And it certainly isn't the kind of regime

change we remember from his first term, when he employed a much blunter instrument in Iraq. But it is one of the ways that the administration is groping for a non-military solution to a brutally difficult predicament. Last week Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced that Iran will move its nuclear program to full-scale uranium enrichment--and he threw in another ugly threat to Israel for good measure--even as U.S. officials lobbied hard for an anti-Iran resolution at the U.N. Security Council. Countering several recent news reports, U.S. officials denied that airstrikes on Iran's nuclear facilities were even close to imminent. But the president pointedly sidestepped questions about whether military contingency planning was underway.

The point of the new hearts-and-minds program, U.S. officials say, is to remind the Iranian people what goodies await them--mainly economic prosperity--if they drop their nuclear ambitions. Yet outside interference tends to enrage Iranians, who have never forgiven Washington for the CIA-assisted coup that toppled elected Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953. "It's not new," Javad Zarif, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, says of the American campaign. "They increased their activities in Iran two or three years ago and now instead of a reformist president we have a conservative president. That tells you how successful they were."

Zarif may have a point. Before the Iranian presidential elections last June, Bush issued a statement criticizing the fairness of the process. Even affluent voters who said they hated the Shiite mullahs told a NEWSWEEK reporter in Iran at the time that American arrogance so angered them they decided to vote for Ahmadinejad, the radical candidate. In such an atmosphere, a military attack of any kind would only incite Iranians even more, many U.S. officials concede.

There is some evidence the Bush administration may be dabbling in covert action as well. The Iranian regime has been incensed in recent months by a series of attacks by "bandits" along the border, and has accused U.S. and British intelligence agencies of fomenting unrest. U.S. officials insist they have nothing to do with such attacks. And some officials familiar with U.S. intelligence operations say they are unaware of any presidential directive, or "finding," instructing the CIA or other U.S. agencies to conduct covert actions. If true, that means the president is relying, for the moment, on Ahmad Baharloo and his broadcast brigade.

Voices in the Darkness

Newsweek

By Andrew Nagorski

4/24

Beyond the headlines spawned by Iran's nuclear ambitions, beyond the confrontation between Iranian political and religious leaders and Western governments trying to devise some way to keep them in check, there's a more basic question: what is this country called Iran and what do its people want? Lila Azam Zanganeh, the editor of "My Sister, Guard Your Veil; My Brother, Guard Your Eyes: Uncensored Iranian Voices" (132 pages. Beacon Press), warns that there are no easy answers. After all, she writes, Iran is "at a surreal crossroads between political Islam and satellite television," and is both "religiously sclerotic" and full of young people "ravenously eager to embrace modernity along with a certain avatar of the American dream."

But this slim volume, with contributions from 15 Iranian artists and intellectuals, many of whom now live in the West, offers intriguing glimpses of that complex reality and the emotional turmoil it engenders. While most of the authors would agree with writer Reza Aslan that the Islamic republic is a "mullahcracy" or, as he puts it, "a bizarre hybrid of religious and third world fascism," they are uneasy when Westerners make similar sweeping characterizations. Photographer Shirin Neshat, for example, protests against portrayals of Iranian women as victims, but then argues they are especially creative and strong precisely because they have to do constant battle with oppression.

There's a near-lyrical quality to many of these essays and interviews that transcends such seeming contradictions. Take Mehrangiz Kar's chilling essay about mannequins. The human-rights lawyer charts the growing power of the fundamentalists through the fate of these objects in store windows: first, a few inches were added to their skirts; next, they lost their hair as veils became compulsory and "mobile Islamic moral courts" demolished unveiled mannequins, and, finally, the dolls in the windows were beheaded, since the authorities considered their lips and eyes unduly provocative. All of which paralleled the complete rollback of women's rights in Iran. "The ideal woman for fundamentalists was a woman who did not have eyes to see, a tongue to speak, and legs to run away," Kar writes. At the same time, though, she sees a growing grass-roots movement among women to regain their individual identity and freedom. She points to the subtle signs such as women finding ways to make fashion statements with brighter clothing, while still wearing the obligatory chadors.

In a society where so much is forbidden, there are the inevitable double lives. Iranians tell their compatriots living abroad that they're missing "a sexual revolution behind closed doors, where young Iranians drop ecstasy, host backroom orgies, and generally put Amsterdam to shame," writes journalist Azadeh Moaveni, author of the memoir "Lipstick Jihad." Maybe so. But most of the descriptions here suggest that the illicit parties are sad affairs, and that the regime has been more successful in destroying romance than sex. Literary scholar Naghmeh Zarbafian discovered that the Iranian translation of Milan Kundera's "Identity" is stripped of its love scenes, but words like "copulate" and "rape" haven't been censored. In other words, anything mildly erotic is taboo, while the mechanical and violent is fine.

And yet anyone who has sampled the rich offerings of recent Iranian films, with their compelling ordinary characters and all-too-human emotions, senses that so much more is happening. "My Iran bears little resemblance to the Iran that is portrayed in the daily news," says Abbas Kiarostami, one of the country's leading directors. "And I have faith that my films are closer to the reality of Iran--that is, to its social, cultural, and spiritual heart." While the government has stopped distributing his films, new technology--DVDs--means that he still has an audience. Other contributors point out that the Internet is not just a source of uncensored information but also offers a platform for many forms of artistic expression, such as photography exhibits that wouldn't have a chance elsewhere.

In contrast to Kiarostami, who decided never to leave, many Iranians are like the young man briefly mentioned in one of the essays, who yearns for the West to ease its visa restrictions "so that his brain could also be drained." The majority of the voices in this book represent Iranian exiles who remain profoundly ambivalent about the country they have left behind as they try to explain it to their new compatriots in

the United States or elsewhere. All of which raises one more question: how does a country produce so many highly intelligent, creative people and at the same time elevate the fundamentalists and demagogues who rule and terrorize them? This collection doesn't answer that question, but it certainly puts it into sharper focus.

Cutting a Deal With Tehran

Newsweek

By Mahmood Sariolghalam

4/24

Richard Nixon deserves more credit. His historic 1972 trip to China was indeed, as the president himself called it, "the week that changed the world." His bold gambit broke two decades of silence between seemingly implacable cold-war enemies. From that day on, relations went from guarded to normal to, at times, almost friendly. And if China today is no democracy, it is globalized

and free-market--with every prospect that prosperity will sooner or later cause its autocratic leadership to wither away.

The time is ripe for another Nixon-style strategic initiative--toward Iran. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad last week jubilantly announced his country's membership in the world's nuclear club. The claim may be premature, but it was a clear sign of Tehran's intent. The defiant rhetoric was matched in Washington, where senior Bush-administration officials called for U.N. sanctions and muttered darkly about the need for "regime change," beyond merely halting Iran's nuclear ambitions. Despite loose talk of a military strike, possibly deploying U.S. tactical nukes, conflict is not imminent. But it may be inevitable--unless a deal is done.

That's the bad news. The good news is that a diplomatic settlement--one as dramatic as Nixon's--may indeed be possible. To achieve it, it's essential to accept several givens:

First, we must understand why, precisely, the Iranian government insists on independent and domestic uranium enrichment. Iranians feel they are destined to become a (and perhaps the) regional player in the Middle East. Power and recognition is the cornerstone of Tehran's security and foreign policy. As the Iranian leadership sees it, a nuclear capability is Iran's only security guarantee in a troubled and unstable neighborhood--a conviction that is only heightened by American saber rattling. To this must be added an economic justification. By 2018, according to demographic estimates, Iran's population will exceed 100 million, two thirds of them younger than 30. Simply to satisfy surging domestic energy needs and maintain growth, Iran will need dependable sources of power beyond oil. Weaponized or not, Iran must go nuclear.

A second reality: surrounded by U.S. forces in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf, Iran feels threatened by America. The sense of confrontation and paranoia that began with the Iranian revolution of 1979 lives today. Iran's leaders thus concentrate on security planning rather than pursuing, say, a Malaysian or Turkish model of economic development. Yet they must justify this trade-off (guns against butter) to a people interested in economic progress and an improvement in ordinary life. And that, in turn, requires confrontation with an outside enemy--the United

States. Without it, the government itself would be threatened, as would the sustaining ideology of the revolution.

Third, and last: the problem with regime change is what would replace it. Though America often pretends differently, genuine democracy is more than elections. It is civil society--fully formed and empowered institutions based on the rule of law and, preferably, free markets. Is democracy even possible in Iran, where 90 percent of industrial activity is controlled by the state? Democracy requires a space between the state and the society, a characteristic lacking throughout the Middle East.

Recognition of these elements suggests a solution, short of an otherwise likely war. It is summed up in the famous Shanghai communiqué signed between Nixon and Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai, which acknowledged "essential differences ... in [the] social systems and foreign policies" of China and the United States. Despite these, the two sides agreed to "conduct their relations on the principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states, non-aggression against other states, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence."

This does not mean that George W. Bush should rush to Tehran. To the contrary, it suggests only that Washington leave its ambitions for regime change to developments within Iran itself--namely the prosperity and sense of internal security that, in itself, will eventually lead to a new generation of leadership. As for the technology of uranium enrichment, Tehran has already achieved that. Good diplomacy could restrict it to a pilot scientific project, adequate for producing nuclear fuel but insufficient for a weapons program. For their own security, Iran's leaders are probably ready to accept that. But do not expect an end to tensions and confrontation, as ensued upon Nixon's visit. To survive, Iran's leaders need that, too.

--Sariolghalam is an associate professor of international relations at the National University of Iran.

The Last Word: Javad Zarif--Finding the 'Missing Link'

Newsweek

By Malcolm Beith

4/24

Last Tuesday fiery Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad proudly boasted that his country had joined "the club of nuclear countries" after successfully enriching uranium. The move defied U.N. calls for Tehran to suspend its nuclear program, and came on the eve of an inspection visit by Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Even with the threat of U.N. sanctions looming and rumors of a U.S. military strike swirling, Ahmadinejad vowed that Iran would continue its course. NEWSWEEK's Malcolm Beith spoke to Javad Zarif, Iran's permanent representative to the United Nations, about the conflict last week. Excerpts:

BEITH: What are your feelings about President Ahmadinejad's tough position?

ZARIF: We made it very clear that there are two fundamental concepts. One is that Iran has inalienable rights under the NPT [nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] and

respect for these rights--both for Iran as well as any other country [that is a] member of the NPT--is imperative for the authority and integrity of the treaty. The second aspect of our position has been that Iran wants to exercise its rights in an atmosphere of tranquility where there is no concern about any proliferation suspicions, and for that we have been and are prepared to negotiate in order to allay any concerns.

Meanwhile, uranium enrichment continues. Are you sending a contradictory message?

No, because we have said that Iran will not respond well to pressure. A suspension of the uranium-enrichment program was in place for over two years. That would have provided the necessary time to reach a politically acceptable negotiated solution. So we need to find out: "What is that missing link that prevented a negotiated solution?" I would submit that the missing link is the necessary political will, combined with a mentality that through pressure imposition and intimidation, political results can be achieved.

Is Iran more amenable to working with Russia and China, rather than the United States, to come to an agreement?

We are open to working with everybody. If you have a more reasonable and realistic approach to the resolution of this problem then you have a better chance of success. Until now, the positions offered by Russia and China have been more conducive to a successful outcome.

Iranian nuclear chief Gholamreza Aghazadeh recently said that Iran would be willing to give the West a share in enrichment facilities in order to ease concerns that it was being used for military purposes.

Yes. One of the possibilities presented by Iran was to create a regional consortium so that various countries could have a share both in ownership and operation of the facility. It [would] be a consortium, jointly owned and operated. [But] every proposal that has been on the table has failed to receive any serious consideration.

Is Iran willing to risk sanctions?

Iran does not want to invite sanctions. We're not seeking confrontation. But at the same time the prospect of Iran accepting an imposition because that carries with it some sticks is not a prospect that is appealing to the Iranian population.

How would Iran respond to a military strike?

I don't think Iran should respond to it. I think what is being talked about in Washington is a threat to the international community as a whole and a threat to the rule of law. We live in the 21st century, we have a body of international law that prohibits the threat of wars--not even the use of wars but the threat of wars--and the United States continues to live in the 19th century. Somebody must remind President Bush that it's an outdated statement to say that "all options are on the table."

Ahmadinejad has made threats to Israel.

No, the Iranian president has never made any threats against any other country. In fact, Iran has been on the receiving side of threats from Israel which go back long before President Ahmadinejad ran for office.

He's said Israel should be "wiped off the map."

The rhetoric that is used by the U.S. administration as well as Israeli officials against Iran is by far more fiery and more provocative than any statement that has come out of Iran. Iran's position is very clear: We don't intend to attack any country. We've never done that in the past, we'll never do it in the future. I wonder whether Israel or the United States can make that statement.

If Iran doesn't intend to make weapons, is it that important to be a nuclear power?

Iran doesn't want to have weapons. We believe that those who possess nuclear weapons lack the necessary logic to understand that being able to destroy this planet is simply ridiculous and inhuman. We believe Iran has the right to any technology. That is different from even attempting to [possess] a weapon that we consider to be illegal--for everybody--and illegitimate.

Target: Iran

Weekly Standard

By Thomas McInerney

4/24

A MILITARY OPTION AGAINST Iran's nuclear facilities is feasible. A diplomatic solution to the nuclear crisis is preferable, but without a credible military option and the will to implement it, diplomacy will not succeed. The announcement of uranium enrichment last week by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad shows Iran will not bow easily to diplomatic pressure. The existence of a military option may be the only means of persuading Iran--the world's leading sponsor of terrorism--to back down from producing nuclear weapons.

A military option would be all the more credible if backed by a new coalition of the willing and if coupled with intense diplomacy during a specific time frame. The coalition could include Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Turkey, Britain, France, and Germany. Solidarity is important and would surely contribute to potential diplomatic success. But should others decline the invitation, the United States must be prepared to act.

What would an effective military response look like? It would consist of a powerful air campaign led by 60 stealth aircraft (B-2s, F-117s, F-22s) and more than 400 nonstealth strike aircraft, including B-52s, B-1s, F-15s, F-16s, Tornados, and F-18s. Roughly 150 refueling tankers and other support aircraft would be deployed, along with 100 unmanned aerial vehicles for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, and 500 cruise missiles. In other words, overwhelming force would be used.

The objective would be, first and foremost, to destroy or severely damage Iran's nuclear development and production facilities and put them out of commission for at least five years. Another aim would be to destroy the Iranian air defense system, significantly damage its air force, naval forces, and Shahab-3 offensive missile

forces. This would prevent Iran from projecting force outside the country and retaliating militarily. The air campaign would also wipe out or neutralize Iran's command and control capabilities.

This coalition air campaign would hit more than 1,500 aim points. Among the weapons would be the new 28,000-pound bunker busters, 5,000-pound bunker penetrators, 2,000-pound bunker busters, 1,000-pound general purpose bombs, and 500-pound GP bombs. A B-2 bomber, to give one example, can drop 80 of these 500-pound bombs independently targeted at 80 different aim points.

This force would give the coalition an enormous destructive capability, since all the bombs in the campaign feature precision guidance, ranging from Joint Direct Attack Munitions (the so-called JDAMS) to laser-guided, electro-optical, or electronically guided High Speed Anti-Radiation Missiles (HARM) for suppression of Iranian surface-to-air missiles. This array of precision weapons and support aircraft would allow the initial attacks to be completed in 36 to 48 hours.

The destruction of Iran's military force structure would create the opportunity for regime change as well, since it would eliminate some or all of Ahmadinejad's and the mullahs' ability to control the population. Simultaneously or prior to the attack, a major covert operation could be launched, utilizing Iranian exiles and dissident forces trained during the period of diplomacy. This effort would be based on the Afghan model that led to the fall of the Taliban in 2001. Not only would the overt and covert attacks weaken the ability of Iran's leaders to carry out offensive operations in retaliation, they would cripple the leaders' power to control their own people.

Iran's diverse population should be fertile ground for a covert operation. Iran is only 51 percent Persian. Azerbaijanis and Kurds comprise nearly 35 percent of the population. Seventy percent are under 30, and the jobless rate hovers near 20 percent.

Iran's leaders have threatened to unleash a firestorm of terrorism in the event military action is taken against them. Any country involved in the attack would be subject to retaliation by Hezbollah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and al Qaeda, the Iranians have claimed. If nothing else, this threat demonstrates how closely tied Iran is to terrorist groups. The United States and its allies would have to be prepared for stepped-up terrorist acts. Iran could also project forces into Iraq, but this is unlikely because they would encounter the full strength of the American military. However, Iran might encourage proxies among Iraq's militant Shiites. Coalition forces in Iraq would have to be ready to respond.

No doubt the Iranians would attempt to close the Gulf of Hormuz and block the extensive shipping that goes through it. American air and naval forces are quite capable of keeping the gulf open, though shipping might be slowed. The most adverse economic consequences of shipping delays would be felt in Iran itself.

President Bush is right when he says Iran cannot be permitted to have nuclear weapons. The prospect of leaders like Ahmadinejad, who advocates wiping Israel "off the map," with their hands on nuclear weapons is a risk we cannot take. Diplomacy must be pursued vigorously, but the experience with Iraq suggests there's little reason for optimism. Thus, a viable military option is imperative.

--Lt. Gen. Thomas McNerney (Ret.) served as assistant vice chief of staff of the United States Air Force.

To Bomb, or Not to Bomb

Weekly Standard

By Reuel Marc Gerecht

4/24

WHEN I WAS RECENTLY in Paris, a French diplomat explained to me why he--and many others in the French foreign ministry--thought the United States would, in the end, bomb Iran's nuclear-weapons facilities. Owing to Chinese and Russian obstreperousness, the United Nations would probably fail to agree on any sanctions, let alone a sanctions regime with sufficient bite to intimidate the mullahs. The Europeans--at least the French, Germans, and British if not the Italians--would do a bit better, primarily because the French, despite their laissez-passer cynicism and their Gaullist pride vis-à-vis the United States, have developed a strong distaste for the clerics. The mullahs did, after all, once bomb Paris and kill a slew of prominent Iranian expatriates on French soil; and the French don't particularly care for religious Third Worlders' joining the nuclear club. France might even lead the sanctions charge against Tehran--an astonishing historical moment for the Fifth Republic, which has usually aligned itself with Muslim Middle Eastern regimes or cultivated a profitable neutrality, especially when the United States was involved on the opposite side.

But this nouvelle différence française, alas, would not in all probability dissuade the Islamic Republic's nuke-loving theocrats. The Iranians would proceed, my French friend thought, with little of the dialogue-of-civilizations finesse and moderation they exhibited during the presidency of Mohammad Khatami--probably the period when the clerical regime made its greatest advances in its nuclear-weapons program. Iran's most politically savvy cleric, Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, is trying hard to align most of the clerical establishment behind him, even the reformist and dissident mullahs who hate his guts, to ensure the fire-breathing president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, doesn't scare foreigners too much with his Khomeinist language and thought. Rafsanjani, the true father of the Islamic Republic's nuclear "energy" program, loathes the diehard ex-Revolutionary Guard Ahmadinejad, who threatens to ruin, among other things, Rafsanjani's hitherto successful strategy of dividing the Europeans from the Americans.

But Rafsanjani probably won't be able to corral Ahmadinejad. (He who triumphs at home is likely to triumph abroad, and the new president has been remarkably successful in replacing provincial governors and appears to be commencing a fresh purge of the country's universities.) In any case, the Americans will grow more anxious. Tehran will likely become even more bellicose toward the United States and Israel. Adding fuel to the fire, the clerical regime will continue to test new and improved ballistic missiles, extending range and payload.

The Iranian-American enmity will, my French friend reasoned, kick into high gear. The White House will admit that it can no longer diplomatically maintain the international processes designed to thwart the mullahs' acquisition of nuclear weaponry. George W. Bush, who has described a bomb for the terrorism-fond clerics as "unacceptable," will decide that further delay in attacking the known crucial facilities will only allow the mullahs to disburse clandestinely sufficient enriched

uranium to fabricate nukes. The administration may well get a strong indication, either through its own resources or those of a foreign-intelligence service, that Iran is very near the red line in the production of weapons-grade uranium, and all the geostrategic and terrorist possibilities of a clerical nuke that now seem frightening but abstract will seem imminent. Therefore, so they reason, the Americans will let loose the U.S. Air Force and Navy even though George W. Bush, the State Department, the CIA, and the Pentagon really would prefer to do anything else.

So: The black-white rigor of French logic aside, does bombing the Islamic Republic's nuclear facilities make sense? What are the downsides of such action? Do the negatives outweigh the good that would come from the demolition of Iran's facilities? The repercussions from an American strike, inside Iran and out, would surely be massive. The French are certainly right: The diplomatic process, no matter how hard the Europeans and the Americans may try, is coming to a close. Unless the Iranians prove more helpful than they have been since the election of Ahmadinejad and, as important, since the highly intelligent and tough former Revolutionary Guard commander Ali Ardeshir Larijani assumed responsibility for the nuclear portfolio in August 2005, it will take a near miracle to keep the diplomatic dialogue going on this subject for more than another twelve months.

TO AVOID THINKING about preventive military strikes or a public avowal of failure against the clerics, the Bush administration may have one more "realist" moment, and attempt to bribe the clerical regime into giving up its uranium-enrichment capabilities. It does not appear that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, let alone the president, really believes that "carrots" could satisfy the mullahs' two-decade-old appetite for nukes. To believe in such "realism" when it comes to the clerical regime, you have to believe that economics trumps politics among the ruling elite. Yet modern Middle Eastern--and especially Iranian--history clearly shows that ideology has run roughshod over economic pragmatism.

Oil and natural gas aside--and in Iran, even counting oil and gas--the Muslim Middle East has been an economic basket case in great part because the region's political elites have been repeatedly enamored of toxic ideas: Marxism, socialism, communism, fascism, and now increasingly Islamism, but never Adam Smith, Milton Friedman, or even the illiberal state-driven capitalisms of East Asia. Economically oriented American and European "realists" usually cite Iran's chronic unemployment, especially among the young, as a driving catalyst for pragmatic change among the ruling elite. Yet it is distinctly odd, then, that Iran's last two presidents, Khatami and Ahmadinejad, have fairly ardently advocated socialist economics in their campaigns. The Islamic Republic's dirigiste, unproductive, and corrupt economy was in great part built by revolutionary mullahs, who are its largest political and economic beneficiaries. Freer and more open trade in Iran usually means someone I know--preferably someone I know in my family--gets rich. It does not mean political pragmatism, which is what Westerners, especially Americans, think it does.

As president in the 1990s, Rafsanjani was encouraging greater European investment in Iran and his version of a "dialogue of civilizations" at the same time he was authorizing hit squads to knife and gun-down feared or disliked Iranian expatriates in Europe. If the Europeans had responded with anger, sanctions, or paramilitary actions against the Iranians and their allies who were involved with these black operations, it's conceivable the clerics would have become more pragmatic. But Europeans who believed in "engagement"--the idea that negotiation and trade produce political moderation--always won the day, so no machtpolitik lesson was

ever delivered to Tehran. European engagement with Iran during Khatami's presidency certainly didn't moderate Iran's internal politics; Khatami became weaker each day after his election, and those more hotly faithful to Khomeini's vision became stronger. One can argue there was a limited "Khatami effect" on Iran's foreign policy: The killing teams stopped sojourning in Europe. But the political killings continued inside Iran, gaining in frequency.

If Rafsanjani and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's successor, Ali Khamenei--the two great, purely political clerics of the Islamic revolution--had ever been really desirous of altering American attitudes and attracting significant U.S. investment to Iran, they would have used their subsidies to the Lebanese Hezbollah and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas--all three clients of Tehran--to restrain terrorism against the Jewish state. Longstanding Iranian support for terrorism against Israel and Jews worldwide has been one of the principal obstacles to détente between the United States and the Islamic Republic. If the Iranians had behaved somewhat better in this regard, it would have gone a long way--especially under Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, who both were hoping at various times to see moderation among the mullahs--toward thawing U.S. trade with the Islamic Republic.

Yet the Iranians have never wavered in their support of anti-Israeli terrorists. Ideology has easily trumped commercial good sense, even when clerical Iran was at its most "liberal," when Khatami, Rafsanjani, and Khamenei regularly opined about how critical economic progress was for the health of the Islamic Republic. Furthermore, any honest review of Rafsanjani's and Khamenei's speeches and writings since 1979 would quickly reveal that both gentlemen hate the United States more than they hate Israel. Jews dominate America, of course: Rafsanjani, Khamenei, the ex-"Anonymous" CIA analyst Michael Scheuer, and the American academics John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, the authors of "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy," might find chatting together about "Jewish influence" pleasant and insightful. But in the mullahs' eyes, Israel's evil is subordinate to America's "world-devouring arrogance." We're not the "Great Satan" just because three million Jews live in America. And Rafsanjani's and Khamenei's views on this subject are the coin of the revolutionary clerical realm.

All that said, the gut-wrenching nature of contemplating a preventive military strike against the mullahs' nuclear facilities may still be enough to push the Bush administration to explore secretly the possibility of a "grand bargain" with Tehran. There are those in the administration who really do believe that the clerics want the nukes primarily because they're scared of their neighbors, some of whom (the Israelis and the Pakistanis) have atomic weapons. This line of argument has become a trope for the geostrategic and dovish crowds. They don't see the mullahs' pursuit of power as the manifestation of God's will via nuclear weaponry in the hands of Iran's clerics, Islam's truest vanguard. Such "realists" are always irretrievably secular. Yet, it's a good bet that Secretary Rice doesn't share this perspective: She seems to think that Iran's ruling clerics see themselves in a good-versus-evil struggle where there is no possibility of permanent compromise. And Secretary Rice would be right in that assessment.

Even if the secretary still has strong "realist" instincts--she is, after all, a disciple of Brent Scowcroft, Bush One's national security adviser, and she is surrounded in the State Department by foreign service officers who live to negotiate--it won't matter. The Iranians won't play ball. If the Bush administration tries a Libyan or North Korean approach, it will look nearly as foolish as President Clinton and Secretary of

State Madeleine Albright did when they tried in 2000 to apologize their way into getting President Khatami to engage Washington and to cooperate with the FBI in its search for the Iranian culprits behind the deadly Khobar bombings in Saudi Arabia in 1996.

The Clinton administration's handling of that affair remains the single dumbest American approach to the mullahs since 1979. The hapless, not-so-secret negotiating efforts of Carter's national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski with the provisional Iranian government in 1979--which was a major factor behind the U.S. embassy's seizure and the collapse of the moderate government of prime minister Mehdi Bazargan--and the not-so-secret trip in 1986 to Tehran of Reagan's national security adviser Robert McFarlane both made more sense than Clinton's attempt through apologia to break bread with and divide the Middle East's premier power politicians. Although the Bush administration mercifully doesn't have the same penchant for apology as its predecessor, one should have enormous sympathy for the current national security adviser, Stephen Hadley, if he gets tasked with the job of reaching out to the Iranians one last time. The American ambassador in Baghdad, Zalmay Khalilzad, has a less dangerous assignment.

ALTHOUGH THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION has no desire to have the Great Iran Debate--just mentioning a preventive military strike at the State Department or the Pentagon is not a socially acceptable, polite thing to do--the clerical regime will probably force the administration to have it soon. The recent reporting that suggests the Bush administration--or at least the dark side of it in the Pentagon and the vice president's office--is already gearing up for a possible military confrontation with the clerics is, to put it mildly, at odds with the diplomacy-centered, keep-the-handcuffs-on-hawkish-U.N.-ambassador-John-Bolton approach of the State Department, which dominates Iran policy. Although this may change, the Pentagon and the vice president's office seem to have little role in the administration's Iran discussions, and in neither place do you find bombing enthusiasts or strategists trying to game scenarios reminiscent of the run-up to the 2003 war against Saddam Hussein.

The Pentagon's Central Command, which handles the Middle East and is led by General John Abizaid, has no doubt begun to look at the theoretical question of what preventive military strikes might entail, as well as what might happen in the region if the Islamic Republic were to go nuclear. (For example, would the United States be obliged to change its deployments in the region to handle a more aggressive, nuclear-armed clerical regime?)

This is, of course, what prudent, farsighted generals do even if they know--as General Abizaid surely does--that his civilian bosses are as allergic to the use of preventive military strikes against the clerics as are probably most senior military officers in CENTCOM. It in fact would be negligent of Abizaid not to look down the road and realize that the sophisticated reflex to dismiss the possibility of preventive military strikes could change overnight if the United States were actually staring in the face a rabidly anti-American theocracy on the threshold of nuclear weaponry.

In any case, whether Abizaid thinks striking is a good or bad idea is irrelevant: Military men are obliged to think about the strategic ramifications of the Islamic Republic's going nuclear. It doesn't take great powers of prognostication to see that the Iran conversation will remain theoretical and easy until that point when the United States really believes that the mullahs are on the verge of obtaining the bomb. From that moment forward, the conversation in Washington, which really

hasn't been that serious, will become deadly serious. (No one in the government or out ought to have much confidence in CIA estimates about when Iran will have weapons of mass destruction. The current five to ten-year estimate could die overnight.)

Critical point: The Iranians--not the Americans--control this discussion and are circumscribing the diplomatic avenues the Bush administration is still determined to pursue. Tehran's mullahs are unlikely to allow us any running room. Rafsanjani's and Ahmadinejad's recent statements about Iran succeeding in enriching uranium (level unspecified) and its readiness to begin industrial-scale production mean, among other things, that the clerical regime believes it now has the advantage (which it does).

The United Nations has again proven incapable of handling this challenge (the Russians and the Chinese will, so the Iranians believe, continue to block sanctions). And the Iranians have little reason so far to fear the Europeans. The Germans have repeatedly shown themselves uncomfortable with tough sanctions against Tehran, and the recent comments made by the German foreign minister recommending direct U.S.-Iranian talks signify, translated into Persian, that the Germans really don't like the sanctions approach, even when pushed by France. Rafsanjani and Ahmadinejad are also saying that it's too late; you can't bomb us now since we've crossed the enrichment threshold. This certainly isn't true--the Iranians don't have enough centrifuges constructed and running--but it could become true, much faster than the Bush administration would like.

The clerical regime may well be calculating that they cannot adequately maintain the secrecy of their nuclear-weapons program. The opposition group the Mujahedeen-e-Khalq exposed their highly secretive efforts in 2003 (and earlier warned foreign-intelligence services about it) and quite likely will do so again when Iran is farther down the road to weaponization. So the regime might as well be as public as possible about basic enrichment--that is, get as many centrifuges constructed, running, and enriching to non-weapons grade under IAEA observation though not control, and thus allow a very rapid break-out to weapons-grade enrichment whenever the ruling clergy chooses. By doing it so publicly, in an in-your-Western-face manner, the mullahs hope to reinforce public approval and tap into Iranian nationalism to buttress the regime. The mullahs are under no delusion about their small base of support in the population; Ahmadinejad, on a recent Caspian Sea meet-the-people tour, was blasted with popular dissatisfaction. The new president's honeymoon appears to be already over.

The Iranians are making the astute call that if they can get the West to acquiesce now--if they can get the West to believe they really are on the verge of industrial-scale enrichment--then they're much safer than if they drag this out. America is, so CNN says (and the Iranian English-speaking elite faithfully watch CNN), tied down in Iraq. Politically, President Bush is obviously weak. Down the road, circumstances might not be so propitious. And the Iranian nuclear-weapons program is now technically probably ready to advance. Add it all up, and the current Iranian push, coming from both Rafsanjani, who the Europeans had surreally hoped would stop this program, and Ahmadinejad, is tactically brilliant. Unless Rafsanjani's and Ahmadinejad's rhetoric and actions now provoke more intense European resolve (and if this doesn't do it, nothing will), no sanctions strategy is likely to congeal effectively.

And the Bush administration hasn't been helping. It has been loath to ramp up the specter of military strikes to reinforce a sanctions-threat in European-Iranian nuclear negotiations. The president would actually be wiser to allow Seymour Hersh's "wild speculation" in the New Yorker to be seen as acceptable contemplation in his White House. This might cause British foreign minister Jack Straw to go apoplectic, but it would send the correct signal to Tehran, with its finer appreciation of power politics. So given the exhaustion of diplomacy, should we prepare to bomb? Or should we give it up, admit we can't stop the clerics from getting the nuke, and try to contain and undermine the Islamic Republic's atom-armed theocracy as best we can?

THE REASONS NOT TO BOMB are many, and some are pretty compelling. The thoughtful anti-bomb critics believe such an action is unfeasible (too many possible sites to attack and therefore no guarantee of success without a land invasion), too convulsive (the Iranian people will rise in nationalist indignation; the Europeans and the rest of the "international community" will go ballistic), too dangerous (Iran will unleash a small army of clandestine agents to smite us in Afghanistan and Iraq, ending America's Iraq project and costing numerous American lives in both countries; reborn Persian terrorist holy warriors might strike us everywhere else), and politically unwise (we will silence the Iranians who want change in their country since the nation will rally around the mullahs). Let us look first at the arguments that really shouldn't scare us.

* If we bomb, we will kill off the internal Iranian opposition. This is perhaps the weakest argument against a preventive strike. Although it would be nice to have Iranian society evolve quickly into something more democratic than theocracy, the odds of this happening before the regime gets a nuke aren't good. It could be decades before this happens; preventive military strikes would have the immediate benefit of delaying Iran's possession of nuclear arms for a few, perhaps several, years. In any case, it is highly unlikely that an American strike would arrest Iran's intellectual progress away from theocracy. This process has been going on since the 1980s--Iran's loss to Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war was an important catalyst to questioning and dissent.

It's much more reasonable to assume that the Islamic Republic's loss to America--and having your nuclear facilities destroyed would be hard to depict as a victory--would actually accelerate internal debate and soul-searching. It's unlikely that many Iranians would feel any affection for an American attack--we would certainly see rampant nationalist and Muslim indignation from many quarters--but the discussion would be much more complicated than just anti-Americanism. It would be, as it was during and after the Iran-Iraq war, double-edged, and probably painful for the ruling clergy, who have not been beloved for a very long time. And the reasons they are not liked are felt each day.

This would not change with an American attack against nuclear facilities. Iranians' growing criticisms of their own society, especially those criticisms advanced by folks who were, or still are, loyal to the revolution--most famously Grand Ayatollah Ali Montazeri, the "defrocked" onetime successor to Khomeini--simply cannot be blown away by foreigners' actions, any more than, in an American context, left-wing intellectuals' concern about social justice, or American blacks' revulsion at the indignities of state-sanctioned racism, could have been stopped by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. It's likely that an American attack on the clerical regime's nuclear facilities would, within a short period of time, produce burning criticism of the ruling mullahs, as hot for them as it would be for us. This is not to say that

American attacks would produce a counterrevolution. Not at all. It's just to say that such attacks would not make most Iranians love the mullahs more.

An attack would surely introduce uncertainties into Iranian politics, something the clerical dictatorship has tried to avoid. It's worthwhile to remember what happened after the USS Vincennes accidentally shot down a civilian Iranian airliner in 1988. Iranians appeared furious. Even among those who hated the clerical regime--even among Iranian expatriates who'd been driven from their homeland by Ayatollah Khomeini and loved the United States profoundly--vengeful wishes were common. (More than a few astute folks in America's counterterrorist community have long believed that Pan Am 103's destruction above Scotland in 1989 had its origins in a clerical decision to strike back for the Vincennes action. Libya's Muammar Qaddafi, who had his own desire for vengeance against the Americans, entered the picture later.)

Yet within a fairly short time, you could see that many Iranians had flipped: They were almost thankful. Most seemed to assume America had blown the airplane from the sky intentionally, yet they were now giving credit to America for helping to break Khomeini's will to continue the war against Saddam Hussein. America had chosen sides--in most Iranian eyes, atrociously in favor of the Butcher of Baghdad--but the war had been stopped. The detested war-loving mullahs had been broken.

Mutatis mutandis, the emotions surrounding an American strike against the regime's nuclear facilities would be complicated. With or without an American strike on the clerics' nuclear sites, the advance of democracy in Iran will likely have many anti-American overtones (less perhaps than elsewhere in the Muslim Middle East, since theocracy has improved America's image in Iran enormously as the mullahs have failed to fulfill the promises of the Islamic revolution). A surge in anti-Americanism, even if it lasted long, would not save the regime from the intellectual aftershocks of a U.S. attack on its nuclear-weapons facilities. Iran's political and democratic dissidents, especially among the clergy and the left-wing lay crowd, have often been very anti-American. They would no doubt remain so even as they found themselves questioning whether the regime had lost its mind getting into a war with the world's only superpower.

* If we bomb, the Iranians will rise in righteous indignation and a new generation of anti-American Shiite holy warriors will be produced (as if the Sunni terrorists weren't bad enough).

Iranians might rise in righteous indignation. Nations don't like to be bombed. But there is simply more to it than that. If we delayed Iran's acquisition of nuclear weaponry by even three years, that might turn out to be a great success--if in those three years something happened that would have been vastly worse if Tehran had had nuclear weapons. If Saddam Hussein had developed nuclear weapons by 1991, then he might still be in Kuwait, and we would have a rabid predator loose in the Middle East. This didn't happen, it strongly appears, because the Israeli attack on the Osirak nuclear reactor in 1981 and/or the American attack on Saddam in 1990-91 and subsequent sanctions derailed his plans for weapons of mass destruction. Some similarly dangerous situation could arise now, causing us to thank God that the Islamic Republic didn't have a nuke. Under such circumstances, whether the Iranian people were angry at us, short-term or even long, would really be a secondary issue.

And as explained above, anger at the United States is likely to be double-edged,

cutting toward the ruling clergy as well as us. We shouldn't become paralyzed from fear of Shiite death-wish believers coming at us again. It's possible. What makes a terrorist Muslim holy warrior is usually complex and personal, and an American air strike on Iranian nuclear facilities might provide that special explosive ingredient to some.

However, it's not likely, and it's especially not likely that the clerical regime would be able to produce and export these holy warriors as an automotive company does cars. The Islamic Republic ceased to produce holy warriors by the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988. (The death of Khomeini in 1989 also stole a charismatic element from the brew that had produced an amazing number of young men who lived to die.) Even in Lebanon, where Hezbollah is just across the border from Israel, Shiite holy warriors have receded--at least those who want to immolate themselves and others for the cause. This disease is obviously alive among the Sunnis, but it seems extinguished among the Shiites.

Blame Khomeini, the Iran-Iraq war, and nationalism. The type of millenarian hope that many faithful Iranian men had at the beginning of the revolution died out in the war and in the unjust and increasingly corrupt society the mullahs built. Millenarian despair--the recognition that God's perfect society isn't accessible on earth but just might be accessible through a gloriously violent and fraternal death--also burned itself out in the unending, pointless slaughter of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war and the increasing pettiness and deceit of an aging Islamic Republic. There are certainly diehard true believers in Iran--Ahmadinejad appears to be one--but the internal chemistry of Iranian society doesn't produce many anymore among men under 25, the key age group for marrying a killer faith with testosterone. The potential for chiliastic rapture--the fraternity of death that young men can have most easily in brutal combat--has just dried up.

Something so secular and adventitious as an American air strike on a nuclear facility is very unlikely to bring back that magic, that love of God and man, that can send young boys across minefields on motorcycles. The rise of a less religious nationalism in Iran is a sign of declining jihadism. Nationalism in the Sunni radical world has been in retreat (even if it still often defines the contours of "globalized" radical Islamic thought) as holy warriorism has been increasing. An offended God is a vastly more important element in jihadism than an offended nation-state. If Ahmadinejad declares that thousands of young men will sign up to become martyrs in terrorist attacks upon Americans if the United States bombs Iran, don't believe him. He's dreaming. He's having a flashback.

If opponents of preventive bombing conjure up illusions of Sunni militants--or just the "one billion plus Muslims worldwide"--outraged at American actions against the Islamic Republic, then one should remind them of the Arab and Muslim streets that were supposed to rise in jihad a half dozen times against Westerners since 1914 but didn't. Imagining Arab and non-Arab Sunnis, particularly the truly violent Wahhabi set, who hate Shiites almost as much as they hate Americans, going on the warpath on behalf of a nuclear-defanged Shiite Iran is numbingly hard, though obviously not impossible for those who believe the Islamic Republic is only a menace because America--especially President Bush--is determined to demonize it.

* If we bomb, the international community will go ballistic.

They probably would. And this is certainly a more serious limitation on American

action. Americans really don't like acting alone, braving the censure of other, particularly Western, nations. Taken individually, most Americans probably don't care much what France or Germany or Spain or Italy thinks. Great Britain is the exception, especially in perilous times. Americans, particularly liberal Americans, do care, however, when "the West" isn't with us, and it probably wouldn't be with us in a bombing run on Iran's nuclear sites. As Robert Kagan tirelessly points out, the inability to project much military force inevitably starts to alter the ethics that sanction the use of force. Europe's relative military weakness now makes anti-Americanism the natural state. Would the anger be worse than what we went through with the Iraq war? Hard to tell.

America's contracting-out of its Iran policy to the British, French, and Germans--the so-called EU-3--since 2003 has made the foreign-policy elites in those countries somewhat more sensitive to American concerns and more alarmed by the clerical regime's nefarious behavior. It's hard to love the mullahs. Westerners try now and then, especially, if they can find a cleric like Khatami, who is personally appealing, at least more than Rafsanjani and Khamenei. The Islamic Republic long ago would have captured Europe's undying Third World love if it had not been for the regime's treatment of women. Although some Western female journalists have tried to depict Iranian women as liberated under their headscarves and veils, these sentiments have an uneasy time with other reporting that shows Iranian women, however strong-willed and independent, being severely abused by the regime's Islamic-law system. The phenomenal global success of Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* has also made it more difficult to view the Islamic Republic's internal ethics, particularly regarding women, benignly.

The clerical regime's behavior and rhetoric has been too dark for too long for it easily to gain sympathy in the West as an innocent Third World Muslim country being picked on by a warmongering George W. Bush. But anti-Americanism is deeply rooted in Western Europe, especially in Germany. Much of Europe came very close to sympathizing with Saddam Hussein. It's a decent bet that the longer European and American diplomacy continues on the Iranian nuclear question, the more condemnation the United States will encounter when it abandons this process, even if the process has been without content for months.

The real question remains, is a nuclear weapon under the control of Ali Khamenei "unacceptable"? If it is, then enduring the heat of hostile European opinion ought to be sustainable. Living through the Iraq war has been an unhappy experience--for those who see the world first and foremost through a transatlantic lens, downright nerve-wracking. But the sky has not fallen. It would probably not fall--at least not in Europe--if we attacked the clerics' atomic-weapons programs.

* If we bomb, the mullahs will hit us in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Using its Revolutionary Guard and intelligence-ministry forces, the Islamic Republic could strike us in both countries. You don't need to imagine reborn Iranian Shiite holy warriors running amok to see cause for concern. If you had to pick one reason that the Bush administration would not strike the Islamic Republic's nuclear facilities, this would probably be it.

It's impossible to overestimate the Iraq fatigue that now afflicts the administration. The American military is stressed out. Although it's difficult to say what Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's view is--his entire civilian staff seems to have recused

itself from giving a forceful opinion on the Iranian nuclear issue--the military brass will likely fight any preventive military strike against Iran for fear of the repercussions in Iraq. Their views may be unfounded, but it seems likely President Bush would hesitate to dismiss these concerns.

Ultimately, the clerical regime itself will determine whether the United States strikes its nuclear facilities. If it acts in a rash manner, deploying frightening language and new ballistic hardware, if it gets caught engaging in serious nastiness in Iraq or terrorism abroad before it has enough centrifuges up and running, then it's certainly possible to imagine the president, even the senior officers of the U.S. Army, deciding America has no choice. As we get closer to the "red line" for Iran's atomic-weapons programs, it's not at all unlikely we will concentrate on Iran's threat independent of Iraq.

Viewed calmly, Afghanistan and Iraq shouldn't make or break the decision on whether to strike Iran's facilities. In both countries, the Iranians are only as good as their proxies. It seems highly unlikely that the clerical regime would try to deploy large numbers of Revolutionary Guards and intelligence officers in open combat in either place. The Iranians would be operating without benefit of cover. (They stick out like sore thumbs in both countries.) They would be inviting U.S. attacks on Iran--and not on nuclear facilities, but on Revolutionary Guards Corps camps, military installations, and intelligence facilities. Such things are critical to the regime's survival. The regime certainly remembers that the U.S. Navy essentially annihilated the Iranian regular and Revolutionary Guard navy in one day at the end of the Iran-Iraq war. It's doubtful the clerical regime would like to repeat the experience. Indirect terrorism is the clerical way, and that's what one would expect in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.

The mullahs could certainly find Iraqi and Afghan recruits to help, but whether these attacks could reach and maintain an amplitude sufficient to change the political or military fate of either country is open to question. Terrorism against Americans in either place is likely to kill the natives as well, perhaps lots of them. If the Iraqi Shia discovered that the Iranians were blowing up their women and children, there would be hell to pay for those Iranians so unfortunate as to be working in or visiting Iraq.

An Iranian offensive in Iraq would certainly stress the entire Shiite community. If the Americans were to alienate seriously the Shiites--something we have not yet done--then we could be in serious trouble. If the young radical Muktada al-Sadr were forced from the political process (there was a time for this, but that time is now past), we might see him take up arms for Iran. If he remains inside the political system, then it's unlikely he will destroy the system in which he's a player. There just isn't that level of affection, certainly not fealty, between him, his men, and the Iranians.

The same is true, probably more so, for the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), the dominant Shiite political party within the United Iraqi Alliance. Though formed under Iranian patronage, and no doubt still benefiting from Iranian largesse, SCIRI is an Iraqi Arab Shiite party with stronger ties now to the holy Iraqi city of Najaf than to Tehran.

The Iranian press sometimes carries stories about how the Iraqi Shia are no longer theirs. The former exiles, whom Iran once saved, are becoming adult ingrates. The Iranians are right. If in 12 to 24 months, the Iraqi political system isn't functioning and Shiite Iraqis are not committed to the system in place, then the Iranians really

won't be able to hurt us in Iraq, since the country in all likelihood will have collapsed. If we bomb by then, it might be difficult to tell the difference between Iraqi-and Iranian-inspired mayhem. If the political system is working, then the Iranians will probably be, for most nasty purposes, operating alone. They will certainly be able to cause us pain, but they won't be able to bring down the Iraqi political system. And if they can't do that, then they can't really hurt us.

Which brings us to the last and most stultifying concern:

* If we bomb Iran's nuclear facilities, we cannot fully verify the damage we've done without a land invasion. And Iranian terrorist reprisals against our troops, if sustained and deadly, might force us to consider the unthinkable: a large-scale land invasion of the Islamic Republic.

The EU-3 negotiations and the IAEA inspections and deliberations have certainly made it easier to contemplate an aerial bombardment of Iran's nuclear facilities. By their actions and words, the Iranians have told us that there are certain sites that are critical to their program--especially the enrichment and conversion facilities at Natanz and Isfahan. If the Iranians had backup facilities, their dogged efforts to free these sites from IAEA control would make no sense whatsoever. We didn't know this 24 months ago, but we do now. Taking out a handful of sites such as these, even when underground, is feasible. We would have to be prepared to bomb these facilities more than once, but the United States certainly has the capacity to stop the Iranian government from continuing any substantial work on these premises. (Even if we couldn't completely collapse underground facilities using conventional bunker busters, we could certainly paralyze any above-ground efforts to repair them.)

It's also reasonable to assume that, given the enormous effort the clerical government has put into building up its program over the last 15 years (this is truly the clerical regime's Manhattan Project), if these sites were wiped out, they could not be replicated overnight. It would probably take a few years to rebuild them and their machinery. That delay might be critically important down the road, depending on events in Iran and elsewhere. It might not. The only thing for sure is that the United States would have to be prepared to bomb the clerical regime's facilities again, and the second time round, the regime would try much harder to hide these places, which would likely mean that it would take the Iranians several years to rebuild their nuclear program more securely. Overhead satellite cameras and Iranian opposition groups--especially the unpleasant but occasionally insightful Mujahedeen-e-Khalq organization, the group that publicly revealed the Natanz facility--would dog them. The CIA, too, might on occasion contribute something of value. Though this is certainly no guarantee of accurate, constant intelligence coverage, it's probably enough to make things difficult and time-consuming for the mullahs.

Bombing the nuclear facilities once would mean we were declaring war on the clerical regime. We shouldn't have any illusions about that. We could not stand idly by and watch the mullahs build other sites. If the ruling mullahs were to go forward with rebuilding what they'd lost--and it would be surprising to discover the clerical regime knuckling after an initial bombing run--we'd have to strike until they stopped. And if we had any doubt about where their new facilities were (and it's a good bet the clerical regime would try to bury new sites deep under heavily populated areas), and we were reasonably suspicious they were building again, we'd have to consider, at a minimum, using special-operations forces to penetrate suspected sites.

All of this would probably transpire over many years, perhaps a decade or more, and it certainly could go in a different direction. The regime could fall, or it could evolve in a healthy direction, from internal convulsions, but it would be unwise to allow a bloodied clerical regime to get a nuclear weapon. The United States obviously does not want to get in the same place that it was with Iraq in the 1990s, launching periodic air attacks but not knowing whether the mullahs' nuclear activities had escaped our detection. There is no way the Europeans would have the stomach for this--and probably few Americans would, either.

Terrorism is in the ruling clergy's DNA--which is one of the reasons we don't want them to get the nuke; it's even a bigger reason we don't want them to get a bomb after we've been pummeling them. And if the mullahs responded to a successful U.S. attack against their nuclear facilities with a lucky terrorist strike against a big American target overseas or on the mainland--again, it's unlikely the clergy would do this without pretty good camouflage through non-Iranian terrorist groups, and such large-scale terrorist operations are always very difficult to execute, especially with the United States and others surveilling the Iranians and their allies closely--the United States would have to respond massively against the Islamic Republic. A land invasion might not be necessary, but if the regime were to kill thousands of Americans it's hard not to envision a U.S. president asking Congress for a declaration of war and an all-out invasion of Persia.

ALL OF THIS IS FRIGHTENING. It reinforces the temptation to accept the status quo rather than going on the offensive. Inaction is the default position of "realists," which explains their staying power. However, one significant terrorist attack by an Islamic Republic protected by nuclear weapons, and many might view as necessary what had seemed reckless. If the Iranians even carried out a "minor" terrorist act--for example, blowing up a U.S. embassy and killing and maiming one hundred officials--the United States in a post-9/11 world would have to unleash hell against the clerical regime. To absorb such a hit without a massive reprisal would be to invite much worse nuclear-protected terrorism.

If the Revolutionary Guard Corps, which oversees the Islamic Republic's nuclear weapons program, were to give a wing of al Qaeda material for a dirty bomb, what would the United States do in response? The regime's past fondness for Ayman al-Zawahiri, the occasional movement of al Qaeda members through Iran both pre-and post-9/11, and the "arrest" and "detention" of some al Qaeda members in the Islamic Republic to this day are, to say the least, disconcerting. What would we do if we were pretty sure they'd ordered a terrorist attack--say, 80 percent sure--but we were 100percent sure they had nuclear-armed ICBMs?

If either Rafsanjani or Ahmadinejad were ever to follow through on their wild rhetoric against Israel with a nuclear strike--and this is certainly a possibility unprevented by either man's ethics--then the path now deemed reckless might seem, even to the dovish Europeans, in retrospect like a morally compelling course.

Deterrence theory may well work against the clerical regime, but it ought to be admitted that we have never before confronted a regime where anti-Americanism, violence, terrorism, and God's writ have been so intermarried. The Soviets in their hatreds were positively ecumenical. What we are dealing with in the Islamic Republic's ruling revolutionary elite is a politer, more refined, more cautious, vastly more mendacious version of bin Ladenism. It is best that such men not have nukes, and that we do everything in our power, including preventive military strikes, to stop

this from happening.

The opponents of military strikes against the mullahs' weapons facilities say there are no guarantees that we can permanently destroy their weapons production. This is true. We can't guarantee the results. But what we can do is demonstrate, to the mullahs and to others elsewhere, that even with these uncertainties, in a post-9/11 world the United States has red lines that will compel it to act. And one nonnegotiable red line is that we will not sit idly and watch a virulently anti-American terrorist-supporting rogue state obtain nukes. We will not be intimidated by threats of terrorism, oil-price spikes, or hostile world opinion. If the ruling clerical elite wants a head-on collision with a determined superpower, then that's their choice.

No matter what happens, it is long overdue for the Bush administration to get serious about building clandestine mechanisms to support Iranians who want to change their regime. This will take time and be brutally difficult. And overt democracy support to Iranians--which is the Bush administration's current game plan--isn't likely to draw many recruits. Most Iranians probably know that this approach is a one-way invitation to Evin prison, which isn't the most effective place for expressing dissent. However we go about assisting the opposition, the prospects for removing the regime before it acquires nuclear weapons are slim.

So we will all have to wait for President Bush to decide whether nuclear weapons in the hands of Khamenei, Rafsanjani, Ahmadinejad, and the Revolutionary Guards Corps are something we can live with. Given the Islamic Republic's dark history, the burden of proof ought to be on those who favor accommodating a nuclear Iran. Those who are unwilling to accommodate it, however, need to be honest and admit that diplomacy and sanctions and covert operations probably won't succeed, and that we may have to fight a war--perhaps sooner rather than later--to stop such evil men from obtaining the worst weapons we know.

--Reuel Marc Gerecht is a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and a contributing editor to The Weekly Standard.

TURKEY

Sliding Backward

Newsweek

By Owen Matthews

4/24

Whatever happened to Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the outspoken prime minister whose bold reforms brought Turkey to the very threshold of Europe? He was a rebel who loosened the Turkish military's stranglehold on political power. He brought cultural rights to the country's Kurdish minority and overhauled a quasi-totalitarian legal system. But these days? He sounds more and more like the reactionary old guard he came to power vowing to overturn.

Consider some contrasts. Last August Erdogan electrified crowds in the largely Kurdish city of Diyarbakir by telling them they were citizens with equal rights. But earlier this month, after a week of rioting, he warned Kurdish protesters, "Don't you dare test the power of the state." Last year Erdogan defied nationalists at home by

agreeing to open Turkish ports and airports to Greek Cypriot vessels and aircraft, the price the European Union demanded for starting EU accession talks. Now he's backpedaling. Erdogan came to power preaching tolerance and human rights. Now he's repeatedly sued cartoonists who lampoon him.

At home and abroad, Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party, or AKP, have taken a sharp lurch toward old-fashioned Turkish nationalism--with potentially dramatic implications for Ankara's EU bid as well as Turkey's place in the world. Why? Erdogan's a politician. Elections are looming, perhaps as soon as this November. If his mildly Islamic party is to do well, it must stay in tune with the voters--and they seem to be shifting. Long friendly toward the United States and hungry to join Europe, young Turks in particular now seem to be turning toward parties critical of U.S. policy in the region and EU interference at home. Last month researchers surveying Turkey's 4.5 million 17- to 19-year-olds found that fully 20 percent said they'd vote for the far-right Nationalist Action Party. At a recent congress, NEWSWEEK has learned, Erdogan instructed party elders to play up nationalism to get those voters back. "The party's religious credentials will never be questioned, but their nationalist ones can be," says an AKP source not authorized to speak on the record.

The recent unrest in the largely Kurdish southeast--which left at least 15 protesters dead, including four children--has been a turning point. Revolutionary reforms pushed through by Erdogan (backed by strong EU pressure) have given Turkey's Kurds more rights than they've had in generations, including the opportunity to broadcast and teach in their own language. Yet for his pains, Erdogan has a revolt on his hands that bears uncomfortable similarities to the Palestinian intifada: crowds of children, their faces covered with scarves, throwing stones at soldiers, as well as a female suicide bomber who blew herself up in the northern town of Ordu. Erdogan's reaction was quick and unequivocal. Security forces wouldn't hesitate to act against women and children, he warned, if they allowed themselves to be used as "pawns of terrorism."

A crackdown on the Kurds would be the death knell for Turkey's EU aspirations. But growing numbers of Turks don't seem to care. Indeed, many blame the EU for encouraging dangerous Kurdish national aspirations. According to a recent poll conducted by Istanbul's Bilgi University, the proportion of Turks in favor of joining the EU has fallen from 75 percent in 2004 to 63 percent today. Other surveys put the figure closer to 50 percent. Turks also blame the United States for failing to close down military camps of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, in northern Iraq. "You tell the world that you have a war on terror and yet you haven't touched the PKK, despite all the troops you have in the country?" says Kemal Koprulu, the U.S.-educated founder of the ARI think tank in Istanbul.

Cyprus is another flash point. In a nod to Europe, the Turks last year agreed to open Turkish ports to Cyprus on the understanding that the EU would open up ports in Northern Cyprus as well. No go, EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn now says. Turkey must open its ports before this coming October's EU progress report or the whole process will turn into a "train wreck." Trouble is, the Turks are so determined not to back down on Cyprus that Ankara's already talking about suspending further EU negotiations.

Unfortunately for Turkey, there's no shortage of Europeans who would like to see just that. German Chancellor Angela Merkel is far less friendly toward Turkish

membership than her predecessor, Gerhard Schröder, was. Greece, once an ardent champion, is turning cooler too. Athens' new foreign minister, Dora Bakoyannis, warned earlier this month that "Turkey's EU process is not a certain path."

Faced with a chill in Brussels, Erdogan has focused his energies on developing Turkey's ties to the Islamic world. Last month he made a keynote speech at the Arab League conference in Khartoum, and his foreign minister, Abdullah Gul, hosted Hamas's Khaled Mashal and Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi for talks. There have been numerous high-level visits by Syrian and Iranian officials. To Washington's chagrin, Ankara has even flirted with inviting the hard-line Iraqi Shiite leader Moqtada al-Sadr as part of what Erdogan's chief foreign-affairs adviser, Ahmed Davutoglu, calls Turkey's "zero problems with our neighbors" policy.

Erdogan isn't about to abandon his drive to modernize Turkey, by any means, and preparing the country for EU membership is part and parcel of that effort. Indeed, joining Europe remains the Justice Party's best defense against military hawks opposed to its efforts to dismantle the more repressive apparatus of the state. Yet Erdogan is playing a dangerous game. Perhaps he can balance the dictates of liberal economics, progressive politics and old-time nationalism. But there are plenty of enemies, both at home and in Europe, who would like to see him fail.

HAMAS

The Latest Zionist Conspiracy

Daily Standard

By Mark D. Tooley

4/12

A PROMINENT HAMAS member of parliament has explained why most American Christians support Israel. The churches are run by "converted" Jews who are exploiting Christians for Zionist purposes. "Even the churches where the Americans pray are led by Jews who were converted to Christianity, but they were converted to keep controlling the Americans," Sheikh Mohammad Abu Tir explained on an American radio show on April 7.

A Gallup poll released on April 6 shows that religious Americans tend to be more pro-Israel. But Gallup, according to Abu Tir, did not understand the real reason for this. "I made a study and I know very well that all this radicalism in some parts of the Christianity, [including] the Anglicans who are being led by Bush, is because of the control of Zionists," said the orange-bearded Abu Tir.

Jewish control of the media is, of course, old hat. Jewish control of the churches, however, is a new twist. Thanks partly to the antics of Hamas officials such as Abu Tir, Americans sympathize with Israel over the Palestinians by 59 percent to 15 percent, according to the latest Gallup poll. But 64 percent of regular churchgoers sympathize more with Israel, compared to 45 percent of Americans who never attend church.

Meanwhile, the Palestine Solidarity Movement (PSM) conference held at Georgetown University in March offered helpful advice on how pro-Palestinian activists can penetrate American church groups. A report from the American Jewish Congress

provided an account of the PSM event.

Activists were encouraged to "look Christian," to "study Christian culture, understand it, so you can create Christian solidarity to then reach out to Palestinian solidarity," to dress conservatively, maintain proper grooming and a good social demeanor, and to "become the Ned Flanders (a Simpsons' character) of your church."

PSM activists were also instructed to avoid profane language, say "God blesses you" after a sneeze," and act "Christian like." They were told to provide gifts of Holy Land holy water and rosaries and talk about children dying at the hands of the Israelis. Above all, the PSM told their activists-in-training to speak in the language of spirituality and not politics, to ask the priest or pastor to pray for Palestinians during worship, and to hook up with anti-Iraq war groups.

As the Palestinian activist gains trust by becoming part of the church "family," they should "educate" the Christians about Zionist exploitation. Once the Christians understand, they will not stand for what is happening to the Palestinian Christians, the PSM activists were assured.

IN SOME WAYS, the PSM's work is unnecessary. Mainline Protestant officials in the United States have been repeating anti-Israel mantras for years. The PSM should be pleased by how "educated" these prelates already are.

But the anti-Israel bias of some left-wing church officials has not influenced most churchgoers. According to Gallup, American Christians are overwhelmingly pro-Israel, Catholics as well as Protestants--which rebuts the popular notion that pro-Israel Christians are simply evangelicals obsessed with the biblical end-times.

Some 64 percent of white Catholics sympathize with Israel, compared to 63 percent of white Protestants. Blacks were less pro-Israel, with whom they sympathized over the Palestinians by 40 to 24 percent. Only 12 percent of all weekly churchgoers more sympathized with the Palestinians, compared to 20 percent of those who never attend church.

Why are American Christians across the board inclined to support Israel more than those without strong religious ties? Certainly some religious Americans, especially--but not exclusively--among evangelical Protestants, may see Israel as the fulfillment of biblical prophecies. Other church goers may simply have a sentimental attachment to the besieged Chosen People of the Old Testament, of whom their Scriptures speak so powerfully, and around whose memory and symbols much of their worship still revolves.

It is also possible that religious Americans have an innately strong attachment to democracy and human rights. Most probably share the conviction, which President Bush often articulates, that freedom is a divine gift, not a conditional right granted by the state--which puts Israel's democracy in stark contrast with their Palestinian neighbors.

Whatever the reasons, Sheik Mohammad Abu Tir and the Palestinian Solidarity Movement will likely be disappointed if they believe that American Christians will turn against Israel in the near future.

--Mark D. Tooley directs the United Methodist committee at the Institute on Religion and Democracy.

The Tomatoes of Wrath

Time

By Phil Zabriskie

4/24

The goats were happy, but the people feeding them were forlorn as they dumped loads of unsellable cherry tomatoes in the scrub of central Gaza. Hundreds of tons of the vegetable used to be exported from the area, but last week the Palestinian Economic and Development Authority, which operates greenhouses abandoned by Israeli settlers, could only trash much of the crop. Since Hamas' electoral victory in the Palestinian territories, Israel has, in effect, blocked commerce by virtually sealing the borders, citing continued attacks by Palestinian militants. The closings also prevent almost all imports. Now anxious U.N. workers in Gaza City fret that they will soon run out of food to hand out to even more anxious Palestinian refugees. Walid Safiz, 28, a vendor selling sundries at the Friday market in Gaza City, said business was down 80% because, with international financing and subsidies frozen, the government can't pay its roughly 160,000 civil servants. Says Safiz: "If they don't get salaries, they don't buy anything." On Saturday, Palestinian cops, angry over unpaid salaries, stormed a government building.

Since taking power on March 29, Hamas, refusing to recognize Israel's right to exist, has been scrambling to respond to the chief consequences of victory: a freeze in funding to the Palestinian government by the U.S. and many members of the European Union. For now, Hamas leaders, facing dwindling postelection optimism, can be glad that popular frustration and anger are pointed at Israel, the U.S. and Europe. Flexibility on the part of the international community would ease their difficulties, but meanwhile Hamas must find a way to stem the crisis or risk having opprobrium turned its way.

There is scarce room for maneuvering: most international capitals have chosen not to receive Hamas' leaders. Pledges of funding from a handful of Arab countries--even if delivered--wouldn't make up the financial shortfall. Israel has suspended monthly payments of approximately \$50 million in tax and customs revenues it collects for the Palestinians. And it will not talk to Hamas until it halts attacks on Israel by all Palestinian factions. Even as Hamas, which has itself held to a cease-fire, tries to stem attacks by other militants, Israel says it will continue to retaliate, increasing economic damage.

Prime Minister Ismail Haniya lashed out at Israel and the West last Tuesday for trying "to force our people to kneel down." But his administration is searching for ways out of the crisis, which might mean making conciliatory gestures toward Israel. According to Sami Abu Zuhri, a Hamas spokesman in Gaza, Hamas as an organization will not recognize Israel and would seek only an "interim solution" to the current impasse, but spokesmen for the government, as well as some Palestinian officials, have suggested that almost all options could be on the table--including, perhaps, recognition in some roundabout form--if Israel in return would withdraw to the 1967 borders and close all settlements in the West Bank. "Hamas has made significant strides to evolve, which have so far not been internationally

acknowledged," says Nicolas Pelham, senior Middle East analyst with the International Crisis Group.

As focused as Hamas must be on establishing international ties, it must also watch rival factions at home, particularly the party it ousted from power, Fatah. Already Haniya's administration is sparring with President Mahmoud Abbas, who belongs to Fatah, over control of Palestinian security forces. And it is not just Fatah. A member of Islamic Jihad who called himself Abu Aziz told TIME his cadres will continue firing homemade Qassam rockets into Israel.

Resolving those problems will require a subtlety that so far seems in short supply. At a rally in Jabalya refugee camp on Friday, Haniya addressed a crowd of thousands, making no policy statements but instead trying to gird his listeners for future struggles. "We are facing an unholy alliance led by the American Administration to cut aid to the poor and oppressed Palestinian people," he said. "We will not give in, and attempts to isolate the government will fail." After he finished speaking, a throng surrounded his car. He drove slowly away, supported, exalted, but with his thoughts and plans, much like Hamas', still a mystery.

"We will not give in, and attempts to isolate the government will fail."

--ISMAIL HANIYA, Palestinian Prime Minister
* * *

ISRAEL

Ward of the State

New Republic
By Yossi Klein Halevi
4/10

Ariel Sharon is spending Election Day as he has almost every day for the last three months--comatose in Hadassah Hospital. Sharon's two sons, Omri and Gilad, are at his side, trying to rouse him by playing his favorite classical music and Israeli songs. One floor below them, Sharon's fellow patients, some in wheelchairs, wait to enter a polling station. Some say they have left their sickbeds just to vote "for Sharon." This election, after all, is a projection of his will. Sharon destroyed the party of government he founded three decades ago, created its replacement, and determined the election's main issue--separation between Israelis and Palestinians--before disappearing down an empty corridor in the intensive care unit.

Hadassah is an ingathering of Israel's impossible diversity. There are Ethiopian soldiers speaking an immigrant Hebrew and teenage girls with pro-settler orange ribbons hanging from their knapsacks, Muslim women in white kerchiefs, and ultra-Orthodox Jewish women in black kerchiefs. And, yet, Hadassah is almost extraterritorial, a place where--even on Election Day--Israelis can try to forget their political and ethnic divisions and imagine a common, fragile humanity. Most of the patients waiting to vote in the hospital's polling station feel a sense of drift. After all, old parties have shattered and new ones haven't coalesced. And "peace" and "settlements"--the two words that together defined Israeli politics for decades--have been almost entirely absent from this campaign. A young woman supporting Kadima tells me this is the first time she isn't voting left; another young woman, a Likudnik,

says this is the first time she's voting Labor. Dr. Avraham Rivkind, one of Sharon's physicians, heads the department of general surgery and the trauma unit to which many of the wounded from Jerusalem's suicide bombings are brought. "Sharon fought against terror his whole life," he says, "and I get the failures of the war against terror." Lanky and long-faced, he smiles at odd moments, even when talking about terrorist attacks, perhaps as a defense. Rivkind is revered at Hadassah for refusing to give up on the most hopeless patients, such as the soldier who was shot in the heart and pronounced dead on arrival and whom Rivkind revived. Rivkind is a Kadima supporter, though he rejects the party's two main platforms--the security fence and unilateral withdrawal. "Separation is nonsense. There's no such thing. You can't close yourself off hermetically. Someone will always find a way in. I want to keep trying to talk, even with Hamas. How? I would invite [Palestinian Prime Minister and Hamas leader Ismail] Haniyeh to the hospital. And I would start by showing him a 14-year-old Palestinian boy I operated on last week--and who was injured when a bomb he was working with blew up. I would ask Haniyeh, 'Look at this boy. Would you want your son to look like this?' And then I would show him the care this boy is getting here. They portray us as animals. So, come, I'll show you who we are. And I'll ask him, 'Isn't this a better way to live between us?'" Hadassah Hospital is probably the most intense meeting place between Arabs and Jews in the Middle East. Here, Sharon's vision of separation, endorsed in one form or another by most Israeli parties, appears to be a fantasy. Probably several thousand Arabs--some of them Israeli citizens, others residents of East Jerusalem--pass through here every day. Jewish and Arab women share the same maternity wards. Across the courtyard from Rivkind's trauma center, a group of Palestinian doctors and nurses are taking a course in cancer treatment for children. And, in the children's cancer ward, a birthday party is being celebrated for four children--two Arabs, two Jews. Dr. Ahmed Eid, an Arab Israeli, heads the liver and kidney transplant unit. "No Jewish patient ever said he didn't want to be treated by an Arab," he says. There is, though, a problem with organ donations: Some Jewish and Arab donors insist on restricting their organs to their own people. Given the shortage, Eid accepts all donations and then tries to argue with the donors' families. "But there is no discrimination here. Medicine is different from real life. Here, it's a virtual atmosphere." Eid lives, in effect, a double life. At Hadassah, he is a respected doctor-- a savior of Jewish lives. Outside, he is sometimes treated as a potential terrorist--a destroyer of Jewish lives. At Ben Gurion Airport, he is subjected to humiliating security checks, even when traveling as part of a Hadassah delegation. But the future, he believes, is Hadassah, not Ben Gurion. "In the end, there will be no separation wall. Look around you in this hospital--at all the Jews and all the Arabs. How can you have separation?" Outside the polling booth, two young men await their turn to vote. David, a religious Jew, plans to vote for Baruch Marzel's party, the National Jewish Front--successor to Meir Kahane's Kach. "I don't care if Marzel has no chance of getting elected," he says. "This country is a wagon going over the cliff. No principles, no solidarity, no love. Sharon took thousands of people in Gaza--salt of the earth, the most productive farmers in the country--and threw them into the streets. They were protecting the country from terror attacks. And now rockets are falling on Ashkelon. You'll see: Soon we'll have Katyushas in Jerusalem. I say, put all of the Arabs from the West Bank into Gaza. You know what? Give them half the state, from Beersheva to Eilat, I don't care. Just let there be separation. The Arabs are going to win. Finished. It's just a matter of time." Muhammad Dalasha, a Hadassah nursing student from the Galilee, sits beside David and stares into space, pretending not to listen. When David leaves, Muhammad says he's voting Kadima. "This party reflects who I am. I don't care for the Arab parties. I haven't gotten anything from them. They contribute nothing to Israeli society. If I could speak to Sharon, I would tell him about the

difficult situation the country is in and how the government isn't the same without him. I would tell him that we're praying for him and hope he returns. My vote for Kadima is for Sharon."

Old Spy, New Tricks

Newsweek

By Kevin Peraino and Joanna Chen

4/10

At first glance, Rafi Eitan seems like an unlikely kingmaker. Sure, the former spymaster is something of a legend in Israel, having participated in many of the more-colorful intelligence capers since the founding of the Jewish state. In the 1940s he earned the nickname "Rafi the Stinker" after crawling through a sewage drain during a mission for the Palmach, the early Zionist militia. Then, as a Mossad official in 1960, he directed the team that captured Adolph Eichmann in Argentina. Eitan later admitted he was the handler for Jonathan Pollard, the U.S. Navy analyst convicted in 1986 of spying for Israel. But at 79 years old, Eitan has lost some of the spring in his step. "He can't see," says Eitan Haber, who has known the spymaster for 40 years. "He can't hear nothing."

Maybe not, but Eitan possesses the one asset irresistible to any potential Israeli prime minister: votes. His newfound Pensioners Party, which ran on a platform of greater retirement benefits for the elderly, captured an astonishing seven seats in Israel's parliamentary elections last week. That could be a decisive chunk. Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's centrist Kadima Party, after winning a lower-than-expected 29 out of 120 Knes-set seats, will need small coalition partners like the Pensioners Party as it cob-bles together a governing majority. "This is one of the beauties of parliamentary democracy," says Yaron Ezrahi, a political scientist at Jerusalem's Hebrew University. "It can suddenly give prominence to a small group." Olmert probably doesn't see the beauty. "The cost," Ezrahi says, "is stability."

Some of Olmert's best choices for coalition partners are dovish parties with expensive social agendas. Amir Peretz's Labor Party, which won the second largest bloc of seats, campaigned on a platform of better pay for workers. Other potential partners, like the Sephardic Orthodox Shas party, might choose to support Olmert's goals of further West Bank withdrawals, but only if they get financial handouts and other concessions. Eitan has liabilities of his own. He's been named as an unindicted co-conspirator in the Pollard case, and apparently is in violation of the Helms-Burton Act because of dealings in Cuba, where he befriended Castro and made a small fortune operating citrus plantations. "He can't go to the States," says Haber.

Such inconvenient details haven't dampened spirits at the Pensioners headquarters. "Who cares about America?" asks Elhanan Glazer, 59, the youngest member of the Pensioners' newly elected Knesset bloc. "The people love him here." When the results were announced on giant screens in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square, the Pensioners went wild. "We were just in shock," says Glazer. "We jumped on each other, kissed each other." Volunteers provided refreshments to keep supporters from overheating. "People were excited," says student volunteer Moshe Naveh. "I had to hand out cold water to everyone."

When the euphoria wears off, however, Eitan and the party's other leaders will need

to make some difficult decisions. Eitan has so far been tight-lipped about his views on unilateral disengagement from the occupied territories. He was once a staunch supporter of the settlement movement, but friends hint that he may have had a change of heart--similar to that of his old ally, the comatose Ariel Sharon. Still, the Pensioners already seem to be learning the art of public negotiation. Glazer told NEWSWEEK there's a "list price" for the Pensioners' support: at least two cabinet ministries and two deputies. "We're not making any decisions yet," he says. "Who knows what kind of an animal Kadima will turn out to be?"

The same can be said of the Pensioners. Their support stems partly from a genuine concern for the elderly in Israel, where immigrants often arrive late in life, without much savings. But the party's success was also a trendy protest vote by young lefties disenchanted with traditional politicians. The message, according to Ezrahi: "If I can't vote for any other politician, I might as well vote for my grandmother." Such waves of public sympathy can be ephemeral. The Pensioners Party will "probably disappear before the next election," says Gerald Steinberg, a political-studies professor at Bar-Ilan University. But in the meantime, if Olmert finds himself in a jam, he can probably call on Rafi the Stinker. Eitan's Pensioners are ready to help--for a price.

Feeling Lonely At The Top

Time International

By Tim McGirk, Aaron J. Klein, Jamil Hamad

4/10

In Khartoum for an Arab league summit last week, Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas received hourly dispatches on the vote in the Israel elections. There was no secret about who he wanted to win: Ehud Olmert, leader of the centrist Kadima party, and political heir to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who has lain in a coma since January. Olmert's party did better than any other; but Kadima scooped up just 29 of the 120 seats in the Knesset. Opinion polls before the vote had suggested that it would win nearly 40. "I wish Olmert had more seats," Abbas told his aides. "Now he can't give us anything."

Strong partners are needed to forge a Middle East peace. But neither Abbas nor Olmert, acting Prime Minister and all but certain to continue in that role, fit the bill. As President of the Palestinian Authority, Abbas, a member of Fatah, has to contend with the radical Islamic government of Hamas, which won the Palestinian elections in January. And Olmert must rig up a coalition government with potentially troublesome partners to secure a majority in the Knesset. Until he does that, say advisers, he will not move into Sharon's office. But putting a coalition together is just a start; political observers in Jerusalem say that Olmert's plans to "disengage" with the Palestinians--by pulling out some Jewish settlements from the West Bank and creating permanent borders--are likely to be stalled or re-grooved by his coalition partners.

Olmert will likely align Kadima with Labor (which won 20 seats) and either the Shas party of the Orthodox Sephardic Jews (12 seats) or the right-wing Yisrael Beiteinu (11 seats), a voice for the country's 900,000 Russian immigrants. Several of the smaller fringe parties, such as the Pensioners' Party, may also join the coalition. All these groupings have their own agendas. Labor, for example, says it wants a negotiated peace with the Palestinians. Labor leader Amir Peretz said he is in favor of

dismantling Jewish settlements in the West Bank. But this will cause pain among those of his supporters who remember that earlier Labor governments were responsible for building many of the West Bank settlements, where over 250,000 Jews now live. As Gerald Steinberg, head of the Program on Conflict Management and Negotiation at Bar Ilan University, says, "Disengagement is hindered by Kadima's low results." Shas is against a pullout of settlers, while Beiteinu wants to draw the border so that many Israeli-Arab citizens would be pushed unwillingly into a future Palestinian state.

Notwithstanding its unspectacular performance, Kadima's victory marks a new chapter in Israel's history. Voters have shown themselves willing to sacrifice the ancient dream of a Greater Israel--stretching from the sea to the Jordan River--and to make room for a separate Palestinian state. That is a painful but pragmatic recognition of realities, as Olmert himself admits. A portion of his election-night speech was directed to his fan in Khartoum--Abbas. "We are ready to compromise and give up parts of our land that we love," Olmert said, "where the best of our sons and fighters are buried and, with a heavy heart, to evacuate the Jews who live there in order to allow us to fulfill your dream and live alongside us, in your state, in lasting peace."

For many Israelis, those words were stirring stuff. But they don't seem to have cut much ice with Hamas. Leaders of the Islamic party are incensed by a key facet of Olmert's disengagement plan: If Hamas refuses to accept Israel's right to exist, the Israelis will draw up permanent borders without the Palestinians' consent. "Why should we recognize Israel," Aziz Dweik, a Hamas member and the new speaker of the Palestinian parliament, told TIME, "when Israel won't recognize our existence?" Israel, for its part, will not talk to Hamas until the militants abandon their vow to destroy the Jewish state, renounce terrorism and give up their weapons. Relations between Israel and the Palestinians are at a low: 14 of the new Hamas cabinet ministers took the oath of office last week by videophone because Israel refuses to let Hamas officials travel by road between the West Bank and Gaza. Still, Hamas is observing a 14-month-old cease-fire with Israel, though other Palestinian groups continue to launch attacks. Last week, the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades sent a hitchhiking suicide bomber into the West Bank settlement of Kedumim. His bomb exploded in a car killing himself and four Jewish settlers.

Any withdrawal from the West Bank probably won't start for a year, say Kadima party insiders. Until then, Olmert will try coaxing settlers to leave voluntarily so that he can avoid the ugly eviction scenes of the past year, when ultra-Orthodox squatters hurled stones at Israeli security forces and called them "Nazis." But most of all, Olmert will be waiting to see if Hamas softens its stance towards Israel. It hasn't done so yet.

Is Ehud Olmert Feeling Lucky?

Time

By Romesh Ratnesar

4/17

It's just past 11 on a brilliant Jerusalem morning, and Ehud Olmert is sitting down for breakfast. Olmert lives on a serene block in the city's German Colony, in an airy three-story town house decorated with canvases painted by his wife Aliza. As Olmert

serves cucumber salad and Aliza offers to make omelettes--to go with the smoked salmon, roasted vegetables, olives and cheese--it's easy to forget that the couple across the table is the most powerful in Israel. Easy, that is, until you spot the six-person security detail posted outside the front door. And until Olmert starts talking. "A friend who has known me for 25 years told me that I look so well prepared for the job that it's unbelievable--as if I've prepared for it all my life," Olmert says, slathering eggplant on a piece of pita bread. "And in a way he's right. I know some of the professional experts had other forecasts. But I knew that one day I would become Prime Minister."

Olmert is not a humble man. In a country where leaders typically make their mark on the battlefield, Olmert has distinguished himself more by relentless self-assurance and urbane tastes, which run from Cuban cigars to effulgent designer ties. At 60, he has spent his life in the public eye, first emerging as a young corruption fighter in the Israeli parliament and later serving as mayor of Jerusalem. In 2003, he was appointed Deputy Prime Minister under Ariel Sharon, but few Israelis thought Olmert had much chance to succeed his boss, given Olmert's image as a remote, high-living élitist. As recently as March 2005, just 13% of Israelis in a poll wanted Olmert for their leader. But his prospects began to turn last fall, when Sharon deserted the right-wing Likud Party to form the centrist Kadima. Six weeks later, a stroke put Sharon in a coma, leaving Olmert to take over as acting government head and party leader. In last month's general election, Kadima won more seats in parliament than any other party, cementing Olmert's claim as Prime Minister--and capping a run of political fortune that has left counterparts numb with disbelief and possibly jealousy. "Winning the lottery is easier to contemplate than Ehud ever becoming Prime Minister," says Yossi Sarid, formerly of the left-wing Meretz Party, who has known Olmert for 30 years. "But being lucky is very important. And to be Prime Minister of Israel, you need a little luck."

Olmert needs all the luck he can get. His biggest challenge will be to sustain support for a campaign promise that involves evacuating thousands of Israeli settlers from the West Bank, completing a wall to separate Israel from the Palestinians and establishing new borders--all within four years. Olmert's team calls the idea "convergence": it would amount to the first large-scale uprooting of Israeli citizens from the West Bank since the territory was captured in 1967. Olmert told TIME that he expects the post-convergence map to be "very close to what may be the final borderlines" between Israel and the Palestinians--a notion that outrages Palestinians, since Olmert also says he intends to hold on to the largest Israeli settlements in the West Bank. And the plan could spark further ugly confrontations between the government and settlers. All that turmoil would test the fortitude of an experienced, popular leader like Sharon--let alone a man who, according to a pre-election poll, only 1 in 8 Israelis say they would like to have over for dinner. But those who know Olmert say such opposition only fuels his determination. "Even if it gets tough, he'll keep going," says a former adviser. "He's committed, and he believes in his plan. And I think he believes he can deliver exactly what he has said."

In a two-hour interview last week, Olmert betrayed little uncertainty about the job ahead. "I've been working 33 years to reach this minute," he says. "I am where I'm supposed to be." Olmert is rangy and barrel-chested, with a long, sallow countenance that makes him look as if he is in a constant state of mourning. In person, he exudes a relaxed, backslapping warmth, but even those close to him say he can get prickly. "He always has to have the last word," says Etti Livni, a former Knesset member and close friend. Says Aliza: "He's a hunter. It's hard to win an

argument with him. But how many times can you lose an argument and still be Prime Minister?"

Unlike Sharon, who would conduct freewheeling gabfests with his aides without ever settling on a course of action, Olmert insists on reaching decisions at the end of each meeting. His stamina is honed by daily six-mile runs; someone who has advised both men says that "by 5 a.m. Olmert knows everything, because he has read all the papers on the Internet. I don't think Sharon knew how to turn on a computer." But Olmert shares Sharon's preoccupation with the survival of the Jewish state and an abiding skepticism in the Palestinians' willingness to accept that. "He mistrusts them," says Livni. "I don't think he's optimistic about a dialogue that will lead to an end to the conflict."

Olmert is a scion of the Israeli right, which long subscribed to the vision of creating "Eretz Yisrael," extending from the Mediterranean Sea to the banks of the Jordan River. Olmert's father served in the Knesset in the 1950s as a member of the Herut Party, a forerunner of the right-wing Likud. Ehud studied law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and was elected to the Knesset in 1973 as the youngest Likud member. Olmert launched crusades against corruption in professional soccer and, later, against organized crime. Israelis credit Olmert's generation with bringing transparency to the clubby, Old World atmosphere of Israeli politics. "We changed the rules of play," says Sarid.

But rather than continuing to fight the system, Olmert joined it. In 1977 he opened a private law firm, using his influence to attract wealthy clients. The law practice made him rich--"I don't hate the good life," Olmert says--but his ties to the business community landed him in the middle of numerous scandals, including a case stemming from the 1988 election campaign in which he was accused of conspiring with other Likud officials to skirt campaign-finance restrictions. Though he was acquitted in 1997, Olmert gained a reputation for cynicism. As Jerusalem mayor, he initiated improvements such as a light-rail system but ran up huge deficits and bequeathed the city a legacy of half-finished development projects. In 1996, he pushed for the opening of a tunnel beneath the contested Temple Mount, a move that sparked clashes between police and Palestinians that left 80 dead.

The violence was a harbinger of the second Palestinian intifadeh, during which Jerusalem withstood a regular onslaught of suicide bombings. "I've seen more attacks and more blood than any political leader anyplace," Olmert says. "There were attacks in almost every corner of the city. I've met with dozens of victims. It's something that comes back to me time and time again." Olmert says the experience "re-emphasized the need for separation" from the Palestinians.

That meant throwing support behind the idea of evacuating settlements in the occupied territories, a position long championed by Israeli doves, including Aliza Olmert. She says she voted for her husband's party for the first time last month. "The situation made right-wingers like Ehud realize that sooner or later we had to negotiate, or in the worst case act unilaterally," says Aliza. "And the experience of living with someone like me, with a lefty-oriented position, can be powerful." When Olmert steps away from the table, Aliza says Ehud's frequent absence from home made their five children gravitate toward her views--a claim that Olmert doesn't dispute. "This is an open house," he says. "There wasn't one dominant voice heard here."

In 2003, at Sharon's prodding, Olmert agreed to run again for the Knesset. Though Olmert was only 34th on the Likud's list of candidates, a reflection of his weakness in the party, Sharon made him Deputy Prime Minister. In that role Olmert acted as Sharon's foil, floating trial balloons before Sharon signed on to them--the most notable being the plan to evacuate settlers from the Gaza Strip last year, an idea first proposed by Olmert in a newspaper interview in 2003. But despite Olmert's loyalty, friends say, he never felt accepted by the Israeli leader. Sharon excluded Olmert from high-level meetings at his ranch in the Negev desert; a close ally of Olmert's who asked not to be named says Olmert even talked of quitting the government. Olmert calls Sharon "a hero," but he has stopped paying visits to Sharon in the hospital. "I want to remember him the way he really was, not as an 80-year-old man, lying in bed helpless and unconscious."

Olmert's desire to step out of his predecessor's shadow may have influenced his campaign pledge to initiate a withdrawal from parts of the West Bank by 2010. After the relative success of the Gaza pullout and the rise to power of Hamas in the Palestinian territories, many Israelis have abandoned faith in peace negotiations with the Palestinians in favor of unilateral moves. But withdrawing from the West Bank, which is home to 230,000 settlers, may prove more wrenching than it was in Gaza. "Sharon never meant to go as far as Olmert is proposing," says Natan Sharansky, a former Cabinet member who left Sharon's government to protest the Gaza pullout. "But this is Olmert's unique chance to prove his leadership."

It won't be the only one. The Hamas-run Palestinian government said last week it will be unable to pay the salaries of 140,000 Palestinians this month without an immediate infusion of aid. Olmert has refused to turn over \$50 million in tax revenues Israel collects on behalf of the Palestinians and has ruled out negotiations with the government unless Hamas renounces terrorism and recognizes Israel. But the prospect of a humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories may force Israel to soften its position on Hamas. Olmert told TIME he is meeting with aides "to see what we can do" to assist the Palestinians through nongovernmental organizations without giving money to Hamas. And Olmert might still face U.S. resistance to his plan to evacuate some West Bank settlements if it looks as if he is trying to retain bigger ones and draw Israel's final borders in the process--which Palestinian leaders such as President Mahmoud Abbas say would leave a future Palestinian state in pieces. "He and the President need to sit down, and we need to understand what his vision is," says a senior Administration official. "At that point, we'll be able to make judgments about what that means for us."

And what will it mean for Israel? As Aliza clears the food, Olmert outlines his ambition to find an end to the long struggle with the Palestinians--even if that means, after years of failed negotiations, that Israel ends the struggle on its own. The goal "is to come to a point where we are back where we belong, we have secured our existence, and it's time for us to be like other countries, living in peace," he says. "If God wanted me to be here, he wanted me to be here for this." With that, Olmert gets up from the table and goes back to work.

To read more of the interview with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, go to time.com

"Winning the lottery is easier to contemplate than Ehud becoming Prime Minister," says Yossi Sarid.

'We Are Ready to Change'

Newsweek

By Lally Weymouth

4/17

Against the advice of his campaign managers, Ehud Olmert made a daring move. In the midst of the recent election campaign, he decided to tell Israeli voters that, if elected, he and his Kadima Party would pull Israeli settlers out of most of the West Bank. The decision may have cost him some support. But Kadima still won more votes than any other party, and Olmert is now putting together a governing coalition. He has one rule: those who join must agree with him on "convergence"--or withdrawal from much of the occupied territories. Last week, in his first interview with a foreign publication since the election, Olmert sketched out his plans for NEWSWEEK's Lally Weymouth. Excerpts:

WEYMOUTH: You are forming your governing coalition.

OLMERT: The Labor Party is going to be a senior partner, but we will [also] have a few more parties in the government.

Will [Avigdor] Lieberman [leader of the right-wing party Yisrael Beiteinu] join?

Lieberman will most likely be a member of the coalition government.

And Shas?

And Shas, yes.

So you will have a very broad coalition?

I hope so, yes. I think it would be good to try and form a national consensus. [But] I declared before the elections what my plans are [for withdrawing from the territories] in a most explicit manner.

I heard your advisers warned you not to do this.

I was aware of the possibility that it would cost me some votes, but I also knew that once I had made this statement and managed to win, I would have a greater mandate to act. And I certainly intend now to go ahead and not waste time.

What do you mean by "convergence" as distinct from withdrawal?

The idea is that most of the settlements that would have to be removed ... will be converged into the blocs of settlements that will remain under Israeli control.

You're talking about [moving settlers to] Maale Adumim?

The blocs of settlements which include Maale Adumim, the Etzion bloc and Ariel will be augmented by more settlements. The rest of the territories will not have any Israeli presence and will allow territorial contiguity for a future Palestinian state.

Will the Army stay behind?

I will keep all the military options to be able to combat terrorism effectively everywhere.

Is the [separation] fence the basis of the border that you're thinking about?

The fence will have to be adjusted to the makeup of these blocs of settlements. No Israeli will live outside the fence--firstly for the sake of security, and secondly for providing territorial congruity for the Palestinians. The time has come for a change, and I am absolutely determined to accomplish it. It's been discussed and debated and argued in Israel for decades. I think that there is an opportunity now which never existed before. This is a combination of the position of the public opinion of Israel, my commitment and the understanding and, hopefully, future support of President George W. Bush.

Would you want some kind of U.S. recognition of the borders [you set unilaterally]?

I will seek such recognition, yes.

Do you expect some kind of a new alliance or new defensive pact from the United States?

I understand that if this move will be accepted as a contribution to a Middle East with less violence and terror, we will be able to reach an understanding with the American government about some measures of support that can be essential for the success of this move.

Financial, military or both?

Everything that could be of assistance to the completion of such a huge challenge will be on the agenda.

You said you will give bilateral talks with the Palestinians a chance.

I will.

How much time will you give the new Palestinian government?

I'm not expressing any ultimatum. If we reach the conclusion that the Palestinians are not prepared to meet the requirements that lead to negotiations, we will then move forward without a negotiating process. We are ready to change. We are not prepared to wait forever.

Regarding the Iranian nuclear program, is there a military option?

There is only one thing I can say: Israel will not tolerate a situation in which Iran has effective control of nonconventional weapons that can be used directly against the state of Israel.

What did you learn from Ariel Sharon?

Perhaps the most important thing is the importance of remaining cool at a time of

crisis. I also learned from Sharon the merits of changing your opinions and your mind.

IRAQ

Saddam's Delusions

Foreign Affairs

By Kevin Woods, James Lacey, and Williamson Murray

May/June 2006

EDITOR'S NOTE: The fall of Baghdad in April 2003 opened one of the most secretive and brutal governments in history to outside scrutiny. For the first time since the end of World War II, American analysts did not have to guess what had happened on the other side of a conflict but could actually read the defeated enemy's documents and interrogate its leading figures. To make the most of this unique opportunity, the U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) commissioned a comprehensive study of the inner workings and behavior of Saddam Hussein's regime based on previously inaccessible primary sources. Drawing on interviews with dozens of captured senior Iraqi military and political leaders and hundreds of thousands of official Iraqi documents (hundreds of them fully translated), this two-year project has changed our understanding of the war from the ground up. The study was partially declassified in late February; its key findings are presented here.

STRATEGIC CALCULUS

Throughout the years of relative external peace for Iraq after Operation Desert Storm, in 1991, Saddam Hussein continued to receive and give credence to optimistic assessments of his regime's prospects dished up by his top military officers. Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz described the dictator as having been "very confident" that the United States would not dare to attack Iraq, and that if it did, it would be defeated. What was the source of Saddam's confidence?

Judging from his private statements, the single most important element in Saddam's strategic calculus was his faith that France and Russia would prevent an invasion by the United States. According to Aziz, Saddam's confidence was firmly rooted in his belief in the nexus between the economic interests of France and Russia and his own strategic goals: "France and Russia each secured millions of dollars worth of trade and service contracts in Iraq, with the implied understanding that their political posture with regard to sanctions on Iraq would be pro-Iraqi. In addition, the French wanted sanctions lifted to safeguard their trade and service contracts in Iraq. Moreover, they wanted to prove their importance in the world as members of the Security Council -- that they could use their veto to show they still had power." Ibrahim Ahmad Abd al-Sattar, the Iraqi army and armed forces chief of staff, claimed that Saddam believed that even if his international supporters failed him and the United States did launch a ground invasion, Washington would rapidly bow to international pressure to halt the war. According to his personal interpreter, Saddam also thought his "superior" forces would put up "a heroic resistance and . . . inflict such enormous losses on the Americans that they would stop their advance." Saddam remained convinced that, in his own words, "Iraq will not, in any way, be like Afghanistan. We will not let the war become a picnic for the American or the British soldiers. No way!"

When the coalition assault did come, Saddam stubbornly clung to the belief that the Americans would be satisfied with an outcome short of regime change. According to Sattar, "No Iraqi leaders had believed coalition forces would ever reach Baghdad." Saddam's conviction that his regime would survive the war was the primary reason he did not have his forces torch Iraq's oil fields or open the dams to flood the south, moves many analysts predicted would be among Iraq's first in the event of an invasion. In the words of Aziz, "[Saddam] thought that this war would not lead to this ending." Saddam realized that if his strategic calculus was correct, he would need the oil to prop up the regime. Even with U.S. tanks crossing the Iraqi border, an internal revolt remained Saddam's biggest fear. In order to quell any postwar revolt, he would need the bridges to remain intact and the land in the south to remain unflooded. On this basis, Saddam planned his moves.

Some senior Iraqi military officers did not share their leader's assumptions, taking a more pessimistic view. The director of military intelligence, Zuhayr Talib Abd al-Sattar al-Naqib, commented that except for Saddam and the inner circle, most knowledgeable Iraqis secretly believed that the war would continue all the way to an occupation. The commander of the First Republican Guard Corps admitted, "There was nothing that could have been done to stop the Americans after they began." Sultan Hashim Ahmad al-Tai, the minister of defense, recalled that "Iraqi military professionals were not surprised at U.S. actions at all. We knew what preparations were required, and what would happen if those preparations were not done properly. . . . Even if we had a real defense, we wouldn't have stopped the Americans, but we would have made the price exaggerated."

As late as the end of March 2003, Saddam apparently still believed that the war was going the way he had expected. If Iraq was not actually winning it, neither was it losing -- or at least so it seemed to the dictator. Americans may have listened with amusement to the seemingly obvious fabrications of Muhammad Said al-Sahaf, Iraq's information minister (nicknamed "Baghdad Bob" by the media). But the evidence now clearly shows that Saddam and those around him believed virtually every word issued by their own propaganda machine.

For example, during the first ten days of the war, Iraq asked Russia, France, and China not to support cease-fire initiatives because Saddam believed such moves would legitimize the coalition's presence in Iraq. As late as March 30, Saddam thought that his strategy was working and that the coalition offensive was grinding to a halt. On that day, Lieutenant General Abed Hamid Mahmoud, Saddam's principal secretary, directed the Iraqi foreign minister to tell the French and Russian governments that Baghdad would accept only an "unconditional withdrawal" of U.S. forces because "Iraq is now winning and . . . the United States has sunk in the mud of defeat." At that moment, U.S. tanks were a hundred miles south of Baghdad, refueling and rearming for the final push.

MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS

By 2003, the Iraqi military was reeling from 13 years of almost continuous engagement with U.S. and British air forces, the accumulating effects of sanctions, and the insidious impact of the regime's dysfunctional policies. These pressures had all helped drive the Iraqi military into a state of chronic decline. The Iraqi military's main mission was to ensure the internal security of the Baathist dictatorship. Concerned about everything except fighting wars, the Iraqi military, which had once

aspired to a Western-like profession of arms, became focused on militarily irrelevant -- but nonetheless life-and-death -- issues.

The best example of this focus is the prewar condition of the Iraqi air force, which did not launch a single sortie against the coalition during the invasion. According to the commander of Iraq's air force and air defense force, Hamid Raja Shalah, Saddam simply decided two months before the war that the air force would not participate. Apparently, Saddam reasoned that the quality and quantity of the Iraqi air force's equipment would make it worse than useless against coalition air forces. Consequently, he decided to save the air force for future needs and ordered his commanders to hide their aircraft. This decision was yet another indication that Saddam did not believe coalition ground forces would ever reach into the heart of Iraq. He was sure his regime would survive whatever conflict ensued.

To implement Saddam's decision to preserve the air force, the Iraqis moved most of their aircraft away from operational airfields. To hide them from prowling coalition air forces, they camouflaged planes in palm groves or buried them in the sand, from which coalition forces dug them up after the war. Saddam's refusal to use the Iraqi air force is reminiscent of his behavior during Desert Storm, when he ordered a significant portion of the air force to flee to Iran. In 2003, Saddam ruled out Iranian sanctuary, telling aides, "The Iranians are even stronger than before; they now have [part of] our air force." Even with his regime under dire threat, Saddam's thoughts were never far from the regional power balance.

When it came to weapons of mass destruction (WMD), Saddam attempted to convince one audience that they were gone while simultaneously convincing another that Iraq still had them. Coming clean about WMD and using full compliance with inspections to escape from sanctions would have been his best course of action for the long run. Saddam, however, found it impossible to abandon the illusion of having WMD, especially since it played so well in the Arab world.

Ali Hassan al-Majid, known as "Chemical Ali" for his use of chemical weapons on Kurdish civilians in 1987, was convinced Iraq no longer possessed WMD but claims that many within Iraq's ruling circle never stopped believing that the weapons still existed. Even at the highest echelons of the regime, when it came to WMD there was always some element of doubt about the truth. According to Chemical Ali, Saddam was asked about the weapons during a meeting with members of the Revolutionary Command Council. He replied that Iraq did not have WMD but flatly rejected a suggestion that the regime remove all doubts to the contrary, going on to explain that such a declaration might encourage the Israelis to attack. [See Footnote #1 below]

By late 2002, Saddam finally tilted toward trying to persuade the international community that Iraq was cooperating with the inspectors of UNSCOM (the UN Special Commission) and that it no longer had WMD programs. As 2002 drew to a close, his regime worked hard to counter anything that might be seen as supporting the coalition's assertion that WMD still remained in Iraq. Saddam was insistent that Iraq would give full access to UN inspectors "in order not to give President Bush any excuses to start a war." But after years of purposeful obfuscation, it was difficult to convince anyone that Iraq was not once again being economical with the truth.

Ironically, it now appears that some of the actions resulting from Saddam's new policy of cooperation actually helped solidify the coalition's case for war. Over the

years, Western intelligence services had obtained many internal Iraqi communications, among them a 1996 memorandum from the director of the Iraqi Intelligence Service directing all subordinates to "insure that there is no equipment, materials, research, studies, or books related to manufacturing of the prohibited weapons (chemical, biological, nuclear, and missiles) in your site." And when UN inspectors went to these research and storage locations, they inevitably discovered lingering evidence of WMD-related programs.

In 2002, therefore, when the United States intercepted a message between two Iraqi Republican Guard Corps commanders discussing the removal of the words "nerve agents" from "the wireless instructions," or learned of instructions to "search the area surrounding the headquarters camp and [the unit] for any chemical agents, make sure the area is free of chemical containers, and write a report on it," U.S. analysts viewed this information through the prism of a decade of prior deceit. They had no way of knowing that this time the information reflected the regime's attempt to ensure it was in compliance with UN resolutions.

What was meant to prevent suspicion thus ended up heightening it. The tidbit about removing the term "nerve agents" from radio instructions was prominently cited as an example of Iraqi bad faith by U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell in his February 5, 2003, statement to the UN.

Another factor reduced Iraq's military effectiveness: sanctions. For more than a dozen years, UN sanctions had frayed the fiber of the Iraqi military by making it difficult for Baghdad to purchase new equipment, procure spare parts, or fund adequate training. Attempts to overcome the effects of the sanctions led Saddam to create the Military Industrial Commission as a means to sustain the military. The commission and a series of subordinate organizations steadily promised new capabilities to offset the effects of poor training, poor morale, and neglected equipment. Saddam apparently waited for the delivery of wonder weapons that would reverse the erosion of his military strength.

A captured Military Industrial Commission annual report of investments made in 2002³ showed more than 170 research projects with an estimated budget of about 1.5 percent of Iraq's gdp. The commission divided projects among areas such as equipment, engineering, missiles, electronics, strategic weapons, artillery, and air forces. One senior Iraqi official alleged that the commission's leaders were so fearful of Saddam that when he ordered them to initiate weapons programs that they knew Iraq could not develop, they told him they could accomplish the projects with ease. Later, when Saddam asked for updates on the nonexistent projects, they simply faked plans and designs to show progress.

This constant stream of false reporting undoubtedly accounts for why many of Saddam's calculations on operational, strategic, and political issues made perfect sense to him. According to Aziz, "The people in the Military Industrial Commission were liars. They lied to you, and they lied to Saddam. They were always saying that they were producing or procuring special weapons so that they could get favors out of Saddam -- money, cars, everything -- but they were liars. If they did all of this business and brought in all of these secret weapons, why didn't [the weapons] work?"

Members of the Military Industrial Commission were not the only liars. Bending the truth was particularly common among the most trusted members of Saddam's inner

circle -- especially when negative news might reflect poorly on the teller's abilities or reputation. According to one former high-ranking Baath Party official, "Saddam had an idea about Iraq's conventional and potential unconventional capabilities, but never an accurate one because of the extensive lying occurring in that area. Many reports were falsified. The ministers attempted to convey a positive perspective with reports, which were forwarded to Saddam's secretary, who in turn passed them up to Saddam." In the years before Operation Iraqi Freedom, everyone around Saddam understood that his need to hear only good news was constantly growing and that it was in their best interest to feed that hunger.

A 1982 incident vividly illustrated the danger of telling Saddam what he did not want to hear. At one low point during the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam asked his ministers for candid advice. With some temerity, the minister of health, Riyadh Ibrahim, suggested that Saddam temporarily step down and resume the presidency after peace was established. Saddam had him carted away immediately. The next day, pieces of the minister's chopped-up body were delivered to his wife. According to Abd al-Tawab Mullah Huwaysh, the head of the Military Industrial Commission and a relative of the murdered minister, "This powerfully concentrated the attention of the other ministers, who were unanimous in their insistence that Saddam remain in power."

Within the Iraqi military and the Iraqi regime more generally, rumors circulated that summary execution awaited anyone who dared contradict the dictator. Officers remembered the story of the brigadier general who once spent over a year in prison for daring to suggest that U.S. tanks might be superior to those of the Iraqi army. One senior minister noted, "Directly disagreeing with Saddam Hussein's ideas was unforgivable. It would be suicide." Nor was Saddam alone in his distaste for bad news. According to Major General Hamid Ismail Dawish al-Rubai, the director general of the Republican Guard's general staff, "Any commander who spoke the truth to [Saddam's son] Qusay would lose his head."

Fear of Saddam's reaction to bad news was not limited to his ministers and soldiers. Its pernicious effects reached even into Saddam's immediate family. One former high-level official related the following story about Qusay:

At the end of 2000, it came to Saddam's attention that approximately seventy military vehicles were immobile. Saddam told Qusay to resolve the problem. Republican Guard mechanics claimed they could repair the vehicles if the funds were made available. Qusay agreed to the work, and funds were provided for the task. Once the work was completed, Qusay sent a representative to inspect the vehicles and he found them lined up on a vehicle park, thirty-five vehicles on each side. The vehicles looked like new, having been freshly painted and cleaned.

After Qusay's representative inspected them, a second inspection was conducted to verify that they were now operational. The staff was told to supply drivers to move all [the] vehicles to the opposite side of the vehicle park to ensure they were in working order. None of the seventy vehicles would start. When this was reported to Qusay, he instructed that Saddam not be informed, as Qusay had already told Saddam that the vehicles were operational.

In the end, Qusay did not order mechanics to fix the vehicles -- it appears that he was eager only to hide this failure from his father.

Besides outright lying, there were further impediments to the flow of information within the regime. One was the requirement to embellish even the simplest message with praise for Saddam, as evidenced by the minister of defense's memo following a training exercise called Golden Falcon:

In reference to your Excellency's instructions regarding the large exercises at the Public Center, having strong faith in the only God of our hearts, and God's permanent support to the believers, the faithful, the steadfast, and with great love that we have for our great homeland and our Great Leader, our Great Leader has won God's favor and the love of his dear people in the day of the grand homage. Your enthusiastic soldiers from our courageous armed forces have executed Golden Falcon Exercise number 11. In this exercise we have tested our readiness and confrontation plans against any who attempt to make impure the lands of civilization and the homeland of missions and prophets. This exercise is the widest and most successful in achieving the required results. Soldiers from the III and IV Corps have participated in this exercise.

There is no indication that the two corps actually conducted any significant exercise during this period.

This kind of bureaucratic embellishment extended to every level of military organization. While this type of flowery language is not unknown in the region, it was taken to such extremes in Iraq that it often replaced all substance in reports and orders. For example, a March 9, 2003, instruction from the Imam al Hussein Brigade to one of its combat groups read, "The Third Group, al Quds Army . . . and other formations attached to it are fighting valiantly, placing their trust in God Almighty, until the end that He prescribes, which God willing will be the enemy's defeat and his withdrawal, and a victory for us that will please our friends and grieve our enemies." After the war, several of the more capable military commanders commonly noted four other factors that seriously affected military readiness: the mostly irrelevant military guidance passed from the political leadership to the lowest level of military operations, the creation of "popular" militias, the tendency of Saddam's relatives and sycophants to rise to the top national security positions, and the combined effects of the onerous security apparatus and the resulting limitations on military authority. Many senior Iraqi military officers blamed this "coup-proofing" of the regime for most of what befell the Iraqi army during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

IRRELEVANT GUIDANCE

A close associate once described Saddam as a deep thinker who lay awake at night pondering problems at length before inspiration came to him in dreams. These dreams became dictates the next morning, and invariably all those around Saddam would praise his great intuition. Questioning his dictates brought great personal risk. Often, the dictator would make a show of consulting small groups of family members and longtime advisers, although his record even here is erratic. All of the evidence demonstrates that he made his most fateful decisions in isolation. He decided to invade Iran, for example, without any consultation with his advisers and while he was visiting a vacation resort. He made the equally fateful decision to invade Kuwait after discussing it with only his son-in-law.

In a wide-ranging discussion with his closest advisers in the fall of 1990, Saddam provided an insight into his "unique" abilities:

"America is a complicated country. Understanding it requires a politician's alertness that is beyond the intelligence community. Actually, I forbade the intelligence outfits from deducing from press and political analysis anything about America. I told them that [this] was not their specialty, because these organizations, when they are unable to find hard facts, start deducing from newspapers, which is what I already know. I said I don't want either intelligence organization [the Iraqi Intelligence Service or the General Military Intelligence Directorate] to give me analysis -- that is my specialty. . . . We agree to continue on that basis . . . which is what I used with the Iranians, some of it out of deduction and some of it through invention and connecting the dots, all without having hard evidence".

After 1991, Saddam's confidence in his military commanders steadily eroded, while his confidence in his own abilities as a military genius strengthened. Like a number of other despots in history who dabbled in military affairs, Saddam began to issue a seemingly endless stream of banal instructions. He could not resist giving detailed training guidance.

Dozens of surviving memoranda echo the style and content of a 2002 top-secret document titled "Training Guidance to the Republican Guard." These documents all hint at the kind of guidance military officers received from Saddam on a regular basis. One chapter of the "training guidance" document, called "Notes and Directions Given by Saddam Hussein to His Elite Soldiers to Cover the Tactics of War," charged officers to do the following: "Train in a way that allows you to defeat your enemy; train all units' members in swimming; train your soldiers to climb palm trees so that they may use these places for navigation and sniper shooting; and train on smart weapons."

In the aftermath of the 1991 war, the Iraqi military made extensive efforts to "learn" from its experiences during Desert Storm. These attempts were hampered by Saddam's conviction that his ground forces had performed well in the fighting. This certainty forced officers compiling Iraqi lessons-learned analyses to avoid issues that might involve Saddam's prestige or question the Iraqi forces' fighting abilities. Instead, they focused on peripheral issues that were almost totally irrelevant to winning wars. These restrictions led to some perverse claims, such as that the Republican Guard had actually performed well in the war by avoiding annihilation: "If it were not for these precautions, we would have suffered great loss, but when we compare our losses with the large number of fighter aircraft, missiles, and artillery bombing that the Iraqi army was subject to we find these losses trifling. That proved that the Republican Guards and the armed forces managed to reduce the danger from air strikes." Such briefings drove home the point that Iraq had done well in Desert Storm (at least on the issues that mattered most to the regime). In a short time, the constant praise for Iraq's tactics during the war -- digging deep bunkers and dispersing and hiding the Iraqi army -- made them into de facto operational doctrine.

Little evidence exists that any of the politicized Iraqi generals understood the advantages in maneuverability, speed, command and control, or training that the U.S. forces enjoyed. By the time the military was ready to brief Saddam on the lessons of the Persian Gulf War, however, they did fully understand the danger of presenting him with claims other than those he already believed. Truthful analyses therefore gave way to belittlement of the U.S. victory and denials that the United States had any advantage over Iraq other than in military technology. One comment made by an Iraqi general during a mid-1990s conference was typical: "After the

liberation of our land in Kuwait, and despite the fact that more than 30 countries headed by the occupation forces of the U.S. rushed madly upon our Republican Guard, our performance was heroic."

THE RISE OF PARAMILITARY FORCES

It is hard to overestimate the effects that the Shiite and Kurdish uprisings of 1991 had on Saddam's outlook. After that point, the threat of another uprising consistently remained his top security concern. One of the precautions he took to prevent and, if necessary, quell a future disturbance was to create private armies made up of politically reliable troops: the Saddam Fedayeen, the al Quds Army, and the Baath Party militia. Ironically, these organizations actually worsened national security by making army recruitment more difficult and by stripping the military of needed equipment. And when they eventually went to battle against the onrushing coalition forces, they were obliterated in short order.

Most Western analysts have argued that Saddam created these militias to help defend Iraq from external attack. Documents obtained after Operation Iraqi Freedom, however, indicate that the original and primary purpose of the paramilitary forces had little to do with protecting Iraq from invasion. The militias were indeed charged with that task -- but only later on, after Saddam became fascinated with the success of the Palestinian intifadas and with the U.S. experience in Somalia. The original and primary purpose of the paramilitary groups was to defend Iraq from internal enemies, not external ones.

The al Quds Army ("al Quds" is Arabic for "Jerusalem") was a regional militia created to control particular areas of Iraq and crush as rapidly as possible any disturbance that occurred. The best evidence suggests that close to 500,000 Iraqis joined the al Quds force, albeit with widely varying degrees of commitment. As to its value as a military force in times of war, the minister of defense best expressed the view of his colleagues when he said, "The Quds force was a headache, they had no equipment for a serious war, and their creation was a bad idea. The Ministry of Defense was required to give them weapons that were taken from the real army. But the army had no control of them. Their instructions came only from the president's office and not from normal military channels."

According to another senior Iraqi general, the al Quds Army was not a serious combat force: "It never had anything to do with the liberation of Jerusalem or fighting the Zionists, and was merely another organ of regime protection." Nonetheless, once the war began, Saddam's flattery machine cranked out boasts, half-truths, and outright lies about the abilities and performance of the al Quds force. Saddam fully expected the militia's members to fight like lions and to bleed the Americans dry, and no one was courageous enough to tell him when they failed to do so. Reports such as this one, from a public release by the Iraqi army's general command, were typical: "A hostile force backed by jet fighters and helicopters attempted to approach the outskirts of the al Muthanna Governate. Our unrivaled men of the al Quds Army confronted it and forced it to stop and then retreat. They inflicted on it huge human and equipment losses. This included the destruction of seven vehicles of various types. Congratulations to the al Quds Army on its absolute victory over the allies of the wicked Zionists." That this event never happened as described was immaterial to the Baathist command. The reality that Saddam's inner circle refused to tell him was that the al Quds force started dissolving as soon as U.S.

tanks approached. By the time coalition forces arrived at many of the militia's defensive positions, Saddam's vaunted warriors had vanished.

Whereas the al Quds Army was a part-time territorial defense force meant for use in times of crisis, the Saddam Fedayeen was a permanent force tasked with a number of state security missions. Before the war, coalition planners believed that the Saddam Fedayeen was a paramilitary group with wide-ranging missions including counterinsurgency, domestic direct action, and surveillance. They also understood that it would serve as a backup to the regular army and the al Quds Army in case of a local uprising. Such assessments were generally correct but somewhat out of focus.

It is now clear that Saddam created the Fedayeen in October 1994 in reaction to the Shiite and Kurdish uprisings of March 1991. Those revolts had revealed the potentially fatal flaws in Saddam's internal security apparatus: the local Baath Party organs were not capable of putting down uprisings without external support, the Iraqi armed forces were unable or unwilling to suppress rebellions with sufficient speed and ruthlessness, and the tribes of Iraq still represented a significant threat to Baghdad's control, even after more than 25 years of pan-Arabic socialist indoctrination. The fanatically loyal Saddam Fedayeen was created to remedy such problems and ensure that any future revolt would be rapidly crushed.

According to Saddam Fedayeen planning documents captured by the coalition, the mission of this militia was to protect Iraq "from any threats inside and outside." Meticulous Saddam Fedayeen records list numerous operations conducted in the decade after the militia's creation: "extermination operations" against saboteurs in Muthanna, an operation to "ambush and arrest" car thieves in Anbar, the monitoring of Shiite civilians at the holy places of Karbala, and a plan to bomb a humanitarian-aid outpost in Erbil, which the Iraqi secret police suspected of being a Western intelligence operation.

The Saddam Fedayeen also took part in the regime's domestic terrorism operations and planned for attacks throughout Europe and the Middle East. In a document dated May 1999, Saddam's older son, Uday, ordered preparations for "special operations, assassinations, and bombings, for the centers and traitor symbols in London, Iran and the self-ruled areas [Kurdistan]." Preparations for "Blessed July," a regime-directed wave of "martyrdom" operations against targets in the West, were well under way at the time of the coalition invasion.

In a typical Iraqi pattern, corruption soon worked its way into the Saddam Fedayeen. Despite enjoying regular showers of cash, on-the-spot bonuses for successful missions, educational benefits, military privileges if injured, martyr privileges if killed, and free land just for volunteering, a number of Saddam Fedayeen paramilitaries still joined the growing underground economy. In 2001, reports surfaced that members of the organization were smuggling weapons to the Saudi border, where they sold them for cash, and were establishing roadblocks in order to shake down travelers.

These failures of discipline elicited a harsh response from the regime. Punishments of errant militiamen included having one's hands amputated for theft, being tossed off a tower for sodomy, being whipped a hundred times for sexual harassment, having one's tongue cut out for lying, and being stoned for various other infractions. It was

only a matter of time before military failure also became punishable as a criminal offense.

In typical Iraqi bureaucratic fashion, a table of specific failures and their punishments was created and approved. In 1998, the secretariat of the Saddam Fedayeen issued the following "regulations for when an execution order against the commanders of the various Fedayeen" units should be carried out:

Any section commander will be executed, if his section is defeated; any platoon commander will be executed, if two of his sections are defeated; any company commander will be executed, if two of his platoons are defeated; any regiment commander will be executed, if two of his companies are defeated; any area commander will be executed, if his Governate is defeated; any Saddam Fedayeen fighter, including commanders, will be executed, if he hesitates in completing his duties, cooperates with the enemy, gives up his weapons, or hides any information concerning the security of the state.

No wonder that members of the Saddam Fedayeen often proved to be Iraq's most fanatical fighters during the 2003 war. On numerous occasions, Fedayeen forces hurled themselves against the coalition's armored columns as they rushed past the southern cities of Samawah, Najaf, and Karbala, and they even tried to block the coalition from entering Baghdad itself -- long after the Republican Guard had mostly quit the field. In the years preceding the coalition invasion, Iraq's leaders had become enamored of the belief that the spirit of the Fedayeen's "Arab warriors" would allow them to overcome the Americans' advantages. In the end, however, the Fedayeen fighters proved totally unprepared for the kind of war they were asked to fight, and they died by the thousands.

RELATIVES AND SYCOPHANTS

Saddam truly trusted only one person: himself. As a result, he concentrated more and more power in his own hands. No single man could do everything, however; forced to enlist the help of others to handle operational details, Saddam used a remarkable set of hiring criteria. As one senior Iraqi leader noted, Saddam selected the "uneducated, untalented, and those who posed no threat to his leadership for key roles." Always wary of a potential coup, Saddam remained reluctant to entrust military authority to anyone too far removed from his family or tribe.

Western observers may have considered the Republican Guard to be a bulwark of the regime, but Saddam saw it as the military force best positioned to overthrow him. As a result, in 2001 he placed Qusay at its head, making his youngest son the commander of Iraq's most elite combat units -- even though Qusay's military experience was limited to a short stint at the Iranian front in 1984, where he had experienced little if any real combat. The minister of defense described the situation this way: "My working for Qusay Hussein was a mistake; Qusay knew nothing -- he understood only simple military things like a civilian. We prepared information and advice for him and he'd accept it or not. As the ultimate commander of the Republican Guard, Qusay could take advice from professional military officers in the Ministry of Defense and the Republican Guard or ignore it to make decisions." Qusay had the final say on significant military decisions unless Saddam himself chose to intervene. Qusay's purview included such fundamental matters as what key terrain to defend and, during the war, when and how to shift Iraq's remaining forces.

Several senior officers privately questioned many of his decisions, but few were willing to do so in an open forum.

After the war, senior military officers constantly remarked on Qusay's lack of military knowledge and his unwillingness to take their "good" advice. But even these flaws were not sufficient to explain everything that went wrong. The evidence shows that many of Qusay's advisers were also unqualified, while those who were qualified often kept silent even when given an opportunity to speak.

Major General Barzan Abd al-Ghafur Sulayman Majid, commander of the Special Republican Guard, was fairly representative. Before the war, coalition planners generally assumed that the quality of Iraqi military officers improved as one moved up the military hierarchy, from the militias to the regular army, to the Republican Guard, and then to the Special Republican Guard. It stood to reason that the commander of the Special Republican Guard -- Iraq's most elite fighting force -- would be highly competent and loyal. In fact, after the war, Barzan's peers and colleagues were all openly derisive of his abilities. Saddam had selected Barzan, one general noted, because Barzan had several qualities that Saddam held dear. "He was Saddam's cousin, but he had two other important qualities which made him the best man for the job," this general said. "First, he was not intelligent enough to represent a threat to the regime, and second, he was not brave enough to participate in anyone else's plots."

Barzan himself was well aware of the tenuous nature of his position. In an interview after the war, he described his appointment: "I was called to Baghdad from holiday and told that I would be taking command of the Special Republican Guard. I was on a probationary status for the first six months. I was ordered by Saddam to take the command; I had no choice. I was sick at the idea of being the Special Republican Guard commander. It was the most dangerous job in the regime." This general, the man who was to command the last stand of Saddam's most impressive military forces, spent most of the war hiding.

General Tai, the minister of defense, was a striking exception to this rule. Here, by all accounts, was a competent military commander. His elevation to minister of defense apparently changed him, however.

The specific reasons for his change are no doubt complex, but his actions during the meetings and planning conferences prior to the coalition invasion suggest an explanation. In one telling event during the final planning, he remained silent when more junior officers voiced concerns over Saddam's new plan for the defense of Iraq. As one corps commander who was there later noted, "Some of the senior military leaders present only competed to please Saddam. The Minister of Defense was an honorable man but he gave up his strategic vision in order to keep Saddam's favor." At the end of 2002, Saddam once again asserted himself, putting into place his own operational concept for Iraq's defense -- a concept that would ultimately hasten the destruction of the Iraqi armed forces. On December 18, the chief of staff of the Republican Guard gathered his commanders together and told them of the new plan. It was both original and bold -- and totally impractical. In a postwar interview, the commander of the Second Republican Guard Corps told how the new plan was announced:

The Republican Guard chief of staff called all the commanders to meet at the Republican Guard Command Center. When I asked why, I was told that they had a

new plan for the defense of Baghdad. I thought to myself that we were supposed to be defending all of Iraq, not just Baghdad. When we got there, we found that Qusay Hussein was also present.

The Republican Guard chief of staff briefed us in front of a large wall map that covered just the central portion of Iraq. The map showed Baghdad in the center with four rings. Every ring had a color. The center ring was red. Approximately ten kilometers out from the red ring was a blue ring. Then approximately seven kilometers out from that one was a black ring. Finally, the last circle was marked in yellow, which was designated for reconnaissance forces only. The Republican Guard chief of staff explained the plan in a very crude and ugly way. Things like "the Republican Guard Hammurabi Division defends in the north of the city, the Republican Guard Medina Division in the south, the Republican Guard al Nida Division in the east, and special forces and the Special Republican Guard in the west." When the Americans arrived at the first ring, on the order from Saddam, the forces would conduct a simultaneous withdrawal. The units would then repeat this "procedure" until reaching the red circle. Once in the red circle, the remaining units would fight to the death.

With this incredible simplicity and stupidity, the assembled Republican Guard officers were told that this was the plan for the defense of our country. Qusay said that the plan was already approved by Saddam and "it was you who would now make it work." I disagreed and told Qusay that a proud army with an 82-year history cannot fight like this. We were not using our experience. I was told by Qusay that there would be no changes because Saddam had signed the plan already.

Compared to previous defense arrangements drawn up by professional military staffs, this new plan was amateurish. It paid no attention to basic military factors, such as geography, nor did it explain how all the units would be able to retreat simultaneously from one ring to the next while being engaged on the ground and assaulted from the air. Even after Qusay and the Republican Guard's chief of staff briefed their officers on the concept, the senior military leadership did little to arrange for it to be implemented. For Saddam, issuing a decree was considered enough to make the plan work.

SECURITY AND COMMAND LIMITATIONS

While most of Iraq's senior military leaders fell prey to the corrupting influences of the regime's inner circle, other factors combined to undermine the effectiveness of subordinate leaders and units. The commander of the Baghdad Division of the Republican Guard provided an example of how hard it was to function: "In the Republican Guard, division and corps commanders could not make decisions without the approval of the staff command. Division commanders could only move small elements within their command. Major movements such as brigade-sized elements and higher had to be requested through the corps commander to the staff command. This process did not change during the war and in fact became more centralized."

Every senior commander interviewed after hostilities emphasized the psychological costs of being forced to constantly look over his shoulder. At any one time, each of these military commanders had to contend with at least five major security organizations, including the Special Security Office, the Iraqi Intelligence Service, the General Military Intelligence Directorate, and various security service offices within the Republican Guard bureaucracy. Moreover, the number of security personnel in

each of these organizations increased dramatically after 1991. In many cases, new spies were sent to units to report on the spies already there.

The Second Republican Guard Corps commander described the influence of the internal security environment on a typical corps-level staff meeting:

"First a meeting would be announced and all the corps-level staff, the subordinate division commanders, and selected staff, as well as supporting or attached organizations and their staffs, would assemble at the corps headquarters. The corps commander had to ensure then that all the spies were in the room before the meeting began so that there would not be any suspicions in Baghdad as to my purpose. This kind of attention to my own internal security was required. I spent considerable time finding clever ways to invite even the spies I was not supposed to know about".

The target of all of this internal spying, the corps commander, was forced to coordinate the surreptitious activities of the various persons spying on him. If he accidentally excluded any of these spies from a "secret" meeting, it could provoke intense, quite possibly dangerous, suspicion in Baghdad.

Such a lack of trust had a direct effect not only on the ability of commanders to lead their units, but also on the ability of units to take advantage of their knowledge of the ground to prepare optimal defenses. In many cases, staff officers in Baghdad who had never visited particular areas still were the ones who gave precise deployment directions for even the smallest units.

The commander of the Second Republican Guard Corps echoed the problems described by the commander of the Baghdad Division: "I had to ask for permission from the Republican Guard staff in Baghdad to move brigade-size units and was still doing so up until April 2 and 3 [2003]." By then, coalition forces were making their final drive toward Baghdad.

Not quite every commander had to endure such restrictions. Leaders of the al Nida Division, for example -- an armored division of the Republican Guard -- enjoyed unusual liberty. Tasked with defending Baghdad's eastern approaches against possible attacks from Iran, the al Nida Division was considered by both Iraqi and coalition intelligence organizations to be the best of the best. According to the division's chief of staff, its materiel readiness was the best in the Iraqi military, and its commander planned and conducted training virtually independent of any higher authority. Such autonomy was unheard of elsewhere, including in al Nida's sister unit, the Baghdad Division. When asked in a postwar interview to explain the disparity between the authority he exercised and that exercised by other divisional commanders, al Nida's commander answered in an incredulous tone, "I am a Tikriti [from Saddam's hometown] and other commanders were not."

Yet constant surveillance was the rule. As one officer explained,

"All phones in the Republican Guard office were monitored and all meetings were recorded. High-ranking officers were subjected to constant technical monitoring and surveillance in and out of their homes. The Republican Guard Security Office monitored all aspects of senior Republican Guard officers' lives, including their financial affairs and diet. Republican Guard Security Office personnel even questioned the guards at senior officers' houses to see what they could learn about

the officers' lifestyles. The Special Security Office knew how many times I went to the bathroom. Republican Guard commanders were not trusted to conduct any movement or even so much as start a tank without permission. Requesting retirement was impossible because the regime would assume one opposed them politically, and one would be arrested and jailed".

There were two common reactions to the pervasive security apparatus. The first was to work through the fog of suspicion and maintain as open a process as possible, while still attempting to command a military unit on the brink of war. Operating in this manner often required extreme precautions. The commander of the Second Republican Guard Corps, for instance, held most of his private meetings in the walled garden of a private home where he could be relatively sure that the regime's spies could not eavesdrop on him. The second reaction, more common among senior leaders, was to avoid any actions, activities, or circumstances that might invite suspicion from the various "eyes" of the regime.

The net effect of such reactions was that corps-level operational command and control disappeared from the battlefield. The restrictions imposed on Iraq's officers during peacetime and the general atmosphere of fear made it impossible to coordinate action during war. By consistently sacrificing military effectiveness for the supposedly more important needs of internal security, the regime effectively neutered its military, which ultimately proved incapable of standing up to the disciplined and competent coalition forces.

LAST DAYS

In the end, Saddam determined that the most important factor for military success lay in the spirit of the warrior. Saddam considered instilling ideological commitment to the Baathist cause to be the best way to prepare Iraq's soldiers for war. Saddam told his officers that Allah wanted to insult the United States by giving his strongest personal abilities to the materially weak Iraqis. Because Saddam perceived the Baathist spirit of the Iraqi warrior to be far superior to anything American soldiers were capable of bringing to the battlefield, he overlooked the many factors eroding the foundation of his military's effectiveness.

The conclusion of an Iraqi training manual sums up the regime's attitude. "Military power," it reads, is measured by the period in which difficulties become severe, calamities increase, choices multiply, and the world gets dark and nothing remains except the bright light of belief and ideological determination. . . . If [a soldier] ignores [his] values, principles, and ideals, all military foundations [will] collapse. He will be defeated, shamed, and [his] military honor will remain in the same place together with the booty taken by the enemy. The President, the Leader Saddam Hussein asks, "Would men allow for their military honor to be taken by the enemy as booty from the battle?"

Iraq's was not the first army to place "spirit" over the reality of firepower and steel, and it is unlikely to be the last.

Much of the debate on the origins of the postwar insurgency in Iraq has centered on the question of whether Saddam's regime placed munitions around the country to support a future guerrilla war against an external foe. There is no significant documentary evidence to suggest it did so. Rather, what is clear is that the regime

ordered the distribution of ammunition in order to preserve it for a prolonged war with coalition forces.

As far as can be determined from the interviews and records reviewed so far, there was no national plan to embark on a guerrilla war in the event of a military defeat. Nor did the regime appear to cobble together such a plan as its world crumbled around it. Buoyed by his earlier conviction that the Americans would never dare enter Baghdad, Saddam hoped to the very last minute that he could stay in power. And his military and civilian bureaucrats went through their daily routines until the very end.

Only slowly did Saddam and those around him finally seem to realize that they were suffering a catastrophic military defeat. In the regime's final days, the only decisive actions those at the top seemed capable of were attempts to stem the flow of bad news. For instance, a Ministry of Defense memorandum dated April 6 told subordinate units, "We are doing great," and reminded all staff officers to "avoid exaggerating the enemy's abilities." By that point, Iraq's military forces had already collapsed or were collapsing. Coalition attacks had destroyed almost all of the corps and division headquarters, and the few that remained had been rendered ineffective by the furious pace of the U.S. advance. Although some isolated Iraqi units continued to fight, they were no longer connected to a coherent military organization.

According to Deputy Prime Minister Aziz, by then even Saddam had finally accepted that the end was near. On that day, he called a meeting of the Iraqi leadership at a house in central Baghdad. During the meeting, according to Aziz, Saddam's tone was that of a man "who had lost his will to resist" and "knew the regime was coming to an end." Later that day, Saddam traveled to another safe house a few miles away (he changed locations every three to six hours). There he met with his personal secretary, his two sons, the minister of defense, and the chiefs of staff of the al Quds Army, the Republican Guard, and the Saddam Fedayeen. It was almost midnight, and according to those present, the combination of some accurate battlefield reports and Western satellite news broadcasts had finally made it impossible to ignore their dire predicament.

Yet Saddam began giving orders to deploy and maneuver formations that had ceased to exist. His attention focused on plans to have the Republican Guard enter Baghdad and join with the Saddam Fedayeen in "preparing" for urban warfare. Late the next day, Saddam met again with his closest advisers and, according to a participant, accepted that "the army divisions were no longer capable of defending Baghdad, and that he would have a meeting with the Baath Regional Commanders to enlist them in the final defense of the regime." A subsequent meeting on the same day produced an unexecuted plan to divide Baghdad into four quadrants. Saddam placed loyal Baath Party stalwarts in command of each sector and charged them with defending the city to their last drops of blood.

By the time Saddam spoke to his military staff, however, a U.S. armored brigade had already captured Baghdad's airport. As he discussed the plan for the final defense of the city, another brigade of U.S. armor was busily chewing up the manicured lawn in front of his central palace.

--Kevin Woods is a defense analyst in Washington, D.C. James Lacey is a military analyst for the U.S. Joint Forces Command. Williamson Murray is Class of 1957

Distinguished Visiting Professor of History at the U.S. Naval Academy. Along with Mark Stout and Michael Pease, they were the principal participants in the USJFCOM Iraqi Perspectives Project.

Paying Attention

National Review

By Bill Crawford

4/10

On the third anniversary of the liberation of Iraq, there is no denying that the political situation there is dicey. A coalition government hasn't been formed, and a large reason for this is a lack of leadership on the part of Prime Minister Jaafari, who is refusing to resign. Nevertheless, there are stories of hope and progress everyday, and they continue to be largely ignored by the mainstream media.

It's striking that even the Kurdish Media sees bias in the mainstream media: The media in the U.S. and throughout the world has criticized the way the U.S. is handling the war in Iraq. They have published numerous articles that have heavily criticized US actions.

However, they fail to communicate the "good things" that are happening in Iraq. Nearly 2,000 educational institutions have been rehabilitated with USAID funding, unemployment has dropped considerably, and more hospitals are being built in the rural areas. How about some examples? According to Reuters, here is all that happened in Iraq Thursday: BAQUBA - Eight people were wounded, including six civilians, when a roadside bomb targeting a police patrol exploded in central Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

KIRKUK - One traffic policeman was shot dead on Wednesday night in Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, a police source said.

KIKRUK - Police said they found the beheaded body of a man in Kirkuk on Wednesday. The man was a member of the Kurdish militia, the Peshmarga. And according to ABC News, here is all that happened on the same day, in addition to ten deaths after a bomb blast: Roadside bombs targeted police and army patrols in Baghdad and Baqouba, killing at least two Iraqi forces and wounding 18 people, including civilians.

A roadside bomb targeted a U.S. patrol in Ramadi Thursday, according to the U.S. military. No casualties were reported.

Gunmen in three cars ambushed five Shiite truck drivers on their way to the capital from the town of Mahawil, killing all of them and stealing their trucks. Police discovered a headless body they believe belonged to a Kurdish man kidnapped the previous night in the northern city of Kirkuk.

Police found four corpses of men in their 20s, handcuffed and blindfolded, in Baghdad's southern Dora district. Reporting on the other six days of this week were much the same. Here is something they didn't report: In the Kurdish north, eight more mass graves were uncovered with the remains of 1,000 Iraqis.

I mentioned the Brookings Institute's Iraq Index last week in regards to the number of fatalities of U.S. troops, but I want to point out a few other facts from the report. One of the Left's favorite mantras against our winning peace in Iraq is that those that are doing the fighting and dying are largely poor, uneducated minorities. The facts show otherwise. As of February 4, the fatalities by ethnic groups are as follows: White 1,654, Hispanic 248, and Black 231. Moreover, they are more likely to be from the suburbs than the inner city: 40.5 percent versus 26.2 percent. Our mission in Iraq is an American one.

Iraq received the new Italian ambassador this week. His country has allocated 200 million Euros to the reconstruction of Iraq. The projects will focus on providing potable water and power plants.

In related news, a power plant opened just south of Basra. More than 500 Iraqis were employed in the \$128 million project, which adds 5 percent to the country's electrical output: The Khor Az Zubayr plant will generate a substantial amount of power which will be transmitted and distributed across the country. Additional electric projects are ongoing. Although electricity is not at levels expected by U.S. residents, most Iraqi families are now getting more electricity than ever before; some for the first time ever. Air Rafidayn will soon begin flights between three Iraqi cities and the Chinese city of Guangzhou. These will be the first direct flights to China since the first Gulf War.

On Monday the third annual Rebuild Iraq Expo will open in Jordan. Companies from 32 countries will be there to take advantage of the enormous opportunities in Iraq: The minister highlighted the role of the private sector and the benefits it can reap from the rebuilding of Iraq and the exchange of expertise and information with the international companies.

The Sweetwater Canal near Basra is undergoing renovations. When the project is completed it will provide cleaner water to 2.5 million Iraqis. The canal has experienced problems with leakage, bank collapse, breaches and other structural problems; according to USACE, many of these problems were emergency repairs under the contract just completed.

The project included a geotechnical survey, pump assessment, head and sluice gate repairs, trash rack refurbishment, sediment removal, engine hydraulics and electronics overhauls, emergency canal repairs, operations training, design for permanent power for Pump Station Two and a computer system to track operations and maintenance. Opportunities for women continue to be the focus for the Gulf Regional Division. A conference held in Baghdad gave more than 250 Iraqi business women the chance to learn how to receive government contracts and a chance to network with their counterparts: According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers GRD, many speakers spoke of how proud they were to be working with the Iraqi business women, gave tips on how to build their businesses and how to build their network of business contacts. Japan has agreed to build a \$119 million power plant for the city of Samawa. The first of three power plants for the province of 200,000 should be completed in under two years. Japan also agreed to provide \$300 million to help modernize the country's largest sea port at Umm Qasr. Renovations on the Tikrit courthouse are complete: The electrical renovation included new wiring and fixtures throughout the old building; bringing it to a standard which will support modern computer and electronic technology. A newly constructed annex building adds capacity to the facility and provides for a more efficient work flow. Included in

the new annex is a reception area, restrooms and office spaces that will improve the functionality of the courthouse. On the third anniversary of the invasion, troops who have returned to Iraq three years later have noticed the progress being made: "One of the biggest differences in Baghdad, and throughout Iraq... is that the Iraqi military is doing really well, and they're taking over more pieces of the mission," said Army Sgt. Maj. Linda Allen. "The second biggest difference that I see [between now and three years ago] is the infrastructure issue." The troops that spoke also said that the media and politicians need to have patience with the mission in Iraq.

U.S. and Iraqi troops conducted a free medical clinic for the residents of Tarmiya. The town's leader expressed his thanks: "Great things are happening here! This plan was put out in the Qada meeting," said Sheik Saeed Jassim Hameed Al-Mashadani, the Qada leader. "I have a good feeling (about the medical operation) today because the people get free medical attention."

"We have a good relationship with coalition forces," added Jassim. 375 patients were seen in clinic.

Iraq elected a beauty queen: Tamar Goregian, 23, the first Armenian Iraqi to win the pageant, was officially elected the "Iraqi Queen of Beauty." Nine contestants, including five Muslim girls, already withdrew days before the event, fearing after impacts for participating in a "taboo" competition. Eleven contestants remained.

Aside from queen of beauty, the audience also elected a teen queen and a queen of grace. Life goes on.

In security news, Major General James Thurman told the Pentagon press corps that Iraqi security forces have proven that they are capable of protecting the Iraqi people. In Baghdad and the surrounding area, Iraqi security forces now outnumber coalition forces, and are increasingly taking the lead in operations. Thurman also said that the Iraqi people are proud of Iraq's security forces, and tips on criminal and terrorist activity continue to increase: "The Iraqi people further demonstrate their growing trust and confidence by the use of the national tip hotline," added Thurman. "Over 3,000 tips have been received, and more than 2,500 of those tips have led to successful operations."

Thurman said terrorists are failing. "Iraqi and Coalition forces continue to disrupt multiple terrorist cells that indiscriminately attack civilians, Iraqi security forces and the Coalition."

A Marine general says the military can sustain current troop level in Iraq indefinitely, contradicting the claims of many opponents of the war that Iraq is "breaking" the military.

The two-week long Operation Cowpens ended this week. The operation resulted in the seizure of a significant amount of weapons and explosives: Coalition forces have captured two dozen rifles, more than 10,000 rounds of ammunition and nearly three dozen rocket-propelled grenade launchers. Artillery and mortar rounds have also been plenty in the recovered items.

Soldiers on the scene estimated that enough explosive material has been found, along detonation cord and signaling devices, to rig up more than 300 improvised explosive devices. These roadside bombs have been an ongoing challenge to Soldiers

in Bradley- Fighting Vehicles and in Humvees.

"We've put a stop to a lot of the IED making," said Sgt. Daniel Reinhardt, a team leader from Broadview, Mont. "The more we're out here, the more we stuff we bring out, the less the bad guys are here.

In Tikrit, four large weapon caches were uncovered during a joint U.S.-Iraqi operation. The caches included 27,000 rounds of ammo, four surface-to-air missiles, 118 artillery shells, as well as other assorted munitions. Seventeen suspects were detained.

Near Balad, an attack was repelled by an Iraqi-army unit, which returned fire after three gunmen attacked it. The attackers were later killed after firing on U.S. soldiers who arrived as backup.

In a combined U.S.-Iraqi operation, 99 rocket propelled grenades were captured.

In Yusifiyah, nine terrorist were detained, and one killed, in an operation by coalition forces.

A large weapons cache was uncovered in Balad: The find includes more than 2,000 rounds of 7.62 ammunition, 337 60 mm mortar rounds, six 82 mm mortar rounds, two 60 mm mortar tubes, two mortar tripods (one of which had a base), one 125 mm projectile, one barrel of gun powder and 31 assorted munitions.

Near Hamaniyah, coalition forces killed eight terrorists in a raid. The operation also uncovered weapons, ammunition, and false identification documents.

This weekend a joint U.S.-Iraqi operation led to the capture of two terror-cell leaders, and 60 other terrorists.

This story is the kind that really warms my heart. Two terrorists in Baqubah were killed when the bomb they were making went off prematurely.

A top aid to Zarqawi was captured by the U.S. military. He was involved in the kidnapping of Italian Guiliani Sgrena: Iraqi forces had captured Muhammad al-Ubaydi, a former senior intelligence official under the regime of Saddam Hussein and also a top aide to the al-Qaida leader in Iraq Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the U.S. military said in a statement.

The statement also said that al-Ubaydi, who headed the Secret Islamic Army, was captured by Iraqi forces in southern Baghdad on March 7.

The U.S. military said that al-Ubaydi was the prime suspect in the abduction of Italian journalist Guiliana Sgrena in February 2005, who was released a month later.

Al-Ubaydi was also responsible for assassination attempts against Iraqi officials and some other kidnappings, the statement added, without revealing further details.

His arrest was a serious defeat for the terrorists in Iraq: Officials believe Abu Ayman's capture will not only disrupt some of these attacks, and that his capture will undoubtedly save lives, but that he will also provide valuable information leading to the capture of other terrorists he has worked with in the past.

Acting on tips from local Iraqis, three hostages were rescued by U.S. and Iraqi forces in Mosul. The hostages were found chained to the wall of a basement.

The Iraqi army has assumed control of the province of Salah Eddin. The province is a stronghold for terrorists and ex-Baathists.

How about some stories of real American heroes?

Capt. Frank Diorio was awarded the Bronze Star for action in Iraq: On April 11, insurgents launched an attack against the firm base using small arms fire, rocket propelled grenades and three suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices.

For several hours, the enemy continued the well-organized assault with intense, sporadic firefights that continued for the next three days.

Diorio's quick reactions, concise orders and sound decisions enabled his company to repel the enemy attack while inflicting a high number of casualties.

No Marines from the company were killed during the attack.

Senior Airman Daniel Acosta II was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart for his actions in Iraq. He was injured while disarming an IED: Acosta was serving as an explosive ordnance disposal technician Dec. 7 with a team assigned to investigate a crater for explosive devices. Acosta discovered and detonated one device, but another one exploded. Acosta lost an arm.

This week, the 1st Cavalry Division will be dedicating a memorial to its soldiers killed in Iraq. The monument will honor the 168 soldiers from the division who lost their lives in Iraq.

Two Marines with the 1st Marine Division were awarded the Bronze Star for action under fire: [Russel] also discovered that a Marine low on ammunition was isolated by the attack.

Russel then raced across approximately 75 meters of open terrain while under fire from at least six insurgents with Cyparski close by.

An enemy round struck Russel in the helmet, knocking him to the ground with a concussion.

The two Marines managed to get the ammunition to the isolated Marine with Russel bleeding profusely from wounds to his face and arms.

They then rushed back to direct the fight and establish accountability. Finding two men missing, the two Marines rushed across the open area again to retrieve a wounded Iraqi soldier despite explosions from more than twelve enemy grenades and a stream of machine gun and small-arms fire.

An Army Reservist killed in Iraq was awarded the Silver Star: Witkowski was firing a .50-caliber machine gun mounted on a Humvee that was providing cover for a convoy when an improvised explosive device entered the vehicle. Witkowski threw his body, covering the IED as it exploded and killed him, in an act which saved the

lives of others.

The good news continues--maybe you'll start seeing it from more venues soon.

--Bill Crawford lives in San Antonio, Texas. He blogs at All Things Conservative.

The Threat Saddam Posed

National Review

By James Lacey

4/10

For almost three years, the anti-war protesters have kept up the drumbeat: "Bush lied and people died." Because weapons of mass destruction (WMD) were not found in Iraq, an endless stream of commentators continues to declare that Saddam Hussein was not the serious threat the administration claimed him to be. The critics usually go even further, and assert that sanctions and the destruction of WMD facilities by U.N. investigators had done so much damage to WMD infrastructure that it would have taken Saddam years to rebuild it even to a minimal capacity.

But these claims ignore huge amounts of contrary evidence; and most of this evidence can be found in the final report of the Iraqi Survey Group (ISG) -- the very same report that many critics hold up as proof positive that Iraq was not a WMD threat. The evidence found by the ISG (an investigative commission set up by the Bush administration after the invasion of Iraq) confirms that Saddam was preparing to rapidly reconstitute his WMD program the moment he broke out of sanctions, which -- given the frayed state of the coalition against him -- would inevitably have happened. Not only did Bush not "lie"; the critics themselves are guilty of selectively citing evidence and of ignoring facts inconvenient to their argument. The ISG report, as well as the other evidence that continues to come to light, demonstrates that Saddam couldn't be trusted with the apparatus of a modern state, which he would have turned quickly back to producing WMD as soon as circumstances allowed.

Consider just one datum: According to the report, Saddam had the capability to start anthrax production within one week of making the decision to do so, and thereafter to produce over ten tons of weaponized anthrax a year. If even 1 percent of that amount -- 200 pounds -- were released into the air over Washington, D.C., Congress's Office of Technology Assessment estimates that up to 3 million people would die.

How did Saddam keep such a massive capability from being discovered by the inspectors? Simply by hiding it in plain sight. For instance, at a facility called al-Hakam, Dr. Rihab Rashid Taha al-Azawi maintained a production line that produced ten tons of biopesticides for agricultural use each year. These biopesticides were produced in powder form and milled to 1 to 10 microns in size -- but bio agents milled this finely are absolutely useless for agricultural purposes. Farmers found the biopesticide Dr. Rihab was sending them almost impossible to use, as it had to be hand-dropped one plant at a time or it would disappear. When they followed her recommendation to mix it with water and spray it, all they got was a thick slurry that clogged spray nozzles.

Though such finely milled powder may be useless for agricultural work, it is the

perfect size for an inhalation bioweapon. (To be effective, anthrax must be milled at less than 10 microns.) Experts estimate that weaponized-anthrax spores that infect the skin will kill 50 percent of untreated patients; inhaled anthrax will kill 100 percent of untreated victims and 50 percent of those receiving immediate treatment. Simulations prior to Desert Storm estimated that an anthrax attack would kill over 25 percent of Coalition forces, as many as 200,000 men. In the hands of terrorists, this would be a weapon of incalculable value.

Dr. Rihab, the supposed agricultural scientist, is better known to U.S. intelligence agencies as "Dr. Germ," the head of Saddam's biological-warfare program for most of the decade immediately preceding the invasion. A 1999 Defense Intelligence Agency report called her the most dangerous woman in the world, and others have testified that she used political prisoners to test her bioweapons when she began to doubt she was getting accurate data from infected donkeys and dogs. When questioned by U.N. inspectors about al-Hakam, she claimed it was a chicken-feed plant. (Charles Duelfer, deputy executive chairman for the U.N. inspection team, later told reporters, "There were a few things that were peculiar about this animal-feed production plant, beginning with the extensive air defenses surrounding it.") According to the 1999 DIA report, the normally mild-mannered Rihab exploded into violent rages when questioned about al-Hakam, shouting, screaming, and, on one occasion, storming out of the room, before returning and smashing a chair.

In 1995, the U.N. inspectors showed Rihab documents obtained from the Israelis that demonstrated that Iraq had purchased ten tons of growth media from a British company called Oxoid. Shown this evidence, Rihab admitted to the inspectors that she had grown 19,000 liters of botulism toxin; 8,000 liters of anthrax; 2,000 liters of aflatoxins, which can cause liver cancer; *Clostridium perfringens*, a bacterium that can cause gas gangrene; and ricin, a castor-bean derivative that can kill by impeding circulation. She also admitted conducting research into cholera, salmonella, foot-and-mouth disease, and camel pox. Neither the U.N. nor later inspectors were able to certify that all of this lethal cornucopia was ever destroyed.

In fact, in a document declassified just recently, there are indications that these deadly organisms -- and the infrastructure to create them -- were not destroyed. According to this document, persons at the highest levels of the regime were convinced that Iraq had eliminated its entire biological-weapons program: In a mid-1990s conference of Saddam's Revolutionary Command Council, Iraqi deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz told Saddam Hussein that he expected to resolve all biological issues with U.N. inspectors very quickly, because the program no longer existed. But Aziz was immediately contradicted by Saddam's son-in-law, who reminded Saddam that not everything had been disclosed, not even to supposedly trusted members of the regime's inner circle:

Some teams work and no one knows of them. Sir, they [U.N. investigators] do not know all of the methods or all of the means nor all of the scientists nor all of the places. Frankly, yes, some activities were discovered . . . Sir, what they have discovered in the biological file is the least and most insignificant concern. The 17 tons [the amount of biological growth medium imported into Iraq] are not the problem, but the thousands of tons we have not accounted for or told how they were produced or how they were used . . . Sir, I would like to go back to this subject [biological weapons]: Do we have to reveal everything? If we continued with the silence and if the meeting took this line, I must say that it is in our interest not to reveal anything. It is clear from the remainder of this transcript -- a document

captured by U.S. forces -- that Tariq Aziz is both startled and angry to discover that Saddam has been keeping him in the dark about continuing WMD programs even as he tries to convince U.N. inspectors that no such programs still exist. It was not until Saddam's son-in-law defected in August 1995 that the U.N. was alerted to the fact that Iraq's biological program was far greater than they believed. But by this time Saddam was close to throwing the inspectors out -- before they could uncover and dismantle the program in its entirety.

The ISG report goes out of its way to understate its WMD findings, but the underlying facts are duly alarming. For instance, the report goes on at great length about Iraq's attempts to import super-high-quality aluminum tubes in 2001-2003. At the time, this was cited by Western intelligence agencies as evidence that Saddam was trying to reconstitute his WMD program. The agencies claimed that the tubes were intended to be used to build centrifuges for nuclear enrichment. The Iraqis maintained, however, that the tubes were for 81mm rockets and had nothing to do with WMD. The ISG report accepts this explanation, even though it notes that Iraq was producing 50 lower-quality tubes a day for its 81mm rockets, and had no need for the expensive higher-quality imported tubes. The report also states that an Iraqi general, Husam Muhammad Amin, became worried about repeated attempts to purchase aluminum tubes that were subject to U.N. nuclear controls and took his concerns to Abdullah Mullah al-Huwaysh (deputy prime minister and head of the Military Industrial Commission). Nonetheless, Iraq persisted in its attempts to purchase the high-grade aluminum tubes and a contract was still being negotiated as Coalition tanks rolled into Baghdad.

MOBILE DEATH FACTORIES The ISG report dedicates an entire annex -- 20 pages of exhaustive analysis -- to proving that the two suspected mobile bio-labs were not what Secretary of State Colin Powell claimed they were, before the U.N., in the run-up to war. But the report gives the discovery of Iraq's actual mobile bioweapons labs only a little over one page of attention.

After the 1995 defection of Saddam's son-in-law forced Iraq to admit to an extensive bioweapons program that it had been hiding, U.N. inspectors made an effort to eliminate it. But Saddam was not ready to give up all he had gained, and large portions of the bioweapons research program were continued in small mobile labs by a band of key scientists and technicians under the auspices of the Iraqi Intelligence Service. The ISG report says its investigators were unsure if any of this continuing bioweapons research was military-related. (No one ever bothered to ask the investigators if there was any other conceivable purpose for bioweapons.)

The ISG found evidence that at least five mobile bioweapons research labs were operating in Baghdad right up to the commencement of the Coalition invasion. At one site, which building residents claimed was a biological lab, investigators found chemicals, along with documents from lab employees asking for hazardous-duty pay for having to work with biological materials. Another lab, discovered in a Baghdad mosque, was filled with equipment belonging to a known bioweapons scientist. Still another clandestine lab was identified by the ISG team at the Baghdad Central Public Health Laboratory, which employees admitted was operated by the Intelligence Service for several years prior to 2003.

According to the ISG report, Samarra Drug Industries had tanks available for bio-agent production ranging from 100 to 10,000 liters that could have begun bioweapons production three to four weeks after the order was given. Just one of

these 10,000-liter tanks, if filled with botulinum toxin, would be enough to wipe out the global population more than twice over.

And it could be worse: Even a thimbleful of smallpox germs would kill tens of millions. If smallpox were released by terrorists in the United States, where inoculations ceased in 1972, the result would be a disaster of almost unimaginable magnitude. With some estimates claiming that each infected person can infect between 10 and 17 others, the smallpox germ is the bioweapon of choice for terrorists. Given Saddam's close links to terror groups it would have been sheer folly to allow his regime to possess even the smallest capability to produce the germ.

The report states that the ISG found evidence that Iraq had in fact obtained smallpox cultures from the former Soviet Union in 1992. An Iraqi scientist also described for the ISG Iraq's efforts to develop smallpox for biological warfare by using eggs and viral cultures. ISG investigators visited two labs where they found equipment that appeared to be used for making animal vaccines, but "this dual-use equipment was assessed to be easily diverted to produce smallpox or other pathogenic viruses." The ISG also visited a location where animal pox vaccines were produced in tissue culture; its assessment was that this equipment could be used for the rapid production of large amounts of smallpox virus.

The ISG report states in bold font that investigators "uncovered no evidence to support smallpox R&D at ASVI [Al-Amiriyah Serum and Vaccine] Institute for possible use as an offensive BW agent." Since this was the only facility in Iraq previously known to be associated with smallpox, the ISG's declaration that no bio-warfare research was being conducted there would seem to give the institute a clear bill of health. But the report also says that Dr. Rihab (a.k.a. Dr. Germ) made frequent visits to the institute to conduct unidentified biological-warfare research, and that the institute maintained a "small capability" for organic production; it needs to be stressed that when it comes to smallpox, you need only a very small amount to cause a catastrophic amount of damage.

A TYRANT'S DESIGNS In summary, then, what the Iraqi Survey Group discovered was that Saddam was maintaining a biological-warfare research program right up to the Coalition invasion, and that he had the installed capability to produce bio-toxins. Would he have used them? An amazing conversation between Saddam and his inner circle was recorded in a captured but undated Iraqi document.

SADDAM: I want to make sure that -- close the door please (door slams) -- the germ and chemical warheads, as well as the chemical and germ bombs, are available to [those concerned], so that in case we ordered an attack, they can do it without missing any of their targets?

HUSAYN KAMIL: Sir, if you'll allow me. Some of the chemicals now are distributed, this is according to the last report from the Minister of Defense, which was submitted to you, Sir. Chemical warheads are stored and are ready at Air Bases, and they know how and when to deal with, as well as arm these heads. Also, some other artillery machines and rockets (missiles) are available from the army. While some of the empty "stuff" is available for us, our position is very good, and we don't have any operational problems. Moreover, in the past, many substantial items and material were imported; now, we were able to establish a local project, which was established to comply with daily production. Also, another bigger project will be finalized within a month, as well as a third project in the coming two to three months that will keep us

on the safe side, in terms of supply. We, Sir, only deal in common materials like phosphorus, ethyl alcohol, and methyl (interrupted) . . .

SADDAM: What is it doing with you, I need these germs to be fixed on the missiles, and tell him to hit, because starting the 15th, everyone should be ready for the action to happen at anytime, and I consider Riyadh as a target . . .

HUSAYN KAMIL: (door slams) Sir, we have three types of germ weapons, but we have to decide which one we should use, some types stay capable for many years (interrupted).

SADDAM: We want the long term, the many years kind . . .

HUSAYN KAMIL: . . . There has to be a decision about which method of attack we use; a missile, a fighter bomb, or a fighter plane.

SADDAM: With them all, all the methods . . . I want as soon as possible, if we are not transferring the weapons, to issue a clear order to [those concerned] that the weapon should be in their hands as soon as possible. I might even give them a "non-return access." [Translator Comment: to have access to the weapons; to take them with them and not to return them.] I will give them an order stating that at "one moment," if I'm not there and you don't hear my voice, you will hear somebody else's voice, so you can receive the order from him, and then you can go attack your targets. I want the weapons to be distributed to targets; I want Riyadh and Jeddah, which are the biggest Saudi cities with all the decision makers, and the Saudi rulers live there. This is for the germ and chemical weapons . . . Also, all the Israeli cities, all of them. Of course you should concentrate on Tel Aviv, since it is their center.

HUSAYN KAMIL: Sir, the best way to transport this weapon and achieve the most harmful effects would come by using planes, like a crop plane; to scatter it. This is, Sir, a thousand times more harmful. This is according to the analyses of the technicians (interrupted) . . .

SADDAM: May God help us do it . . . We will never lower our heads as long as we are alive, even if we have to destroy everybody. And while biological weapons may have been the most dangerous near-term threat that Saddam could pose to the world, other WMD programs were also being fostered. As Oil for Food money began to fill his coffers, Saddam was restarting chemical-warfare, ballistic-missile, and even nuclear programs. After Desert Storm, Saddam encouraged Iraqi officials to, in his words, "preserve the nation's scientific brain trust essential for WMD." He told his close advisers that he wanted to keep Iraq's nuclear scientists fully employed, and this theme of preserving personnel resources persisted throughout the sanctions period. According to his science adviser, Ja'far Diya' Ja'far Hashim, "Saddam's primary concern was retaining cadres of skilled scientists to facilitate reconstitution of WMD programs after sanctions were lifted." Saddam instructed the general directors of Iraqi state companies to prevent key scientists from the pre-1991 WMD program from leaving the country. Saddam, as quoted by his presidential secretary, Abid Hamid Mahmud, also told scientists that they should "preserve plans in their minds" and "keep the brains of Iraq's scientists fresh."

Husayn Kamil -- Saddam's son-in-law and minister of military industrialization -- announced in a speech in 1995, to a large audience of WMD scientists at the Space Research Center in Baghdad, that WMD programs would be resumed and expanded

as soon as U.N. inspectors left Iraq. Clearly, Saddam viewed inspectors and sanctions as little more than a temporary obstacle. In a written statement to the ISG, Saddam's presidential secretary stated that "if sanctions were lifted and there was no U.N. monitoring, then it was possible for Saddam to continue WMD activities and in my estimation it would have been done in total secrecy because he [Saddam] had learned from 1991."

HOW IMMINENT A THREAT? The question remains as to how long it would have taken Saddam to reconstitute WMD programs once he had escaped the sanctions regime. We have already seen the answer, in the case of bioweapons: a matter of weeks. For the rest of his programs, estimates vary. Tariq Aziz said recently that "Saddam would have restarted his WMD programs, beginning with the nuclear program, after sanctions." Aziz estimated that Iraq would have a full WMD capability two years after sanctions ended. Saddam's minister of military industrialization, Abdullah Mullah al-Huwaysh, told the ISG that Saddam would have reconstituted all of the proscribed programs within five years: This would have included having a sizeable nuclear inventory on hand for immediate use. Huwaysh also stated that in response to a Saddam inquiry regarding how long it would take to start mass production of chemical weapons, he told the dictator that mustard-gas production could start within six months, but Sarin and VX would take a bit longer. Other WMD scientists claimed they had the materials and equipment to start mustard production in days, though such a fast start could damage the production equipment. By 2002, Iraq was already purchasing the precursor chemicals for the production of Sarin.

The ISG report quotes one senior official as stating that by successfully targeting scientists from Russia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, China, and several other countries, and coupling them with resident know-how, Saddam ensured that he could rebuild his entire WMD program within two years.

After 1991, Iraq's own resident WMD scientists were moved from government labs into universities: There they could carry out their work without fear of being targeted by Coalition aircraft or much bothered by U.N. inspectors. According to the ISG report, "Saddam used the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research through its universities to maintain, develop, and acquire expertise, to advance or preserve existent research projects and developments, and to procure goods prohibited by U.N. sanctions." By 1997, the number of university instructors working on WMD-related projects increased from a handful to 3,300, while a further 700-800 were sent to WMD-related companies on a regular basis to help with technical problems.

As the billions in Oil for Food cash flowed in, Saddam "began investing his growing reserves of hard currency in his military-industrial complex, increasing access to dual-use items and materials, and creating numerous research and development programs." Between 1996 and 2002, the annual budget for the military-industrialization ministry -- which was responsible for WMD development -- increased over forty-fold; by the time the Coalition invaded, it had grown to 1 trillion Iraqi dinars. The military "technical research" projects at Iraqi universities had skyrocketed from about 40 projects in 1997 to 3,200; and the military-industrialization workforce had expanded by over 50 percent in just three years. Saddam's WMD program was ready to move into overdrive. Financial salvation led Saddam to start thinking again about nuclear weapons. In 1999 he met with his senior nuclear scientists and offered to provide them with whatever they needed, and immediately thereafter new funds began to flow to the Iraqi Atomic Energy

Commission (IAEC). In 2001, Saddam mandated a large budget increase for the IAEC and increased the salaries of nuclear scientists tenfold. He also directed the head of the IAEC to keep nuclear scientists together, and instituted new privileges for IAEC scientists, while also investing in numerous new projects. From 2001 onward, Saddam convened frequent meetings with the IAEC to highlight new achievements.

While money flowed back into the nuclear project, Saddam also maintained an extensive ballistic-missile program. He had previously told his ministers that he did not consider ballistic missiles to be WMD and that he would never accept missile-range restrictions. In 2002, Iraq began serial production of the Al Samoud II, a ballistic missile that violated U.N. range limits: Test firings reached 183 miles (294 km). By the time the Coalition invaded, 76 of these missiles had been produced and more were in the pipeline. Saddam also, in early 2002, directed the design and production of a missile with a range of 650 to 750 km, and told Huwaysh that he wanted it within six months. Huwaysh relates that when Saddam was informed that production would take longer, and that the twin Volga engines they could sneak through sanctions would reach only 550 km, he left the room "profoundly disappointed." The difference would keep Tel Aviv out of range. (These were not the only means Saddam pursued to strike at Israel: His al-Quds organization was building four UAVs -- pilotless drones -- that were to be turned over to Hamas for the express purpose of killing Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon.)

What becomes clear, as example piles upon example in the ISG Report, is that this document that has been used by one side of the debate as proof that Saddam had no WMD capability actually says quite the opposite. The fact that no weapons stockpiles were found in Iraq does not mean that Iraq was not a threat. According to the report, Saddam could start producing deadly bioweapons within a week of deciding to do it; he retained the capability to produce smallpox; he had the capability to start producing chemical weapons such as mustard gas within days or at most weeks of deciding to do so; he was actively preparing to produce the nerve agents Sarin and VX; he was pouring cash into nuclear research; he was working on his ballistic-missile program even as the Coalition crossed the border into Iraq.

In short, the unholy trinity of the WMD world -- bioweapons, chemical weapons, and nuclear weapons -- were either readily available or in the process of being created, along with the missiles required to deliver them anywhere in the region, when Coalition armor rolled into Baghdad. Three years later, we should still be very glad it did.

--Mr. Lacey is a Washington-based writer focusing on defense and foreign-policy issues.

Can Iraq's Militias Be Tamed?

Time

By Michael Ware

4/10

As he steps onto the streets of Baghdad's Shi'ite slum Sadr City, Saed Salah chambers a round into his pistol and shoves it into the back of his pants. A mid-ranking commander in the Mahdi Army, one of the most potent of the armed militias

that have carved Baghdad into fiefdoms, Saed Salah has little to fear from the authorities. The whole neighborhood knows who he is. Motorists are aware that his fighters man the makeshift checkpoints that dot the neighborhood. Even though he has attacked U.S. troops countless times, no one will touch him. If the G.I.s could find him, they would slap him straight into Abu Ghraib prison. But that's not likely to happen. The American military may occupy Iraq, Saed Salah says, and an Iraqi Prime Minister may be in power, but neither owns these streets.

He's right. Iraqi army troops set checkpoints on the main thoroughfares in and out of Sadr City, but they are powerless in the face of the Mahdi Army. "They do nothing. They can't even stop a vehicle," says a member of a separate unit of the fractious militia as he speeds past one of the checkpoints. A pickup truck overflowing with gunmen toting AK-47s roars up from behind. Their shirts are emblazoned with the name of one of the country's most formidable armed groups: MAHDI ARMY, PROTECTION COMMITTEE, 2ND BRIGADE. As they approach the army checkpoint, no one makes a move; instead of confrontation, there is acknowledgment. A militia member waves from the pickup, and a soldier sheepishly waves back. With that, the gunmen barrel through.

In Baghdad today, the militias are consolidating their power. A wave of sectarian killings since the Feb. 22 bombing of a holy Shi'ite shrine in Samarra has left hundreds--possibly thousands--of Shi'ites and Sunnis dead across the country, with more tortured and dismembered bodies turning up each day. The U.S. military is pinning its hopes on the Iraqi army and police to stand between the two sides and bring calm to a volatile situation, but in many parts of the capital, the U.S.-backed forces wield less authority than the forces taking their orders from men like Saed Salah and his boss, the rebel anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. Many U.S. and Iraqi officials believe that hard-line Shi'ite militias are behind the daily abductions and executions of Sunnis and that they are doing as much to rile sectarian hatred as terrorists linked to Abu Mousab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq.

Yet there's also evidence that the mainstream of armed fighters on both sides is loath to allow the extremists to drag them into full-scale war--for now. In more than a dozen interviews with militia leaders, insurgent commanders and clerics, TIME sought out the men likely to be on the front lines of a full-blown sectarian conflict. What they have to say won't necessarily bolster hopes that Iraq can avoid all-out civil war indefinitely. But few militia members interviewed by TIME believe that they are fighting one now. Their assessments largely accord with those of U.S. military intelligence: that while rival death squads roam unchecked, for now civil war is in no one's interest but al-Zarqawi's. Militants on both sides say U.S. forces remain a bigger enemy than their countrymen. "The elements for civil war are all there," says a senior U.S. military-intelligence officer, "but this society is complex, and it still hasn't generated self-sustaining sectarian strife."

What no one denies is that the violence is becoming more brutal. U.S. officials say 25 bodies are found each day, although it's unclear how many are victims of sectarian killings. Unlike the terrorist attacks committed by al-Zarqawi, sectarian violence rarely bears a calling card. Shi'ite and Sunni militants interviewed by TIME say the worst killings are carried out by small, secretive death squads that the militants conveniently describe as rogue elements. Windows into the machinations of the death squads are rare, but U.S. and Iraqi forces have gained some intelligence on them. Some operations have been uncovered in Sunni-controlled areas, like those of the radical Ansar al-Sunnah group discovered in Latifiyah more than a year ago

during a U.S. sweep called Operation River Walk. Execution videos, swords and instruments of torture were found by soldiers in what were deemed to be killing rooms.

A March 26 raid on a Shi'ite militia complex--believed to be a hub for a kidnapping and terrorist network--has raised suspicions that a death squad may have been run out of the complex. Shi'ite leaders claim that the 16 men who died in the raid were worshipping peacefully in what turned out to be a mosque. But Iraqi commandos and U.S. military liaisons told TIME that the dead perished in battle with weapons in their hands. According to U.S. military officials, more than 60 reports of kidnappings or executions have been linked to the mosque, including the slayings of three Iraqi special-forces soldiers. Shi'ite leaders continue to deny the allegations.

Such discoveries lend credence to those, like former Prime Minister and chief U.S. ally Iyad Allawi, who say Iraq is already mired in civil war. Yet despite the bloodshed on both sides, the militants on the front lines don't consider themselves in outright conflict with one another. "War might be tomorrow or one year from now; it all depends on the sparks made by those seeking to inflame it," says Abu Mohammed, a former top-ranking officer in Saddam Hussein's army and now a key Baathist insurgent strategist. Another Baathist insurgent downplays the pervasiveness of sectarian hatred: "It's true there are death squads killing Shi'ite and killing Sunni, and while they're Iraqi, they're really the instruments of foreign interests"--referring to al-Qaeda and Iran. His Shi'ite counterparts in al-Sadr's militia agree. Two mid-ranking field commanders of the Shi'ite Mahdi Army say the violence falls short of war with the Sunnis. "Sectarian violence is made by the occupation forces. There is no civil war," says Saed Salah as members of his cell nod in agreement.

Both Shi'ite and Sunni militants insist they would rather fight to rid Iraq of U.S. forces than take up arms against each other. Abu Mohammed says there's nothing to be gained by waging a costly religious fight while the U.S. remains in the country. "The Shi'ites are an inseparable part of the resistance. We have to unite our efforts against the invaders, so we must be careful to avoid a civil war that will weaken us," he says. Contact between Sunni insurgents and Shi'ite militias like al-Sadr's Mahdi Army have been under way since the battle of Fallujah in 2004, with both exchanging expertise and manpower. "We have nothing against Shi'ites ... our dead are buried with theirs, as theirs are buried with ours in Fallujah," says insurgent commander Abu Saif. It's a sentiment echoed by the Sadrist leaders, who bear scars from dueling with the U.S. "We have many relationships binding us together," says Abu Zainab.

Still, few U.S. or Iraqi officials believe Iraq can ever become a stable, functioning society as long as political parties maintain their armed wings. The U.S. would prefer that the Iraqi security forces disarm the militias, but it hasn't happened. A senior military official in Baghdad says the U.S. is deliberately avoiding confrontations with the militias. But last month alone, soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division in Baghdad have had what the official calls 19 "encounters" with militias, including a shooting incident. The danger is that the bigger the militias get, the more likely they are to intensify their clashes over turf and authority. A U.S. military-intelligence officer says there is still some reason to believe that Iraqis will put their common interests ahead of their rivalries. "In this society, there are many ties that bind--from tribe to clan to educational, social and political," he says. "I don't think the threads have been cut." If they ever are, it may prove impossible to put them back together.

The Lesson of Tal Afar

New Yorker
By George Packer
4/10

Tal Afar is an ancient city of a quarter-million inhabitants, situated on a smuggling route in the northwestern desert of Iraq, near the Syrian border. In January, when I visited, the streets had been muddied by cold winter rains and gouged by the tracks of armored vehicles. Tal Afar's stone fortifications and narrow alleys had the haggard look of a French town in the First World War that had changed hands several times. In some neighborhoods, markets were open and children played in the streets; elsewhere, in areas cordoned off by Iraqi checkpoints, shops remained shuttered, and townspeople peered warily from front doors and gates.

Since the Iraq war began, American forces had repeatedly driven insurgents out of Tal Afar, but the Army did not have enough troops to maintain a sufficient military presence there, and insurgents kept returning to terrorize the city. In early 2004, the division that had occupied northwestern Iraq was replaced by a brigade, with one-third the strength. A single company—about a hundred and fifty soldiers—became responsible for protecting Tal Afar. Insurgents soon seized the city and turned it into a strategic stronghold.

Last fall, thousands of American and Iraqi soldiers moved in to restore government control. This time, a thousand Americans stayed, and they slowly established trust among community leaders and local residents; by January, a tenuous peace had taken hold. The operation was a notable success in the Administration's newly proclaimed strategy of counterinsurgency, which has been described by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as "clear, hold, and build." Last month, in a speech in Cleveland, President Bush hailed the achievement in Tal Afar as evidence that Iraq is progressing toward a stable future. "Tal Afar shows that when Iraqis can count on a basic level of safety and security, they can live together peacefully," he said. "The people of Tal Afar have shown why spreading liberty and democracy is at the heart of our strategy to defeat the terrorists."

But the story of Tal Afar is not so simple. The effort came after numerous failures, and very late in the war—perhaps too late. And the operation succeeded despite an absence of guidance from senior civilian and military leaders in Washington. The soldiers who worked to secure Tal Afar were, in a sense, rebels against an incoherent strategy that has brought the American project in Iraq to the brink of defeat.

THE "I" WORD

Colonel H. R. McMaster, the commander of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, is forty-three years old, a small man, thick in the middle, with black eyebrows that are the only signs of hair on a pale, shaved head. His features are deeply furrowed across the brow and along the nose, as if his head had been shaped from modelling clay; but when he grins mischief creases his face, and it's easy to imagine him as an undaunted ten-year-old, marching around and giving orders in his own private war. The first time I saw him, he had a football in his hands and was throwing hard spirals to a few other soldiers next to his plywood headquarters, on a muddy airfield a few miles south of Tal Afar.

McMaster and the 3rd A.C.R. had been stationed in Tal Afar for nine months. When they arrived, in the spring of 2005, the city was largely in the hands of hard-core Iraqi and foreign jihadis, who, together with members of the local Sunni population, had destabilized the city with a campaign of intimidation, including beheadings aimed largely at Tal Afar's Shiite minority. By October, after months of often fierce fighting and painstaking negotiations with local leaders, McMaster's regiment, working alongside Iraqi Army battalions, had established bases around the city and greatly reduced the violence. When I met McMaster, his unit was about to return home; the men were to be replaced by a brigade of the 1st Armored Division that had no experience in Tal Afar, and no one knew if the city would remain secure. (Within weeks, there were reports that sectarian killings were on the rise.)

The lessons that McMaster and his soldiers applied in Tal Afar were learned during the first two years of an increasingly unpopular war. "When we came to Iraq, we didn't understand the complexity-what it meant for a society to live under a brutal dictatorship, with ethnic and sectarian divisions," he said, in his hoarse, energetic voice. "When we first got here, we made a lot of mistakes. We were like a blind man, trying to do the right thing but breaking a lot of things." Later, he said, "You gotta come in with your ears open. You can't come in and start talking. You have to really listen to people."

McMaster is a West Point graduate who earned a Silver Star for battlefield prowess during the 1991 Gulf War: his armored cavalry troop stumbled across an Iraqi mechanized brigade in the middle of a sandstorm and destroyed it. That war was a textbook case of what the military calls "kinetic operations," or major combat in relatively uncomplicated circumstances; the field of battle was almost easier, some Gulf War veterans say, than the live-fire exercises at the National Training Center, in Fort Irwin, California. After the war, McMaster earned a doctorate in history from the University of North Carolina. His dissertation, based on research in newly declassified archives, was published in 1997, with the title "Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam." The book assembled a damning case against senior military leaders for failing to speak their minds when, in the early years of the war, they disagreed with Pentagon policies. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, knowing that Johnson and McNamara wanted uncritical support rather than honest advice, and eager to protect their careers, went along with official lies and a split-the-difference strategy of gradual escalation that none of them thought could work. "Dereliction of Duty" won McMaster wide praise, and its candor inspired an ardent following among post-Vietnam officers.

In April, 2003, at the moment when General Tommy Franks's "shock and awe" campaign against the regime of Saddam Hussein appeared to be a clean victory, the Army War College's Center for Strategic Leadership approved the release of a monograph by McMaster entitled "Crack in the Foundation: Defense Transformation and the Underlying Assumption of Dominant Knowledge in Future War." McMaster, who describes himself as "a bit of a Luddite," argued against the notion that new weapons technology offered the promise of certainty and precision in warfare. The success of the Gulf War, he wrote, had led military thinkers to forget that war is, above all, a human endeavor. He examined the messier operations of the nineteen-nineties, beginning with the debacle in Somalia, and concluded, "What is certain about the future is that even the best efforts to predict the conditions of future war will prove erroneous. What is important, however, is to not be so far off the mark that visions of the future run counter to the very nature of war and render American forces unable to adapt to unforeseen challenges."

In the spring of 2003, McMaster joined the staff of General John Abizaid at Central Command. Abizaid soon took over from Franks, who got out of Iraq and the military just as his three-week triumph over the Baathist regime showed signs of turning into a long ordeal. Although the violence in Iraq was rapidly intensifying, no one at the top levels of the government or the military would admit that an insurgency was forming.

"They didn't even want to say the 'i' word," one officer in Iraq told me. "It was the spectre of Vietnam. They did not want to say the 'insurgency' word, because the next word you say is 'quagmire.' The next thing you say is 'the only war America has lost.' And the next thing you conclude is that certain people's vision of war is wrong."

The most stubborn resistance to the idea of an insurgency came from Donald Rumsfeld, the Defense Secretary, who was determined to bring about a "revolution in military affairs" at the Pentagon—the transformation of war fighting into a combination of information technology and precision firepower that would eliminate the need for large numbers of ground troops and prolonged involvement in distant countries. "It's a vision of war that totally neglects the psychological and cultural dimensions of war," the officer said. Rumsfeld's denial of the existence of the insurgency turned on technicalities: insurgencies were fought against sovereign governments, he argued, and in 2003 Iraq did not yet have one.

In October of that year, a classified National Intelligence Estimate warned that the insurgency was becoming broad-based among Sunni Arabs who were unhappy with the American presence in Iraq, and that it would expand and intensify, with a serious risk of civil war. But Rumsfeld, President Bush, and other Administration officials continued to call the escalating violence in Iraq the work of a small number of Baathist "dead-enders" and foreign jihadis. For Rumsfeld, this aversion became a permanent condition. Over Thanksgiving weekend last year, he had a self-described "epiphany" in which he realized that the fighters in Iraq didn't deserve the word "insurgents." The following week, at a Pentagon press conference, when the new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps General Peter Pace, said, rather sheepishly, "I have to use the word 'insurgent,' because I can't think of a better word right now," Rumsfeld cut in, " 'Enemies of the legitimate Iraqi government'—how's that?"

The refusal of Washington's leaders to acknowledge the true character of the war in Iraq had serious consequences on the battlefield: in the first eighteen months, the United States government failed to organize a strategic response to the insurgency. Captain Jesse Sellars, a troop commander in the 3rd A.C.R., who fought in some of the most violent parts of western Iraq in 2003 and 2004, told me about a general who visited his unit and announced, "This is not an insurgency." Sellars recalled thinking, "Well, if you could tell us what it is, that'd be awesome." In the absence of guidance, the 3rd A.C.R. adopted a heavy-handed approach, conducting frequent raids that were often based on bad information. The regiment was constantly moved around, so that officers were never able to form relationships with local people or learn from mistakes. Eventually, the regiment became responsible for vast tracts of Anbar province, with hundreds of miles bordering Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Syria; it had far too few men to secure any area.

A proper strategy would have demanded the coordinated use of all the tools of American power in Iraq: political, economic, and military. "Militarily, you've got to

call it an insurgency," McMaster said, "because we have a counterinsurgency doctrine and theory that you want to access." The classic doctrine, which was developed by the British in Malaya in the nineteen-forties and fifties, says that counterinsurgency warfare is twenty per cent military and eighty per cent political. The focus of operations is on the civilian population: isolating residents from insurgents, providing security, building a police force, and allowing political and economic development to take place so that the government commands the allegiance of its citizens. A counterinsurgency strategy involves both offensive and defensive operations, but there is an emphasis on using the minimum amount of force necessary. For all these reasons, such a strategy is extremely hard to carry out, especially for the American military, which focusses on combat operations. Counterinsurgency cuts deeply against the Army's institutional instincts. The doctrine fell out of use after Vietnam, and the Army's most recent field manual on the subject is two decades old.

The Pentagon's strategy in 2003 and 2004 was to combat the insurgency simply by eliminating insurgents-an approach called "kill-capture." Kalev Sepp, a retired Special Forces officer, who now teaches at the Naval Postgraduate School, in Monterey, California, said of the method, "It's all about hunting people. I think it comes directly from the Secretary of Defense-'I want heads on a plate.' You'll get some people that way, but the failure of that approach is evident: they get Hussein, they get his sons, they continue every week to kill more, capture more, they've got facilities full of thousands of detainees, yet there's more insurgents than there were when they started." In "Dereliction of Duty," McMaster wrote that a strategy of attrition "was, in essence, the absence of a strategy."

During the first year of the war, Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez was the commander of military operations in Iraq. He never executed a campaign plan-as if, like Rumsfeld, he assumed that America was about to leave. As a result, there was no governing logic to the Army's myriad operations. T. X. Hammes, a retired Marine colonel who served in Baghdad in early 2004, said, "Each division was operating so differently, right next to the other-absolutely hard-ass here, and hearts-and-minds here." In the first year of the war, in Falluja and Ramadi, Major General Charles Swannack, of the 82nd Airborne Division, emphasized killing and capturing the enemy, and the war grew worse in those places; in northern Iraq, Major General David Petraeus, of the 101st Airborne Division, focussed on winning over the civilian population by encouraging economic reconstruction and local government, and had considerable success. "Why is the 82nd hard-ass and the 101st so different?" Hammes asked. "Because Swannack sees it differently than Petraeus. But that's Sanchez's job. That's why you have a corps commander." Lieutenant General Sanchez, who never received his fourth star, remains the only senior military official to have suffered professionally for the failures of the Iraq war. (He is now stationed in Germany.)

From his post in Central Command, McMaster pushed for a more imaginative and coherent response to an insurgency that he believed was made up of highly decentralized groups with different agendas making short-term alliances of convenience. By August, 2004, Falluja had fallen under insurgent control, Mosul had begun to collapse, and Najaf had become the scene of a ferocious battle. On August 5th, General George Casey, Sanchez's successor, signed the Operation Iraqi Freedom campaign plan. The document, which was largely written on Sanchez's watch, remains classified, but Kalev Sepp described it to me in general terms. (In early 2004, McMaster had recruited him to be an adviser on Iraq.) Sepp said, "It was a product that seemed to be toning itself down. It was written as if there were

knowledge of this bad thing, an insurgency, that was coming up underfoot, and you had to deal with it, but you had to be careful about being too direct in calling it an insurgency and dealing with it that way, because then you would be admitting that it had always been there but you had ignored it up to that point. It did not talk about what you had to do to defeat an insurgency. It was not a counterinsurgency plan."

In the fall of 2004, Sepp went to work under Casey in the strategy division of Multi-National Force Iraq, MNF-I. In Baghdad, a small group of officers, led by an Army colonel named Bill Hix, worked with Sepp and two analysts from the RAND Corporation to turn the campaign plan into a classic counterinsurgency strategy that focussed, above all, on the training of Iraqi security forces, with American advisers embedded in Iraqi units and partnerships between the two armies.

By November, 2004, MNF-I had outlined a strategy, and the military command in Baghdad finally had a plan for fighting the insurgency. Much time had been lost, and putting the plan into effect in numerous units was a formidable task. Counterinsurgency, by its nature, is highly dependent on local knowledge and conditions. Changes had to be made at the level of the platoon, the company, and the battalion; the campaign plan helped officers catch up with what some local commanders had already learned to do.

By then, Colonel McMaster had arrived in Fort Carson, Colorado, and he had assumed command of the 3rd A.C.R. He had just a few months to get the regiment ready for its second deployment to Iraq. The unit ended up in Tal Afar-a place that was being called the next Falluja.

A WAR FOR PEOPLE

In Colorado, McMaster and his officers, most of them veterans of the war's first year, improvised a new way to train for Iraq. Instead of preparing for tank battles, the regiment bought dozens of Arab dishdashas, which the Americans call "man dresses," and acted out a variety of realistic scenarios, with soldiers and Arab-Americans playing the role of Iraqis. "We need training that puts soldiers in situations where they need to make extremely tough choices," Captain Sellars, the troop commander, said. "What are they going to see at the traffic control point? They're possibly going to have a walk-up suicide bomber-O.K., let's train that. They're going to have an irate drunk guy that is of no real threat-let's train that. They're going to have a pregnant lady that needs to get through the checkpoint faster-O.K., let's train that." Pictures of Shiite saints and politicians were hung on the walls of a house, and soldiers were asked to draw conclusions about the occupants. Soldiers searching the house were given the information they wanted only after they had sat down with the occupants three or four times, accepted tea, and asked the right questions. Soldiers filmed the scenarios and, afterward, analyzed body language and conversational tone. McMaster ordered his soldiers never to swear in front of Iraqis or call them "hajjis" in a derogatory way (this war's version of "gook"). Some were selected to take three-week courses in Arabic language and culture; hundreds of copies of "The Modern History of Iraq," by Phebe Marr, were shipped to Fort Carson; and McMaster drew up a counterinsurgency reading list that included classic works such as T. E. Lawrence's "Seven Pillars of Wisdom," together with "Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife," a recent study by Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl, a veteran of the Iraq war.

Sellars told me, "I don't know how many times I've thought, and then heard others

say, 'Wish I'd known that the first time.' " The rehearsals in Colorado, he said, amounted to a recognition that "this war is for the people of Iraq." Sellars, who grew up in a family of lumber millers in rural Arkansas, described it as a kind of training in empathy. "Given these circumstances, what would be my reaction?" he asked. "If I was in a situation where my neighbor had gotten his head cut off, how would I react? If it was my kid that had gotten killed by mortars, how would I react?"

By the time two squadrons of the 3rd A.C.R. reached the outskirts of Tal Afar, in the spring of 2005, the city was being terrorized by takfirin-Sunni extremists who believe that Muslims who don't subscribe to their brand of Islam, especially Shiites, are infidels and should be killed. The city was central to the strategy of the Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi; Tal Afar had become a transit point for foreign fighters arriving from Syria, and a base of operations in northern Iraq. Zarqawi exploited tribal and sectarian divisions among the city's poor and semilliterate population, which consists mostly of Turkomans, rather than Arabs, three-quarters of them Sunni and one-quarter Shiite. The mayor was a pro-insurgent Sunni. The police chief, appointed by the government of Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari, was a Shiite. His all-Shiite force was holed up in an area of high ground in the middle of the city known as the Castle, which is surrounded by sixteenth-century Ottoman ramparts. Unable to control the city, the Shiite police sent out commandos (McMaster described them as a "death squad") to kidnap and kill Sunnis. Outside the Castle, radical young Sunnis left headless corpses of Shiites in the streets as a warning to anyone who contemplated cooperating with the Americans or the Iraqi government. Shiites living in mixed neighborhoods fled. "The Shia and Sunni communities fell in on themselves," McMaster said. "They became armed camps in direct military competition with one another."

McMaster's point man in the effort to stabilize the city was Lieutenant Colonel Chris Hickey, a squadron commander. Hickey, a good-looking man who has soft brown eyes and an aquiline nose, almost never raises his voice and seems as ordinary and steady as McMaster is intellectually restless and gregarious. He's the father of two girls, and it's easy to picture him at a parent-teacher conference. His soldiers spoke of him with reverence; a major in the squadron described Hickey as "the sort of quiet man who feels things very deeply," and Jesse Sellars spoke of his "tactical patience." Last summer, while American and Iraqi soldiers moved block by block into the city, encountering heavy resistance that often took the form of three-hour firefights, Hickey began to study the local power structure. For several months, he spent forty or fifty hours a week with sheikhs from Tal Afar's dozens of tribes: first the Shiite sheikhs, to convince them that the Americans could be counted on to secure their neighborhoods; and then the Sunni sheikhs, many of whom were passive or active supporters of the insurgency.

"The Shia freaked out," Hickey told me inside his cramped headquarters, in a derelict cluster of cement buildings behind the crenellated ramparts of the Castle. " 'Don't we give you information? So why are you meeting with the Sunnis?' 'Because I'm trying to be balanced. I'm trying to stabilize your city. If I just talk to you, I'm not going to stabilize your city.' We tried to switch the argument from Sunni versus Shia, which was what the terrorists were trying to make the argument, to Iraqi versus takfirin."

Hickey's first attempts to persuade Sunnis to join the Tal Afar police force yielded only three recruits, but he did not give up. In painstakingly slow and inconclusive encounters, each one centering on the same sectarian grievances and fears, Hickey tried to establish common interests between the Sunnis and the Shiites. He also

attempted to drive a wedge between nationalist-minded Sunnis and extremists, a distinction that, in the war's first year or two, American soldiers were rarely able to make; they were simply fighting "bad guys." At the highest levels of the Administration, the notion of acknowledging the enemy's grievances was dismissed as defeatist. But in Tal Afar I heard expressions of soldierly respect for what some Americans called the Iraqi resistance. "In a city that's seventy-five per cent Sunni, if you approach it from a point of view of bringing in or killing everyone who's had anything to do with the insurgency you're bound to fail," Major Michael Simmering said. "Imagine how many people in this town have picked up a rifle and taken a shot at coalition forces. Do we really want to try to arrest them all?" Lieutenant Brian Tinklepaugh explained, "You can't sever your ties with anyone-even your enemy. People with ties to the insurgents have us over for tea."

Hickey, during his conversations with sheikhs, was educating himself in the social intricacies of Tal Afar's neighborhoods, so that his men would know how a raid on a particular house would be perceived by the rest of the street. ("Effects-based operations," a term of art in counterinsurgency, rolled off the tongue of every young officer I met in Tal Afar.) He was also showing his soldiers what kind of war he wanted them to fight. It required unlearning Army precepts, under fire. "The tedium of counterinsurgency ops, the small, very incremental gains-our military culture doesn't lend itself to that kind of war," Jack McLaughlin, a major on Hickey's staff, told me. "There are no glorious maneuvers like at the National Training Center, where you destroy the Krasnovian hordes. It's just a slow grind, and you have to have patience."

At the same time, the 3rd A.C.R. engaged in frequent combat; ultimately, the regiment lost twenty-one soldiers in northwestern Iraq, and one platoon suffered a casualty rate of forty per cent. Last September, Colonel McMaster staged a push into Surai, the oldest, densest part of the city, which had become the base of insurgent operations; there were days of heavy fighting, with support from Apache helicopters shooting Hellfire missiles. Most of the civilians in the area, who had been warned of the coming attack, fled ahead of the action (unknown numbers of insurgents escaped with them), and though many buildings were demolished, the damage to the city wasn't close to the destruction of Falluja in November, 2004. "There are two ways to do counterinsurgency," Major McLaughlin said. "You can come in, cordon off a city, and level it, à la Falluja. Or you can come in, get to know the city, the culture, establish relationships with the people, and then you can go in and eliminate individuals instead of whole city blocks."

After McMaster's offensive, Hickey and a squadron of a thousand men set up living quarters next to Iraqi Army soldiers, in primitive patrol bases without hot water, reliable heat, or regular cooked meals. One afternoon, I walked with Hickey a hundred yards from his headquarters-past soldiers on guard duty warming themselves over a barrel fire-to the mayor's office, in the Castle. The new mayor, Najim Abdullah alJabouri, is a secular Sunni Arab and a former brigadier general from Baghdad, who speaks no Turkmen, Tal Afar's main language. The city was so polarized that the provincial authorities had turned to an outsider to replace the corrupt former mayor and win a measure of confidence from all sides. Najim, a chain-smoker, wore a dark suit and a purple shirt without a tie; his face was drawn and he had dark pouches under his eyes. On his wall hung a photograph of him with McMaster. The Mayor had written a letter to Bush, Rumsfeld, and Congress asking them to extend the 3rd A.C.R.'s deployment in Tal Afar for another year.

"If a doctor makes an operation and the operation succeeds, it's not a good thing to put the patient under the care of another doctor," the Mayor told me. "This doctor knows the wound, he knows the patient." He added, "Hickey knows my children by name."

I asked what would happen if, as before, the Americans withdrew from Tal Afar.

"What? No American forces?" The Mayor could hardly comprehend my question. "It will take only one month and the terrorists will take over. At a minimum, we need three years for the Iraqi Army to be strong enough to take control of the country—at least three years. You can't measure the Army only by weapons. It's building people, too."

The Mayor had once been tempted to join the insurgency. He lost his military career in 2003, when L. Paul Bremer III, the administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority—the American occupation government—dissolved the old Iraqi Army. "Bremer gave the order that whole families die," he said. "I decided that if my children died I would pick up my gun in revenge." But the dynamic in Tal Afar, where the U.S. Army seemed to be cleaning up after its own mistakes, had improved his opinion of the Americans. "I began to work with the Americans here and saw a new picture. I thought before that all Americans, like Bremer and the people we saw on TV, were killers and turned guns on Iraqis. But when I worked with them and saw them more, I realized they were different. Before, we were just sitting and watching Al Jazeera and believing it. Now I see it's a lying network."

The intensity of the Mayor's attachment to the Americans was understandable. They were in the same position, outsiders trying to hold the city together and persuade its tribes and sects to find a common national identity. I once saw Hickey ask a group of police trainees at a new station whether they were Sunni or Shiite, and when they started to answer he said, "No-Iraqi!" Hickey had seen the Mayor demonstrate the lesson to an elementary-school classroom.

Down the hall from the Mayor's office was a small conference room dominated by a thirty-foot table. Along each side, behind clouds of cigarette smoke, Tal Afar's notables sat grimly in tribal dress and business clothes: Sunnis on one side, Shiites on the other. It was only the second time the two groups had met in the Castle. The Mayor had told me that cold drinks were among his main negotiation tools, and everyone was sipping a Pepsi or a Sprite. The Mayor took his place at the head of the table. On the wall behind him hung a giant Iraqi flag.

The meeting soon deteriorated. There were complaints about the slow pace of rebuilding, the uneven distribution of contracts, the lack of government funds, and the inability of Shiite families who had fled Tal Afar to return to the mixed neighborhoods. "The rebuilding is something horrible," the Mayor said, in agreement. "But it contains a wonderful thing: it's not accepted by both sectors. So that's proof they can be united."

Shiite sheikhs accused the Sunnis of tolerating the presence of terrorists, and Sunni sheikhs accused the Shia of making unwarranted generalizations about them. "This is our second meeting, and we're saying the same things," a Shiite sheikh complained. "What is the point?"

"Sitting here is the point," the Mayor, relentlessly cheerful, said; I was beginning to

understand his look of exhaustion. "It's wonderful that you are at least sitting together. We're supposed to have a meeting of the reconstruction committee, but the important thing is we should reconstruct ourselves-then everything will be easier."

A Sunni sheikh demanded, "If you want to make things better, why do you ask people applying to be police whether they are Sunni or Shiite? Asking will only consolidate the problems."

"We want to create a balance between Shiite and Sunni," the Mayor answered. "If the Sunnis come, believe me, after a while we won't ask this question."

After listening to the complaints of the Sunnis, a Shiite sheikh lost his temper and stood up to face the other side of the table: "The people who are fighting-where do they come from? They don't pop up from the ground. Some of you know who they are." The sheikh's father had been ambushed and killed on the way to a reconciliation meeting with a Sunni tribe. "Only Shia have these problems," he said.

That night, I visited the jail at a police station between Hickey's headquarters and the Mayor's office. Forty-seven prisoners were squeezed into a cell so tight that they had to take turns sleeping; four or five others were crammed into the latrine. When a guard slid aside a plywood sheet covering the cell's barred door, the prisoners, dazed and wide-eyed, protested their innocence and asked for blankets. One boy said that he was twelve years old. A fat, middle-aged man who claimed to be a teacher from Mosul told me in fluent English that he'd been arrested because a roadside bomb had happened to go off near a taxi in which he was riding. He hadn't seen a judge in a month, and hadn't seen a lawyer at all.

Next door to the cell, in an unlit room whose roof had partially caved in, offering a view of the starry desert sky, several policemen were trying to stay warm around a petrol burner. With one exception, they were Shiites. Police work was the only job they could find, they said; Sunnis had taken their old jobs. The chief, whose name was Ibrahim Hussein, said, "My wife and children can't leave the house." A slight young cop named Hassan said that seventy members of his tribe had been killed by terrorists, including a cousin whose corpse turned up one day with the head severed.

The policemen offered me the only chair in their squalid little room. One of their colleagues was sleeping under a blanket on the cement floor. It was bitterly cold. They said that they wanted the Americans to leave Tal Afar and create a perimeter around the city to keep terrorists out; inside the city, they said, the Americans were preventing the police from eliminating the terrorists, releasing most prisoners after just a few days. The men had been trained for two months in Jordan, and I asked whether they had been instructed in human rights. They said that they had studied the subject for a week.

"What about the rights of the guy who gets kidnapped and beheaded?" Hussein said. Hassan added, "If the Americans weren't here, we could get more out of our interrogations."

"You mean torture?"

"Only the terrorists."

"How do you know that they're terrorists?"

"Someone identifies them to me. We have evidence. The innocent ones, we let go."

"How many terrorists and sympathizers are there in Tal Afar?"

Hassan considered it for a moment. "A hundred and fifty thousand." This was approximately the number of Sunnis in the city.

When I got up to leave, the policemen begged me to ask Colonel Hickey for blankets and heaters.

The Tal Afar police were better informed about local realities than either the Americans or the Iraqi Army, but they were ill-trained, quick to shoot, likelier to represent parochial interests, and reluctant to take risks. "There are some police that would go after the Sunnis," Chris Hickey said. "So, yes, we are a constraint on them. Their heads not there yet." A soldier in the squadron, who was departing on a mission with Iraqi policemen to distribute food packages in a mixed area, went further: "These guys are worthless."

The American patrol bases around the city stand next to Iraqi Army battalion headquarters; this allows for daily conversations among counterparts in the two armies and frequent sharing of information. The Americans are not just training an Iraqi Army; they are trying to build an institution of national unity before there is a nation.

Hickey and other Americans spoke highly of Lieutenant Colonel Majid Abdul-Latif Hatem, an Iraqi battalion deputy commander. One evening, Colonel Majid invited me into his spartan quarters on the grounds of Tal Afar's granary, across a marshy field from the American patrol base. A Shiite from Nasiriya, in the south, he had a comically large handlebar mustache and mirthless eyes under droopy eyelids. In the corner of the room was a cot with a military blanket; on the wall was a map of his battalion's area of operations. As he began to talk, an orderly prepared tea in a blackened brass pot.

Colonel Majid, who had been in Tal Afar for a month, had an unsentimental view of the city's problems. "If we evacuated Tal Afar of Shiites or of Sunnis, it would be a calm, lovely city. The main issue in Iraq now is the sectarian one: one group wants to destroy the other group. The people need a long, long time, so that they can learn democracy, because they were raised on a sectarian basis. Second, to get rid of the problems we should divide Iraq into three parts: Sunni, Shiite, and Kurd. If there is one Iraq on the map, but inside the people are divided, what's the point of being one? The people are tired of war and instability—they just want to live in peace, even by dividing. The time of Jesus and the Prophet Muhammad is past. There are no more miracles."

Colonel Majid took out a piece of white paper and carefully drew the outline of Iraq, then carved it into sectors. "This area is Shiite," he said. "This area is Sunni: Mosul, Tikrit, Samarra, Anbar. Take oil from here"—he pointed to Basra and Kirkuk—"and give some of it to here. The Sunnis will have to accept. If the oil was in their area, they would ask for division."

I asked if the American and Iraqi armies could prevent a civil war.

"At any moment, there will be war between the two sects," he said. "I want to tell you the truth." He repeated the word in English. "Right now, you are observing the men of the Iraqi Army, and seeing what's on the outside. But I know the interior of them. My men are not coming here for nationalist beliefs, for one Iraq. They are here because they need work. So don't be surprised if they stand and watch killing between the people here."

We drank tea and talked, and, as the night wore on, Colonel Majid disappeared into the darkness; I could see only his mustache, his eyes, and the orange glow of the petrol burner. I asked if Iraq could be divided without huge population transfers and terrible bloodshed.

"How much do the Americans spend on their army every month here? Six billion dollars. One billion of this can build houses or apartment complexes in the south, for the Shia here up north. You have to offer many things if you're going to move people: transportation, houses, jobs. It's a very complicated situation, and I'm not George Washington to arrange everything for you.

"God says: no one can change the people if they don't change themselves. America is the biggest power in the world, but it cannot get control over the explosions here and the insurgency. It cannot change the way people think." He added, "Saddam Hussein brought all of us to the point where we all hate Iraq."

I asked if Iraqi minds could change over time.

"Maybe," Colonel Majid said. "But it will take years."

In Tal Afar, I began to imagine the Americans as sutures closing a deep wound. If they were removed too quickly, the wound would open again, and there would be heavy bleeding; at the same time, their presence was causing an infection in the surrounding flesh. This was a dilemma that required careful timing. It was also possible that the wound was too deep ever to be repaired. This would be less a dilemma than a defeat.

The Americans' achievement in Tal Afar showed that, in the war's third year, individuals and units within the Army could learn and adapt on their own. On my last night in the city, Colonel McMaster sat in his makeshift office and said, "It is so damn complex. If you ever think you have the solution to this, you're wrong, and you're dangerous. You have to keep listening and thinking and being critical and self-critical. Remember General Nivelle, in the First World War, at Verdun? He said he had the solution, and then destroyed the French Army until it mutinied."

During the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment's final weeks in Iraq, morale was remarkably high. Some soldiers expressed, almost under their breath, a reluctance to leave. Many of them had established strong bonds with Iraqis and didn't want to abandon the work they had done together. They brought gifts for the Iraqis' children when they returned from leave. The Iraqi Army units in Tal Afar had been watching McMaster's men carefully, and were showing signs of competence, taking the lead in small operations, learning to win the trust of local civilians, and often proving more adept than the Americans at securing good intelligence. They still faced enormous logistical problems—they lacked armored vehicles and a reliable system of paying salaries, and their Ministry of Defense was so weak and corrupt that Iraqi soldiers

still depended on the American military's supply system to eat and to stay warm. As for the Iraqi police, they resembled less a neutral security force than a faction in the city's conflicts. Nonetheless, the American soldiers in Tal Afar felt that they had achieved something. At the headquarters of Hickey's squadron, in the Castle, young officers who, in the war's second year, had concluded that the cause was lost now talked about a fragile success.

"If we're not stupid, and we don't quit, we can win this thing," Major McLaughlin said. "History teaches you that war, at its heart, is a human endeavor. And if you ignore the human side-yours, the enemy's, and the civilians'-you set yourself up for failure. It's not about weapons. It's about people."

"If we are smart enough to see this through, we can win it," Major Simmering said. "If we're not careful, we could destroy everything we've done in the last six months in a matter of minutes by doing something stupid-taking an action that could alienate the Sunni population. It takes months to make somebody like you; it can take just a minute to make them hate you." All the soldiers worried about what one general in Iraq called a "rush to failure." As Simmering put it, "There's a lot of political pressure back home to turn this over to the Iraqis."

"A GOOD-ENOUGH SOLUTION"

From Tal Afar, I flew by helicopter to an airfield a few miles north of Tikrit, called Forward Operating Base Speicher. The headquarters of the 101st Airborne Division, Speicher is an "enduring FOB"-one of a handful of gigantic bases around Iraq to which American forces are being pulled back, as smaller bases are handed over to the Iraqi Army. Speicher has an area of twenty-four square miles and the appearance of a small, flat, modular Midwestern city; there is a bus system, a cavernous dining hall that serves four flavors of Baskin-Robbins ice cream, a couple of gyms, and several movie theatres. At least nine thousand soldiers live there, and many of them seemed to leave the base rarely or not at all: they talked about "going out," as if the psychological barrier between them and Iraq had become daunting. After three months on the base, an Army lawyer working on the Iraqi justice system still hadn't visited the Tikrit courts. A civil-affairs major who had been in Iraq since May needed to consult a handbook when I asked him the names of the local tribes. A reporter for the military newspaper Stars & Stripes had heard a bewildered sergeant near Tikrit ask his captain, "What's our mission here?" The captain replied sardonically, "We're here to guard the ice-cream trucks going north so that someone else can guard them there."

Much of the activity at an enduring FOB simply involves self-supply. These vast military oases raise the spectre of American permanence in Iraq, but, to me, they more acutely suggested American irrelevance. Soldiers have even coined a derogatory term for those who never get off the base: "fobbits." I spent two days at Speicher without seeing an Iraqi.

After Tal Afar, it was dismaying how little soldiers at Speicher knew about the lives of Iraqis. When I drove with the civil-affairs major into Tikrit, we stopped along the way at an elementary school, just outside the base. The major wanted to see if the teachers had pursued his request to have the children become pen pals with kids at an elementary school in his home town, in California. It sounded like a fine idea, but two nervous female teachers who received us in their office gave a number of reasons that the children hadn't yet written letters. The major pressed them for a

few minutes, and then he was ready to let the project go. As soon as he left the room, the women showed me a thick stack of pictures that their students had drawn for the children in California, along with a letter from the teachers asking for school supplies and "lotion for dry skin." The letter concluded, "Good luck U.S.A. Army." But the women were too frightened to give the bundle to the major; a relationship with an elementary school in America could make them targets of local insurgents. All this was lost on the major. The teachers said that they rarely saw American soldiers anymore.

Speicher provides a more representative picture of the American military's future in Iraq than Tal Afar. The trend is away from counterinsurgency and toward what, in Washington, is known as an "exit strategy." Commanders are under tremendous pressure to keep casualties low, and combat deaths have been declining for several months, as patrols are reduced and the Americans rely more and more on air power. (During the past five months, the number of air strikes increased fifty per cent over the same period a year ago.) More than half the country is scheduled to be turned over to Iraqi Army control this year. This is the crux of the military strategy for withdrawal, and it is happening at a surprisingly fast pace. President Bush has always insisted that the turnover and "drawdown" will be "conditions-based"-governed by the situation in Iraq and by the advice of commanders, not by a timetable set in Washington. But everywhere I went in Iraq, officers and soldiers spoke as if they were already preparing to leave. A sergeant in Baquba, northeast of Baghdad, said, "We'll be here for ten years in some form, but boots-on-the-ground-wise? We're really almost done." He said that the U.S. Army doesn't allow itself to fail, and when I suggested that Iraq hardly looked like a victory the sergeant replied, "So you adjust the standard of success. For me, it's getting all the Joes home. It's not that I don't give a damn about what's going on here. But that's how it is."

A field-grade officer in the 101st Airborne said, "The algorithm of success is to get a good-enough solution." There were, he said, three categories of assessment for every aspect of the mission: optimal, acceptable, and unacceptable. He made it clear that optimal wasn't in the running. "We're handing a shit sandwich over to someone else," the officer said. "We have to turn this over, let them do it their way. We're like a frigging organ transplant that's rejected. We have to get the Iraqi Army to where they can hold their own in a frigging fire-fight with insurgents, and get the hell out." The Iraqi national-security adviser, Mowaffak al-Rubaie, who chairs a high-level committee in Baghdad on American withdrawal, gave the same forecast that was mentioned by a planner on General Abizaid's staff, at Central Command: fewer than a hundred thousand foreign troops in Iraq by the end of this year, and half that number by the middle of 2007.

In other words, "conditions-based" withdrawal is a flexible term. The conditions will be evaluated by commanders who know what results are expected back in Washington. I suggested to Senator Chuck Hagel, the Nebraska Republican, who has been a critic of the Administration's war policy, that this sounded like a variation on the famous advice that Senator George Aiken, of Vermont, gave President Johnson about Vietnam, in 1966: declare victory and go home. "In a twenty-first-century version, yes, probably," Hagel said. "It won't be quite that stark." The Administration, he said, is "finding ways in its own mind for back-door exits out of Iraq." He added, "We have an election coming up in November. The fact is, we're going to be pulling troops out, and I suspect it'll be kind of quiet. We're going to wake up some morning, probably in the summer, and all of a sudden we'll be forty thousand troops down, and people will say, 'Gee, I didn't know.' "

A senior military officer defended Generals Abizaid and Casey, and said that they would not simply bow to pressure from Washington. "I don't think commanders are so ambitious that they're willing to sell their men and their endeavor up the river so they can tell their bosses what they want to hear." But he admitted that there was considerable pressure for withdrawal, saying, "A blind man on a dark night can see people want the recommendation to be drawdown." The pressure is partly driven by the strain on the military, and partly by the fear that thousands of junior officers and senior sergeants, who face future deployments, may quit if the war extends many more years. Divorce rates among Army officers have doubled since the war began. The Army is so short-staffed that it has promoted ninety-seven per cent of its captains. "If you're not a convicted felon, you're being promoted to major," a Pentagon official said.

As Americans pull back to the isolated mega-bases, further reducing the daily death toll, Iraq will likely become a lighter burden for Republicans in Congress and for the Administration. A number of American officials, both civilian and military, along with Sunni politicians in Tal Afar and Tikrit, told me that this scenario was not only inevitable but healthy. Contact between Americans and Iraqis had led to mistakes, deaths, and mutual exhaustion.

But a good-enough counterinsurgency is really none at all. There is no substitute for the investment of time, effort, and risk that was so evident in Tal Afar. The retreat to the enduring FOBs seems like an acknowledgment that counterinsurgency is just too hard. "If you really want to reduce your casualties, go back to Fort Riley," Kalev Sepp, the Naval Postgraduate School professor, said. "It's absurd to think that you can protect the population from armed insurgents without putting your men's lives at risk." The policy of gathering troops at enormous bases, he added, "is old Army thinking-centralization of resources, of people, of control. Counterinsurgency requires decentralization."

Some military leaders are feverishly trying to institutionalize the hard-won knowledge from cities like Tal Afar, in time to make a difference in this war. At the training base in Taji, just north of Baghdad, there is now a counterinsurgency academy where incoming officers attend classes taught by those they've come to relieve. (Jesse Sellars told me that his main lesson to his successors was to educate themselves and their soldiers about the Iraqis.) Sepp sat in on a class led by General Casey, after which a newly arrived brigade commander said, "This is the first time I've been told my primary mission is to train Iraqi forces." Until then, he had thought that his mission was to kick down doors and haul people in. Many commanders in Iraq still think so.

In the first year of the war, Major General David Petraeus achieved a temporary success when, as a divisional commander in northern Iraq, he applied the basic ideas of counterinsurgency. He is now a lieutenant general and commander of the Combined Arms Center, at Fort Leavenworth, in Kansas. Petraeus is overseeing a group of active-duty and former officers in the writing of a new joint Army/Marine Corps counterinsurgency field manual. "It is, as with many things in life, much easier to explain than to do," he told me. "But it is very important to get that basic understanding right again, and the power of a field manual is its ability to communicate relatively straightforward concepts. The basic concepts and principles are not rocket science or brain surgery, but they can be very hard to apply." Counterinsurgency begins, he said, when military leaders "set the right tone."

In February, I attended a two-day workshop at Fort Leavenworth, where the authors of the draft heard suggestions from an assembly of critics. Petraeus had invited not just military and civilian officials but academics, journalists, and human-rights activists, and the workshop was co-sponsored by the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, at Harvard's Kennedy School-in keeping with the draft manual's claim that counterinsurgency is twenty per cent military and eighty per cent political. Also in attendance was Brigadier Nigel Aylwin-Foster, a British general who had just published an article in *Military Review*, out of Fort Leavenworth, which delivered an attack on the American military's cultural ineptitude in fighting the Iraqi insurgency. Aylwin-Foster, who had served under Petraeus in 2004, when Petraeus led the training mission in Baghdad, told me, "It seemed to be an enigma, the U.S. military as an entity. They're polite, courteous, generous, humble, in a sense. But you see some of the things going on-if I could sum it up, I never saw such a good bunch of people inadvertently piss off so many people." When Aylwin-Foster's article appeared, in December, General Peter Schoomaker, the Army chief of staff, ordered it to be sent to every general in the Army; I saw it on a number of desks in Iraq.

The question hanging unasked over the workshop at Fort Leavenworth was whether it was already too late to change the military's approach in Iraq. When Kalev Sepp discussed the field manual with students in his class on insurgency at the Naval Postgraduate School, a Special Forces captain said, "If this manual isn't written soon, you'll have it ready just in time to give one to each soldier leaving Iraq."

CIVIL WAR?

Just as the Americans have begun to learn how to fight a counterinsurgency war, they find themselves in the middle of a growing civil conflict, and what succeeds in the former may backfire in the latter. Training Iraqi security forces and turning responsibility over to them makes sense if the Americans are trying to buttress an embattled government against insurgents; but, as sectarian violence rises, with the police and the Army dominated by one group, the Americans could also be arming one side of an approaching civil war.

On February 22nd, the Shiite shrine in Samarra was bombed, almost certainly by elements of Al Qaeda; its golden dome was destroyed. The sectarian violence that followed was widely interpreted as the first definitive sign that Iraq was coming apart, but Baghdad and the mixed towns around it had already shown clear symptoms of civil war. In the capital, Shiite families were being driven out of Sunni neighborhoods by a campaign of threats and assassinations. Young Sunni men were being rounded up by Shiite militiamen, some of whom wore police uniforms; they disappeared into secret prisons or turned up on the street, bound and shot to death.

Dora, a middle-class neighborhood of Sunnis, Shiites, and Christians in southern Baghdad, has become the epicenter of the low-grade civil war. A businessman from Dora told me that it began with the killing of barbers: Sunni extremists believed that shaving a man's beard was against Islam, and they extended the ban to Western-style haircuts. "After the barbers, they went on to the real-estate agents," the businessman said. A fatwa was issued, declaring that in the time of the Prophet there was no buying or selling of property. Then an ice vender was shot dead on the street because ice wasn't sold in the seventh century.

The next targets were grocery-shop owners, exchange-shop owners, clothing-shop

owners. "At first, they were giving reasons, but then things developed, and they started killing for no reason," the businessman said. Every day in the heart of Dora, around the Assyrian Market, a list of intended victims—mostly merchants, and always Shiites—circulates by word of mouth. Within a few days, people on the list who don't take precautions are shot to death in broad daylight. Police at the local stations don't get involved, and American soldiers rarely enter the district, though the businessman said that he goes to sleep at night to the sound of gunfire, helicopters overhead, and bombs dropping, as if he were on the front line of a battle. "Dora is out of the government's control," the businessman said, and Shiites who can afford to escape are leaving.

A senior Iraqi official who has access to classified intelligence said that the campaign of violence is part of a strategic effort by Sunni insurgents to "shape the battlefield": to clear the district of potential enemies and use it as a staging area for attacks in Baghdad. Dora has an oil refinery and a power plant, and it lies along the route from the Sunni-dominated tribal areas south of Baghdad to the heart of the city. The killings in Dora, the official said, are part of a trend away from attacks on American and Iraqi military units, which expose insurgents to great risk, toward killings of local officials and ordinary citizens, intended to undermine the public's confidence that the government can protect it. In January, he said, there were seven hundred of these murders, the highest number of the war up until that month. "So 2006, maybe, will be the year of assassinations and infrastructure attacks," the official said.

The killings have created an atmosphere of sectarian hysteria that residents of Baghdad have never known before. Fear and hatred of one's neighbor are expressed in extreme language. I met a Shiite butcher, Muhammad Kareem Jassim, who owns a small shop on a busy thoroughfare, the doorway obstructed by the hanging carcasses of skinned lambs. His brother was also a butcher, with a shop in Dora. One morning in January, the brother was cutting meat for two women customers when a man walked into the shop, asked the women to excuse him, came up to the counter, and said, "Good morning." The brother looked up, said, "Good morning," and was shot in the face and killed. His grown son rushed into the room, shouting, "Daddy, Daddy!" and he, too, was shot dead. A second brother, also a butcher, came running from an adjacent shop with a carving knife in his hand; he was also killed.

When I sat down, ten days later, to talk with Jassim, a stout, bearded man in his fifties, he was hyperventilating with rage. "Dirty fuckers, sons of bitches—they have no faith, no religious leaders, since the time of Omar and Abu Bakr until now," he said of Sunnis, going straight back to the seventh century. "The only reason for this is that we are Shia." He expressed great bitterness that Sunni religious and political leaders rarely condemn the killings of Shiites, and he despaired of being protected by American or Iraqi security forces. The butcher's shoulders heaved, and he said, "If our religious leaders gave a fatwa, there would be no more Sunnis in Iraq anymore! Because everybody now has a broken heart. I wish I could catch them with my hands and slaughter them. I could do it—I'm a butcher."

In the past year, Shiites have begun to engage in deadly retaliatory strikes against Sunnis. Many ordinary Shiites have lost patience with the calls for restraint from religious leaders like Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. And Shiite party militias have taken up kidnapping and assassination, creating widespread fear among Sunnis for the first time.

The Iraqi Islamic Party is the country's largest Sunni party. Its headquarters, in

western Baghdad, has a human-rights office with pictures on the walls of Sunni corpses bearing marks of torture allegedly inflicted by Shiites. While I was in the office, an elderly couple arrived in a state of panic. A week before, at six in the morning, fifteen commandos had broken into their house and taken their grown son from his bed. Since then, the parents had been unable to get any information about him. The woman described the commandos as members of the Badr Corps, the largest Shiite militia in Iraq, which was formed during the Iran-Iraq War by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. One of its leaders, Bayan Jabr, is now the Minister of the Interior; Sunnis accuse him of allowing Shiite militiamen to infiltrate Iraqi police forces. Sunnis routinely call Shiite politicians like Jabr "Iranians." The mother cried, "In all my life, I never saw something like this. They are coming from Iran, the Persian people-Iran, which is trying to get the nuclear bomb to destroy the world."

A Party official, Omar Hechel alJabouri, told the old couple that he would contact the Interior Ministry about the case, in order to prevent their son from being tortured or killed. Every day, he said, a hundred people come to his office with complaints, so many that he has taken to sleeping on a cot in a corner of the room. "Our brothers, the Shia, are very smart in crying about their suffering," he said. "We others are not as smart." (An American Embassy official told me that in Iraq each side has perfected its own "victimology.")

American troops have been struggling to purge Shiite militiamen from the Iraqi police and recruit Sunnis, with the goal of making it a non-sectarian force. Major General Joe Peterson, who is leading the police-training effort, said that the goal was to have two hundred thousand police trained and equipped by the end of the year. (As of mid-March, a hundred and thirty thousand had been trained.) "We captured a Shiite death squad last week," he said. "There are guys going out in the middle of the night." The squad, which was out to avenge the death of a member's relative, included twenty-two employees of the Interior Ministry. "We have some very bad groups out there who are bent on insuring that the government fails," he said.

An American intelligence official said that he considers the increasingly aggressive Shiite militias a bigger long-term threat to Iraq than the Sunni insurgency. These groups raise the prospect not just of a Sunni-Shiite civil war but also of an intra-Shiite fight, between the Badr Corps-widely perceived as a front for Iran-and the Mahdi Army of Moqtada al-Sadr, the radical Iraqi populist. When I asked Colonel McMaster what Americans could do if a full-scale Iraqi civil war breaks out, he said, "Not a whole hell of a lot."

PLAN B

Fort Leavenworth has a Center for Army Lessons Learned. There is no equivalent at the White House or the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Last November, the Pentagon issued D.O.D. Directive 3000.05, which declared that "stability operations," or peacekeeping and security maintenance-which Rumsfeld had denigrated in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq, questioning why the Pentagon had such a division-were now "a core U.S. military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct and support." The directive went on, "They shall be given priority comparable to combat operations." In the obscure world of "stability ops," D.O.D. 3000.05 was a historic, if belated, document. Careful readers noticed that it was signed not by Rumsfeld but by his deputy Gordon England. In February, Rumsfeld released his Quadrennial Defense Review, a congressionally mandated report setting out long-term military policy. Its language seemed unassailable,

focussing on the need for greater capability in civil affairs, military policing, cultural and language expertise, and counterinsurgency, all as part of what the document called "the long war" against global terrorism. But in its budget choices, which reveal the real priorities of the Defense Secretary, the Iraq war had hardly registered. Instead of cutting back on hugely expensive weapons programs in order to build more troop divisions-Iraq has made it painfully obvious that a larger army is necessary for fighting counterinsurgency wars-the review favored the fighter jets and carriers that are the lifeblood of military contractors and members of Congress.

It's an open secret in Washington that Rumsfeld wants to extricate himself from Iraq. But President Bush's rhetoric-most recently, in a series of speeches given to shore up faltering public support-remains resolute. For three years, the Administration has split the difference between these two poles, committing itself halfheartedly to Iraq. (Through every turn in the war, the number of troops in Iraq has remained remarkably stable-between a hundred and fifteen thousand and a hundred and sixty thousand.) In 2006, maintaining the status quo no longer seems viable. The midterm elections and the President's flagging popularity will force Bush to make a choice: either he will devote the rest of his Presidency to staying in Iraq or he will begin a withdrawal.

In "Dereliction of Duty," McMaster's book on Vietnam, he described how Lyndon Johnson's top generals allowed the President to mire American troops in Vietnam with no possible strategy and no public candor. He wrote, "As American involvement in Vietnam deepened, the gap between the true nature of that commitment and the President's depiction of it to the American people, the Congress, and members of his own Administration widened. Lyndon Johnson, with the assistance of Robert S. McNamara and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, had set the stage for America's disaster in Vietnam." In *Tal Afar*, I told McMaster that there were more than a few echoes of the Iraq war in his book. He laughed and said, "I can't even touch that."

A President who projects a consistently unrealistic message of success to the public; a Defense Secretary who consolidates power in his office and intimidates or ignores the uniformed military; senior generals-Tommy Franks, John Abizaid, Ricardo Sanchez, Richard Myers, and now Peter Pace, Myers's successor as chairman of the Joint Chiefs-who appear before congressional committees and at news conferences and solemnly confirm that they have enough troops to win: the parallels between Vietnam and Iraq, in terms of the moral abdication of leaders, are not hard to see. In one sense, though, the two wars are inversely analogous: in Vietnam, Johnson claimed to be staying out while he was getting in; in Iraq, something like the opposite is happening.

It isn't easy to know how much unwelcome information reaches the President. On December 16th, the day after elections for a constitutional government in Iraq, a group of senators and representatives met with the President and his top national-security advisers in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, while General Casey and Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, joined in from Baghdad on a large video screen. According to Senator Joseph Biden, the Delaware Democrat, who had flown back from Iraq that morning, Vice-President Cheney was characteristically sanguine about the war, saying, "It's been a great election, Mr. President-we're well on our way." The President talked at length about the need to continue fighting terrorism. When it was Biden's turn to speak, he said, "With all due respect, Mr. President, if every single Al Qaeda-related terrorist were killed tomorrow, done, gone, you'd still have a war on your hands in Iraq." On the video screen, Khalilzad

and Casey nodded. When the discussion turned to the need for a political solution, with non-sectarian heads of the Defense and Interior Ministries, Rumsfeld began nodding vigorously-as if to say, Biden thought, "Hey, this is Condi's problem. This ain't my problem."

Condoleezza Rice now finds herself trying to win the kinds of fights with Rumsfeld that Colin Powell lost long ago. As Secretary of State, she has begun to repair alliances that Powell was helpless to keep the Administration from shredding. By most accounts, Stephen Hadley, her replacement as national security adviser, is a weak figure in the White House, and Cheney's influence has waned in the second term, allowing Rice to consolidate foreign-policy decision-making in her department, as Powell never could. But Rumsfeld remains a formidable bureaucratic force. Recently, Rice and Rumsfeld have battled over the question of how to protect Iraq's infrastructure. Insurgents have become so adept at hitting pipelines, power stations, and refineries that fuel and electricity shortages have become nationwide crises; meanwhile, some Iraqi Army units and tribes that are being paid to guard these facilities are collaborating in the destruction. At the State Department, these attacks have become a full-time preoccupation. One official there described the strategy of Sunni insurgents this way: "The one thing we can do is strangle Baghdad, the crown jewel of Iraq. You don't have a country without dealing with us. You may have the oil in the north, Kurds-but how are you going to get it out?" For several months, Rice has tried to force a decision on whether to commit American troops to protecting key sites. Rumsfeld has resisted, and-as with so many issues in Iraq-the White House has made no decision.

The Defense Secretary has even objected to soldiers providing security for the small reconstruction teams that Khalilzad wants to establish in provincial capitals. (Rumsfeld insists that private contractors be used instead.) Final word on the mission has been held up at the White House for months. An Administration official said that the delay showed how badly reality can be "disconnected from the President's rhetoric of Iraq as the most important thing on the planet." The official went on, "Certain people at the Pentagon want to get out of Iraq at all costs." He added, "These provincial reconstruction teams should be resolved in an afternoon. But Rumsfeld doesn't want to do it, and nobody wants to confront him."

As a State Department official was preparing to leave for Baghdad recently, a colleague told him, "When you get there, the big sucking sound you'll hear is D.O.D. moonwalking out of Iraq as fast as it can go. Your job is to figure out how we can fill the gap." But the State Department has nothing like the resources-money, equipment, personnel-of Defense. It is having trouble persuading enough foreign-service officers to risk their lives by filling the vacant slots at the Embassy in Baghdad or on ministerial-assistance teams, even though raises are being offered; for a brief period, the State Department considered re-activating, for the first time since Vietnam, a policy of forced assignments. In 1970, at the height of the pacification program in Vietnam, the U.S. reconstruction teams included seventy-six hundred civilians and military officials; in a country the size of Iraq, that would mean eleven thousand people, but barely a thousand positions are planned for the provincial teams in Iraq. The Administration asked an increasingly skeptical Congress for just \$1.6 billion in reconstruction funds for the coming year, which means that, though the output of electricity, water, oil, and other utilities still falls well short of prewar levels, the major reconstruction effort in Iraq is now over.

In February, I met Secretary Rice in her office at the State Department. On one wall

was an old recruiting poster, in which the pointing figure of Uncle Sam is saying, "We're at War. Are You Doing All You Can?" I asked Rice whether she would alert the President if she saw a rush to disengage from Iraq. "If I thought there was a drawdown that was going to endanger our ability to deliver a foundation for stability that outlasts whatever presence we had-absolutely, I would," she said. She quickly added that this isn't happening, and that the President won't allow it to happen: "Even though there is violence, there is a process that is moving, I think rather inexorably, actually, toward an outcome that will one day bring a stable Iraq."

Rice admitted that the American public is "uneasy" about Iraq. Speaking in her precise, academic manner, she analyzed one or two of the Administration's mistakes. But she kept falling back on the strategy of hope. I asked in several ways about the danger of civil war; her answer was that Iraq won't have one, because Iraqis don't want one. And when she turned to the larger questions about the President's legacy in the Middle East, Rice sounded almost mystically optimistic: "I think all the trends are in the right direction. I can see a path where this turns out as we would want to see it turn out." She narrowed her eyes. "I can see that path clearly."

At the Embassy in Baghdad, Khalilzad gave me the impression that he worries about the focus and staying power of the Administration, as if his own sense of urgency had to be constantly signalled to Washington. As the military draws down, he said, he isn't certain that the American effort will be redoubled in other crucial areas, such as education, or on the provincial teams. He was blunt about his fears for 2006. The U.S. will stay engaged in Iraq on one condition, he said. "The condition is whether we, the people who have responsibility here and in Washington, project to the American people that we know what we're doing: that we have reasonable goals, that we have good means to achieve those goals, and that we're making progress. I think the American people lose confidence when they think either the war is not important or we don't know what the hell we're doing. So it behooves us, those of us who believe that we know what we're doing, to communicate to the American people that there is a strategy that can produce results, and to communicate it effectively, without hyping." He added, "Happy talk is not the way to gain the confidence of the people."

The American strategy is for Khalilzad to push the Iraqi factions toward a government of national unity, so that political compromise will drain away support for the violence, while the Iraqi security forces become capable national institutions. Considering that just a year ago Sunni Arabs stood completely outside the political game, and the Iraqi Army was only a few months into a serious training program, the strategy has been at least partly successful; the high Sunni turnout in the December elections was a tribute to Iraqis' political maturity and Khalilzad's skills as a broker. But if a government forms and the violence-whether sectarian, insurgent, criminal, or some indistinguishable mixture of them all-continues at this extraordinary level, or even intensifies, the U.S. will have played its last card. Then there will be no more milestones to celebrate, only the incremental effort of fighting an insurgency and rebuilding a failed state, without the prospect of a dramatic turn that could restore the support of the American public. People with experience in insurgencies talk about five, eight, ten years.

Recently, Senator Biden noticed a change in the tone of Administration officials. After the Samarra mosque bombing, Stephen Hadley, the national-security adviser, called him to say that perhaps Iraqi leaders had "looked over the precipice" of civil war and would now pull back. What Biden heard in Hadley's voice was not the unshakable

conviction normally expressed by White House officials. It was something closer to "wistfulness," he said—a prayer more than a belief.

In recent remarks, the President and Administration officials, such as Cheney and Rumsfeld, have made it clear that, in the case of an American defeat, they will have a Plan B ready: they will blame the press for reporting bad news. They will blame the opposition for losing the war. In mid-March, on "Face the Nation," Cheney, who has offered consistently rosy forecasts on Iraq, was asked whether his statements had deepened public skepticism about the war. "I think it has less to do with the statements we've made, which I think were basically accurate and reflect reality, than it does with the fact that there's a constant sort of perception, if you will, that's created because what's newsworthy is the car bomb in Baghdad."

In Congress, there has been remarkably little public pressure on the Administration from Republicans or Democrats to take drastic action, at least until the formation of the Iraqi government is complete. Among Republicans, though, the anxiety over Iraq is barely concealed—midterm elections are now seven months away—and has been expressed partly through criticism of the Administration on other national-security issues, such as wiretapping and the Dubai port controversy.

"Most Republicans know that they're connected to Bush and his fortunes and his poll numbers," Chuck Hagel said. "Iraq has been consistently the No. 1 issue in the polls." Since the call for withdrawal, several months ago, by Representative John Murtha, the Pennsylvania Democrat, members of his party seem to be content to watch in silence as the Administration destroys its domestic standing over Iraq. Three years into the war, there is still no coherent political opposition.

"There's an old saying in politics: when your opponent's in trouble, just get out of the way," Senator Barack Obama, the Illinois Democrat, told me. "In political terms, I don't think that Democrats are obligated to solve Iraq for the Administration." He added, "I think that, for the good of the country, we've got to be constructive in figuring out what's going to be best. I've taken political hits from certain quarters in the Democratic Party for even trying to figure this out. I feel that obligation. I'll confess to you, though, I haven't come up with any novel, unique answer so far."

After the Samarra bombing, when the prospect of civil war was added to an intractable insurgency, many Democrats and Republicans concluded that Iraq was lost. Conservatives like George F. Will and William F. Buckley, who, for philosophical reasons, never held out much hope for Iraq, have given up on the reconstruction. But most politicians remain paralyzed between staying and leaving, unable to decide which is the lesser evil. The deaths of more Americans and the spending of billions more dollars offer no promise of success beyond the prevention of wider chaos and, perhaps, a slow consolidation of the Iraqi state. Yet an American withdrawal would leave behind killings on a larger scale than anything yet seen; Iraqis from every background expressed this fear. Baghdad and other mixed cities would be divided up into barricaded sectors, and a civil war in the center of the country might spread into a regional war. The Shiite south would fall deeper under Iranian control, Kurdistan would try to break away, and the Sunni areas would go the way of Tal Afar at its worst. This is where comparisons to Vietnam do not apply: in Southeast Asia, the domino theory turned out to be false, but Iraq in the hands of militias and terrorists, manipulated by neighboring states, would threaten the Middle East and the U.S. for many years. The truth is that no one in Washington knows what to do.

A former Administration official said, "All of us-not just the Administration but Congress and the American people-own the problem of Iraq. But I'm afraid we're going to cut. We're unwilling to make the sacrifice and spend the political capital." He summed up the three years of the Iraq war as three successive kinds of failure: "There was an intellectual failure at the start. There was an implementation failure after that. And now there's a failure of political will."

Beyond the White House, various analysts have offered alternative strategies, all of them based on the notion that 2006 is the year in which Iraq's long-term future, for better or worse, will be decided. Barry Posen, a political scientist at M.I.T., has offered a more radical proposal than any officials have dared to entertain. In a recent article in *Boston Review*, Posen concluded that a unified, democratic Iraq is highly unlikely and that American interests require a strategic withdrawal over the next eighteen months. Posen is known as a foreign-policy realist; when I met him at his office at M.I.T., he said, "I've been depicted as a villain. I just want the American polity to consider all sides of the equation before undertaking armed philanthropy." Posen has decided that America can afford to leave behind a civil war in Iraq-one that we will "manage" on our way out, so that its result will be, in his words, "a hurting stalemate." If one side seems about to win, the U.S. can tip the board in the other direction. "We managed a civil war in Bosnia from the outside," Posen said. "Whether we knew it or not, we were generating a hurting stalemate." In the end, after much violence, Iraq's factions will conclude that no one can win, and then they will come to their own arrangement.

Posen's version of withdrawal is *realpolitik* with a vengeance, offering the cold comfort of hardheaded calculations rather than grand illusions; but it's difficult to imagine how America, without troops in Iraq, could control events on the ground any better than it can now. When I asked Posen about the moral obligation to Iraqis, who will surely be massacred in large numbers without American forces around, he replied, "No one talks about the terrible things that can happen if we stay the course. The insurgents are trying for a Beirut Marinebarracks bombing." He added that he doesn't imagine his ideas will be heard in Washington. "These people are stubborn. A rational person would think that they've learned something about the limits of American power. They've learned nothing."

Kenneth Pollack, who served on the National Security Council under President Clinton-and whose book "The Threatening Storm" made an influential case for the war in 2002-recently led a small group at the Brookings Institution in writing a detailed report on a new strategy for Iraq. It calls for the Administration to shift the focus from the pursuit of insurgents in the Sunni heartland and, instead, to concentrate overstretched American and Iraqi forces in cities where the reconstruction effort is still somewhat popular-providing security while allowing economic development to flourish. This strategy, known in counterinsurgency doctrine as the "ink spot" approach (because zones of security gradually spread out from population centers), has also been proposed by the military expert Andrew Krepinevich. It was put into practice in Tal Afar. Pollack's proposal demands that, in spite of intense political pressures at home, there be no troop withdrawals anytime soon, since the total number of American and Iraqi forces is now only half of what experts say is required to secure the country. It also counts on a level of international help that the Bush Administration has never shown the ability, or the desire, to muster. In a sense, the report asks the country to offer the same commitment and imagination, to take the same risks and make the same sacrifices, as the soldiers in Tal Afar.

"PARADISE"

On a quiet street in eastern Baghdad, behind a garden with lawn chairs arranged in rows, there is a small, unremarkable two-story building. A sign in front, which says "Al Janna Center," is barely visible from the street, for reasons of safety. Al Janna means "Paradise," and Dr. Baher Butti, who directs Al Janna, had been warned by anonymous fundamentalists that paradise cannot be found on earth.

Dr. Butti is a psychiatrist and a secular Christian in his mid-forties, a small, stoop-shouldered man with thinning hair and an air of stoical gloom. I first met him in the summer of 2003, and on each subsequent visit to Iraq I looked him up. Over the past three years, he has grown increasingly skeptical about the motives of the Americans, Iraqi politicians, religious leaders, and the country's neighbors. Yet he pursued with great persistence an idea that had first come to him after the fall of Saddam: he wanted to open a "psycho-social rehabilitation clinic" that would rebuild the humanity of his countrymen. Dr. Butti believed that, after decades of dictatorship, wars, sanctions, and occupation, Iraqis need to learn to talk, to think, to tolerate. He had registered his proposal for the clinic with the occupation authority and successive Iraqi ministries, but none of them had given him support. Last year, a Baghdad newspaper owner donated funds, and in January the Al Janna Center finally opened.

In the waiting room, brightly colored abstract paintings by patients hung on the walls. Up a narrow flight of stairs, there were several small meeting rooms where Dr. Butti planned to hold lectures, poetry readings, computer-training courses, and women's mental-health group meetings. The center was humble and barely furnished, but, amid the grinding ugliness and violence of Baghdad, it felt like an oasis of calm. "If we gain humanitarian care for our patients, then the rebound will be a humanitarian movement in all the society," Dr. Butti said. "This place is not just a scientific institute. It's also a place for literature and arts. We are trying to educate people about communication."

Dr. Butti lives in Dora, the mixed neighborhood in south Baghdad that has been particularly violent. "There are no direct clashes in the streets, but when every day you have one or two of your acquaintances killed, this is civil war," he said. Most of his friends and colleagues are leaving Iraq, along with much of the country's professional class.

When we sat down in his office, with cups of tea, he said, "Let me tell you about my own conflict." His conflict was simple: to stay or to leave. Last May, his young daughter was badly injured when her school bus was hit by a suicide car bomb. After that, his wife, who is also a doctor, insisted that the family move to Abu Dhabi. Yet Dr. Butti has finally achieved something tangible in Iraq, and to leave now would be like abandoning a child. "I feel like someone who's been cut from the roots," he said.

Dr. Butti's decision depends on what happens in the next few months, and on the formation of a new government. He doesn't have much hope for improvement any time soon, but he is looking for some sign of stability. "Or it will go into a civil war, and all will be lost, and there will be nothing to be done here anymore. It's either this year or none." He added, "Not one of the Iraqis believes that you Americans should leave tomorrow. Even the Sunni leaders—they announce it in the media, but that's for, let's say, public use. They know that we can't have the American Army

leaving the country right now, because, excuse me to say, George Bush did a mess, he must clean it." He shrugged and smiled, in his pained way. "We are attached in a Catholic marriage with our occupiers. It's not possible to have a divorce."

He walked me outside into the sunlit garden. On the street, a car passed by slowly. For an hour, I had forgotten to be afraid, and now that we were saying goodbye I was reluctant to go. In the past we had always shaken hands, but on this occasion Dr. Butti kissed my cheeks, in the Iraqi way. Perhaps he felt, as I did, that we might not meet again for a long time.

Generals, See Progress

National Review

By Bill Crawford

4/17

The struggle to form a unity government in Iraq continues, but signs of hope are emerging. One of the sticking points continues to be Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari, who has so far refused to resign; however, on Sunday the Iraqi Shia Alliance reported it was close to a deal to replace him.

For a little perspective, travel back to the States, to the U.S. Senate and watch the immigration debate in the Senate. We've been doing democracy for several centuries now, and we can't get 100 politicians to agree on one issue. Considering we're the pros, we could cut the Iraqis a little slack as they continue to get the feel of this democracy-project thing.

There continues to be plenty of good news to be found in Iraq. The Iraqi army continues to take over responsibility for more battle space, al Qaeda continues to take a beating, and rebuilding of the country is progressing. Moreover, the Iraqi economy is improving, and has doubled in the last three years.

News for Pessimistic Generals * The media has given an enormous amount of publicity to former generals who are calling for Rumsfeld to resign, and all but ignore those who remain optimistic about our efforts in Iraq. Colonel William Grimsley commanded the brigade that first took control of Baghdad Airport. Three years on he remains optimistic about the country's future: Grimsley, commander of the 3rd Infantry Division's 1st Combat Brigade Team during the opening days of Operation Iraqi Freedom, said history--not current events--will tell the true story of Iraq's metamorphosis.

And that story will show how Iraq ultimately emerged from almost 40 years of a regime that ignored the people's needs and undermined its potential, Grimsley, now a military assistant to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, said during an interview with American Forces Press Service and the Pentagon Channel.

* Major Kevin Carter just returned from Iraq, and shares this assessment: Charter believes not enough attention is being paid to the progress being made by Iraqis in taking control of their country. He said the people of Iraq are grateful Saddam Hussein has been overthrown.

"I was told by an Iraqi that only two things could get rid of Saddam, the United

States or Allah. I will never forget that," Charter said. "An Iraqi officer told me that if we just up and left the country would implode. They are so grateful for us being there and toppling Saddam. Even the Sunnis, who benefited under Saddam, thanked us."

* Before you think I'm just parroting the Pentagon line by quoting only officers, a Marine serving with an Iraqi unit had this to say: "Everybody hears about all the car bombs in Baghdad and how many people got shot. Those things are reality--I don't want to downplay them. But there's a lot of good things happening," he said.

Despite being the main targets of terrorists and ex-Baathists, Iraqi soldiers remain well motivated: According to the commanding officer of the local Iraqi-army unit here, the soldiers' motivation to fight insurgents is steady despite the loss of two of their own comrades. During a memorial service for a fallen soldier, the Iraqi commander of 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division, assured his soldiers they were performing well and encouraged them to continue to listen and learn from the Marines.

"I want the soldiers to continue to do the job they are doing," said the commanding officer, who wishes to remain anonymous. "We need the Marines' support and they are very professional when it comes to training my soldiers."

* A tip led U.S. troops to a house where forged documents were made: The two suspected forgers were found at a house where Soldiers seized \$2,050 in U.S. currency, more than 500,000 Iraqi Dinars, 125 various forms of identification, fake stamps for the IDs and an AK-47.

* Another tip led U.S. troops to a weapons cache at a terrorist training facility: Found at the site were 19 155 mm artillery rounds and 21 mortar rounds of various calibers.

The site may have been a training site of insurgents. The cache was transported to a secured location for controlled detonation.

* 320 Iraqis from Anbar Province arrived in Jordan to received training as police officers.

* The Iraqi army continues to take over more battle space: The 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division is assuming control of an area of responsibility that encompasses Balad, Al Duluyah and Yethrib, as well as the smaller villages surrounding these cities.

* In addition to taking over battle space, Iraqis continue to take the lead in more security operations. Operation Cobra Strike was lead by soldiers of the 8th Iraqi Army Division. The operation was planned, and conducted by Iraqis, with U.S. soldiers in support.

* Iraqi soldiers discovered four weapons caches during an operation in southern Baghdad: In total, the four weapons caches consisted of seven RPG rounds, three machine guns, 28 70 mm mortar rounds, 38 60mm mortar rounds, landmines, a large bag of homemade explosives, a sniper rifle, grenades, 13 pre-made roadside-bombs, ten rockets, 403 linked rounds of small arms ammunition, three bags of linked ammunition and 5,000 rounds of sniper-rifle rounds.

* 139 Iraqi soldiers recently graduated from commando school, and are ready to fight: "The Iraqi people are tired of the terrorists, extremists and instability and this unit fights that ... I am very proud that I am part of this special unit that will help stabilize this country," he said. "The terrorists have had their time. This is our time now."

* 39 of 45 planned border forts along the Iran-Iraq border are complete. The border posts are manned by Iraqis.

* U.S. troops discovered several significant weapons caches on an island in the Euphrates River: On April 5, Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 67th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, discovered 34 fused 82 mm rounds, five fused 120 mm rounds, 600 82 mm mortar rounds, 23 fused rocket-propelled grenades, five hand grenades, 28 55-gallon drums of TNT, nine 55-gallon sacks of nitrate, two bundles of detonation cord, a penetrator and 5,000 AK-47 rounds.

The next day, Soldiers gathered 1,500 meters of command wire, a mortar sight, a receiver, 54 82mm rounds and a 107mm rocket.

On April 7, MND-B Soldiers discovered the following items on the island: 1,450 18 mm anti-aircraft rounds, 27 125 mm aerial bombs, 30 anti-tank grenades, seven 60 mm mortars, five 82 mm mortars, 25 RPG rounds, 96 sticks of dynamite, 600 mortar primers, 156 hand grenades, three cylindrical containers, a RPG launcher, a rocket (caliber unknown), 37 boosters and a small mortar.

* In Mosul, U.S. soldiers discovered a significant amount of materials used to make IEDs.

* In Tikrit, a terrorist planting an IED was captured.

* In Yusifiyah, several terrorist were killed or captured after their safe house was attacked: During the assault, five terrorists, three of them wearing suicide vests, were killed; five others, one of whom was wounded, were detained. Two of the suicide bombers were killed before either could detonate his vest, and the third detonated his body bomb killing only himself and injuring no one else.

* I mentioned Operation Cowpens last week. The operation ended Friday, and the tally of captured munitions is impressive. The list is long, but bears repeating:

* 57 mm recoilless rifle: 1 * 105 mm rounds: 3 * 115 mm rounds: 5 * 120 mm rounds: 6 * 122 mm rounds: 4 * 125 mm rounds: 12 * 130 mm rounds: 4 * 155 mm rounds: 10 * 82 mm mortars: 4 * 14.5 mm ammunition in case: 15 * .50 caliber main gun: 1 * .50 caliber ammunition can: 1 * 60 mm casings: 6 * 60 mm mortar system: 2 * 7.62 main gun: 1 * 82 mm rounds: 28 * AC adapter: 1 * AK ammunition: 2,225 rounds * AK magazines: 1- * AK-47: 18 * AK-47 drums: 1 * aluminum tube with explosives: 1 * antennas: 5 * anti-personnel mines: 7 * anti-tank hand grenades: 5 * bandoleers: 3 * bulk explosives: 51 * batteries: 7 * bayonets: 5 * blasting caps: 146 * bolt action rifle: 1 * bottles of accelerant: 1 * cell phone charger: 1 * cell phones: 4 * charging bases: 4 * feet of copper wire: 500 * feet of detonation cord: 4,580 * electrical switches: 5 * pounds of accelerant: 100 * fragmentation vests: 2 * gas masks: 5 * German main gun: 1 * glue guns: 3 * grenade launchers: 2 * hand grenades: 23 * Iraqi-army uniforms: 5 * improvised

explosive device making materials: 1 * IED paperwork: 1 * improvised devices: 5 * improvised mortar tube with aiming sights: 1 * improvised rocket launcher: 4 * pounds of TNT: 35 * long-range radios: 2 * machine gun: 1 * mortar fuses: 18 * mortar rounds: 12 * mortar sights: 3 * rigged Motorola radios: 10 * Motorola rechargeable batteries: 25 * other rockets: 4 * PKC rifle: 2 * PKC ammunition: 1 * 57 mm and 68 mm rockets: 32 * rolls of tape: 3 * rocket-propelled grenade fragmentation rounds: 5 * RPG launchers: 31 * RPG rounds: 52 * RPG sights: 1 * RPG triggers: 2 * SA-8 rocket: 1 * SA-14 rocket: 5 * SA-14 training round: 1 * SA-14 tracker head: 3 * scope: 1 * cordless phone base: 3 * soldering guns: 2 * Soviet .50 caliber main gun: 1 * Soviet anti-aircraft artillery main gun: 1 * spare main gun barrel: 1 * switches: 3 * talk about radios: 19 * unknown fuse: 1 Several al Qaeda suspects were killed in a raid Sunday: US forces killed five suspected insurgents and detained five others in a raid on a house southwest of Baghdad early Sunday in a hunt for an alleged Al Qaeda operative, the US military reported, according to AFP.

* In another raid, a senior al Qaeda operative was killed. Abu Umar was the terror groups "ambassador," and was charged with forming relationships with other groups in Iraq. Umar was an associate of Osama bin Laden. More than 115 top al Qaeda operatives have been killed or captured in Iraq over the last few months.

* Al Qaeda in Iraq continues to use unwilling people to carry out attacks. One attacker was identified by the fingerprints found on his hand, which was hand cuffed to the steering wheel of a car used as a bomb. It was the only part of him found.

* U.S. military vehicles in Iraq will be getting a new anti-RPG system called Trophy from the Israelis [This item has been corrected since posting.--Ed.]: The Trophy, unveiled by the IDF a year ago, combines two main systems: a radar built by Israel Aircraft Industries Ltd., detects threats; and a Rafael-designed system destroys incoming threats in flight. Rafael claims that the Trophy can protect armored fighting vehicles against all types of anti-tank rockets and missiles.

The two conceptual innovations incorporated into the Trophy are 360-degree protection of the tank or APC, which eliminates the need for adding armor plating, which can double a tank's weight, restricting its mobility and maneuverability; and to provide protection from new threats from the side and top in low-intensity combat, compared with frontal threats of the past.

* The State Department issued a report on Iraq's economy. Iraq's economy has nearly doubled in the last three years. GDP rose by 2.6% last year, and is expected to rise by more than ten percent in 2006.

* A carpentry workshop funded by USAID is helping Iraqis earn a living: The workshop focuses on fostering leadership, independence and financial stability among 18- to 24-year-olds. Profits from sale of furniture and doors made in the carpentry shop are reinvested in the youth center to purchase sports equipment, Internet access and secondary school supplies.

* Three new power substations are now online in Najaf. At a cost of \$4.8 million per substation, each should provide 25,000 households with electricity.

* A ceremony in Baghdad marked the opening of a renovated youth center: The Youth Center offers programs and training in weightlifting, boxing, wrestling, judo and soccer. During the tour, the guests viewed young Iraqi boxers sparring;

wrestlers practicing takedowns; soccer players kicking goals; and weightlifters pumping iron.

The project was financed with funds from the 10th Mountain Division.

* Everyday Americans are also helping out in Iraq. Frank Casa of Fairport, New York raised \$25,000 to send wheel chairs to disabled residents of Hilla: Casa has raised more than \$25,000 to send desperately needed wheelchairs to Hilla, a city south of Baghdad, ravaged by the blasts of suicide attacks and car bombs. Later this year, he'll travel to Iraq to help distribute the wheelchairs.

"There are many, many civilians that are caught in desperate straits, that were caught up in this war, and they're strictly victims," Casa said. "Not to have mobility is like throwing fuel on the fire."

* The latest weekly reconstruction update is available here. Highlights include:

* A water system is under construction in Fallujah. When completed it will provide 200,000 residents with clean water. * A firing range is under construction at the police academy in Hillah. * Renovations are complete on the police station in Kadhimiya. * The rehabilitation of a sewer pump station is complete in Mansour. * In Baghdad, construction is complete on three solid waste transfer stations. * A project to provide 10,000 residents in Basrah is complete. * Construction of two power stations in Erbil Province is complete. * Reconstruction is complete on two fire stations in Karbala. * 13 of 15 school projects are complete in Karbala. * Construction of new classrooms is now complete in Mosul.

* U.S. and Iraqi troops conducted a dental clinic in Amu Shabi: A smile can light up one's face... and today, more than 200 Iraqis had a reason to smile.

Iraqi-army troops, along with U.S. Special Forces medics, Civil Affairs and 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division Soldiers, traveled to a school in Amu Shabi, Iraq, to provide a Dental Assessment and Care Clinic for local citizens.

* A Scottish company has plans to build the first water park in Iraq. This story is pertinent because of the what the company's sales managers said: International sales manager Jim Stuart said yesterday: "I am delighted to be involved in this project and it shows that rebuilding in Iraq really is happening."

Sadly, the newly elected Miss Iraq won't be attending the opening.

* Norway's DNO will become the first Western company since the invasion to produce oil in Iraq next year. The company has discovered five oil reservoirs in northern Iraq.

* Iraqi Air is purchasing two new planes from Airbus.

* Iraq is spending \$25 million to purchase two new oil tankers.

OUR HEROES * Petty Officer 2nd Class Juan M. Rubio will be awarded the Silver Star later this month for actions in Iraq: On Jan. 1, 2005, Rubio's platoon was ambushed on the Euphrates River. The Marines left their boats and pursued the attackers, only to have an explosive set off nearby.

Rubio and three Marines were wounded. Despite having shrapnel wounds in his legs and arms, Rubio belly-crawled to the injured Marines and treated their injuries. He then dragged each of them across open terrain, under fire, to safety behind a wall.

He showed the uninjured Marines how to care for the wounded troops and then began directing covering fire while he helped take the wounded back to the boats.

"Your actions saved lives and you have set an example for future corpsmen and Marines to emulate," wrote Maj. Gen. R.F. Natonski, who wrote a letter endorsing the medal. "Your service is coveted by each and every Marine in the 1st Marine Division."

One Marine died that day, Lance Cpl. Brian Parrello. Rubio believes Parrello saved his life.

"He took a big chunk of artillery," Rubio said. "He absorbed 90 percent of the explosion for me. I owe my life to him."

* Petty Officer 2nd Class Justin Jewett was awarded the Bronze Star for action in Iraq: Jewett ran through a hail of gunfire and dragged the injured teammate 20 feet to the protection of a large vehicle, the citation says. He then administered first aid.

Under continuous attack, he supervised the evacuation of his wounded teammate. The Navy said Jewett's "courageous actions" saved his teammate's life.

* Lance Corporal Carlos Gomez-Perez was awarded the Silver Star this week for his actions in Fallujah: In the late morning, the platoon came under fire from machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades coming from three directions, according to a citation signed by Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter.

Gomez-Perez first made sure that several injured comrades received medical attention, then moved another downed Marine out of the line of fire, suffering wounds to his shoulder and face in the process.

"Despite his injuries, he again exposed himself to enemy fire and continued to attack the enemy with grenades and by firing his rifle with his uninjured arm," the citation states. "By his bold leadership, wise judgment and complete dedication to duty, Lance Corporal Gomez-Perez reflected great credit upon himself and upheld the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service."

--Bill Crawford lives in San Antonio, Texas. He blogs at All Things Conservative.

Iraq Is the War on Terror

National Review

By Andrew C. McCarthy

4/17

The Bush administration evidently believes revisiting the case for toppling Saddam Hussein is a political loser. That this conclusion--which, of course, has played in the media like a tacit admission of guilt--is a terrible miscalculation becomes clearer with each passing day. As journalists, scholars, and analysts pore over more of the

intelligence haul seized when U.S. forces toppled the Iraqi regime, the case for removing an America-hating terror-monger responsible for the brutal torture and murder of--literally--tens of thousands of people looks better and better. Still, the administration maddeningly refuses to go on offense in its defense.

This is at least the second occasion of this politically suicidal default. Top administration officials also gratuitously handed their critics a cudgel when, for reasons still explicable only by panic, they retracted--and, indeed, apologized for--an entirely accurate assertion in the president's 2003 State of the Union Address.

As Michael Ledeen recounted here on NRO a few days ago, President Bush's claim that the Iraqi regime had sought uranium in Africa was not only true and, as the British parliamentary investigation later concluded, "well-founded"; it was probably an understatement. Christopher Hitchens observes--based on the Duelfer Report--that Iraq's efforts to acquire uranium from Niger stretch back a quarter century. Unless you are inclined to believe Saddam was interested in procuring goats in 1999 when he dispatched a high-ranking emissary to that cash-starved but uranium-rich African nation--a nation with which he had previously done uranium business--there can be little doubt that nuclear-weapons development was the impetus.

Now, onto suicidal default, chapter two. The president's poll numbers are plummeting, largely due to the success the opposition has had in portraying Iraq as a misadventure--a diversion from the "real" war on terror, disintegrating into a chaotic mess of dubious nation-building. Why? Because the administration put most of its eggs in a shaky WMD basket; failed to make and sustain the case--i.e., the abundantly supportable case--that Saddam was both a committed terrorist and terrorist-abettor; and has since allowed Iraq to be etched as the test-case for its Middle East democracy project rather than as a logical phase of the war on terror. Even today, if you ask most Americans, "What does Iraq have to do with the war on terror?" you'll get a blank stare--if not a curt "Nothing." Why should it be otherwise? That, effectively, has been the administration's own answer.

All the while, the evidence continues to mount that Saddam was a gathering threat against the United States--just as the president said he was. And the mounting has now been accelerated by the recent public availability of intelligence files--which the administration, for some reason, refused for years either to make available or to use in its own much needed defense.

Already, thanks to diligent work by the likes of Steve Hayes of The Weekly Standard (author of The Connection and numerous articles about Iraq and al Qaeda), Tom Joscelyn (find his website here), Ed Morrissey (of Captain's Quarters), and Edward Jay Epstein (find his website here) we have seen, among other things:

- * direct contacts between high-ranking Iraqi regime officials and both Osama bin Laden and Ayman Zawahiri (bin Laden's top deputy);

- * an apparent payment of hundreds of thousands of dollars by Iraq to Zawahiri in 1998;

- * elaborate mentions of Iraq in bin Laden's infamous 1998 fatwa calling for the murder of all Americans, anywhere they could be found--the fatwa that presaged the bombing of the U.S. embassies five months later;

* an Iraqi al Qaeda member held in Guantanamo Bay, charged with traveling to Pakistan with an Iraqi Intelligence official in August 1998 (the same month the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were bombed) to study the possibility of bombing the American and British embassies there;

* the attempt by Iraq to recruit jihadists in the late 1990s to bomb an American target, Radio Free Europe, in Prague;

* the continued insistence to the 9/11 Commission by top Clinton officials (including President Clinton himself) that the retaliatory strike against the al Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Sudan following the embassy bombings was justified by intelligence indicating that the target was home to a joint chemical weapons venture of Iraq, al Qaeda and Sudan;

* the Clinton administration so convinced of an asylum arrangement between Iraq and al Qaeda that its top counter-terrorism official, Richard Clarke, opined to National Security Adviser Sandy Berger in 1999 that bin Laden would "boogie to Baghdad" if things became too hot for him in Afghanistan (it wouldn't, after all, have been a first: Saddam was already harboring one of the 1993 World Trade Center bombers);

* the still open allegation that Mohamed Atta met with an Iraqi intelligence officer in Prague in April 2001, during the plotting stages of the 9/11 attacks;

* the still unexplained presence of an Iraqi intelligence operative, Ahmed Hikmat Shakir, at the initial January 2000 planning meetings in Kuala Lumpur for the 9/11 attacks;

* the recent revelation that Saddam's regime was, since at least 1994, conducting training for thousands of terrorists--training which, from 1998 forward, drew in thousands of jihadists from outside Iraq;

* the recent revelation that Saddam's son Uday ordered preparations in 1999 for a wave of "special operations, assassinations, and bombings, for the centers and traitor symbols in London, Iran and the self-ruled areas [Kurdistan]"; and

* the exercises in January 2003--on the eve of the U.S. invasion--known as "the 'Heroes' attack," which was designed to prepare regional terror units to fight exactly the kind of insurgency war that has been waged against coalition forces for the last three years.

Now, the intelligence haul has produced another notable disclosure--which is startling only if you continue to gulp the popular Kool-aid that depicts Iraq as nothing more than a disastrous Bush blunder. About a week ago, Morrissey (crediting Iraq scholar Laurie Mylroie) published a striking memorandum, apparently authored by an Iraqi air-force general in March 2001. The memo, excerpted below (*italics are mine*), sought volunteers for suicide missions against American targets: In the Name of God the Merciful The Compassionate Top Secret

The Command of Ali Bin Abi Taleb Air Force Base

No 3/6/104

Date 11 March 2001

To all the Units

Subject: Volunteer for Suicide Mission

The top secret letter 2205 of the Military Branch of Al Qadisya on 4/3/2001 announced by the top secret letter 246 from the Command of the military sector of Zi Kar on 8/3/2001 announced to us by the top secret letter 154 from the Command of Ali Military Division on 10/3/2001 we ask to provide that Division with the names of those who desire to volunteer for Suicide Mission to liberate Palestine and to strike American Interests and according what is shown below to please review and inform us.

Air Brigadier General

Abdel Magid Hammot Ali

Commander of Ali Bin Abi Taleb Air Force Base

Air Colonel

Mohamad Majed Mohamadi.

Morrissey has now confirmed the translation through two experts, working independently. Assuming the document is authentic, it is a powerful confirmation of what was already palpable: The Iraqi dictator who attempted to murder a former U.S. president in 1993, who assiduously attacked the U.S. in his state-controlled media, who colluded with the terrorist network that attacked the U.S. throughout the 1990s, who defied sanctions and expelled weapons inspectors, who shot at U.S. planes in the no-fly zone throughout the 1990s, and who conducted frenetic terrorist training in preparation for a bloody, long-term insurgency against the U.S., was a threat to the United States.

The question lingers: Would an Iraqi air-force general in 2001 have had good reason to think he could get volunteers from within the Iraqi ranks for suicide missions?

There's good reason to think the answer to that question is "yes." As Tom Joscelyn points out to me, the new memorandum on which Morrissey has reported should be considered in conjunction with another piece of information that has attracted little media attention. This one comes from the December 2002 Report of the Joint Inquiry into the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001 by the House and Senate Intelligence Committees.

One section of that Report (at pp. 209-13) studied what the U.S. intelligence community had, prior to 9/11, in the way of "Intelligence Information on Possible Terrorist Use of Airplanes as Weapons." Over a seven-year period, the joint inquiry found there were at least twelve such indications. Included among them was this one (p. 211): In February 1999, the Intelligence Community obtained information that Iraq had formed a suicide pilot unit that it planned to use against British and U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf. The CIA commented that this was highly unlikely and probably disinformation.

The purpose here is not to take yet another shot at the intelligence community. As the joint inquiry observed, the sources for the twelve reports it outlined were believed to be dubious or to have provided sketchy information at best. The CIA did not have access to the files we are now, finally, scrutinizing.

Nevertheless, the new memo, coupled with the finding by the joint inquiry, does underscore that: (a) our intelligence in Iraq (and elsewhere) was very poor; (b) that intelligence was not sufficient for making categorical conclusions about Iraq's intentions (including the absurd claim, made by many in intelligence circles, that Saddam would never collaborate with jihadists); (c) it is wishful thinking to conclude, as do many Bush critics, that President Clinton intimidated Saddam into foreswearing attacks against the U.S. by a 1993 air strike against an empty Iraqi-government building (in "retaliation" for the attempt to murder the first President Bush); and (d) it is critical for the historical record and the legacy of American military operations in Iraq to continue translating and studying the intelligence trove we have seized.

Most important for present purposes: The evidence is there, as it has always been, to prove that removing Saddam Hussein's regime from power was a significant advance in the war on terror. But all the evidence in the world proves nothing unless the administration gets out and makes the case. Publicly. Those who have given their lives to a noble cause deserve nothing less.

--Andrew C. McCarthy, a former federal prosecutor, is a senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

ISRAELI – PALESTINIAN ISSUES

A Bitter Prize

Foreign Affairs
By Tom Segev
May/June 2006

The Accidental Empire: Israel and the Birth of the Settlements. Gershom Gorenberg.
: Times Books, 2006, 480 pp.\$30.00

On June 13, 1967, a small group of Israelis traveled to an area south of Jerusalem. The land, on the west bank of the Jordan River, had just been conquered by the Israeli army in the Six-Day War, as had East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights.

The visitors were looking for the remains of a group of Jewish villages known as Gush Etzion, which the Arabs had occupied and destroyed during Israel's War of Independence, in 1948. For the intervening 19 years, the West Bank had been under Jordanian control. But the survivors of Gush Etzion had never given up hope of returning, and now they planned to stay. So did the Israelis who, around the same time, moved into the newly occupied Golan Heights and Jerusalem's Old City -- forcing out hundreds of Arab families.

Today, nearly 40 years later, about 250,000 Israelis live in some 125 officially recognized West Bank settlements. Another 180,000 live in the annexed areas of East Jerusalem, and about 16,000 live in the Golan.

The most comprehensive book on these settlers is *Lords of the Land*, by the journalist Akiva Eldar and the historian Idith Zertal, which was published in Hebrew in 2005. *Lords of the Land* describes Israel's settlement of the occupied territories as the result of political and emotional pressure that the settlers skillfully applied to a largely unenthusiastic but weak Israeli government. Now, Gershom Gorenberg, in a careful and fluently written book, has produced a much more sophisticated analysis. In *The Accidental Empire*, Gorenberg depicts the settlements as the product not just of political maneuvering, but also of the Israeli identity itself. Settling the land had always been at the core of the Zionist experience, but by 1967, when the Six-Day War began, many Israelis had lost their confidence in the old Zionist dream. Israel's smashing battlefield success in the war reversed this trend, galvanizing many Israelis into taking up the Zionist mantle once again and making a fresh beginning in the newly captured land.

Gorenberg, a U.S.-born Israeli and a columnist and editor for the English-language *Jerusalem Report*, presents this drama with impressive skill. He fails, however, to accompany it with a clear analysis of how and why these settlements went from being an expression of Zionist enthusiasm to an existential hazard and a moral burden for the country.

THE UNNECESSARY OCCUPATION

Although the Six-Day War resulted in the occupation of Gaza, the Golan, and the West Bank, grabbing the West Bank was hardly Israel's priority when the fighting began; at the time, most Israelis probably would have settled for peace on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines.

Many Israelis, however, had never stopped dreaming of a Greater Israel. Some justified their desire for more territory on strategic grounds; others were motivated more by national and religious sentiments. Although they remained outside the mainstream, both camps exerted considerable moral and political influence during Israel's first 20 years.

Gorenberg writes with great insight about such forces, including radicals within the ruling Labor movement who had opposed the idea of partition since the 1920s and continued to do so after Israel's independence. He quotes leading rabbis who prayed that the Jews would recapture the Western Wall and other holy sites that had fallen under Jordanian control in 1949. He gives scant attention, however, to another important force: Menachem Begin's right-wing Herut (Freedom) Party, which, after 1948, did more than any other group to keep the hope for a Greater Israel on the political agenda. As a member of the war cabinet, which was hastily formed in June 1967, Begin played a major part in the fateful decision to occupy East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza.

This decision was by no means a natural or necessary consequence of the war. In 1967, the primary military threat to Israel came from Egypt. This threat, however, was effectively eliminated during the first hour of the war, when the Israeli Air Force wiped out almost all of Egypt's warplanes before they even took off. From that point on, Israel no longer had reason to fear for its existence. Why, then, did it nevertheless proceed to occupy the West Bank? Only six months before the war, Israeli intelligence experts had warned the government against seizing the area, since doing so would require Israel to control a large, hostile Palestinian population.

Yet the government ignored this advice. True, the Jordanian army provoked Israel by disregarding warnings not to shell the Israeli sections of Jerusalem. But fending off Jordan's attack did not require occupying the West Bank. Taking that land was an irrational act contrary to Israel's national interest.

The explanation for this folly seems to lie in the euphoria that seized Israel's war cabinet following the quick military conquest on the Egyptian front. Reason and strategy were forgotten. None of Israel's government ministers even asked whether it was really in the nation's interest to seize the West Bank and Jerusalem's Old City; the value of such land was treated as self-evident.

Victory, in fact, seems to have driven the entire country into a frenzy. Many Israelis acted as though they had been miraculously rescued from annihilation and had reached the age of redemption; they interpreted winning as a sign from God. The army's own chief rabbi, Shlomo Goren, demanded that the mosques on the Temple Mount be blown up; David Ben-Gurion (Israel's first prime minister) wanted the Old City's walls destroyed; and Prime Minister Levi Eshkol seriously considered transferring hundreds of thousands of Palestinians out of the territories and to Iraq.

SHOCK AND AWE

After the war, the Israeli cabinet split over how to proceed. On one side stood the doves, led by Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir, who favored returning most of the captured land for peace; on the other were the hawks, including Begin, Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon, and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, who wanted to keep most of the land. Eshkol himself was indecisive and hesitant. And Israel's citizens were divided over what to do. The majority agreed, however, that East Jerusalem and Gaza should be permanently incorporated into Israel, and most also favored keeping at least a section of the West Bank.

The idea of settling these lands came from deep within Zionism. The notion of shiva (return) is firmly rooted in Jewish and Zionist tradition. According to the Zionist vision, the state of Israel was born when the Jews returned from exile to the land of their biblical forebears, and many Israelis felt they had an unchallengeable right to the land -- all of it. The settlement ethos had been the cornerstone of Zionism ever since the first pioneers came to live in the area.

Gorenberg points to another, novel source for the zeal that drove Israel's new settlers after 1967. Writing with neither contempt nor approval, he draws on in-depth conversations he had with many of these settlers, whose experiences he places in the context of the unrest that marked the late 1960s in Europe and the United States. The young people around the world who went on to found the New Left suffered from an "illegitimacy complex," Gorenberg writes: raised in comfortable surroundings on stories of their parents' Old Left heroism, the generation of 1968 (or, in Israel's case, 1967) must have felt like failures. Israeli schoolchildren had been weaned on stories of prestate pioneers braving Arab and British antagonism; their own lives seemed soft in comparison. By the 1960s, when these people were coming of age, Israel's early challenges seemed to be fading, and the Zionist drama was being replaced by Israeli routine. Many young Israelis felt that their country had stopped offering them mythological adventures; not only did immigration to Israel virtually cease during this time, but thousands of young Israelis began leaving the country for good, most settling in the United States.

According to Gorenberg, the victory of 1967 changed all that. Many young Israelis suddenly discovered a "New Zionism," just as young people elsewhere were discovering a New Left. Radicals but not revolutionaries, these new settlers regarded themselves as disciples of the early Zionist pioneers. And like their role models, many of them chose to farm the new land: agriculture was seen not merely as a way of life, but as a moral and patriotic calling.

Although Gorenberg's parallel between the New Left and the New Zionism is interesting and original, it explains little in the larger context of Israeli history. To be sure, Israel did experience its own generational crisis in the 1960s. But the struggle there never became part of the apocalyptic upheaval that shook the industrialized West. Moreover, Israelis continued to settle the West Bank long after the fervor of the 1960s had faded; indeed, they continue to do so today.

Understanding the settlers, in fact, does not require a generational thesis. Many of them were religious and were driven by messianic nationalism. Indeed, as Gorenberg explains, the triumph of 1967 had the effect of turning messianism into a mainstream belief among some religious Israelis, particularly young ones. Like their more secular kibbutznik colleagues, the New Zionists believed that Jews must shed their supposed weakness, return to the land, and embrace physical labor and military strength. But after 1967, these New Zionists refused to relinquish traditional Judaism in the process (as the kibbutzniks had). The events of 1967, in other words, created a new fusion of Israeli patriotism and religious faith, producing a particularly fanatical brand of settlers in the process.

A POISON PILL

Regrettably, by limiting himself to the first decade after the war, Gorenberg largely misses the story of the nonideological settlers who came later. The religious die-hards were not the only ones to relocate to the territories after 1967. Many Israelis moved into new housing projects in East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza simply because homes were cheaper there and the settlements offered a higher quality of life than they could afford elsewhere. A large portion of these settlers were new immigrants to Israel, especially from the Soviet bloc, who saw little difference between Israel proper and the occupied territories.

Gorenberg's limited focus also restricts his attention to the Labor governments of Eshkol, Golda Meir, and Yitzhak Rabin. Gorenberg seems to accept the conventional view that these prime ministers permitted the settlements not out of any innate enthusiasm for the project, but as a way to keep themselves in power. In Israeli memory, Gorenberg writes, Begin's rise to the prime ministership in 1977 is often seen as the moment when settlement building began in earnest. But "a more accurate description" of Begin's policy, Gorenberg argues, "would be an escalation of existing trends."

This claim is not quite right. Although by 1977 settlers had already started moving into the territories, at that point they numbered less than 60,000, and about 40,000 of them lived in East Jerusalem. These numbers increased dramatically under Begin, creating a new strategic reality. By ignoring this period, Gorenberg provides only the first half of the settlement story. The second half has been much more disastrous. Still, Gorenberg is right to emphasize Labor's significant role. The truth is that all Israeli governments encouraged the settlements, as did most Israelis. After all, in every post-1967 election, Israelis were offered a selection of anti-settlement parties,

but they never voted them into office. Instead, they chose governments that acted against Israel's national interest and that violated a long tradition of Zionist restraint.

Although the Zionist movement had long advocated settlement, it had always done so with one major caveat: capturing more territory would mean serious demographic dangers. Accordingly, the movement had adopted a basic strategy known as "maximum land, minimum Arabs," and most of its thinkers had favored maintaining a solid Jewish majority in Jewish-controlled land over ruling vast areas populated by Arabs.

Gorenberg fails to explain what led so many Israelis to abandon this logic after the Six-Day War. To be fair, it is a difficult question; the answer cannot be reduced to colonialist hunger or fundamentalist religious faith. Strategic considerations alone are also not sufficient explanation. The real answer probably lies in the paradox inherent in the Zionist dream itself, which, in order to be realized, must be partly abandoned. Zionism holds that all of the biblical Promised Land belongs to the Jewish people. But Zionism is also a democratic vision. Many of its proponents have long recognized that to maintain a viable state that is both Jewish and democratic, they must give up territory populated largely by Arabs; incorporating these areas into Israel would make Israel less Jewish, less democratic, or both. For years, Israelis have struggled with the questions of where to draw the line and, as Gorenberg's book highlights, how much new land can be settled without endangering Israel's Jewish and democratic character.

Gorenberg maintains that the settlements have "undone the [1949] partition of the contested land" such that Jews and Arabs now live "intermixed" in the same territory. This is a curious way of describing the constant violence that surrounds the settlements and the harsh oppression of the Palestinians they entail. According to Gorenberg, "While the settlements are not the only reason that diplomatic efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have been frustrated, they have complicated the task of drawing new partition lines as part of such a resolution." This is an understatement -- in fact, the settlements have become a major obstacle to any reasonable agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

The settlements have also caused more harm than Gorenberg acknowledges, to Palestinians and Israelis alike. Financially, settlement building has eaten up considerable resources that could have been used to improve social services in Israel proper. As a consequence, in recent years the quality of Israel's educational and health services -- once among the state's major achievements -- has dropped. Big pockets of poverty have replaced social equality, another erstwhile source of pride.

At the same time, continued human rights violations in the occupied territories have brutalized Israeli society in almost all spheres and badly damaged Israel's image abroad. The conflict has also dangerously deepened the rift between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel. And it has led to repeated waves of Palestinian terrorism and Israeli reprisals, which have killed thousands of Israelis and Palestinians.

Since 1967, more and more Israelis have come to understand the risks of occupation, which is why most Israelis supported the dramatic event that Gorenberg uses to close his book: Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's August 2005 pullout from Gaza. But Gorenberg, noncommittal to the end, carefully avoids judging the wisdom of Sharon's move. "It may be recorded as the act that revived peace efforts," he writes, "or as the intermezzo before a new battle over the torn land."

Nobody will ever know where Sharon, who suffered a massive stroke in late 2005, would have taken the Israeli-Palestinian conflict next. It is unlikely, however, that he would have come to terms with the Palestinians, especially after Hamas swept the Palestinian legislative elections in January. All his life, Sharon has regarded the Palestinians as enemies, not potential partners. The unilateral pullout from Gaza was the act of a general withdrawing under fire, not that of a statesman suddenly operating in the name of peace.

Nevertheless, the pullout was the first evacuation of settlements from what is considered to be the biblical land of Israel. Breaking that almost sacred taboo may be Sharon's most important achievement. Some withdrawal from the West Bank is now likely to follow, although certain settlements (especially around Jerusalem) are unlikely to disappear. Such changes may not resolve the conflict, but they might make life somewhat easier for both Palestinians and Israelis. Israelis can thank Sharon for showing them that giving up settlements can be relatively painless; although the Gaza settlers themselves suffered considerable hardship, the rest of the country experienced no national trauma. In the long run, the Gaza settlements will have left no imprint on Israel's national endeavor; in the history of Zionism, they hardly deserve a footnote. If anything, dismantling them may have been the first step in a return to the Zionist realism that Israel abandoned after 1967.

The Facts on the Ground

New Republic

By Gadi Taub

4/10

The Accidental Empire:

Israel and the Birth of the Settlements, 1967-1977 By Gershon Gorenberg (Henry Holt, 454 pp., \$30) `The settlers have no human rights," complained Rabbi Yoel Bin-Nun in Ha'aretz a few months before the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was about to expel Jewish settlers from their homes, and all the defenders of democratic values, the rabbi bitterly protested, were indifferent. This proves, he said, that "there is only one sector in Israel to which human rights don't apply, and that's the settlers." With his biblical prophet's beard and visionary's gaze, Bin-Nun is a longtime veteran of the religious settlement movement. And though he has often been controversial among his peers-- after Yitzhak Rabin's assassination he threatened to reveal the names of rabbis who had indirectly encouraged violence against Rabin--this time he was not alone.

The campaign that the settlers waged against the Gaza disengagement was full of denunciations of the plan as a subversion of democracy and its values. Sharon was making a mockery of democratic procedure, they thundered, in defying not just his party's platform but also the referendum that it held among members, in which the plan was rejected. There was no choice, some leaders of the settlers' movement concluded, but to follow the example of Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi and resist, by means of civil disobedience, the attempt of the government to run roughshod over their civil rights. This was a rather surprising argument to hear from the ideological enthusiasts for Israel's occupation, and it struck many Israelis as tactical and cynical. The attempt to ground an occupation in human rights is

something of a stretch. But in fact Bin-Nun, and many of the settlers, were far from cynical. Behind their sudden outburst of democratic passion there was a deep sense of betrayal, and a genuine bewilderment. Given the origins of religious settlement, and the inner logic of its long struggle, this latest stand may be less surprising than it seems. And now, when it looks as if Israel's occupation may be drawing to a close sooner rather than later, is a good time to reflect on its beginning. This is what Gershom Gorenberg's book sets out to do. It deals with a neatly demarcated period of ten years, almost to the month, all of it under Labor Party rule: from the Six Day War in 1967, when Israel acquired the territories, to the fall of Labor in 1977. This was a truly decisive period: by the time Menachem Begin and the Likud took power, settlements were already planted in the Golan Heights, Judea and Samaria (the West Bank), the Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula. Gorenberg's central argument is that the settlement of the occupied territories was a collaborative effort: the work of an old ruling party and a new religious movement. At first, in the great euphoria that followed the victory in 1967, amid the astonishing relief from the long sense of siege, the two partners scarcely noticed their differences. Both saw the Western Wall, the magnificent deserts of Judea and Sinai, and the ancient sites of biblical Samaria through teary, myth-struck eyes. The aging party, nostalgic for its vigorous youth, looked favorably on the younger religious movement, pioneering the new frontiers as Labor itself had pioneered the old ones under Turkish and then British rule. To be sure, there were significant differences. Concerned about international pressure against annexation, Labor's plans for settlement were more careful and hesitant, and they sometimes clashed with the messianic impatience of the younger religious movement. And the messianic impatience in those giddy days was indeed great. The theological origins of the settlers' eschatological passion were to be found in the thought of Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook, who was a kind of Orthodox Jewish Hegelian. Orthodoxy had mostly viewed Zionism as a violation of God's punishment: God sent his children to exile, and they were not to return before the messiah called upon them to do so. But Kook saw secular Zionism and its Orthodox adversaries as the unexpected elements of a larger synthesis that lay in the future. And Kook's son, Rabbi Tzvi Yehudah Hacohen Kook, with whom many of the early settler activists studied, thought that the future envisioned by his father had arrived. The "miracle" of the lightning victory of 1967 was proof of it, and an unveiling of its course: it would proceed through the "redemption" of the land. In Kook the son's teaching, settlement was "heaven's politics," and no earthly politics could ever stand against it. No wonder, then, that Labor was no match for the movement's zeal. Labor, in Gorenberg's account, was both sluggish and divided. It failed to answer the basic question that Lyndon Johnson had posed to Prime Minister Levi Eshkol after the war: what kind of Israel do you want? Eshkol thought that it was too early to tell. For the time being, the Arabs were not willing to negotiate, and so Israel could stay put. But his party could not even make up its mind about what staying put meant. It had a weak dovish faction, which opposed settlement but waged no effective battle against a policy that was never openly and clearly articulated. And there was a stronger hawkish faction, itself torn between two competing conceptions. One, later dubbed the Jordanian Option and first advanced by Yigal Allon, the hero of the War of Independence, favored settling the Jordan Valley; the idea was to surround the densely populated Arab mountain ridge, and later connect it through a land corridor to Jordan. The other, advanced by Moshe Dayan, the hero of the Six Day War, was virtually the opposite. Dayan favored what Gorenberg calls an "invisible occupation": settling the mountain ridge so as to prevent territorial concessions, and dealing with the Arab population--no official dared call them Palestinians in those days--by a combination of formal Jordanian citizenship and de facto Israeli colonial rule. Economic integration was central to Dayan's plan; he imagined a benevolent and

pragmatic colonialism, which first and foremost meant a steady improvement in material conditions. Given this competition within Labor, religious settlers eager to settle the whole of the territories could maneuver between the two plans, as well as manipulate a divided cabinet; and the three together--religious messianism, the Allon plan, and the Dayan plan--produced a haphazard dotting of the territories. Disagreements among the three, and between them and doves of all shades, mattered little, in Gorenberg's telling. Israel felt invincible after the Six Day War, and everyone could get along under the same triumphalist umbrella. The first settlement in the West Bank was a stark demonstration of this: it resurrected Gush Etzion, and could be understood as a "return home" in more than one sense. Close to the cease-fire line of 1949 (known as the Green Line), the place was previously populated by Jews and lost to Jordan in 1948. It was also part of the biblical Land of Israel. Hanan Porat, the "first settler," who initiated the return to Gush Etzion shortly after the Six Day War, was literally returning home: he had been evacuated from the place in the War of Independence. He was a small child then, but a paratrooper in this recent war, and also a student of Kook. Labor performed a role too, in the good old-fashioned pre-state way: it played hide-and-seek with the superpowers. To avoid international pressure against annexation, Eshkol announced that Gush Etzion was to be a military outpost, which, unlike a civil settlement, is legal under international law. Not all later settlements were so well tailored to suit so many people's different aspirations. But in the first six years of settlement, confusion, high spirits, short-sightedness, and nostalgia made friction between the Israeli factions manageable. Then came the surprise attack of the Yom Kippur War, and the great euphoria was abruptly shattered. Gorenberg's chapter about those dark days is particularly strong in conveying the shock. Underprepared and overconfident, Israel barely managed, with emergency American assistance, to stem the tide of enemy forces. In the grim mood after the war, under a tottering Labor government, religious settlers redoubled their efforts at awakening the country from its paralysis. Settlement was helped again by internal divisions in the severely weakened Labor government: Prime Minister Rabin, who resisted expansion into densely populated Samaria, was undermined by his own minister of defense, Shimon Peres, who did more than turn a blind eye to illegal settlement. He helped it creep in by establishing what became known as "facts on the ground." The settlers slowly but steadily gained more ground, and then, in 1977, Labor fell. Written on the border between history, journalism, and literature, Gorenberg's book itself stays close to the ground: it provides personal points of view, biographies, anecdotes, reconstructed dialogues, and a great deal of speculation about his characters' psychological makeup. This makes the narrative somewhat difficult to follow if one is not already well acquainted with the terrain. But the book does have a thesis, not quite argued for but implied throughout. It is that Zionism and the religious settlers' movement are two variations on the same theme, which is "romantic nationalism." Nationalism is Gorenberg's central category, and it includes Labor Zionism, Zionist Socialism, Palestinian terrorism, religious settlers, Begin's Likud, Hamas, and much else. This makes it a blunt instrument of political analysis, but it helps the thesis hold together. At bottom Gorenberg more or less accepts the religious settlers' notion of history, which was designed to persuade Israelis that the occupation is a direct continuation of mainstream political Zionism. This notion has also been adopted in recent years by post-Zionist historians, though for the opposite purposes: the settlers equate Zionism and occupation to legitimate their hold on the territories, while the post-Zionists do the same to delegitimize Zionism as a whole. Gorenberg's book is a soft version of the latter. Rather than a frontal attack on Zionism as a creed, the culprit that gradually emerges from his narrative seems to be "nationalism," and both Labor Zionism and religious messianism are implicated in its sins. As with the settlers and the post-Zionists,

much of the argument about the continuity of the early Labor pioneers and the later religious pioneers rests on an underestimation of ideology and an overestimation of "ethos" and practice. Large portions of Gorenberg's book deal with the details of settlement activity and with the romance of the land. The settlers' theology of redemption is laid out in a scattershot way and under the fuzzy heading of religious nationalism; but secular Zionism never receives a sustained treatment. Its dominant representative in the book is Yitzhak Tabenkin, the old sage of the Kibbutz Hameuhad movement. Tabenkin is useful for Gorenberg because as a leader of the kibbutz movement he was a true son of Labor Zionism--but he was also an enthusiast for Greater Israel. The implication is clear: Labor Zionism is nationalism in the same way that the settlement movement is nationalism. As Gorenberg's narrative progresses, however, one wonders about the disproportional stress on Tabenkin, and about the almost complete disappearance of other central figures in Labor Zionism who were critical of the occupation, and therefore less useful to Gorenberg's facile equation; and most of all one wonders about the absence of David Ben-Gurion. He, too, was highly critical of the occupation. Ben-Gurion is far too central simply to ignore, so Gorenberg does mention his views: he explains that the poet Nathan Alterman "changed his view, criticizing Ben-Gurion's declared willingness to give up the West Bank." This is an odd way to discuss a figure of Ben-Gurion's magnitude; he was surely more than a footnote to a poet. Gorenberg seems to sense this, and so he adds that in supporting Greater Israel "Alterman was also following Ben-Gurion's lead: The founding father was known for asserting that the Bible was the Jewish deed to the Land of Israel"; but this is sloppy and a little mischievous. It is hard to say to whom exactly Ben-Gurion asserted this, but he was unquestionably the author of Israel's Declaration of Independence, in which he stubbornly resisted, despite pressures and ultimatums by religious Zionists, any mention of God or his biblical covenant. What the Declaration does spell out are the foundations of secular Zionism, from Herzl on, and had Gorenberg attended to them he would have discovered that Ben-Gurion's opposition to the occupation was grounded in the very essence of Zionism. The anecdotal style of Gorenberg's book, together with his failure to consider other historical interpretations, gives the reader little clue of the extent to which the book is ideologically driven in advancing its thesis. But anyone familiar with Israel's history will easily detect its principles of historical selection. Critics of the occupation are marginalized or not mentioned at all, and their arguments are off-handedly presented. Carefully limiting the focus to "settlement," the book downplays the fact that the controversy was not just about settlement, but more largely about occupation. And Gorenberg's decision to confine his account to the decade between 1967 and 1977 obscures the fact that the real political story, the massive settlement of the territories, began in earnest only in 1977. Likud almost tripled the number of settlers in the West Bank and Gaza in its first four years. There were some six thousand Israelis in the territories when Labor fell. By the time of the withdrawal from Gaza almost thirty years later, they numbered a quarter of a million. Gorenberg is certainly right to point out that Labor was implicated in the origins of settlement. But contrary to his insinuations, it was not because Labor was so tenaciously Zionist. Quite the contrary. It was because Labor was not tenaciously Zionist enough: it departed from its own creed and allowed the occupation to creep in. Reducing Zionism to a vague "nationalist" sentiment makes Israel's later politics almost incomprehensible: why, if religious-settler nationalism and secular nationalism are such close fellows, did the controversy that tore Israel apart ever erupt? The history of the settlers' movement is, to a great extent, the story of its attempts to deny, exactly as Gorenberg does, the divergence between secular Zionism and religious redemption, between the early pioneers and the later pseudo-pioneers. At first the problem did not seem that

pressing. In the initial burst of messianic enthusiasm generated by Tzvi Yehudah Hacoen Kook's teachings and the "miracle" of the 1967 victory, it was abundantly clear to settlers that a great religious revival of the entire Jewish people was just around the corner. So early friction with the government was a temporary matter, soon to be resolved. Settlement would move ahead, and the rest of the country would follow. In that mood, in April 1968, a group of settlers led by Rabbi Moshe Lvinger came to settle Hebron. Armed with a temporary permit from the military governor of the territories that allowed them to celebrate the Passover seder in town, they rented rooms in a local hotel. When the holiday was over, they just stayed on. The military was baffled, and the cabinet was split. Dayan, then defense minister, arranged for a compromise that allowed the settlers to stay in the military governor's building until a permanent solution was found, and Allon later found it. He pushed through a government decision to construct a Jewish neighborhood near the old city. But shared goals on a local scale were not the same as a great national reconciliation in the cause of a people's redemption, which still failed to materialize. As time wore on, cracks and differences became apparent. They became glaring after the Yom Kippur War. The harsh new facts set new limits on Israeli policy. There was a high price to pay for hubris, and this weighed heavily on Golda Meir's and then on Rabin's government. For the settlers, though, the cure was not political sobriety, but a more intense campaign for religious awakening. They founded an extra-parliamentary political movement called Gush Emunim, or the Bloc of the Faithful, and set out to teach Israelis to trust in God and His providence. But most Israelis were in no mood for it, and what previously seemed like minor disagreements turned in the mid-1970s into a series of confrontations over the hills of Samaria. A growing number of Israelis watched with alarm as the Israeli army had to use force to evacuate settlers. The nation became very familiar with a verse from the eighth chapter of Isaiah, a religious chant that was transformed into a slogan of religious settlement: "Hatch a plot, it shall be foiled; agree on action, it shall not proceed; for God is with us!" As clashes escalated, the settlers found it increasingly necessary to explain that Zionism, and not just God, was on their side, and that it was Labor that had departed from the old standard. Emphasizing the means and ignoring the ends, as Gorenberg does, they began insisting more vocally on the Zionist continuity of their project. Wasn't Zionism always about returning to Zion? Wasn't it always about redeeming the land by settling it? But Labor knew that secular Zionism, classical Zionism, was not about redeeming land, it was about redeeming people. Zionism, as the Declaration of Independence asserted, rested on the right of Jews, "like all peoples," to self-determination. And therefore its democratic state could not be permitted to turn into a permanent colonial enterprise without undermining its own foundations. Only two months after the 1967 war, Amos Oz wrote an essay in the Labor Party's newspaper, Davar--an essay that Gorenberg discusses without clarifying its argument--in which he defined the line over which Israel's electorate would later split: if Zionism is about the liberation of people, it would eventually have to abandon the territories. If it is about redeeming land, it will end up enslaving people. But such considerations did not trouble the settlers, because settlement, as Rabbi Shlomo Aviner explained, stood above "human-moral considerations." It was, as Rabbi Kook the son had taught, the politics of heaven. Yet earthly politics often frustrated it, and the continuity argument had to abandon Labor in favor of Likud in order to keep blurring the difference between redemption and Zionism. If Labor was no longer "Zionist" enough, the hawkish Likud (the one party for which the term "romantic nationalism" in the European sense properly applies) would carry the torch instead. Settlement on the occupied land and Zionism could once again look alike under the auspices of a hawkish national security argument. There was good reason for the settlers to rejoice when Begin was elected, and Begin himself made a point of

giving his first speech after election day in a settlement. And yet, despite the honeymoon with Likud, the scene was set for a clash early on. Begin, who made Zionism and redemption sound so much alike, began negotiating a peace deal with Egypt based on the principle of land for peace. Gush Emunim experienced his diplomacy as the split with Labor all over again. The Faithful retorted with a "Master Plan for Settling Judea and Samaria." The first clause of the plan opens with a declaration that settling is a mitzvah, a religious commandment. Then it explains the means for making the state fulfill its religious obligation: the very means of traditional Zionism, namely creating facts on the ground. While Begin was still at Camp David, having signed the accord with Sadat, the settlers created another fact on the ground, an ad hoc settlement near Nablus, the biblical Shechem, in the heart of an area densely populated with Palestinians. And under Begin, the army evacuated them. Begin tried to heal the rift. He would follow through on the peace accord, but he would also find a place near Shechem that would satisfy the settlers. Such a place was found on privately owned Arab land, a fact which at first did not seem to matter much. Israel had already confiscated private land in the territories for the purpose of settlement, and the Supreme Court upheld this practice, so long as the state insisted that it was a requirement of security. But this time things got complicated. The state failed to make a convincing case for its security concern, and one of the settlers, Menachem Felix, submitted a brief to the court, dismissing the whole case the state made on his behalf. This was not a matter of security, Felix said, it was a matter of the Jewish right to settle the land, as God had promised. He based his case on quotations from the Bible. The court was exceedingly polite. It was deeply impressed, it said, with the sincerity of the settlers' religious beliefs, but as an institution of the sovereign state, "in which halakha [Jewish religious law] takes effect only to the extent which the secular law permits, we are obliged to put the law of the state into action." The court ordered the settlement dismantled. Begin was deeply dismayed, but he announced that he would follow the court's decision. The settlers were more than dismayed. They were shocked. The state had refused to speak the language of redemption. At the margins, some settlers concluded they should stick to redemption over and against the state's resistance. The so-called Jewish Underground killed a number of Palestinian civilians until it was exposed and charged with a number of crimes in 1984. But the mainstream of the settlers concluded that if the state could not speak the language of redemption, redemption would have to learn to speak the secular language of the state. The movement's political center of gravity shifted from Gush Emunim to a newly created body called the Yesha Council. ("Yesha" is the Hebrew acronym for Judea, Samaria, and Gaza.) The council's platform espoused the same political plan as Gush Emunim's master plan, with one important difference: it contained no religious terms whatever. The continuity argument was reduced to secular terminology, forcing the language of redemption underground. This tendency was reinforced by the fact that confidence in redemption would soon sustain another blow: despite Tzvi Yehudah Kook's promise that there would be "no backtracking" in the process of salvation, the Sinai Peninsula and its settlements were evacuated in 1982, a few weeks after the rabbi's death. Yet there was a danger in narrowing the argument for settlement to security, and more thoughtful settlers, Yoel Bin-Nun among them, sensed it. Reducing the whole enterprise to its material aspect threatened to dispel its lofty spirit. Having concluded that settlement overrides ordinary moral considerations--in other words, that it justifies occupation--the settlers had to insist on the higher moral ground. The argument from security offered no such higher ground. Without a clear message of redemption, the enterprise of settlement would be no more spiritual than the spartan militarism of Yitzhak Shamir, Ariel Sharon, or Benjamin Netanyahu. And this was not how the settlers saw themselves. But blending security arguments with messianic

theology kept raising the specter of fanaticism and fundamentalism. First there was the Jewish Underground, which tried to stop the evacuation of Sinai; then there was the Hebron massacre in 1994, in which a settler named Baruch Goldstein murdered twenty-nine Muslims at prayer and wounded more than a hundred in an attempt to stop the Oslo process; and finally, in 1995, there was the Rabin assassination. The settlers were in a bind: speaking the language of hawks threatened to turn the settled land barren, while breathing the spirit of redemption into it meant new violence whenever the state departed from God's plan. The overlapping of political Zionism and religious redemption--the common ground of national security interest--became a minefield. After the failure of the Camp David negotiations in 2000, and renewed Palestinian violence, and then the September 11 attacks in the United States, it was mostly the war on terrorism that promised to keep the settlers' security argument alive: settlement was portrayed as a form of resistance to terrorism. The common ground between religious Zionism and political Zionism was growing narrower. And then, abruptly, in December 2003, it disappeared. Just when it seemed as if the tide was turning against partition, because concessions were held to encourage terrorism, Ariel Sharon, the arch-hawk, the grand creator of "facts on the ground," announced that he would unilaterally move out of Gaza. Nobody pretended that the immorality of occupation had led Sharon to his startling reversal. What transformed the hawk into some sort of dove was his view of the nation's safety. Now the security argument was turned persuasively against settlement, against redemption. Some rabbis called upon religious soldiers to disobey orders of evacuation. Others called for breaking all ties with secular Zionism. But most religious people did not want to go that far, and their only resort was the Supreme Court. They submitted a barrage of petitions on every ground except the ground of redemption, which they knew by then that the court would not accept. They said that giving up land betrayed the very essence of Zionism. The court threw that out. The essence of Zionism, it said, was a democratic Jewish state, and re-drawing borders in an attempt to preserve that essence is within the power of an elected government. The settlers contended that withdrawal from Gaza would reward terrorism and recklessly endanger Israel. The court threw that out, too. The government, it ruled, was a better authority on security than the settlers, and so the court had no business overruling both cabinet and parliament on that score. Finally there was nothing to which the settlers could appeal other than the doctrine of human rights, which has a quasi-constitutional status in Israel and can serve as a basis for judicial review. The only argument on behalf of settlement that might still make sense to the state was its higher law, in which Zionism was grounded originally: democracy and self-determination. Here was something the court would appreciate, and the settlers brought it enthusiastically. It was a dare: how will the state now deny the very considerations on the basis of which it had limited settlement all along? The court took the challenge seriously. A flood of legal precedents was rained upon the settlers. The 320-page court decision recapitulated the entire history of the rift between the ideal of redemption and the ideal of sovereignty. Dryly formal, but also pedagogically precise, the court explained the lesson of history: time and again, it reminded the petitioners, the confiscation of Arab lands and the violation of Arab rights were justified on security grounds. So what was so new about the withdrawal from Gaza? The state was doing only what it did on behalf of settlers many times before: confiscating land and violating rights--but this time, the land and the rights belonged to the settlers. And it was doing this to the settlers for the very same reasons it had done this for the settlers: national interest, national security. The court's massive opinion came down to this: once you have agreed that democracy should yield to security, you cannot argue that security should yield to democracy. The withdrawal was legally upheld. After Gaza, it was no longer possible to identify

political Zionism with messianic settlement. But the old kind of religious confidence was long gone. It was replaced by confusion and outrage: from the settlers' point of view, the language of sovereignty to which they grudgingly submitted so as to preserve the project of redemption did not return the favor. It betrayed them. And it was guilty of more than violating human rights. It violated theology. Redemption had bowed its head to the state, and the state had hurled it to the ground. Hence the righteous anger at Sharon, at the court, at the state, and the attempt to argue that they did not play fair. The settlers' insistence on democratic fairness was an admission of defeat. There was no longer anything else to which they could appeal. And so the withdrawal, despite all kinds of threats, ended in a whimper. No civil war, no mass conscientious objection, only many tears. Ideologically speaking, the struggle to square occupation with Zionism was over. One need only look to the political plans of Sharon's new party, in a document leaked to the press before Sharon's stroke, to see how clear this had become. The overarching goal of Zionism, the Kadima plan explains, was always a democratic Jewish state; and for this reason, it asserts, the withdrawal from Gaza was a fulfillment of Zionist principles, not a transgression against them. Israel must forsake territory if it is to hold together its democracy and its Jewish character, which cannot work without a Jewish majority. It took forty long years for Zionism to re-assert its Declaration of Independence and return to its moral grounding in the "natural right" of self-determination. And finally, through the agency of the great patron of the settlements, it did.

--Gadi Taub teaches in the Department of Communications and the School for Public Policy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is the author of *A Dispirited Rebellion: Essays on Contemporary Israeli Culture*.

Happy Warrior

National Review

By Mark Steyn

4/10

If I were a Palestinian, I'd occasionally wonder what I had to do to get a bad press.

Elect a terrorist government explicitly committed to the destruction of Israel? No, no, no, don't jump to conclusions, explains Bill Clinton. It's just a vote for better municipal services.

Send my daughter to explode in an Israeli restaurant? Oh, well, shrug the experts, it's an act born of "desperation" and "frustration." You have to remember Palestinians don't have any tanks, so they have to make do with what the mayor of London's favorite imam calls "the children bomb."

So the events of March 14th are no surprise. Under something called the 2002 Ramallah Agreement, various Palestinian prisoners were being held at a jail in Jericho under the supervision of American and British monitors. The jailbirds were wanted by Israel for the murder of a cabinet minister in 2001, but in order to keep "the peace process" "on track" Ariel Sharon had been prevailed upon to agree to this carefully brokered international agreement permitting the men to remain under the care of the Palestinian Authority.

Then Hamas gets elected and decides it's not going to honor this agreement and,

with the prisoners' day of liberation at hand, things get a bit sticky at the jail for the Anglo-American supervisors.

So one Tuesday the British team on duty tell the Palestinians they're off to get the car fixed, and no sooner have they gone than an Israeli team swoop in, seize the men, and announce they'll be tried back in the Zionist Entity. When the Palestinian locals find out, they react in the usual way -- torching the British Council offices in Gaza, etc.

Back in London, the media were outraged. At the Brits, that is. The Guardian's Seumas Milne blamed foreign secretary Jack Straw for "the humiliation of the Palestinian president" and "the undermining of efforts to form a viable Palestinian administration" and "the seizure of an elected political leader regarded by many Palestinians as a national hero." On this last point, Mr. Milne conceded, sotto voce, that Ahmad Saadat was wanted for murder, but the murder in question was only that of an Israeli "racist cabinet minister." Anyway, after this episode, "Britain cannot plausibly be regarded as an honest broker in the region." Which must be bewildering to Her Majesty's Government, which under Mr. Blair has been only marginally less of a dishonest broker than the unashamedly pro-Palestinian Continentals.

The assumptions behind press coverage of the "Middle East peace process" make a fascinating study. On one hand, we're told that the Palestinians "deserve" a state (which is a decadent postmodern concept of sovereignty: The United States doesn't exist because the colonists "deserved" a state but because they went out and fought for one). On the other hand, everything they do makes clear that they're absolutely undeserving and are incapable of operating one. It was Hamas who decided to abrogate unilaterally the Ramallah Agreement, but needless to say no blame attaches to the Palestinians for this or any other infraction.

At the time of his death, for example, "President" Yasser Arafat was in something like the tenth year of his five-year term of office, yet Europeans still complained that, in the words of Sir Simon Jenkins, "America refused to acknowledge Yasser Arafat as a democrat." As for the female suicide bomber who tried to blow up the Israeli hospital whose doctors had treated her, and the new Hamas Member of Parliament best known for her inspirational video in which she instructs her remaining children (three of six having self-detonated) how to kill Jews, and all the other exemplars of Palestinian "nationalism," each new depravity by definition only proves how terrible the Israelis must be to drive people to such things.

Maybe. But it would seem more likely that, insofar as anything "drives" you to child sacrifice, it's being absolved of all responsibility for one's actions, and being treated like a child oneself for 60 years. The Palestinian people are the acme of internationalism -- that's to say, they're the only people on the face of the earth with their own U.N. agency, and, after six decades in their care, they are now the most comprehensively wrecked people on the face of the earth.

They didn't get that way by accident. Way back when, hard as it is to recall, they were a reasonably conventional ethnocultural movement promoted in relatively conventional ways -- by the tanks and jets of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, etc. But the region's thugs eventually figured out that Western indulgence of Palestinian depravity was more effective than the crack troops of Glubb Pasha's Arab Legion could ever be.

I wonder how far they can push that. After the London bombings, the city's wretched mayor, Ken Livingstone, found himself having to explain why suicide bombing on Israeli buses is a legitimate act but suicide bombing on Piccadilly buses isn't. The old joke about British Palestine was that it was the twice-promised land: Hence, today a Western democracy and a disaffected Muslim population exist in two solitudes on the same piece of real estate.

But doesn't that sum up Europe, too? And what happens when, say, Iran starts spreading a little terror startup money through France and the Netherlands the way they've done in Lebanon and Gaza? What would it take to persuade a European Muslim to blow himself up in an Amsterdam gay bar? Given the changes in the nature of Palestinian "resistance" these last 20 years, that's a question Europeans ought to be asking. In one of history's better jests, in the remaking of the Continent they're the new Jews.

Football Killing Fields

National Review

By Tom Gross

4/11

Israel is used to being singled out for unjust criticism and subjected to startling double standards by the United Nations, the European Union, much of the Western media and numerous academic bodies. But now FIFA--the supposedly nonpolitical organization that governs the world's most popular sport, soccer--is getting in on the act as well.

FIFA has condemned Israel for an air strike on an empty soccer field in the Gaza Strip that was used for training exercises by Islamic Jihad and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. This strike did not cause any injuries. But at the same time FIFA has refused to condemn a Palestinian rocket attack on an Israeli soccer field last week which did cause injuries.

With the soccer World Cup, which takes place only once every four years, just weeks away, it is a time of mounting emotion for the hundreds of millions of people across the globe who passionately follow the game.

As FIFA meets in the next few days to decide what action to take against Israel, the double standards involved could not be more obvious. Up to now FIFA, which sees itself as a purely sporting body, has gone out of its way to avoid politics, and has refrained from criticizing even the most appalling human-rights abuses connected to soccer players and stadiums.

NOT A WORD ABOUT SADDAM AND THE TALIBAN When Saddam Hussein's son Uday had Iraqi soccer players tortured in 1997 after they failed to qualify for the 1998 FIFA World Cup Finals in France, FIFA remained silent. Uday, who was chairman of the Iraqi soccer association, had star players tortured again in 1998. And in 2000, following a quarterfinal defeat in the Asia Cup, three Iraqi players were whipped and beaten for three days by Uday's bodyguards. The torture took place at the Iraqi Olympic Committee headquarters, but FIFA said nothing.

Again, FIFA simply looked the other way while the Taliban used U.N.-funded soccer

fields to slaughter and flog hundreds of innocent people who had supposedly violated sharia law in front of crowds of thousands chanting "God is great." (Afghan soccer coach Habib Ullahniazi said that as many as 30 people were executed in the middle of the field during the intermissions of a single soccer match at Kabul's Ghazi Stadium.)

FIFA equally failed to speak out when soccer stadiums in Argentina were turned into jails.

AND CHILE AND CHECHNYA FIFA's silence was no less deafening when, according to the International Red Cross, about 7,000 prisoners were detained (and some tortured) in Chile's national soccer stadium after Augusto Pinochet seized power in 1973.

Nor did the organization threaten Russia with sanctions after Chechen president Akhmad Kadyrov was murdered by a bomb explosion at Grozny's Dynamo stadium.

As for the Middle East, FIFA refused to criticize the decision to name a Palestinian soccer tournament after a suicide terrorist who murdered 31 people at a Passover celebration at the Park Hotel in Netanya in 2002. (At the tournament, organized under Yasser Arafat's auspices in 2003, the brother of the suicide bomber was given the honorary role of distributing the trophies to the winning team.)

FIFA also failed to condemn the suicide bomb at the Maxim restaurant in Haifa in October 2003 which injured three officials from the leading Israeli soccer team Maccabi Haifa.

ISRAEL IS DIFFERENT... But then last week, FIFA finally found a target worthy of its outrage, and leapt into action. That target was Israel.

The international governing body for soccer condemned the Jewish state, and announced that it was considering possible action over the Israeli air strike last week on the Gaza soccer field that had been used for terrorist training exercises. The field, which had also reportedly served as a missile launching pad, was empty at the time; the strike itself came in response to the continuing barrage of Qassam rocket attacks directed at Israeli towns and villages.

Only a couple of days earlier, one of those Qassam rockets landed on a soccer field at the Karmiya kibbutz in southern Israel, causing light injuries to one person. Several other Israeli children and adults needed to be treated for shock. The attack was claimed by the Al-Quds brigades, an armed wing of Islamic Jihad. The soccer pitch is regularly used by children and it was only a matter of luck that there were not greater injuries. (Since Israel's withdrawal from Gaza last year, several members of the kibbutz, including a ten-month-old baby, have been wounded after their homes took direct hits from Qassams. Israelis elsewhere have died after being hit by these weapons.)

... BUT NOT QASSAM ROCKETS In an interview with the Jerusalem Post, Jerome Champagne, FIFA's deputy general secretary, who had personally condemned the attack on the Palestinian soccer pitch, refused to extend a similar condemnation to the attack on the Israeli pitch.

Champagne said he had discussed the matter with FIFA president Sepp Blatter and

that a decision on what action to take against Israel would be announced soon. Champagne, a French national, also sent an official letter to the Israeli ambassador to Switzerland. (FIFA is based in Zurich.)

A FIFA condemnation of Israel is no small matter. The incredible passions that soccer arouses in most countries around the globe seem to have few boundaries. For example, it was said that the only time the guns fell silent during the Lebanese civil war was during the 1982 World Cup matches.

Individual Israelis, outraged by FIFA's blatantly one-sided decision, have been sending e-mails to FIFA asking why "they care more about the grass on an empty soccer pitch than the human lives saved by strikes on the Qassam launching pads."

ANTI-SEMITIC BANNERS AND CHANTS They have also asked where FIFA is when anti-Semitic banners go up in European soccer stadiums, and there are chants from spectators about sending Jews to the gas? And where, they wonder, are the FIFA sanctions against the Arab or Asian countries that refuse to allow Israel to compete in Asia?

Other questions have been raised, too--why, for instance, FIFA has moved games from Israel because guest teams were afraid to come to Israel, but has never banned any other national teams from playing home games on account of local Islamic violence. Indonesia, Pakistan, Egypt, Turkey were allowed to continue playing matches at home.

In response to some of this criticism Champagne--perhaps unaware of the phenomena of some radical Jews being at the forefront of whipping up hate against the Jewish state--wrote to the Jerusalem Post saying he couldn't possibly be biased against Israel because his wife was Jewish.

AP FAILS TO MENTION QASSAM ATTACK In its widely circulated report on the FIFA condemnation of Israel, the Associated Press also failed to mention the Qassam rocket attack on the Israeli soccer pitch. As a result, and not for the first time, AP gave its readers around the globe an unbalanced impression of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The popularity of soccer ensured AP's story was used by dozens of news outlets--among others, Al-Jazeera, CBC News of Canada, and the Los Angeles Times. Only the Israeli press mentioned the Qassam attack on the kibbutz Karmiya soccer pitch, an attack which the Islamic Jihad website admits to carrying out.

"WE ARE NOT IN POLITICS" The outrage felt in soccer-mad Israel at these astonishing double standards is all the greater since FIFA president Sepp Blatter has made it clear that FIFA should not become involved in politics. Following calls last December from German politicians that Iran should be banned from participating in the forthcoming World Cup (which starts in Germany on June 9, 2006) because of repeated Holocaust denial by the Iranian president, Blatter said "We're not going to enter into any political declarations. We in football, if we entered into such discussions, then it would be against our statutes. We are not in politics."

Indeed so emboldened does Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad now feel by FIFA's support that he announced last week that he will likely attend Iran's opening match against Mexico in Nuremberg on June 11. Holocaust denial is a serious crime

punishable by a prison term of up to five years in Germany, but Ahmadinejad no doubt feels that powerful international bodies like FIFA will protect him.

A BLIND EYE TO DUBAI Meanwhile FIFA (and other sporting bodies) continually turn a blind eye to boycotts of Israeli sportsmen.

In February, Tal Ben Haim--the Israeli national soccer team captain, who plays his club soccer for the English Premiership team Bolton Wanderers--was banned from joining his Bolton teammates for their training matches in Dubai. FIFA pointedly ignored this. So did Bolton despite the fact that the team claims to be among the leaders of the campaign to "Kick racism out of football" in the U.K.

Only last week, another English club, West Ham, left their two Israeli players, Yossi Benayoun and Yaniv Katan, at home when they went to Dubai. FIFA naturally had nothing to say.

Whilst Israel is often slandered as an "apartheid state," (despite having several Arabs playing in its national team), Dubai has received no criticism for what appears to be a clear "apartheid" policy.

Indeed, were Israel allowed to compete against other Asian teams for a World Cup berth, rather than against the likes of England and France, the relatively strong Israeli team would most probably have been able to qualify for this year's World Cup.

RONALDINHO AIDS TERROR VICTIMS Not all is rotten in world soccer. Some individuals still seem to know right from wrong. Last week, Ronaldinho, the Brazilian superstar widely regarded as the best current player in the world, donated signed footballs and shirts to Israeli child suicide bomb survivors, saying he hoped his gifts would "warm the hearts of the children who have suffered so much."

But FIFA, meanwhile, apparently thinks it is acceptable for Palestinian terror groups to continue targeting such Israeli children, firing missiles from the Gaza Strip, even though Israel has left the area.

--Tom Gross is the former Jerusalem correspondent for the London Sunday Telegraph and New York Daily News. Among his previous pieces for NRO is "Jeningrad".

LIBYA

True to His Terrorist Ways

National Review

By Mohamed Eljahmi

4/13

This week marks the 20th anniversary of the U.S. military strike against Libya. On April 14, 1986, President Ronald Reagan ordered the U.S. Air Force to attack military targets in Libya in response to Libyan involvement in a terrorist attack on a West Berlin disco which killed two U.S. servicemen.

In a nationally televised address after the strike, Reagan declared, "Today we have

done what we had to do. If necessary, we shall do it again." He described Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's record of terrorism and subversion in Africa. He acknowledged that he bore no grudge against ordinary Libyans, "decent people caught in the grip of a tyrant."

Two decades later, little has changed. Qadhafi continues to support terrorism. While he sought Western grace for ransoming kidnapped hostages in March 2000, the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group then used the \$25 million to amplify its terrorism. According to U.S. Pacific Command, "Speedboats used in other kidnappings were allegedly bought with the money, as was a rocket launcher that killed an army captain in pursuit of the fugitives." On March 23, 2006, Qadhafi feted Hamas political leader Khalid Mishaal in Tripoli. The Libyan strongman promised to fund Hamas, even as Mishaal pledges more terrorism.

Qadhafi likewise continues his subversion in Africa. Today, former Liberian President Charles Taylor awaits trial in the Hague for crimes against humanity for his role in the Sierra Leone civil war. The Special Court for Sierra Leone issued its charges on June 4, 2003. Its indictment is instructive: "Taylor received military training in Libya from representatives of the Government of Mu'ammār al-Qadhafi. While in Libya the accused met and made common cause with [Sierra Leonean rebel leader] Foday Saybana Sankoh." Qadhafi's facilitation of the meeting contributed to the loss of as many as 75,000 civilians lives in the civil war that ravaged Sierra Leone. Unfortunately for Africans, such behavior is the rule rather than the exception. Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on September 9, 2004, Secretary of State Colin Powell declared, "Genocide has been committed in Darfur." Yet according to a January 30, 2006, U.N. Security Council report, the Libyan government continues to send weapons to Darfur in violation of the arms embargo. Libyan fighters have joined the militias. In July 2005, one faction "received 35 Land Cruiser vehicles from someone in one of the Libyan security services." As in the Philippines, so too in Sudan. Diplomatic spin might change, but Qadhafi's behavior does not.

Libyans know too well Qadhafi's insincerity. My brother, Fathi El-Jahmi, is perhaps Libya's best-known dissident. A former governor, he did the unthinkable. At the 2002 "People's Conference," he argued that reform in Libya would require free speech and democracy. Libyan security forces quickly sent him to Tripoli's notorious Abu Salim Prison. On March 12, 2004, though, Bush cited Fathi's release as a sign that Qadhafi had changed. "You probably have heard, Libya is beginning to change her attitude about a lot of things," Bush said. He got his carrot. Too bad that two weeks later, Qadhafi returned Fathi to prison.

We believe that he is at least still alive. After Libyan journalist Daif al-Ghazal criticized the government in May 2005, Libyan security kidnapped him. The next month, his mutilated body was found. While Washington condemns the murder of journalists in Lebanon, they remain silent about Libya.

The problem is broader. In February 2006, the regime organized a demonstration in Benghazi against the Danish cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. When the rioters turned their chants toward condemnations of Qadhafi, security forces opened fire, killing eleven. A subsequent sweep landed several hundred people in prison, some as young as 13.

Qadhafi is shrewd. His decision to abandon his weapons of mass destruction program

was a calculated attempt to distract Washington. He believes George W. Bush is a passing phenomenon. He has already outlasted six U.S. presidents; he can outlast Bush. Given his history, the flow of hard currency into his Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and his control over all levers of power in Libya, he can quickly resurrect his weapons programs after Bush leaves office. He certainly has not engaged in any systematic or institutional reform.

At his second inauguration, President Bush declared, "It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world." Please, Mr. President. For my brother, for the Libyan people, and for the security of my adopted country, the United States, don't let Libya be an exception.

--Mohamed Eljahmi is a Boston-based Libyan American activist.

UNITED NATIONS

Another U.N. 'Reform'

Weekly Standard
By Anne Bayefsky
4/17

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION HAS DECIDED not to run for a seat on the new U.N. Human Rights Council. The election, scheduled to take place in New York on May 9, is shaping up to be a nightmare for the United Nations, so there was good reason not to lend it credibility. But the real question is not whether the council will be inept, or whether it will use U.N. cover to demonize the United States and Israel while ignoring the human rights violations of the likes of China, Saudi Arabia, and Zimbabwe. The core issue is what the consequences of this fiasco should be for the American financial and political commitment to an unreformed U.N.

The council was created by the U.N. General Assembly on March 15 in a vote of 170 to 4 (United States, Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau), with 3 abstentions (Belarus, Iran, Venezuela). At the time, Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns blunted the message of the U.S. "no" vote by telling reporters, "We'll look for ways to support [it]." The State Department, in last Thursday's announcement that the United States will not seek council membership this year, reiterated, "We will support the Council and we will continue to fund it."

But Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist has a different vision of constructive multilateralism. He submitted a resolution last week calling on the president not only to eschew a seat on the council, but also to "establish an effective human rights oversight body outside the United Nations system, so as to make it the primary means for examining, exposing, monitoring, and redressing human rights abuses throughout the world." Membership in this body would be limited to states with "a demonstrated commitment to the protection of human rights."

To understand the importance of the action Frist proposes, it is necessary to be clear about what it would leave behind. There has been a massive disinformation campaign concerning the Human Rights Council, operated by General Assembly president Jan Eliasson, Secretary General Kofi Annan, and Congressman Tom Lantos,

with added muscle from Ted Turner's U.N. Foundation and financier George Soros.

Despite these efforts, the U.N. Secretariat has had to produce some unambiguous rules to govern the election process, and these clarify the situation. A U.N. document released April 4 explains that "membership of the Council shall be open to all Member States of the United Nations." No substantive criterion of eligibility reflecting respect for human rights is required for membership. The document also makes obvious who will own the U.N.'s human rights agenda: Membership "shall be based on equitable geographical distribution and seats shall be distributed among the regional groups as follows: African Group 13, Asian Group 13, Eastern European Group 6, Latin American and Caribbean Group 8, Western European and Others Group (WEOG) 7." (The United States is in the WEOG group.)

Which brings us to the candidates that have put themselves forward. First out of the gate for the African group is Algeria. And throwing their hats into the ring for the Asian group are China, Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, among others. The Latins? Cuba to start.

Congressman Lantos has expressed "outrage" that the United States isn't anxious to join the party. By running, he says, the United States could "ensure" that states with abysmal human rights records would not be elected. This ignores the facts of life at the U.N., where the United States is only one of 191 members. Feverish vote-swapping among regional groups is now in full swing for the secret-ballot election to the council, and one can be sure the horse trading has nothing to do with protecting human rights.

In another twist, countries standing for election can choose to make a public pledge that they will eventually protect human rights. In the words of the secretary general, "states wishing to be elected to the new Council will put forward their pledges and commitments to protect and promote human rights. It will be up to their fellow member states to evaluate these promises." The U.N., however, for reasons that became clear as soon as the Algerians and Cubans made their pledges, has decided not to translate these pledges, but to make them available only in their original language, thus impeding evaluation of their worth. So far, only 15 of the 42 declared candidates have made such pledges. While the U.N. budget for 2006-2007 anticipates that the organization will translate 582,781 pages (one-fifth of the cost being borne by American taxpayers), the 15 pages of pledges won't be among them.

In short, nothing has changed. The newly "reformed" human rights body of the U.N. will once again include countries that have no interest in protecting human rights; the regions of the world with the fewest democracies will hold 55 percent of the seats. Standing in the background lamenting U.S. nonparticipation are some, like Amnesty International's Irene Khan, who believe that the "gulag of our times" is Guantánamo--not the Egyptian, Syrian, Iranian, and Sudanese torture chambers--and that the business of promoting human rights is best conducted with the delinquents on the inside, enjoying the privileges of the human rights club, instead of standing outside until they reform.

Senator Frist suggests a bold new direction for the international promotion of human rights outside the United Nations. The time is ripe for such an initiative.

--Anne Bayefsky is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, a professor at Touro Law School, and the editor of EYEontheUN.org.

POLITICS & POLICY

Sixteen Words, Again

National Review

By Michael Ledeen

4/10

In Sunday's Washington Post Dafna Linzer and Barton Gellman provide their gullible readers with a reprise of one of the great myths of the runup to the Iraq war: that President Bush used blatantly false information to justify the war.

The story revolves around various claims by several intelligence services that Saddam's agents were trying to buy uranium in Africa. At least three European services--the French, the Italian, and the British--told Washington about the reported Iraqi efforts. Some of the reports were carefully described as "unconfirmed." Others were based on documents that were given to the American embassy in Rome by Italian journalists, some of which subsequently turned out to be forgeries. Still other reports were highly regarded by the Europeans, especially the British, which led President Bush to say, in his State of the Union speech (January 28, 2003): "The British Government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."

The consensus at CIA was highly critical of these reports (most CIA officials were against the war and didn't want to be blamed for it), but the White House, understandably very suspicious of the quality of CIA's information and analysis, had pushed hard to get more information. Ambassador Joe Wilson had been sent by CIA to Niger in 2002 to snoop around, at least in part because he came highly recommended by his wife, Valerie Plame, herself a CIA officer, and opposed to the war.

After Bush's State of the Union, Wilson claimed publicly that his trip had convinced him that the intelligence reports were groundless. However, he had reported privately--oddly enough in a verbal, not written, report to CIA--that a former high Nigerien official had said that the Iraqis had wanted high-level discussions about "increasing trade," which either meant uranium or goats.

Nonetheless, after the war began, Wilson's public remarks earned him celebrity status in New York and Washington, and the White House decided to try to discredit him. Accordingly, Scooter Libby was authorized to talk to select journalists (which the Washington Post editorially described as a "good leak") about some of the information that suggested Saddam was trying to get uranium in Africa. Libby's actions just showed up in a filing by Special Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, and prompted the Linzer-Gellman story.

Linzer and Gellman say, referring to the phony documents, that "the evidence Cheney and Libby selected to share with reporters had been disproved months before." And they add, in a triumphant tone reserved for the announcement of a knockout punch, that "the Bush administration and British Prime Minister Tony Blair maintained they had additional, secret evidence they could not disclose. In June, a British parliamentary inquiry concluded otherwise, delivering a scathing critique of

Blair's role in promoting the story."

But Linzer and Gellman are wrong, indeed so clearly wrong that it takes one's breath away. The British government did indeed have information about Iraqi efforts to purchase uranium in Africa, and it wasn't connected to the forgeries. And the definitive British parliamentary inquiry--the Butler Commission Report of July, 2004--not only did not deliver "a scathing critique," but totally endorsed the position of British intelligence.

The key paragraph in the Butler Report is this: We conclude that...the statements on Iraqi attempts to buy uranium from Africa in the Government's dossier, and by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons, were well-founded. By extension we conclude also that the statement in President Bush's State of the Union Address of 28 January 2003 that: "The British Government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa" was well-founded. (Page 123, Paragraph 499)

The British Intelligence Service, MI6, still stands by that story, as does the French service, the DGSE. And the two agencies did not base their assessments on the phony documents (indeed, the DGSE knew all about those documents, which were peddled and probably drafted by one or two Italian agents of theirs). According to London Sunday Times reporter Mick Smith--an outspoken critic of the American/British use of intelligence to justify the war, and an outspoken critic of Bush--the Franco/British analysis is based in part on a letter from Iraq's Ambassador to the Vatican, that specifically discussed uranium from Niger. Smith also adds the delicious tidbit that the pile of forgeries actually contained an accurate document about the visit of Saddam's man in the Vatican to Niger in 1999.

So Linzer and Gellman are entirely wrong. Bush's statement was true, and an extensive British parliamentary inquiry concluded that there was good reason for him, and Blair, to say so. Nonetheless, it is now part of the conventional wisdom to say that "the sixteen words" were a lie. How can that be? It's not as if Bush's critics need that detail in order to tear apart the bad intelligence work leading up to Operation Iraqi Freedom. There are enough errors to fill several volumes, as they have.

Part of the answer--the other part being the malevolence and sloppiness of the press--is that the White House made a total hash of the whole thing, as is their wont. Indeed, if you go back and read the painful statements regarding "the sixteen words," you will find at least one in which Steven Hadley, then deputy national-security adviser, took full "responsibility" for the sin of including those words in the State of the Union. Incredibly for the fine lawyer he is, Hadley seems to have confessed to a crime he didn't commit.

Moreover, the entire Libby operation was misconceived. The White House was reacting to Wilson's writings (and an earlier leak of his own to a New York Times columnist). Didn't they know that Wilson's actual report actually supported the president's 16 words? If they did, they should have hung him with his own two-faced actions. If they did not, it was either because they didn't press CIA for the whole story, or because CIA didn't provide it, knowing it would have helped the White House to which they were legally obliged to tell the whole truth (maybe Fitzgerald, in his poor imitation of Savanarola, might like to look into that).

Once again, when it comes to telling their own story, this administration has few peers in its ability to make a mess. Maybe they caught a bug from the Washington Post?

--Michael Ledeen, an NRO contributing editor, is most recently the author of *The War Against the Terror Masters*. He is resident scholar in the Freedom Chair at the American Enterprise Institute.

George W. Bush's To-Do List

Weekly Standard

By Fred Barnes

4/10

WHAT ARE THE ODDS that President Bush will succeed in his full-blown campaign to recover from a second-term swoon? Not good, if you consider the records of second-term presidents over the past 70 years.

Start with Franklin Roosevelt. He saw a Republican resurgence in 1938, struggled to win reelection in 1940, and was rejuvenated only by World War II. Harry Truman never recovered after the scandals and the Korean War dragged down his presidency. Democrats staged a revival in Dwight Eisenhower's second term as he limped out of office. After enormous success in 1965, the remainder of the John Kennedy/Lyndon Johnson presidency was a disaster. Watergate short-circuited Richard Nixon's second term, Iran-contra doomed Ronald Reagan's, and impeachment ruined Bill Clinton's.

Now Bush is vigorously trying to escape the fate of his predecessors. So, without any ballyhoo or even an announcement, he's mounted a four-front offensive. He's begun to overhaul his White House staff and his administration. He's inviting members of Congress, Republicans and Democrats, to meetings at the White House like never before. He's inaugurated what an aide calls an "open door policy" that includes schmoozing the press and taking questions from the public. And he intends to change his emphasis on policies and initiatives. At least he'd better.

The president's goals are quite simple. He has at least three in mind: improve relations with Congress, strengthen ties to the Republican base of voters, and quash the Democratic talking point that he and his administration are incompetent. To achieve these, he has to improve his popularity as measured by his job approval rating, since the political community and the media are obsessed with this poll number.

Whether in a slump or not, Bush or any president has extraordinary power to change the subject in Washington and indeed around the country--that is, so long as he's willing to be bold, as Bush often is. Let's examine his effort to revive his political fortunes.

* Staff shakeup. The president has a problem with firing anyone. Unlike most presidents, he's loyal to his staff, especially those who've been with him for years. Thus, it was highly significant that he allowed Andy Card to fall on his sword during a bad spell for Bush and quit as White House chief of staff. Now the president has braced himself for the pain of more staff switches. He's given the new chief, Josh

Bolten, carte blanche to make personnel changes.

They'd better be sweeping. If they are, Bush can create the aura and energy of a new presidency, one ready to overcome troubles and do big things again. The press, communications, congressional liaison, and economic policy offices at the White House may be overhauled. And should Bolten turn his attention to cabinet posts, particularly one or more of the Big Four (State, Defense, Justice, Treasury), he's likely to look first at Treasury Secretary John Snow. Snow's the only one who's not a longtime Bush ally. Rumsfeld has only known Bush since the start of the administration, but he now looks like a Bush lifer.

A spate of major firings and hirings would mesmerize the media. They'd have to cover it extensively. Of course, they'd stress the president was succumbing to the advice of critics. So what? The mere fact of widespread changes, not the press's needling, would dominate the news.

* Chats with Congress. The pace of presidential gatherings at the White House with Senate and House members has accelerated noticeably in recent weeks. Three bipartisan congressional groups that had visited Iraq were awarded private sessions with the president last week. The groups included sharp critics of Bush like Democratic senators Russ Feingold of Wisconsin and Carl Levin of Michigan. Meanwhile, Senator Ted Kennedy was invited over to discuss Bush's competitiveness initiative.

More important, though, are the president's meetings with congressional Republicans, who used to constitute his base of support on Capitol Hill. Many of them have become alienated from the president. At one session last week, Bush spent most of the meeting listening to their advice and complaints. It was time well spent.

* Open door. Along with his meetings with members of Congress, the president's off-the-record chats with small groups of Washington reporters and his Q-and-A sessions following speeches destroy the image that he's insulated and out of touch. Bush actually surprised the press when he began taking questions following a speech in Cleveland two weeks ago. The first question, however, was based on a hostile book by political writer Kevin Phillips and sought Bush's take on whether the Iraq war and the rise of terrorism are "signs of the apocalypse." Bush replied, "I haven't really thought of it that way."

The president shouldn't expect too much from his sitdowns with reporters. Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton tried to revive their flagging presidencies this way. They hoped to get reporters to like them or sympathize with them. The tactic failed.

* Policy shifts. No one should expect the president to change his policies on fundamental issues like Iraq and taxes. But there are old policies he could reemphasize and new ones he could adopt. At this point, the most important domestic issue is immigration. Bush didn't intervene when the House passed a bill in December limited to border security and has remained on the sidelines as the Senate deals with the issue.

"It wouldn't be smart to play his card too soon," a senior Bush aide said. "We will help get a vehicle off the floor of the Senate, but then engage the issue more during a [House-Senate] conference." Bush's task is huge. He needs to persuade Republicans and conservatives to accept a plan for illegal immigrants already in the

country to "earn" citizenship--or at least reconcile them to such a program.

Other issues? Bush could wage a noisy campaign for confirmation of appeals court judges and put together a tax reform plan. One thing he's sure to do is attempt to focus the nation on the terrorist threat once more.

History says all this won't revive the Bush presidency. But it's still worth doing if it aids Bush and Republicans, even a little, in warding off catastrophic defeat in the midterm election in November. And it might.

--Fred Barnes is executive editor of The Weekly Standard and author of Rebel-in-Chief (Crown Forum).

'Isolationism!' They Cried

National Review

By Jonah Goldberg

4/10

It was a typical New York Times article. Among the themes: Iraq is a disaster; it's the neocons' fault; the GOP is flirting once more with its dark addiction to "isolationism"; proof that George W. Bush is growing in office can be found in his realization that Bill Clinton's policies were right; and so on. There was only one problem with the page-one story by David E. Sanger titled "A Bush Alarm: Shun Isolation": It was a pile of nonsense.

According to Sanger, Bush has been blindsided by an "unexpected uprising" among newly isolationist neoconservatives. This "rising chorus of neo-conservatives, who urged Mr. Bush to topple Mr. Hussein, say that, having liberated Iraq, the rest is up to the Iraqis." What neoconservatives did Sanger have in mind? Well, he names only one, presumably the ringleader: William F. Buckley Jr. But the inconvenient fact is that WFB isn't a neoconservative and never urged Bush to topple Saddam Hussein. Moreover, there is no "uprising." Of the major neoconservatives who "urged" the Iraq war -- Bill Kristol, Charles Krauthammer, Reuel Mark Gerecht, Robert Kagan, Eliot Cohen, Paul Wolfowitz, Fouad Ajami -- none has called for bugging out. They've offered criticisms, to be sure, but not of an isolationist flavor. Nor have the more traditional or mainstream conservative outlets, including this magazine, offered such an opinion. In other words, WFB was ascribed to a rebellious movement he never belonged to -- and which isn't rebelling. But other than that Sanger got it just right.

Well, not really. The flaw in Sanger's analysis runs deeper than an error in ideological taxonomy. Here's a rule of thumb to keep in mind when studying the history of American foreign-policy debates in the 20th and 21st centuries. When liberals don't want to do something on the international scene that conservatives favor, it's because liberals are any of the following: prudent, pragmatic, realistic, idealistic, peace-loving, clear-eyed, moral, restrained, or all of the above. When conservatives don't want to commit to a liberal foreign-policy agenda, there's one catchall word: isolationist. And even when conservatives subscribe to the same foreign-policy agenda as liberals, they're doing it for isolationist reasons.

For example, in 2004, Franklin Foer, then a senior editor of The New Republic (he's now editor), wrote a long essay on conservatives and isolationism for the New York

Times. It began by noting that conservative columnist George Will had recently voiced some second thoughts about the Iraq War. Will's reservations, according to Foer, were "hardly surprising" given the conservative movement's isolationist history. Of course, The New Republic had itself supported the Iraq invasion as much as Will had, if not more so, in 2002 and 2003, and had subsequently come to have grave and strident second thoughts. But no one would suggest -- least of all The New Republic's editors -- that they were retreating into isolationism. George Will's second thoughts are apparently driven by whispers from the America First Committee, while The New Republic's doubts are the stuff of wisdom and clear thinking.

This nasty idea, a defining theme of elite conventional wisdom, works its way into everything from popular culture to highbrow political commentary. And it's a lie. Or, more accurately, it's a half-truth, which is the most pernicious kind of lie. Of course there were, are, and always will be isolationists on the American right. But isolationism isn't a uniquely conservative phenomenon, nor is it written into conservative DNA. If anything, isolationism's natural home is within the mainstream of the Democratic party and New Republic liberalism.

1920 AND ALL THAT It all begins with the Treaty of Versailles and the Republican-led refusal to ratify it. It should be remembered that the Republican party was not then a "conservative" party as we understand that term today. It was Republican Teddy Roosevelt who launched the Progressive party, and the GOP was on the whole more interventionist than the Democrats during that era. Woodrow Wilson promised to keep America at peace and insisted -- correctly -- that a vote for the GOP was a vote for getting entangled in a foreign war. Wilson eventually dragged America into that war, justifying it on absurdly idealistic grounds (far more idealistic than anything George W. Bush, super-democrat, has said). When Republicans, led by their Senate leader Henry Cabot Lodge, opposed the treaty, critics assailed them as "isolationists." But what usually gets omitted from the story, as David Frum has noted, is that Lodge had agreed to ratify Wilson's other treaty. This treaty would have committed the United States to defending France if she were attacked by Germany. In the end, Wilson refused to submit it to the Senate because a) he was a feckless, egocentric crybaby and b) he feared it would lead to America's getting too involved in European affairs.

Confused? It gets worse. Consider the muckraking journalist John T. Flynn, widely seen as the heart and soul of right-wing isolationism in the 1930s. The head of the New York chapter of the America First Committee, Flynn was a tireless and ubiquitous champion of non-intervention abroad and a relentless critic of Wall Street and big business at home. Guess where Flynn made his name? At The American Mercury? The Freeman? Some other oracle of the imagined paleoconservative past? Nope. The New Republic. He wrote a column there for nearly a decade called "Other People's Money." Flynn left The New Republic because of his opposition to FDR and his advocacy of non-interventionism. And while it's true that in the 1930s "right-wing" was often defined as "anti-FDR," serious observers would hardly claim that Flynn moved unambiguously to the right.

Indeed, throughout the 1930s, The New Republic had subscribed to that "enlightened" form of isolationism we call "pacifism," and to people like Flynn it was The New Republic that moved right by embracing militarism. Before Flynn broke with The New Republic, it had ridiculed those who thought you could "end war by waging war." "On the contrary," it editorialized in 1937, "nothing is more likely than that the United States would go fascist through the very process of organizing to defeat the

fascist nations." This was the heart and soul of Flynn's opposition to intervention. Not surprisingly, his allies in the isolationist cause were other liberals who thought they were staying loyal to liberal principles. This group included American Socialist party leader Norman Thomas, longtime Nation editor Oswald Garrison Villard, Charles Beard, John Dewey, Joseph Kennedy, Bernard Baruch, and Progressive hero Robert La Follette.

In fairness, isolationism, or non-interventionism, was a defensible position before Pearl Harbor, and before it became clear that isolationism would lead to the triumph of Hitler. The memory of the transcendently stupid First World War was still fresh in American minds. There was an enlightened bipartisan consensus that such hell should not be revisited, and isolationism was the smart stance among politically ambitious liberals. John F. Kennedy, who was a junior member of the America First Committee when at Choate, sent the AFC \$100 while he was at Harvard with a note saying, "What you are all doing is vital." Kennedy's older brother Joe was the head of the isolationist group at Harvard. Sargent Shriver -- who would become JFK's brother-in-law, the founder of the Peace Corps, and George McGovern's running mate -- was a member of an AFC-affiliated youth group. Gore Vidal headed up the AFC youth chapter at Exeter.

The Left relentlessly throws Charles Lindbergh in conservative faces as proof of the Right's supposed isolationist -- and anti-Semitic -- heritage. Much of this involves shabby historical analysis: Lindbergh's acclaimed biographer, Scott Berg, couldn't find any evidence that Lindy was a virulent anti-Semite. Claims otherwise rest almost entirely on one lamentable but brief passage in one speech, in which Lindbergh alleged that Jews, capitalists, and British sympathizers were pushing America into war. His final trip to Germany in the 1930s was in behalf of German Jewry: He hoped to persuade Hermann Goering to let the Jews emigrate. As for Lucky Lindy's isolationism, his arguments were based on the prevailing liberal arguments at the time, as well as a fondness for Germany and its culture that was hardly unique, let alone "right-wing." Lindbergh's faith in the reasonableness of Nazis was surely foolish, but, again, such faith was not "right-wing" in any meaningful sense. But even if we were to accept the conventional view of Lindbergh as bogeyman, what of it? Lindbergh's contribution to conservative thought amounts to exactly nil.

One can hardly say the same thing of Messrs. Beard, Dewey, La Follette, and Kennedy, not to mention The New Republic. More important, isolationism has always flourished openly on the left, particularly since the dawn of the Cold War. Even many of the leading Republican isolationists -- William Borah and Hiram Johnson, for example -- were in fact progressive populists who mostly voted with the New Deal. The current refrain about Bush's "lying" us into a "war for oil" has its roots in the writings of Charles Beard, who was convinced that FDR had orchestrated the war and even Pearl Harbor. In 1965, the dean of Big Brain Liberalism, Walter Lippmann, argued that "our true vital interests" were at home. Anticipating his critics, Lippmann proclaimed, "If it is said that this is isolationism, I would say yes. It is isolationism if the study of our own vital interests and a realization of the limitations of our own power is isolationism. It is isolationism as compared with the globalism which became fashionable after the Second World War."

Bill Clinton's execrable mentor, Sen. William J. Fulbright, was an unapologetic isolationist who found America to blame for every international problem. He sought to de-fund Radio Free Europe on the grounds that it was too unsettling to the Soviets. In 1969, when Richard Nixon said that Fulbright represented the rise of the

"new isolationists," the senator didn't deny it, but responded that "the greatest threat to peace and domestic tranquility is not in Hanoi, Moscow, or Peking, but in our colleges and in the ghettos of cities throughout the land."

It was George McGovern who ran on the explicitly isolationist mantra "Come Home, America." And it was Democratic senator Frank Church, inspired by his role model and fellow Idahoan William Borah, who joined with Fulbright to put that slogan into action. The Democrats routinely opposed international assertiveness. They voted to abandon the South Vietnamese (Church cosponsored that legislation), they hobbled the CIA (again, thank you, Senator Church), they opposed Reagan's arms buildup (though not Carter's), and they turned a blind eye to Communist incursions in Nicaragua. It was the Democratic party that stood opposed to the first Gulf War. In the 1990s, Democrats picked up Church's torch, further hamstringing the CIA and the FBI in ways made apparent in the 9/11 Commission hearings. In 2004, it was John Kerry who pounded a lectern because we were opening firehouses in Iraq and closing them in America.

A DEMOCRATIC REFRAIN "Come Home, America" has not always described post-Vietnam liberalism, but it has always -- always -- received a respectful hearing on the left. The notion that "we've got bigger priorities at home" is perfectly consistent with the logic of an activist welfare state. And whenever Republicans have been in power and have acted assertively in America's interests, "Come Home, America" has become the Left's dominant rhetorical refrain. But none dare call it isolationism.

Again and again, the story of Republican and conservative foreign policy isn't one of isolationism and retreat, but of self-confidence in America's ability to determine its own course. Meanwhile, many liberals persist in their infuriating tendency to confuse, often deliberately, unilateralism with isolationism. Liberals like to define "internationalism" as subordinating American interests to those of international organizations like the U.N., and "isolationism" as disagreeing with liberals. For example, Sanger approvingly quotes liberal foreign-policy guru David J. Rothkopf as saying that "Bush came [into office] with a philosophy that was almost neo-isolationist. When they dealt with Iraq, they did it alone -- outside the context of what globalization implies."

Consider some of Bill Clinton's major international forays. Clinton pushed for the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and intervention in Yugoslavia. Some Republicans opposed the Yugoslavia campaigns and the CTBT on the grounds that they were not in America's interests. The liberal establishment, including Bill Clinton, immediately dubbed this opposition proof positive of resurgent conservative isolationism. The New York Times denounced the "smug and shortsighted isolationism of the Republican Congressional leadership." For the record, conservatives opposed the CTBT not out of isolationism, but from a desire to keep all of our options open in world affairs -- which makes us "isolationist" just as much as target practice makes a sheriff a hermit. The intervention in Yugoslavia was a complicated issue, dividing many conservatives and liberals -- The Nation opposed intervention, National Review supported it -- but only the conservative opponents were called "isolationists." And as for NAFTA, 75 percent of Republicans allied themselves with Clinton while 60 percent of Democrats voted against it. But despite Democratic dependence on protectionist labor unions and other groups opposed to free trade, it is the GOP that supposedly smolders with isolationist aims.

The same nonsense pervades David Sanger's unfortunate article. He cites President Bush's dismay that he had to rely on "arm-twisting" to bring a few wayward Republicans "back into the fold" to win passage of the Central American Free Trade Agreement. This, according to Sanger, "jolted Mr. Bush into recognizing a new retreat from the world by his own party." For the record, only 15 of 202 House Democrats voted in favor of CAFTA -- as compared with 205 of 232 Republicans. But, yes, we must keep a weather eye open for isolationism on the rightward horizon.

The Leaker in Chief?

Newsweek

By Michael Isikoff and Evan Thomas

4/17

George W. Bush likes to be seen as a man who dwells above the pettiness of political warfare. He has said he doesn't read the newspapers and shrugs off media criticism as carping of the chattering classes. Especially since 9/11, he has said that he looks to a higher power for guidance. He once threatened to stop sharing information with Capitol Hill if lawmakers didn't put a stop to leaking. "There are too many leaks of classified information," he told reporters in September 2003, "and if there is a leak out of my administration, I want to know who it is."

Last week a video clip of Bush making that statement became cable-TV wallpaper.

Bush, it appeared, was not above the old leaking game after all. The president who, as a younger man, once played the role of loyalty enforcer in his father's White House had not forgotten how to play hardball. According to a filing from the prosecutor in the Valerie Plame leak investigation, Lewis (Scooter) Libby, who has been indicted for lying in the case, told a grand jury that President Bush specifically authorized him to leak from an intelligence document on WMD in Iraq. The leak, according to Libby's testimony, was intended to rebut the allegations of an administration critic, former ambassador Joseph Wilson, who was disputing administration claims that Saddam Hussein's Iraq had been trying to buy uranium from the African country of Niger.

Democrats jumped on the news, calling Bush a hypocrite. Republicans on Capitol Hill worried that the attacks on Bush's integrity would further sink his poll ratings and hurt the GOP in November. "Leaker in chief is something that could stick," said a senior GOP aide, who declined to be named for fear of angering the president. The White House has not denied the central thrust of Libby's claim. But by late last weekend, the White House was scrambling to distance Bush from the leak, putting out the word that the president had not been involved in tactical decisions--like who should leak, or picking which reporter to leak to. The White House may just be spinning--or the reaction could portend a rift between Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, who seemed to be giving Libby his marching orders.

Legally, Bush did nothing wrong. The president can declassify a document any time he wants. Indeed, a sanitized version of the document in question--a National Intelligence Estimate compiled by the CIA and other agencies--was formally declassified and made public only 10 days after some of its contents were leaked by Libby to New York Times reporter Judith Miller in July 2003. But the administration was unquestionably playing games with reporters, whether or not the president was

directly involved.

For instance, on July 11, seven days before key portions of the NIE were released, reporters badgered the then national-security adviser Condoleezza Rice to allow them to see some of the NIE, which had been used by the administration to make the case for war with Congress. "We don't want to try to get into kind of selective declassification," said Rice, though she added, "We're looking at what can be made available."

What Rice did not say was that just a few days before, Libby, who was Cheney's chief of staff and national-security adviser, had been doing some highly selective leaking to Miller over breakfast at the St. Regis Hotel in Washington. (A spokesman for Rice said she had no comment because of the ongoing investigation.) Miller later wrote in *The New York Times* that Libby appeared "agitated" about an article Ambassador Wilson had published two days earlier on the *Times's* op-ed page. Wilson had disputed one of the more sensational claims made in Bush's State of the Union address in January--that Iraq was seeking yellowcake uranium from Africa for its nuclear-weapons program. Wilson wrote that, as a former diplomat with African experience, he had been asked by the CIA to travel to Niger to check out the claim, and found no evidence to support it.

At his meeting with Miller, Libby asked to be identified only as a "former Hill staffer"--a position he had not held for several years. Libby proceeded to rip into Wilson as a minor figure whose report about African uranium had never been seen by the White House. He went on to tell Miller that a highly classified National Intelligence Estimate had "firmly concluded that Iraq was seeking uranium." He also made a passing reference to Wilson's wife, who was working at the time on WMD at the CIA. At one point, wrote Miller in her notes (later subpoenaed by the prosecutor in the leak investigation), Libby seemed to be "reading from a piece of paper he pulled from his pocket."

It is not clear how much Libby might have been freelancing and how much he was working under orders. According to the filing by the prosecutor, Libby told the grand jury that he had been authorized by Cheney to disclose the "key judgments" of the NIE. Libby further testified that Cheney told him he had "consulted" with Bush. A lawyer familiar with the investigation, who asked not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the matter, told *NEWSWEEK* that the "president declassified the information and authorized and directed the vice president to get it out." But Bush "didn't get into how it would be done. He was not involved in selecting Scooter Libby or Judy Miller." Bush made the decision to put out the NIE material in late June, when the press was beginning to raise questions about the WMD but before Wilson published his op-ed piece. (Bush once harrumphed that he would fire whoever had outed Plame. No one is accusing Bush of leaking Plame's name, but he started the ball rolling that ended up with her exposure.)

Judging from Miller's account of her breakfast with Libby, the vice president's man went well beyond the "key judgments" of the NIE. The reference that Saddam was prospecting in Africa for uranium was inserted in the NIE's back pages, along with a dissent from intelligence analysts at the State Department who were "highly dubious" about the report. A former U.S. intelligence official who declined to speak for the record due to the sensitivity of the matter told *news-week* that the NIE staff, writing under strict time pressures, adopted a "kitchen sink" approach, throwing in all sorts of reports that had not been fully vetted.

The dissenting opinions were included in the declassified NIE released to the press on July 18, 2003. But Libby said nothing about them to Miller when he was leaking to her on July 8. Cheney's role in this operation remains murky, as does the precise role played by Bush (both men were questioned by the prosecutor, Patrick Fitzgerald--Bush at the White House, Cheney at an unknown location--but not under oath). The filing by Fitzgerald ties Cheney more directly to Libby's leak than any evidence so far. It says Libby testified that after Wilson's op-ed appeared on July 6, Cheney questioned whether Wilson's trip to Africa was legitimate, or "whether it was a junket set up by Mr. Wilson's wife," Valerie Plame, a CIA operative then working in the agency's counterproliferation division of the directorate of operations.

Libby has been charged with lying to a grand jury and to the Feds about when and from whom he learned Plame's identity. The theory was that Libby was trying to intimidate or get back at Wilson by exposing his wife's undercover role. Libby has argued all along that he was so preoccupied with important national-security matters, he barely noticed that Wilson's wife was involved, and later forgot that he had mentioned anything about her to reporters when he was questioned by investigators in the leak probe. To defend himself, Libby may now want to call both Cheney and Bush as witnesses at his trial. That is not likely to endear him to the president--the one man who has the power not only to declassify secrets but also to pardon convicted felons.

Show Your Teeth

Weekly Standard
By William Kristol
4/17

WHEN CHIDED for a sharp or acerbic remark, Pat Moynihan used to invoke an old aphorism: "This animal is vicious; when he's attacked, he bites back." Moynihan would quote the French verse, which made the point seem more elegant (*cet animal est très méchant; quand on l'attaque, il se défend*). We quote it in English, so the Bush administration will not be deterred from acting on its wisdom.

In other words: Mr. President, fight back.

Last week, news from the prosecution of Scooter Libby put the debate over the justification for the Iraq war back on the front pages. The president, through Vice President Dick Cheney, apparently authorized Libby to share with reporters key judgments of the National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq--evidence that disproved accusations from Joseph Wilson and others that Bush had manipulated or distorted the judgments of the intelligence community.

There was nothing unlawful or improper about what Libby claims the president did. News reports, however, darkly implied that Bush had been caught doing something disreputable; Democrats accused the president of duplicity, hypocrisy, and possible illegality; and the White House went into its characteristic defensive crouch: "We're not commenting on an ongoing legal proceeding," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said.

Nor, apparently, is the White House commenting on ongoing public proceedings--i.e.,

the new evidence gathered in Iraq of Saddam's terror connections. The Joint Forces Command in Norfolk has published a report called the "Iraqi Perspectives Project." In congressional testimony April 6, General Anthony Cucolo said the study drew upon "dozens of interviews with senior Iraqi military and regime leaders and thousands of official Iraqi documents."

Beginning in 1994, the Fedayeen Saddam opened its own paramilitary training camps for volunteers, graduating more than 7,200 "good men racing full with courage and enthusiasm" in the first year. Beginning in 1998, these camps began hosting "Arab volunteers from Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, 'the Gulf,' and Syria." It is not clear from available evidence where all of these non-Iraqi volunteers who were "sacrificing for the cause" went to ply their newfound skills. Before the summer of 2002, most volunteers went home upon the completion of training. But these camps were humming with frenzied activity in the months immediately prior to the war. As late as January 2003, the volunteers participated in a special training event called the "Heroes Attack." This training event was designed in part to prepare regional Fedayeen Saddam commands to "obstruct the enemy from achieving his goal and to support keeping peace and stability in the province."

Rep. Dana Rohrabacher asked Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Woods, the chief author of the study, if Saddam had been "getting out of the terrorism business." Woods, a retired Apache helicopter pilot and military historian, replied, "In the context of the documents--and it is possible that other documents show different things--the activity was increasing from 1995 on." Woods and his coauthors elaborate in the May/June issue of Foreign Affairs:

The Saddam Fedayeen also took part in the regime's domestic terrorism operations and planned for attacks throughout Europe and the Middle East. In a document dated May 1999, Saddam's older son, Uday, ordered preparations for "special operations, assassinations, and bombings, for the centers and traitor symbols in London, Iran and the self-ruled areas [Kurdistan]." Preparations for "Blessed July," a regime-directed wave of "martyrdom" operations against targets in the West, were well under way at the time of the coalition invasion.

The Bush administration has argued that Iraq was and is a central front in the war on terror. Here is evidence that they were right. And yet no one from the administration has noted these findings--to say nothing of commenting on other documents from Saddam's regime that are being made public. Apparently, the administration believes there is little to be gained from "re-litigating" the case for war. But unless Bush's critics stand down, it is foolish to try to stand aloof from this debate. We are engaged in a difficult war. It matters a great deal to the country how the Iraq war relates to the broader war on terror--just as it matters whether President Bush was honest in making the case for the war. The administration's timidity in taking on its critics, openly and publicly, is self-defeating. It's awfully hard to win a political struggle without fighting.

The Ex-Neo

National Review

By John Fonte

4/24

In the summer of 2004, in a widely debated article in *The National Interest*, Francis Fukuyama -- one of America's foremost political thinkers -- publicly broke with the Bush administration and neoconservatism over the Iraq War. Much of the interest in his current book, *America at the Crossroads*, is centered on this controversy. The book's real significance, however, lies not in a rehash of Fukuyama's past pronouncements on the Iraq War, but in his prescriptions for the future -- the creation of new and extra-constitutional institutions of global governance.

After beginning with a brief overview of his main arguments, Fukuyama reviews the history of neoconservatism: Alcove 1 at CUNY, Trotskyism, liberal anti-Communism, *The Public Interest* and "unintended consequences," Commentary and the Cold War, Leo Strauss and the importance of "regime," and the influence of nuclear strategist Albert Wohlstetter. Some may quibble that Fukuyama uses the Stalinist word "Trotskyite" instead of "Trotskyist," or mischaracterizes the division between Harry Jaffa ("John Philip Sousa") Straussians and Allan Bloom ("Wagnerian") Straussians. But on balance this section is very nicely written: a clear guide for beginners, including mainstream journalists.

Fukuyama also draws nuanced distinctions between the William Kristol/Robert Kagan viewpoint and the more "democratic realist" wing of neoconservatism exemplified by Charles Krauthammer and Jeane Kirkpatrick. He argues that the Kristol/Kagan Foreign Affairs article of 1996 that called for a broader democratic interventionism successfully "redefined" neoconservatism and moved it away from the more constrained views of the first generation of neoconservatives, including Kristol père.

Fukuyama characterizes four schools of American foreign policy: neoconservative (promotion of democracy, benevolent U.S. hegemony); realist (traditional balance of power); liberal internationalist ("seeks to transcend power politics through international law and institutions"); and nationalist Jacksonian ("narrow security-related view" of American interests). He himself has left the neoconservative camp and is now a "realistic Wilsonian" or "hard-headed" liberal internationalist (seeking "not the transcendence . . . of power politics but its regularization through institutional constraints").

National Review readers might rightly complain that this list of four schools is far from comprehensive. After all, Jon Kyl, John Bolton, Henry Hyde, Newt Gingrich, Norm Coleman, and most Republican members of Congress could best be described as "Reagan internationalists," part of what Rich Lowry has labeled the "Reagan Synthesis." This coalition combines a strong baseline Jacksonian nationalism ("Don't tread on me") with strands of Wilsonianism (democracy matters), Hamiltonianism (promotion of free trade), and realism (power politics) -- to use the classic taxonomy formulated by Walter Russell Mead. Fukuyama appears to have a visceral distaste for the Jacksonian tradition, which he mischaracterizes as "isolationist"; Mead says it's the Jeffersonians, not the Jacksonians, who are isolationists and identifies Reagan himself as a Jacksonian figure who successfully combined a number of complementary American traditions.

Since his original "End of History" article in 1989, Fukuyama has gradually moved from Hegelian idealism to a more "Marxian" materialism. He tells us that many have misunderstood his thought concerning the "end of history," which was an "argument about modernization," not about ideology -- that is to say, it was materialist, not idealist. Perhaps. But Fukuyama is careful to cite in this regard his 1992 book, not his 1989 article, which emphasized "consciousness," "ideas," and "ideology" over

material factors. In 1989 he wrote: "Have we in fact reached the end of history? . . . If we accept the idealist premises laid out above, we must seek an answer to this question in the realm of ideology and consciousness."

America at the Crossroads has a long chapter on promoting modernization, democracy, and economic growth in developing countries, in which Fukuyama makes many sensible points that parallel arguments he has made before. He stumbles, however, when he asserts that the U.S. "has become steadily less generous" and claims that the U.S. ranks 21st out of 22 leading developed nations in foreign giving (even when private aid is counted). My Hudson Institute colleague Carol Adelman, a former high-ranking official at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), says this is simply wrong: The U.S. ranks 11th of 22 leading donor countries (counting private aid); government foreign aid has doubled between 2000 and 2004, and has also increased as a percentage of gross national income.

On the broader geopolitical front, Fukuyama commits a more serious error: He minimizes the global conflict with radical Islam. He tells us that "rhetoric" about the "global war on terror should cease" because "conceiving the larger struggle as a global war . . . vastly overstates" the problem. "We are fighting a small group of fanatics," he suggests, "sheltering behind a larger group of sympathizers." ("Before the Iraq war, we were probably at war with no more than a few thousand people . . .")

Moreover, "the most dangerous people are not pious Muslims in the Middle East, but alienated uprooted young people in Hamburg, London, or Amsterdam." The conflict, therefore, is a response to modernization and globalization and "cannot be understood primarily" in terms of religion or culture. Indeed, "the major battlegrounds are as likely to be in Western Europe as in the Middle East." Relying on French theorists Gilles Kepel and Olivier Roy, Fukuyama claims that the political appeal of radical Islam is weak. He also draws a clear distinction between radical Islamists and simply ideological Islamists who seek to establish an Islamic regime through political means and who (in Fukuyama's view) are "not necessarily . . . hostile to democracy."

There is, of course, some truth to Fukuyama's contention that radical Islamist (jihadist) ideology and deracinated Muslim immigrants in Europe are, to some extent, the byproducts of incomplete modernization. Nevertheless, it is too clever by half to suggest that the problem is primarily one of a flawed modernization-globalization process rather than a religio-cultural-ideological conflict, and that the terrorist crisis itself is centered mainly in the West (Europe) rather than in the Islamic world and the Middle East. The Western outposts of radical Islam are just that: outposts. The money (mostly Saudi), propagandists (imams), ideological indoctrination, terrorist/military training (sometimes Iranian), logistics, and psychological-religious support come from religious Muslims (self-described, whether "authentic" or not) in the Middle East. Hamas, Hezbollah, and the madrassas emanate from the Middle East. The majority of al-Qaeda adherents are Middle Eastern in origin and consider themselves "pious." The Danish cartoon controversy was activated not in Europe, but in the Middle East.

Remember, eleven Muslim ambassadors from Islamic countries (including, significantly, Turkey) demanded that the Danish prime minister curb press freedom within Denmark. Fukuyama is too sanguine about the "democratic" aspects of Islamist (but non-jihadist) ideology. Islamists (whether violent or non-violent) seek

to establish sharia (Islamic law) as the basis for government. Even a non-violent Islamist regime would be an illiberal one, rejecting both freedom of religion for non-Muslim believers and freedom for the non-religious. Thus, a "democratic" Islamist regime means an "illiberal democracy," in the Fareed Zakaria sense.

Although almost all eyes are focused on Fukuyama's break with the Bush administration and neoconservative thinking, the truly revolutionary part of the book is his embrace, however hesitant, of an extra-constitutional transnationalism. To be sure, all of this is done with often contradictory "on one hand, on the other hand" qualifiers, and further obfuscated by the language of social science.

Fukuyama calls for an "agenda of multiple-multilateralisms." He tells us that, as "realistic Wilsonians, . . . we do not want to replace national sovereignty with unaccountable international organizations" like the U.N. "On the other hand, we do not now have an adequate set of horizontal mechanisms of accountability between the vertical stovepipes we label states."

"Horizontal accountability" would presumably mean some transnational mechanism that would make, for example, the American nation-state and the Canadian or French nation-state democratically accountable to each other. "Horizontal accountability" between states is needed, Fukuyama says, first because it would facilitate globalization, and second because "few [nations] trust the United States" to be "sufficiently benevolent" without "the subjection of American power to more formal constraints."

If Fukuyama were merely saying that Americans should, as a matter of prudential statesmanship, attempt to secure the support of major democratic allies before acting in important international crises, that would be fine. But he is hinting at something else: He is suggesting that new transnational organizations not accountable to American democratic institutions should make decisions concerning American foreign policy. How else to explain the following: "Although international cooperation will have to be based on sovereign states for the foreseeable future, shared ideas of legitimacy and human rights will weaken objections that the United States should not be accountable to regimes that are not themselves accountable."

Why would Americans want to be accountable to the unaccountable? Because, Fukuyama says, Americans believe that if "unchecked power is corrupting in a domestic context," the same holds true internationally. But, of course, the "checks and balances" of the U.S. Constitution already apply to both domestic and foreign affairs and are within the context of our accountable democratic system. What Fukuyama is suggesting is extra-constitutional: some new transnational mechanism of "checks and balances" outside of American constitutional democracy and genuine democratic accountability. Francis Fukuyama, one of our leading democratic theorists, may want to reconsider this flirtation with post-democratic thinking. --Mr. Fonte is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

The Army's Revenge

National Review
By The Editors

The last week or so could be called "The Army's Revenge." There had been resentment toward Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld from the beginning over his attempts to transform the military into a lighter, more modern force. Against the backdrop of the difficulties in Iraq that have weakened the secretary, a handful of retired generals have been able to draw blood with their recent calls for Rumsfeld to step aside (four of them served in the Army, the other two in the Marines).

As a political matter, Rumsfeld's leaving at this moment, under this kind of fire, would play as an admission that the critics who say the Iraq war was fundamentally botched have been right all along. The White House realizes this, which is one reason President Bush made such a strong statement in support of Rumsfeld on Friday. That retired generals are criticizing a Defense secretary is not, per se, the threat to civil-military relations that some of Rumsfeld's defenders seem to think. Retired flag officers are citizens after all, and they're free to say whatever they want. But there is something unseemly about it, especially considering that most of them apparently kept conveniently quiet about their misgivings while in uniform.

More important, the criticisms of Rumsfeld don't have much force. Some say he is too imperious. This charge isn't hard to believe of the strong-willed Rumsfeld, but it is disappointing that generals are apparently so easily cowed that their only recourse when dealing with a muscular Defense secretary is to whine about it after the fact. Others complain about his "micro-management" of the war. It is true that Rumsfeld has exercised a remarkably strong hand in dealing with the military. In planning for the initial Iraq invasion in particular, he was relentless in challenging the work of CENTCOM commander Tommy Franks, driving him to come up with a plan that wasn't just an unimaginative repeat of Desert Storm. The plan didn't suffer from Rumsfeld's intense attention; in fact, the opposite was the case. Even such Rumsfeld critics as Cobra II authors Michael Gordon and Gen. Bernard Trainor credit the innovation and effectiveness of the invasion.

As a matter of principle, micromanagement from a Defense secretary is not a bad thing, even if Robert McNamara gave it a bad name during the Vietnam War. Our system is based on the U.S. military's taking direction from civilian leadership. There is no reason to think that the assumption behind the micromanagement criticism of Rumsfeld--that if only the generals had been left to their own devices, things would have turned out fine--is true. Rumsfeld should actually be faulted for not micromanaging Tommy Franks enough when it came to planning for postwar operations, in which the general had little or no interest.

Some of the retired generals blame Rumsfeld for not providing enough troops to secure Iraq. This is now a hoary debate, and a reasonable case can be made that more troops were necessary. But if there were officers who wanted larger force levels, there were others who did not. Rumsfeld routinely consulted with his chairmen of the joint chiefs--first Richards Meyers and now Peter Pace--and other top commanders, who agreed that it wasn't more U.S. forces, but more Iraqi forces, that were the key to victory. The retired critics are making a harsh implied criticism of these generals, suggesting that careerism prevented them from speaking truth to power about troop levels. The generals who agreed with Rumsfeld might have been wrong, but there is no evidence that they were cowardly or dishonorable.

Retired Army Major General John Batiste has faulted Rumsfeld for insufficient

postwar planning. Given that almost all of the administration's major postwar assumptions proved to be wrong--especially about the continued existence of an effective Iraqi army and police force to provide security--that is a fair criticism. But Batiste was at one point the top military aide to then deputy secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. He seemed to share the vision of the Pentagon's civilian team, and so was awarded a second star and, ultimately, command of a division in Iraq. Once there, he gave every appearance of supporting the strategy and talked of the progress we were making. It's his prerogative to change his mind, but doing so should involve some humility and the admission that he too was wrong about postwar Iraq. Instead, he suggests every mistake was Rumsfeld's alone.

There is, finally, a root-and-branch criticism that some of the retired generals make, especially Gens. Zinni and Newbold. They say the Iraq war was a foolish endeavor to begin with, and, in a mind-numbing recitation of all the conventional Arabist beliefs, insist that there is nothing wrong with the Middle East that can't be fixed by cracking down on Israel. This isn't a criticism of Rumsfeld, but of President Bush and his entire foreign policy. They surely would be no happier with any replacement Defense secretary who is equally committed to implementing Bush's vision.

The debate over Rumsfeld is disappointing in its simplistic assumption that the long, hard slog in Iraq is the doing of one man. There were plenty of mistakes made in Iraq, and there is blame enough to go around. The important questions now have to do with how to prevail in the current conditions in Iraq, and on this the retired generals have little to say, exposing their own lack of seriousness.

All this said, the White House should have no illusions: Rumsfeld is a diminished figure. He has been worn down from being the figurehead of a war the difficulty and cost of which were significantly undersold by the administration, and the ultimate result of which still seems very much in doubt, despite the administration's perpetual optimism. Ultimately, this is Bush's war, and it is his historical reputation that will rise or fall with it, whatever media squalls break out over his secretary of Defense. If winning or gaining in the war were a simple matter of sacking Rumsfeld, we'd favor doing it immediately. Alas, it isn't nearly that simple.

Why Iraq Was a Mistake

Time

By Lieut. General Greg Newbold (Ret.)

4/17

Two senior military officers are known to have challenged Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on the planning of the Iraq war. Army General Eric Shinseki publicly dissented and found himself marginalized. Marine Lieut. General Greg Newbold, the Pentagon's top operations officer, voiced his objections internally and then retired, in part out of opposition to the war. Here, for the first time, Newbold goes public with a full-throated critique:

In 1971, the rock group The Who released the antiwar anthem *Won't Get Fooled Again*. To most in my generation, the song conveyed a sense of betrayal by the nation's leaders, who had led our country into a costly and unnecessary war in Vietnam. To those of us who were truly counterculture--who became career members of the military during those rough times--the song conveyed a very

different message. To us, its lyrics evoked a feeling that we must never again stand by quietly while those ignorant of and casual about war lead us into another one and then mismanage the conduct of it. Never again, we thought, would our military's senior leaders remain silent as American troops were marched off to an ill-considered engagement. It's 35 years later, and the judgment is in: the Who had it wrong. We have been fooled again.

From 2000 until October 2002, I was a Marine Corps lieutenant general and director of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. After 9/11, I was a witness and therefore a party to the actions that led us to the invasion of Iraq--an unnecessary war. Inside the military family, I made no secret of my view that the zealots' rationale for war made no sense. And I think I was outspoken enough to make those senior to me uncomfortable. But I now regret that I did not more openly challenge those who were determined to invade a country whose actions were peripheral to the real threat--al-Qaeda. I retired from the military four months before the invasion, in part because of my opposition to those who had used 9/11's tragedy to hijack our security policy. Until now, I have resisted speaking out in public. I've been silent long enough.

I am driven to action now by the missteps and misjudgments of the White House and the Pentagon, and by my many painful visits to our military hospitals. In those places, I have been both inspired and shaken by the broken bodies but unbroken spirits of soldiers, Marines and corpsmen returning from this war. The cost of flawed leadership continues to be paid in blood. The willingness of our forces to shoulder such a load should make it a sacred obligation for civilian and military leaders to get our defense policy right. They must be absolutely sure that the commitment is for a cause as honorable as the sacrifice.

With the encouragement of some still in positions of military leadership, I offer a challenge to those still in uniform: a leader's responsibility is to give voice to those who can't--or don't have the opportunity to--speak. Enlisted members of the armed forces swear their oath to those appointed over them; an officer swears an oath not to a person but to the Constitution. The distinction is important.

Before the antiwar banners start to unfurl, however, let me make clear--I am not opposed to war. I would gladly have traded my general's stars for a captain's bars to lead our troops into Afghanistan to destroy the Taliban and al-Qaeda. And while I don't accept the stated rationale for invading Iraq, my view--at the moment--is that a precipitous withdrawal would be a mistake. It would send a signal, heard around the world, that would reinforce the jihadists' message that America can be defeated, and thus increase the chances of future conflicts. If, however, the Iraqis prove unable to govern, and there is open civil war, then I am prepared to change my position.

I will admit my own prejudice: my deep affection and respect are for those who volunteer to serve our nation and therefore shoulder, in those thin ranks, the nation's most sacred obligation of citizenship. To those of you who don't know, our country has never been served by a more competent and professional military. For that reason, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's recent statement that "we" made the "right strategic decisions" but made thousands of "tactical errors" is an outrage. It reflects an effort to obscure gross errors in strategy by shifting the blame for failure to those who have been resolute in fighting. The truth is, our forces are successful in spite of the strategic guidance they receive, not because of it.

What we are living with now is the consequences of successive policy failures. Some of the missteps include: the distortion of intelligence in the buildup to the war, McNamara-like micromanagement that kept our forces from having enough resources to do the job, the failure to retain and reconstitute the Iraqi military in time to help quell civil disorder, the initial denial that an insurgency was the heart of the opposition to occupation, alienation of allies who could have helped in a more robust way to rebuild Iraq, and the continuing failure of the other agencies of our government to commit assets to the same degree as the Defense Department. My sincere view is that the commitment of our forces to this fight was done with a casualness and swagger that are the special province of those who have never had to execute these missions--or bury the results.

Flaws in our civilians are one thing; the failure of the Pentagon's military leaders is quite another. Those are men who know the hard consequences of war but, with few exceptions, acted timidly when their voices urgently needed to be heard. When they knew the plan was flawed, saw intelligence distorted to justify a rationale for war, or witnessed arrogant micromanagement that at times crippled the military's effectiveness, many leaders who wore the uniform chose inaction. A few of the most senior officers actually supported the logic for war. Others were simply intimidated, while still others must have believed that the principle of obedience does not allow for respectful dissent. The consequence of the military's quiescence was that a fundamentally flawed plan was executed for an invented war, while pursuing the real enemy, al-Qaeda, became a secondary effort.

There have been exceptions, albeit uncommon, to the rule of silence among military leaders. Former Army Chief of Staff General Shinseki, when challenged to offer his professional opinion during prewar congressional testimony, suggested that more troops might be needed for the invasion's aftermath. The Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense castigated him in public and marginalized him in his remaining months in his post. Army General John Abizaid, head of Central Command, has been forceful in his views with appointed officials on strategy and micromanagement of the fight in Iraq--often with success. Marine Commandant General Mike Hagee steadfastly challenged plans to underfund, understaff and underequip his service as the Corps has struggled to sustain its fighting capability.

To be sure, the Bush Administration and senior military officials are not alone in their culpability. Members of Congress--from both parties--defaulted in fulfilling their constitutional responsibility for oversight. Many in the media saw the warning signs and heard cautionary tales before the invasion from wise observers like former Central Command chiefs Joe Hoar and Tony Zinni but gave insufficient weight to their views. These are the same news organizations that now downplay both the heroic and the constructive in Iraq.

So what is to be done? We need fresh ideas and fresh faces. That means, as a first step, replacing Rumsfeld and many others unwilling to fundamentally change their approach. The troops in the Middle East have performed their duty. Now we need people in Washington who can construct a unified strategy worthy of them. It is time to send a signal to our nation, our forces and the world that we are uncompromising on our security but are prepared to rethink how we achieve it. It is time for senior military leaders to discard caution in expressing their views and ensure that the President hears them clearly. And that we won't be fooled again.

"I NOW REGRET THAT I DID NOT MORE OPENLY CHALLENGE THOSE WHO WERE DETERMINED TO INVADE A COUNTRY... PERIPHERAL TO THE REAL THREAT."

Anatomy of a Revolt

Newsweek

By Evan Thomas and John Barry

4/24

Gen. Eric Shinseki, former chief of staff of the Army, says he is "at peace." But reached last week, he didn't sound all that peaceful. In the winter of 2003, alone among the top brass, Shinseki had warned Congress that occupying Iraq would require "several hundred thousand troops." Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, had rewarded Shinseki for his honesty by publicly castigating and shunning him.

Last fall, Shinseki went to the 40th reunion of the class of '65 at West Point. It has been reported that his classmates were wearing caps emblazoned RIC WAS RIGHT. Last week NEWSWEEK e-mailed Shinseki to ask about the reports. Shinseki called back to say he had heard "rumors" about the caps. But, NEWSWEEK asked, wasn't he there? "Well," he replied, "I saw a cap."

Shinseki, who has retired to Hawaii, was clearly uncomfortable with the role of martyr. He had no desire to join the chorus of retired generals calling for Rumsfeld's resignation. He was circumspect about criticizing Rumsfeld at all, but he seemed to be struggling to disguise his feelings. He pointedly said that the "person who should decide on the number of troops [to invade Iraq] is the combatant commander"--Gen. Tommy Franks, and not Rumsfeld.

Some critics have argued that Shinseki should have banged on the table, pushed harder to stop Rumsfeld from going into Iraq with too few troops. How does Shinseki respond? "Probably that's fair. Not my style," said the old soldier, who nearly lost a foot in combat in Vietnam. There was, he added cryptically, "a lot of turmoil" at the Pentagon in the lead-up to the war. Was that Rumsfeld's fault? "Partly," said Shinseki. Did Rumsfeld bully General Franks, the overall invasion commander? "You'll have to ask Franks," said Shinseki, who indicated that he had talked long enough. "I walked away from all this two and a half years ago," he said.

The former four-star general appeared to be torn between his strong sense of duty and an uneasy conscience. The moral dilemma is as old as the republic. When does a military officer stand up to--and push back against--his civilian masters? And when does he just salute and say, "Can do, sir"?

It's a question of enormous consequence for a democracy with the world's most powerful military. The balance between the civilian and military is precarious. The model may be Lincoln, firing his commanders until he found one (Ulysses S. Grant) who would fight. But the modern reality is messier. It is generally forgotten that Franklin Roosevelt rejected the recommendation of his sainted Army Chief of Staff Gen. George C. Marshall to invade Europe in 1942--which would have been a fiasco. Harry Truman was widely vilified for--wisely--recalling the great Gen. Douglas A. MacArthur when MacArthur wanted to widen the Korean War by attacking China. On the other hand, Lyndon Johnson overreached when he stayed up at night picking

bombing targets during the Vietnam War. In 1997, Army Gen. Hugh Shelton, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, assigned the top brass to read "Dereliction of Duty," a classic study accusing Vietnam-era generals of failing to stand up to their civilian bosses.

Somehow, the lesson did not sink in. Before the Iraq invasion, the senior military did not force a discussion of what to do after the war was won. Rumsfeld was obsessed with the plan of attack, but not the aftermath. The consequences are by now a familiar litany: Rumsfeld demanded a swift, lean force that worked superbly to depose Saddam Hussein--but was woefully inadequate to take over the more onerous task of securing and rebuilding Iraq. Only now are the retired generals coming forth to complain of Rumsfeld's bullying and demanding his resignation.

The Revolt of the Retired Generals has created considerable discomfort in the E-Ring of the Pentagon and at the White House. President George W. Bush felt compelled last week to issue a written statement expressing his "full support" for the SecDef. For now, Bush has no intention of firing Rumsfeld. "He likes him," says a close friend of the president's, who requested anonymity in discussing such a sensitive matter. "He's not blind. He knows Rumsfeld sticks his foot in it." Adds a senior Bush aide, who declined to be named discussing the president's sentiments: "I haven't seen any evidence that their personal rapport is at all diminishing. They see each other often and talk often." Rumsfeld says he has twice offered his resignation to Bush, who has declined it.

The old generals can be quite biting about Rumsfeld; retired Marine Gen. Anthony Zinni wrote an op-ed calling the secretary of Defense "incompetent strategically, operationally, and tactically." But their criticisms are probably best understood as "the first salvos in the war over 'Who Lost Iraq'," says Douglas Macgregor, a retired U.S. Army colonel whose book "Breaking the Phalanx" was influential in inspiring the military's blitzkrieg assault on Baghdad. "Yes, Rumsfeld should go," says Macgregor. "But a lot of the generals should be fired, too. They share the blame for the mess we are in."

Rumsfeld is the chief villain of a very influential new book, "Cobra II," by retired Marine Corps Gen. Bernard Trainor and New York Times reporter Michael Gordon. In their detailed, thorough accounting of the invasion and occupation of Iraq, Rumsfeld is shown badgering the reluctant but mostly quiescent generals into attacking with as few troops as possible. Despite all the talk of the war's being hatched by a neoconservative cabal, Rumsfeld himself appears indifferent to ideology; he was profoundly suspicious of the notion that America could bring democracy to Iraq. Rather, he focused on forcing a transformation of the hidebound, heavy-laden, slow-moving Army. Rumsfeld disdains "nation-building" and blithely counts on the Iraqis to rebuild their own country. But right after the invasion he signed off on orders by the American proconsul, Paul Bremer, to disband the Iraqi Army and fire most of the top civil servants--leaving the country vulnerable to chaos and a growing insurgency.

The publication of "Cobra II," plus talk-show comments from Zinni, the former chief of CENTCOM who was promoting his own book, "The Battle for Peace," appear to have encouraged retired generals to attack Rumsfeld in public. "There was a lot of pent-up agony," says Trainor. "The dam broke."

One of the most powerful indictments came from Marine Lt. Gen. Gregory Newbold, who was chief of operations for the Joint Staff during the early planning of the Iraq

invasion. Writing in Time magazine, Newbold declared, "I now regret that I did not more openly challenge those who were determined to invade a country whose actions were peripheral to the real threat--Al Qaeda." Actually, it was not the job of a uniformed officer, even a high-ranking one like Newbold, to challenge the president's decision to invade Iraq. That's a political judgment: it's up to the president and Congress to decide whom to fight. The military's job is to win the fight.

Still, Newbold has a point when he writes that the decision "was done with a casualness and swagger that are the special province of those who have never had to execute these missions--or bury the results." The real responsibility for Iraq, of course, lies with President Bush. Together with Vice President Dick Cheney (draft-deferred in Vietnam) and Rumsfeld (Navy jet pilot who did not see combat), Bush (Texas National Guard pilot) seemed determined to brush past or roll over the cautious national-security bureaucracy. Bush made little or no effort to prod his national-security staff to ask tough questions, such as how the Sunnis and Shiites would bury centuries of resentment when Saddam was gone. (Bush has said he listens to the generals, but it does not appear he heard any words of caution.) The get-tough trio essentially cut out Gen. Colin Powell, the secretary of State and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who was regarded as too squishy, too much a creature of the go-slow bureaucracy.

Powell has come in for some criticism for not trying harder to slow the Bush juggernaut into Iraq. And the various generals have taken talk-show grief for not speaking out until their pensions were safely vested in retirement. But it is important to understand the military culture to appreciate why more soldiers do not cross their civilian bosses. It is true enough that "political generals" get ahead by never rocking the boat. And it is fair to say that Rumsfeld's shabby treatment of Shinseki--the secretary did not bother to attend the retirement ceremony of the Army chief of staff, whose replacement was leaked 14 months before his term was up--had a chilling effect on other officers.

But it is unlikely that senior military officers go to sleep at night thinking that if only they kowtow a little more they will win that next star on their shoulder. They are far more likely to believe that their duty is to do the best they can with what they've got: the military culture breeds a "can do" attitude in its most successful officers. They are acutely conscious that squabbling at the top can be a morale-crusher for troops who must risk their lives in battle.

Rumsfeld's persona and management style are grating to many buttoned-up, by-the-book officers. He constantly asks questions, often with sarcasm and in-your-face one-upmanship. Briefing the secretary can be an intimidating exercise. Rumsfeld has been known to get so hung up on a single slide, peppering some hapless colonel or general with antagonistic queries, that the briefer never gets a chance to finish his tidy, orderly presentation. Some soldiers like the macho give-and-take, or at least get used to it. "When you walk in to him, you've got to be prepared, you've got to know what you're talking about," says Marine Gen. Mike DeLong, deputy CENTCOM commander from 2000 to 2003. "If you don't, you are summarily dismissed. But that's the way it is, and he's effective."

Other officers, particularly those with less exposure, just find Rumsfeld to be an impatient meddler who jumps around, nosing into subjects he knows nothing about and should leave to the professionals. Rumsfeld himself seems impervious to criticism. Last week, at a Pentagon news conference, confronted by reporters quoting

from embittered retired generals, he dismissively shot back, "There's nothing wrong with people having opinions ... you ought to expect that. It's historic. It's always been the case, and I see nothing really very new or surprising about it."

But in fact, Rumsfeld is bothered by the furor. "He's concerned about the impact on the institution," says Lawrence DiRita, Rumsfeld's counselor. The controversy, DiRita says, can "make generals clam up around civilians, and civilians wonder, 'Is this the next general who is going to leak to The New York Times?' " Rumsfeld worries that the whole concept of civilian control is "turned on its head" by the revolt of the generals. "Conceptually, institutionally, that a handful of disgruntled generals could determine who will lead the Department of Defense--that's not the way it's supposed to work," says DiRita.

As a practical matter, the rebellion may secure Rumsfeld's job. "No president is going to be bullied by a bunch of retired general officers into firing a secretary of Defense," says Thomas Donnelly, the editor of Armed Forces Journal. Of course, by defending Rumsfeld, the president has "moved into the target area," notes General Trainor. "Now the Democrats can say, 'Look, the president's defending an incompetent'."

Rumsfeld is not the sort to fall on his sword, at least willingly. He liked being teased as "Matinee Idol" by President Bush after he held forth so confidently (and, to many Americans, reassuringly) about "killing the enemy" in the traumatic months after 9/11. He has only retirement to look forward to, a boring prospect for a vigorous 73-year-old. His advisers do not expect him to quit any time soon. For many months, on a shelf behind DiRita's desk in his old Pentagon office, stood a Rumsfeld doll that was sold in PXes on military bases after the war in Afghanistan. Pull a string on the backside and a mechanical version of Rumsfeld's rich voice intones, "I don't do diplomacy." DiRita attached a slip of paper near the doll's mouth with his boss's mantra. It reads faster. DiRita's not sure what happened to the doll. But his boss, he says, is still charging forward, trying to change an institution that sometimes resists change. In the weeks ahead, he is sure to meet more resistance from old soldiers who think he is not so much a change agent as a wrecking ball.

The Revolt of the Generals

Time

By Michael Duffy

4/24

Army Major General John Batiste sounded like a big fan of Donald Rumsfeld's when the Pentagon chief dropped by the 1st Infantry Division in Tikrit on Christmas Eve 2004. "This is a man with the courage and the conviction to win the war on terrorism," Batiste told a gathering of 250 G.I.s.

But Batiste's true feelings were a little more complex than he was letting on. After joining a growing chorus of retired generals last week calling on Rumsfeld to resign, Batiste told TIME that he was actually seething as the Defense chief came to call. "When I introduce the Secretary of Defense to my troops, I'm going to be a loyal subordinate," he said. "But it was boiling inside me. Every time I looked at him, I was thinking about ... that s_____ war plan, I was thinking about Abu Ghraib, and I was thinking about the challenges I had every day trying to rebuild the Iraqi military that he disbanded."

Batiste, it turns out, wasn't the only one holding his fire. Over the past several weeks, the extent of the military's unhappiness with Rumsfeld has exploded into what is already being called the Revolt of the Generals. Half a dozen retired generals have used newspaper opinion pages--and in the case of Lieut. General Greg Newbold, TIME magazine (see TIME.com)--to break months of silence and call for Rumsfeld's head. That in turn has rekindled the debate about whether the Iraqi invasion was ill-conceived in the first place, and, if so, who is to blame. President George W. Bush issued a defiant defense of his Pentagon boss--if not the larger enterprise itself--from Camp David, where he went to spend Easter: "Secretary Rumsfeld's energetic and steady leadership is exactly what is needed at this critical period. He has my full support and deepest appreciation." General Richard Myers, the recently retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and retired General Tommy Franks, the main architect of the Afghanistan and Iraq interventions, also quickly leaped to Rumsfeld's defense.

In Washington such high praise from the President is sometimes the prelude to an execution. And behind the scenes, there are indications that the moment for a shuffle could be approaching, says a former White House official who has worked with Rumsfeld. "There are people in the building who would like to see 'peace with honor,'" the official told TIME, dusting off a reference to the 1968 campaign theme that helped elect Richard Nixon. But a senior White House official insisted that Bush would not be pushed into removing the Pentagon boss. "No one has ever mentioned a timeline for his tenure," he said.

Open revolts by the top military brass against their civilian minders are rare but not unprecedented. General MacArthur objected to Harry Truman's handling of the Korean War and was fired in 1951. The Air Force didn't like the way Lyndon Johnson handpicked bombing targets during the Vietnam War. And Bill Clinton had to back down after he ordered the Pentagon to openly admit homosexuals in 1993 by settling on the narrower "Don't ask, don't tell" policy.

But what distinguishes the latest rebellion is that the retired generals are taking on their old boss not over policy or budgets but the operation of an ongoing war. And it is a message that will probably be heard more deeply by voters than the usual criticism from Capitol Hill or editorial boards, particularly because the generals are making essentially the same argument: Rumsfeld was wrong to disband the Iraqi military, has ignored the advice of people with far more battlefield experience and has shown too little concern about the abuses of Iraqi prisoners. The generals also argue that Rumsfeld insisted on too small a force for the invasion, abandoning the doctrine championed by former Secretary of State and four-star general Colin Powell in 1991 after the Gulf War to attack rarely and then only with overwhelming force. Rumsfeld wanted to prove the Powell Doctrine obsolete. Instead, he has probably guaranteed that it will be followed for years.

There is some evidence that the retirees are speaking for other generals still on active duty. "I think," said former U.S. Central Command boss Anthony C. Zinni, a retired Marine four star, "a lot of people are biting their tongues." But not everyone: some still in uniform have criticized the retirees for speaking up now instead of before the war, when the brass accepted Rumsfeld's demands for a smaller, lighter force. But one consistent part of the indictment is that Rumsfeld made clear he wouldn't listen to views that didn't match his own anyway. Lieut. General Newbold made that point in his essay in TIME last week, when he wrote that Rumsfeld

marginalized former Army General Eric Shinseki after the Chief of Staff suggested in a hearing before Congress that much larger forces would be needed following the invasion. "They only need the military advice when it satisfies their agenda," said Major General John Riggs, who spoke out on National Public Radio last Thursday.

While the military's reproach is the most remarkable, it follows some public criticism of Rumsfeld from the civilian side of the Administration that seems to signal he is no longer feared. Last month, Condoleezza Rice acknowledged "tactical errors, thousands of them" in the conduct of the war. That remark, which Rice later characterized as a figure of speech, led Rumsfeld to respond, "I don't know what she was talking about, to be perfectly honest." And though he bears some responsibility for overstating the case for war before the invasion, Powell took aim at his old rival Rumsfeld too, saying last week, "We made some serious mistakes in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Baghdad. We didn't have enough troops on the ground. We didn't impose our will. And as a result, an insurgency got started, and ... it got out of control."

Retired Marine Zinni has said the best outcome would be for Rumsfeld to resign rather than force Bush to fire him. But several well-placed Republicans say that Rumsfeld's fate may be as much in the hands of the Vice President as in the President's. Although Rumsfeld is more responsible than any other man for the rise of Dick Cheney during the 1970s, their roles have since reversed, and now the protégé is protecting the mentor. Between the two of them, Cheney and Rumsfeld have run the Pentagon for almost 12 of the last 32 years. It's the federal agency each knows best, and neither man has any patience for insubordination from men and women in uniform. Cheney began his four-year stint as Defense Secretary in 1989 by publicly scolding Air Force General Larry Welch, who lobbied for missile programs without Cheney's O.K. Not long after, Cheney fired Welch's successor for making unauthorized statements to reporters before the first Gulf War in 1990. "The possibility of Rumsfeld leaving has definitely crossed the President's mind," the former White House official told TIME last week. "The key to it is the relationship with Cheney, and I don't know where that is right now."

But there is also the question of Rumsfeld's ability to function along the Pentagon's polished corridors. A veteran of the highest level E-Ring meetings predicted that Rumsfeld will wonder whether he is hearing what the uniformed officers are really thinking. A natural instinct in that situation, he added, would be to invite fewer military officers to high-level meetings--thus potentially adding to the distance between the uniforms and the civilians.

A friend who recently spent the weekend with Rumsfeld and his wife predicted Rumsfeld would stay for the duration: "They will have to pry him from his stand-up desk with a crowbar." In Cairo last week, Rumsfeld tried to take it all in stride. "If every time two or three people disagreed, we changed the Secretary of Defense of the United States, it would be like a merry-go-round." But Rumsfeld may again be underestimating the strength of an insurgency--this one in his own backyard. Other retired officers are expected to make their views known soon. Which means this Revolt of the Generals has yet to run its course.

FOREIGN POLICY

The Tipping Points

Foreign Affairs

By Daniel Yankelovich

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FROM BAD TO WORSE

Terrorism and the war in Iraq are not the only sources of the American public's anxiety about U.S. foreign policy. Americans are also concerned about their country's dependence on foreign energy supplies, U.S. jobs moving overseas, Washington's seeming inability to stop illegal immigration, and a wide range of other issues. The public's support for promoting democracy abroad has also seriously eroded.

These are a few of the highlights from the second in a continuing series of surveys monitoring Americans' confidence in U.S. foreign policy conducted by the nonprofit research organization Public Agenda (with support from the Ford Foundation), of which I am chair. The first survey, conducted in June of last year, found that only the war in Iraq had reached the "tipping point" -- the moment at which a large portion of the public begins to demand that the government address its concerns. According to this follow-on survey, conducted among a representative sample of 1,000 American adults in mid-January 2006, a second issue has reached that status. The U.S. public has grown impatient with U.S. dependence on foreign countries for oil, and its impatience could soon translate into a powerful demand that Washington change its policies.

Overall, the public's confidence in U.S. foreign policy has drifted downward since the first survey. On no issue did the government's policy receive an improved rating from the public in January's survey, and on a few the ratings changed for the worse. The public has become less confident in Washington's ability to achieve its goals in Iraq and Afghanistan, hunt down terrorists, protect U.S. borders, and safeguard U.S. jobs. Fifty-nine percent of those surveyed said they think that U.S. relations with the rest of the world are on the wrong track (compared to 37 percent who think the opposite), and 51 percent said they are disappointed by the country's relations with other countries (compared to 42 percent who are proud of them).

As for the goal of spreading democracy to other countries, only 20 percent of respondents identified it as "very important" -- the lowest support noted for any goal asked about in the survey. Even among Republicans, only three out of ten favored pursuing it strongly. In fact, most of the erosion in confidence in the policy of spreading democracy abroad has occurred among Republicans, especially the more religious wing of the party. People who frequently attend religious services have been among the most ardent supporters of the government's policies, but one of the recent survey's most striking findings is that although these people continue to maintain a high level of trust in the president and his administration, their support for the government's Iraq policy and for the policy of exporting democracy has cooled.

WHAT MATTERS, AND WHY

A question always hovers in the background whenever public attitudes on foreign policy are reported: What influence do shifts in such attitudes have on the actual day-to-day conduct of foreign policy? Unlike for domestic policy, where it is clear that public opinion is always relevant, for foreign policy it is often difficult to understand whether changes in public opinion lead to changes on the ground.

The reason for this murkiness is that the public grants the president and Congress far more authority for decision-making on foreign policy than on domestic affairs. Americans assume that the president and his advisers have special information about international relations to which they are not privy. Some Americans may also lack confidence in their ability to judge the wisdom of particular foreign policies. All of this translates into a good deal of leeway for policymakers. Still, the public puts limits on this freedom and sometimes takes it away abruptly. Under certain conditions, public opinion can have a decisive influence. The trick is understanding what those conditions are.

In mid-2005, we found that in addition to the war in Iraq, three other issues were moving toward the tipping point, where public opinion would become strong enough to influence policy. These issues were the outsourcing of jobs to other countries, illegal immigration, and the United States' deteriorating relations with the Muslim world. Based on the January survey, concern over outsourcing and illegal immigration has grown a bit more intense, and the worry about the growing hatred of the United States in Muslim countries has modestly receded. On the other hand, U.S. dependence on foreign energy sources, which was not an urgent issue in mid-2005, has leapt to the forefront of the public's consciousness.

In studies that track attitudes, there are always more views that do not change than views that do. This survey is no exception. It is a striking -- and encouraging -- illustration of the public's thoughtfulness and consistency. Respondents still awarded the government high marks (an A or a B) on its performance in achieving foreign policy goals such as helping other nations when natural disasters strike and making sure the United States has a strong and well-supplied military. Respondents continued to believe that the government deserves intermediate ratings on its efforts to make peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians and help improve the lives of people in the developing world. And respondents still gave the government failing grades on issues such as stopping the importation of illegal drugs. This context of overall stability makes any changes in opinion that the survey did find all the more striking and significant.

The war in Iraq, already at the tipping point in mid-2005, remains the primary foreign policy issue on which public pressure continues to mount. Although illegal immigration and outsourcing moved closer to the tipping point in the January 2006 poll, neither has actually reached it. In contrast, the public's concern over U.S. relations with the Muslim world moved slightly away from the tipping point. And the issue of energy dependence, which had ranked far down the list, leapfrogged ahead to move into tipping-point territory.

No change is more striking than that relating to the public's opinion of U.S. dependence on foreign oil. Americans have grown much more worried that problems abroad may affect the price of oil. The proportion of those who said they "worry a lot" about this occurring has increased from 42 percent to 55 percent. Nearly nine out of ten Americans asked were worried about the problem -- putting oil dependence at the top of our 18-issue "worry scale." Virtually all Americans surveyed

(90 percent) said they see the United States' lack of energy independence as jeopardizing the country's security, 88 percent said they believe that problems abroad could endanger the United States' supply of oil and so raise prices for U.S. consumers, and 85 percent said they believe that the U.S. government would be capable of doing something about the problem if it tried. This last belief may be the reason that only 20 percent of those surveyed gave the government an A or a B on this issue; three-quarters assigned the government's performance a C, a D, or an F.

The oil-dependency issue now meets all the criteria for having reached the tipping point: an overwhelming majority expresses concern about the issue, the intensity of the public's unease has reached significant levels, and the public believes the government is capable of addressing the issue far more effectively than it has until now. Should the price of gasoline drop over the coming months, this issue may temporarily lose some of its political weight. But with supplies of oil tight and geopolitical tensions high, public pressure is likely to grow.

The only other issue that has reached the tipping point is the war in Iraq. It continues to be the foreign policy issue foremost in the public's mind, and respondents consistently deem the war (along with the threat of terrorism) to be the most important problem facing the United States in its dealings with the rest of the world. Concern about mounting U.S. casualties in Iraq is particularly widespread -- 82 percent of respondents to the June 2005 survey said they cared deeply about the issue; in January 2006, 83 percent said they did. Although the level and intensity of concern about Iraq has remained fairly stable, the public's appraisal of how well the United States is meeting its objectives there has eroded slightly. Last summer, 39 percent of respondents gave the government high marks on this issue; 33 percent did in January. The erosion, moreover, comes almost entirely from Republicans: 61 percent gave the government an A or a B on Iraq in the first survey, but only 53 percent did in the second. Confidence in U.S. policy on Iraq is also down significantly among those who regularly attend religious services, who also show rising levels of concern about casualties.

One reason for the downward trend is skepticism about how truthful Washington has been about the reasons for invading Iraq. Fifty percent of respondents said they feel that they were misled -- the highest level of mistrust measured in the survey. Another source of skepticism may be more troublesome for the government: only 22 percent of Americans surveyed said they feel that their government has the ability to create a democracy in Iraq.

WHAT'S ON DECK

Three other issues are approaching the tipping point but have not yet reached it: the outsourcing of jobs, illegal immigration, and U.S. relations with the rest of the world, and especially Muslim countries.

An impressive 87 percent of respondents expressed some degree of concern about outsourcing, 52 percent said they "worry a lot" about it, and 81 percent of respondents gave the government poor grades (a C, a D, or an F) on its handling of the issue. Thus, outsourcing now meets two of the three criteria for reaching the tipping point. But it falls short on the third criterion, the ability of the government to take effective action on the issue. Most Americans surveyed (74 percent) felt that it was unlikely that U.S. companies would keep jobs in the country when labor is cheaper elsewhere. And 52 percent of respondents believed it was unrealistic to

think that the government could do anything to stop corporations from sending jobs abroad. On the other hand, a large plurality (44 percent) said they believe the U.S. government could do a lot to prevent jobs from moving overseas if it really tried. Should this plurality become a majority -- which we suspect will happen during 2006 -- outsourcing will have reached the tipping point.

Concern about illegal immigration has also grown. Two out of five Americans surveyed (41 percent) said they "worry a lot" about this issue, and half (50 percent) said they believe that tighter controls on immigration would greatly enhance U.S. security. Almost half (48 percent) also said they believe the government could do a lot to slow illegal immigration, and respondents gave Washington even lower grades on protecting U.S. borders in the most recent survey than they did in mid-2005. Interestingly, the public's feelings on a third issue have moved in the opposite direction. This issue is the intangible but important question of U.S. relations with the rest of the world, and specifically with Muslim countries. During the period between the two surveys, the U.S. public grew marginally less worried about anti-Americanism in the Muslim world and elsewhere. The number of respondents who said they "worry a lot" about growing hatred of the United States in the Muslim world decreased from 40 percent to 34 percent, and the share of those who were deeply concerned about losing the trust of people in other countries declined from 40 percent to 29 percent, one of the larger changes in the survey. The reasons for these changes are not self-evident. The sense of shame about the treatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, so strong in 2005, seems to have receded with the passage of time.

Only about a third of Americans surveyed (35 percent) said they think the U.S. government could do a lot to establish good relations with moderate Muslims -- but almost two-thirds (64 percent) nevertheless gave the government poor marks because of its failure to do so. We expect opinions on this issue to be volatile in the future. Nearly a third of respondents said they "worry a lot" about the rise of Islamic extremism around the world (31 percent) and the possibility that U.S. actions in the Middle East have aided the recruitment of terrorists (33 percent). Almost half (45 percent) said they believe that Islam encourages violence, and survey respondents estimated that about half or more of all Muslims in the world are anti-American. But a clear majority (56 percent) continued to have confidence that improved communications with the Muslim world would reduce hatred of the United States.

Americans may also be getting used to the once-shocking notion that they are not well loved abroad. A majority of respondents (65 percent) have realized that the rest of the world sees the United States in a negative light. When Americans are asked to describe the image of the United States in other countries, the results show a great deal of ambivalence and confusion. Even though a majority said they believe the United States is seen negatively, large majorities ascribed positive elements to the country's image abroad. Four out of five respondents said they think the United States is seen as "a free and democratic country" (81 percent) and "a country of opportunity for everyone" (80 percent). Nearly as many said they believe the United States is seen as generous to other countries (72 percent) and as a strong leader (69 percent). But equal numbers said the United States is seen as "arrogant" (74 percent), "pampered and spoiled" (73 percent), "a bully" (63 percent), and a "country to be feared" (63 percent).

UNITY AND DIVISION

The U.S. public holds a strikingly clear view of what Washington's foreign policy priorities should be. The goals the public highlights range widely. Those that receive the most public support are helping other nations when they are struck by natural disasters (71 percent), cooperating with other countries on problems such as the environment and disease control (70 percent), and supporting UN peacekeeping (69 percent). A surprisingly high level of support shows up for goals that represent the United States' humanitarian (as distinct from its political) ideals, such as improving the treatment of women in other countries (57 percent), helping people in poor countries get an education (51 percent), and helping countries move out of poverty (40 percent). Receiving less support are goals such as encouraging U.S. businesses to invest in poor countries (22 percent). And receiving the least support is "actively creating democracies in other countries" (20 percent).

Not surprisingly, there are partisan differences over what the United States' goals should be. The largest gap between Republicans and Democrats relates to "initiating military force only when we have the support of our allies." Almost two-thirds of Democrats surveyed (64 percent) endorsed this multilateralist principle, in contrast to slightly more than a third of Republicans (36 percent). There are no significant differences between Republicans and Democrats on humanitarian ideals. The parties do differ, however, on the desirability of promoting democracy in other countries (30 percent of Republicans surveyed supported this goal, compared to only 16 percent of Democrats). But even a majority of Republicans have little stomach for this priority of the Bush administration.

This last point merits some elaboration. A majority of the U.S. public supports the ideal of spreading democracy (53 percent of respondents said they believe that "when more countries become democratic there will be less conflict"), but Americans are skeptical that an activist U.S. policy can contribute much to this outcome. A majority of those surveyed (58 percent) said they feel that "democracy is something that countries only come to on their own." As such skepticism grows, support for trying to create democracies abroad declines. In the 2005 survey, 50 percent of respondents thought that the United States was doing well at that task; in the more recent survey, the number fell to 46 percent, and only 22 percent said they believe that Washington can do a lot to build a democratic Iraq.

The 2005 survey described the huge gap that divided Republicans and Democrats on most aspects of foreign policy. The most recent survey found that partisan differences remain pronounced. The gap between the parties is at its widest with regard to how the United States is doing in its foreign policy and how much the Bush administration can be trusted. The most striking difference is in the expression of pride in the nation's foreign policy, with a whopping 58-point spread between the percentage of Republicans and the percentage of Democrats who believe that there is "plenty to be proud of" in U.S. dealings with the world. Essentially, Republicans think the country is doing well in foreign policy, whereas Democrats think it is failing miserably.

But digging into the numbers reveals that although Republicans generally endorse the country's current foreign policy, they share with Democrats a critical appraisal on a number of specific issues. Both groups are reluctant to give an A or a B to the government for its efforts to stop illegal immigration, achieve energy independence, block drugs from entering the country, limit the extent of foreign debt, or negotiate beneficial trade agreements.

BACK TO THE FOLD?

The first survey showed a remarkable parallel between the views of Republican respondents and the views of those respondents who said they frequently attend religious services. (By "religious services," we mean services of any kind -- in churches, synagogues, mosques, or elsewhere.) The second survey showed reduced enthusiasm for some of the administration's policies among devoted service attendees, especially regarding the war in Iraq. In fact, most of the erosion in confidence in the government's foreign policy in the seven months between the two surveys came from this source. Although there are still striking differences between the views of Americans who do not attend religious services frequently and the views of those who do, the gap has started to narrow, suggesting reduced polarization on the basis of religion.

In the first survey, a minority of frequent attendees at religious services (45 percent) expressed serious worry about casualties in Iraq, compared to 56 percent of the total sample. Now that number has increased to 52 percent, closer to the proportion of the population as a whole, which has remained at 56 percent. Although people who frequently attend religious services are still the respondents most supportive of U.S. policy in Iraq, fewer of them (41 percent of those surveyed) gave a high grade to the government on meeting U.S. objectives there than did seven months earlier (46 percent). In the first survey, 32 percent of those who frequently attend religious services said they worried a lot that the war in Iraq was taking up too much money and attention; in January, 40 percent did. Almost half of those surveyed in June 2005 (48 percent) said they believed that the United States could help other countries become democracies; in January, that number had dropped to 37 percent, in line with the 36 percent of the general population. And in the more recent surveys only 46 percent agreed that the United States was "generally doing the right thing" in its relations with the rest of the world, down from 52 percent in the earlier survey.

These are not big changes, but they follow a consistent pattern, suggesting that the most actively religious Americans are starting to react more like the rest of the public. This conclusion is supported by the results of the broad overview question asking whether U.S. foreign policy is going in the right or the wrong direction: 57 percent of those who frequently attend religious services said the latter in January, matching the 58 percent of the rest of the population who said this. Still, despite the mounting reservations of actively religious Americans about some policies, a majority (54 percent) continue to trust the government to tell them the truth about the country's relations with others, in contrast to the 37 percent of respondents who do not frequently attend religious services.

A recent survey of public opinion in Arab countries, conducted in late 2005 by Zogby International and University of Maryland Professor Shibley Telhami, showed results that are dismaying from the United States' point of view, with large majorities believing that the war with Iraq will make Iraqis worse off and the region less peaceful, breed more terrorism, and worsen the prospects for settling the Arab-Israeli dispute. Comparably large majorities said they consider U.S. foreign policies to be driven not by a desire to spread democracy, but by oil, a quest to dominate the Middle East, the goal of protecting Israel, or a desire to weaken the Muslim world.

Nevertheless, one ray of light shines through. Asked what the primary motivation for Bush's Middle East policy is, only 13 percent of those Arabs surveyed in the Zogby/Telhami poll cited "the need to spread ... Christian religious convictions";

most (61 percent) chose instead "the pursuit of [the United States'] national interest." Why does this offer grounds for hope? Because our most recent survey showed that the religious divide over U.S. foreign policy seems to be narrowing, and the Zogby/Telhami survey revealed a similar finding: that the Arab world sees secular, rather than religious, motivations as crucial to U.S. foreign policy. However difficult differences rooted in interests might be to solve, and however long it might take to solve them, clashes rooted in identity and religion are even more problematic and take far longer to surmount.

--DANIEL YANKELOVICH is Chair and Co-founder of the organizations Public Agenda, DYG, and Viewpoint Learning.

GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

Dead-end Debates

National Review

By Victor Davis Hanson

4/13

Currently, there are many retired generals appearing in frenetic fashion on television. Sometimes they hype their recent books, or, as during the three-week war, offer sharp interviews about our supposed strategic and operational blunders in Iraq--imperial hubris, too few troops, wrong war, wrong place, and other assorted lapses.

Apart from the ethical questions involved in promoting a book or showcasing a media appearance during a time of war by offering an "inside" view unknown to others of the supposedly culpable administration of the military, what is striking is the empty nature of these controversies rehashed ad nauseam.

Imagine that, as we crossed the Rhine, retired World War II officers were still harping, in March, 1945, about who was responsible months during Operation Cobra for the accidental B-17 bombing, killing, and wounding of hundreds of American soldiers and the death of Lt. Gen. Leslie McNair; or, in the midst of Matthew Ridgeway's Korean counteroffensives, we were still bickering over MacArthur's disastrous intelligence lapses about Chinese intervention that caused thousands of casualties. Did the opponents of daylight bombing over Europe in 1943 still damn the theories of old Billy Mitchell, or press on to find a way to hit Nazi Germany hard by late 1944?

First of all, whatever one thinks about Iraq, the old question of whether Iraq and al Qaeda enjoyed a beneficial relationship is moot--they did. The only area of post facto disagreement is over to what degree did Iraqi knowledge of, or support for, the first World Trade Center bombing, al Qaedaists in Kurdistan, sanctuary for the Afghan jihadists, or, as was recently disclosed by postbellum archives, Saddam's interest in the utility of Islamic terror, enhance operations against the United States.

Second, the old no-blood-for-oil mantra of petroleum conspiracy is over with. Gas skyrocketed after the invasion--just as jittery oil executives warned before the war that it would. Billions of petroleum profits have piled up in the coffers of the Middle East. Secret Baathist oil concessions to Russia and France were voided. Oil-for-Food

was exposed. And the Iraqi oil industry came under transparent auspices for the first time. The only area of controversy that could possibly still arise would have to come from the realist right. It would run something like this: "Why, in our zeal for reform, did we upset fragile oil commerce with a dictator that proved so lucrative to the West and international oil companies?"

A third dead-end subject is Iran. The Bush administration is hardly hell-bent on preemption, unilateralism, and imperial grandeur in blocking Iran's rapid ascendance to nuclear status.

Instead, there are, and always were, only three bad choices. First, we could let the multilateral Europeans jawbone, using the cowboy George Bush as the bad-cop foil while drawing in the United Nations, the Russians, and the Chinese, or the Arab League, in hopes of delay. Perhaps as we bought time we could pray that after 26 years either the Iranians would liberalize their regime or the democratic experiment in Iraq would prove destabilizing to the neighboring mullahs.

The second tact was live with a nuclear Iran as if it were a Pakistan--and perhaps hope that something like a nuclear democratic India emerged next door to deter it.

The third choice, of course, was to tarry until the last possible moment and then take out the installations before the missiles were armed. The rationale behind that nightmarish gambit would be that the resulting mess--collateral damage, missed sites, enhanced terrorism, dirty-bomb suicide bombers, Shiite fervor in Iraq, and ostracism by the world community--was worth the price to stop a nuclear theocracy before it blackmailed the West, took de facto control of the Middle East oil nexus, nuked Israel, or spread global jihadist fundamentalism through intimidation.

All alternatives are bad. All have been discussed. So far neither the retired military brass nor the Democratic opposition has offered anything new--much less which choice they can assure us is best. The result is that Iran is the new soapbox on which talking heads can blather about the dangers of "preemption," but without either responsibility for, or maturity in, advocating a viable alternative.

The old "good" Afghanistan / "bad" Iraq false dichotomy is ending as well, as we experience similar postbellum reconstructions. Whatever one's views three years ago about removing Saddam, by now the jihadists in Afghanistan are not much different from their brethren in Iraq. The Taliban uses suicide bombers and improvised explosive devices just like al-Zarqawi's killers. Their fundamentalist rhetoric is almost the same.

On some days in March as many Americans died in Afghanistan as in Iraq; and indeed, more Iraqis each day are fighting and dying against Islamic jihadism than are Afghans. Nearby Pakistan is almost as unhelpful as Iraq's neighbors Iran and Syria.

Democracy in both places is fragile. In other words, in both places there are real threats to establishing an alternative to the autocracies that once sponsored terrorism and destabilized the region. And the chances that Mr. Karzai can establish a lasting democratic government among the provinces of his warlords are about the same as Shiites, Kurds, and Sunnis coming together to form a government. Such is the Middle East, as we see with Hamas on the West Bank--a dysfunctional region where realists will be blamed for their amoral emphasis on the semblance of order as

much as idealists for their democratic fervor and the resulting disruption.

Equally fossilized is the "more troops" debate. Whatever one's views about needing more troops in 2003-5, few Democratic senators or pundits are now calling for an infusion of 100,000 more Americans into Iraq. While everyone blames the present policy, no one ever suggests that current positive trends--a growing Iraqi security force and decreasing American deaths in March--might possibly be related to the moderate size of the American garrison forces.

So, for every argument offered by "experts," there was just as available a convincing counter-argument--something usually lost on those eager to keep up with the 24-hour news cycle.

More troops might have brought a larger footprint that made peacekeeping easier--but also raised a provocative Western profile in an Islamic country. More troops may have facilitated Iraqization--or, in the style of Vietnam, created perpetual dependency. More troops might have shortened the war and occupation--or made monthly dollar costs even higher, raised casualties, and ensured that eventual troop draw-downs would be more difficult. More troops might have bolstered U.S. prestige through a bold show of power--or simply attenuated our forces elsewhere, in Japan, Okinawa, Korea, and Europe, and invited adventurism by our enemies. Too few troops were the fault of the present Administration--or the chickens that came home to roost after the drastic cutbacks in the post-Cold war euphoria of the 1990s.

"Troop transformation" has become equally calcified. We know the script. Pensioned Army and Marine generals appear ever more ubiquitously to assure the public that we have near criminally shorted ground troops. They alone are now speaking for the silenced brave majors and dutiful colonels stuck on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq with too few soldiers--as their four-star Pentagon brass sold out to Mr. Rumsfeld's pie-in-the-skies theorists in Washington.

Maybe--but then again, maybe not. The counterarguments are never offered. If hundreds of billions of dollars were invested in sophisticated smart shells and bombs, drones, and computers, to ensure far greater lethality per combatant, then must traditional troop levels always stay the same? How many artillery pieces is a bomber worth, with ordinance that for the first time in military history doesn't often miss? Has the world become more receptive to large American foreign bases? Or depots to housing tens of thousands of conventional troops and supplies? And did lessons of the Balkans and Afghanistan prove the need for far more ground troops and traditional armor and artillery units?

The point is simple: Somewhere between the impractical ideas that the U.S. military was to become mostly Special Forces on donkeys guiding bombs with laptops, or, instead, a collection of huge divisions with tanks and Crusader artillery platforms, there is a balance that the recent experience of war, from Panama to the Sunni Triangle, alone distills. And it isn't easy finding that center when we had enemies as diverse as Slobodan Milosevic, Mullah Omar, Osama bin Laden, and Saddam Hussein.

So we know the nature of these weary debates. Both sides offer reasonable arguments. Fine. But let us not fool ourselves any longer that each subsequent "exposé" and leak by some retired general, CIA agent, or State Department official--inevitably right around publication date--offers anything newer, smarter, or much more ethical in this dark era that began on September 11. No need to mention the

media's "brave" role in all this, from the flushed-Koran story to the supposedly "deliberate" American military targeting of journalists.

Ridding the world of the Taliban in Afghanistan after the attacks on the United States was as necessary as it was daunting--especially given Afghanistan's primordial past, the rise of Islamic fascism, and that creepy neighborhood that has so plagued past invaders.

After allowing the Kurds and Shiites to be butchered in 1991 (in what turned out to be an inconclusive war), the 12-year no-fly-zones and Oil-for-Food, and the three-week war in 2003, staying on to change the landscape in Iraq was as critical as it was unappealing.

Iran's nuclear ambitions did not start in 2006. Like Pakistan's, they were a decade in the making. Indeed, they are the logical fruition of a radical Islam that hates the West as much as it is parasitic on it--and, in lunatic fashion, screams that past American appeasement was really aggression.

Changing the military to meet more nonconventional challenges was always going to be iffy--given the billions of dollars and decades of traditions at stake--and only more acrimonious when war, as it always does, puts theory into practice.

What we need, then, are not more self-appointed ethicists, but far more humility and recognition that in this war nothing is easy. Choices have been made, and remain to be made, between the not very good and the very, very bad. Most importantly, so far, none of our mistakes has been unprecedented, fatal to our cause, or impossible to correct.

So let us have far less self-serving second-guessing, and far more national confidence that we are winning--and that radical Islamists and their fascist supporters in the Middle East are soon going to lament the day that they ever began this war.

--Victor Davis Hanson is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution. He is the author, most recently, of *A War Like No Other*. How the Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War.

No Child Left Behind

Newsweek
By Martha Brant
4/24

Ten-year-old Lea Gibbs was still awake in bed the night the Army chaplain and the casualty officer came by her father's house. The men offered no gentle talk of sacrifice, no quiet prayers. All Lea heard as she came out of her bedroom was the screaming of her step-mom: "Your daddy's dead! Your daddy's dead!" The following day, Lea's mother, Heidi Litherland, began seeking grief counseling for her daughter. "We don't handle that, Ma'am," Litherland says she was told when she contacted the base hospital at Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas. The hospital shuffled Litherland off to Army social services, but they didn't handle counseling, either: instead, they told her to go to a base clinic to get an assessment of the girl's emotional state. "Her dad just

died! What kind of frickin' assessment do you need?" Litherland fumed. She managed to get a list of local private counselors from an Army chaplain, but none could take Lea: their waiting lists were too long. It took five months before she finally saw someone.

The Army has never been very good at talking about death--especially when it comes to children. But with a fighting force that is increasingly made up of parents--43.5 percent of all service people have children--the U.S. military is realizing it needs to offer more to grieving families than a folded flag and a package of death benefits. The number of American children who've lost parents in Iraq and Afghanistan now stands at more than 1,200--a figure roughly equal to the number of widows and widowers, according to the Pentagon. Yet casualty officers--those soldiers who deliver the news every military family hopes never to hear--have no training in counseling, beyond a standardized handbook that encourages them to act as natural as possible and exercise common sense and sensitivity. In fact, there has never been a uniform approach to family "bereavement care" in the U.S. military: experiences vary from branch to branch and base to base. Now some military families are pushing for change--and the Pentagon is starting to listen. "Many feel that the Army family has let them down," explains Debbie Busch, an Army officer's wife who is helping to turn Fort Hood, the nation's largest military base, into a test case for reform.

The changes at Fort Hood are already helping fatherless kids like Lea, now 11. On a recent afternoon at a local soldiers' hospitality center, Lea is laughing with other girls from the base as she sits at a table and works on her art project: a brown and olive "memory box," where she can finally store the letters she keeps writing to her dad, even though a roadside bomb killed him more than a year ago in Iraq. "That's how it is with kids. They mourn in spurts," says Erin Pounders, Lea's counselor at this one-day "grief camp," which Busch helped organize, along with Texas hospice workers. The children sing songs and play games, but the songs are about their dads and the games are designed to draw out memories. The day ends with a candlelight vigil and a color guard; Lea seems drawn to the soldiers, and she chats happily with them. To see her now, you'd never imagine that she struggled with chronic headaches and stomach pains after her dad died, or that she wouldn't talk about his passing or much of anything else. For a while, she couldn't even cry. "It hurt too bad," she says.

The military has always relied on the volunteer efforts of officers' wives like Busch to do their grief counseling. And back when most soldiers were single, or when the nation wasn't at war, that worked just fine. But the needs today are greater. Busch was amazed to find that when a friend lost her husband in Iraq, she was basically cut loose emotionally. "Once the ceremony is over and the flag's been handed to you, people stop calling," says Busch, an Army wife of 24 years who's been fortunate enough never to be on the receiving end of one of those flags.

As Busch heard stories from the widows of Fort Hood, she began lobbying for better training of casualty-assistance officers and a full-time bereavement officer who would work with each family until they get back on their feet. But even the small changes she was advocating fell on deaf ears--until the commander in chief himself visited with families at Fort Hood last April. The families weren't shy about telling President George W. Bush their plight, and he wasn't shy about telling the top brass to listen up. Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey got the message: calling flaws in the Army's bereavement program "unacceptable," he ordered an evaluation last

September, and the service has just begun to implement reforms. Some insiders acknowledge that the Army has let grieving families down, especially when it comes to children. But publicly, the Army is more circumspect. "If a family is angered or hurt because of something that happened, we will try to fix it. We want to fix it. But some things you can't take back," says Col. Mary Torgersen, director of the U.S. Army Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Center.

Harvey has already added \$7 million to this year's budget for casualty assistance, and the branch plans to overhaul officer training (at Fort Hood, the officers now receive a full week of training--including a day spent with hospice workers--rather than the standard three hours). The Army is also computerizing the labyrinth of death benefits for families. And as of this month, commanders will be required to check in with families by phone one week after a soldier's death. (Fort Hood's top general has told commanders to write a personal letter to their slain soldier's family and to send a videotape of the memorial service in Iraq.) Meanwhile, the Government Accountability Office has been studying the Fort Hood reforms for a report on military bereavement care, which is due in Congress in July.

The hope is that these changes will result in the military's paying more attention--not just to grieving spouses, but to their kids. "The children have often been the forgotten mourners," explains Vicki Jay, executive director of Rays of Hope, a children's grief center in Texas, who volunteered to run Fort Hood's grief camp. The key, says Jay, is to talk frankly with kids about death. That's what Stacy Pintor of Utah has been doing with her 5-year-old daughter, Rhea. Pintor, who is attending this month's grief camp, explained to her daughter that her father had died like Mufasa in "The Lion King." "I have forced myself from day one to talk about him because she needs to know her daddy, as much as that hurts me," Pintor says. For Rhea, and so many like her, that is how the healing can begin.

ENERGY

The Price of Our Addiction

Newsweek

By Jane Bryant Quinn

4/24

The U.S. lives in an energy trap. We fell into it gladly, dug it deeper and sit fat and happy, with blinders on. We're fed daily meals of imported oil, from countries we pay in IOUs and think we can push around. But now we're starting to see the costs and risks of our dependency--and I don't only mean gasoline averaging \$2.74 a gallon at the pump.

For years to come, we'll be in the hands of some of the most dysfunctional governments in the world. Oil prices will rise and economic growth will slow--not this year, but almost certainly a few years out. We'll be paying in both treasure and blood, as we fight and parley to keep ever-tighter supplies of world oil flowing our way.

What has changed in the world? We're running out of the capacity to produce surpluses of oil. Demand for crude is expected to rise much faster than new supplies. Developing nations, such as China and India, are glugging barrels at astounding

rates. Meanwhile, most producer nations can't find enough new oil, or drill out more from their reserves, to replace what we're using up. Production from most of the large, older fields is in irreversible decline. About three years from now, the non-OPEC world will start pumping at slowly diminishing rates, says energy analyst Charles Maxwell of Weeden & Co. Most of the extra barrels needed to feed our economic growth will then have to come from OPEC nations--putting them in the driver's seat. Saudi Arabia is stepping up drilling and development, but the volatile market price suggests that it still won't have much capacity to spare. Within 10 or 15 years, it too may not pump enough to meet increased demand.

That puts the oil-dependent countries in a serious bind. We're all jockeying for control of oilfields, in a vast game that runs the risk of turning mean. China and Japan are running warships near disputed oil and natural-gas deposits in the East China Sea. China is doing deals in Sudan, Venezuela and Iran (our "bad guys"). Russia looks less friendly as we continue to invest in the oil countries around the Caspian Sea--Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan.

Nobody really knows how much oil there is. State-run companies don't disclose their true reserves. But clearly there's not enough to cover long supply disruptions, and that puts future economic development at increasing risk. "Terrorists have identified oil as the Achilles' heel of the West," says Gal Luft, head of the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security. The world market is losing maybe 1.5 million barrels a day to political sabotage. In February, the Saudis foiled an attack on one of their major oil installations. Had it succeeded, it could have been an "energy Pearl Harbor," Luft says. No one can foresee how world markets would respond if we attack Iran, but traders are clearly running scared (oil touched \$70 a barrel last week).

This throws our Iraq wars into a different light. To an extent that most Americans don't yet understand, the U.S. military has become a "global oil-protection force," says Michael Klare, an expert on natural-resource wars and author of the book "Blood and Oil." President Jimmy Carter declared the free flow of oil from the Persian Gulf to be a vital U.S. interest, enforced at the point of a gun, if necessary. Today, we patrol tanker routes not only in the gulf, but in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea. Troops and advisers help protect pipelines in chaotic countries such as Colombia and the Republic of Georgia. We're planting military bases near oil supplies in Asia and Africa. Gulf War I was billed as a war to save Saudi oilfields from Saddam Hussein. Gulf War II was elevated to a "war against terror." But it's arguably still about oil--the Carter Doctrine reigns. One of the prizes in Iraq was to have been British and American access to its huge and unexploited oil reserves, Klare says.

What does all this add up to? A future oil market drastically rationed by price. Farmers, truckers and people on lower incomes who have to drive to work will be squeezed, especially if they also need oil to heat their homes. But heating with natural gas won't save you either, says oil investment banker Matthew Simmons; natural-gas supplies may grow even tighter and even higher priced.

On paper, we have alternatives, such as liquefied coal, oil sands from Canada and ethanol. But they're not anywhere close to production on a massive scale. For a smooth transition, mega-energy projects need to get started at least 20 years before oil supplies decline, writes Robert Hirsch of the consulting firm SAIC in a study prepared for the U.S. Department of Energy. If we don't get a running start on the problem, he says, "the economic consequences will be dire." We're probably already

behind. It takes leadership to address a potential crisis in advance.

Unfortunately, we're investing in war, not in crash projects to develop new energy sources. Maybe there's time to spare. But some events, like true civil war and collapse in Iraq, could change everything in a day. We're running a faith-based energy policy--still addicted to oil. If something goes wrong, it will go wrong big.

PROLIFERATION

The Shadow of the Bomb, 2006

Policy Review

By Sidney D. Drell

April/May 2006

Nuclear weapons are unique in their terrifying destructive potential. Their energy release is a million times larger than that of previous explosives. Mass destruction is inevitable if they are used in conflicts. One primitive atomic bomb destroyed — literally wiped out — the Japanese city of Hiroshima at the end of World War II, causing more than 200,000 casualties. That bomb was little more than a trigger of a modern thermonuclear — or so-called hydrogen — bomb that releases 100 times or more destructive energy. There are several tens of thousands of them in the world today.

Through the decades of the Cold War, the prospect of a nuclear holocaust was all too real. The U.S. and the former Soviet Union stood toe-to-toe with their fingers on the triggers, ready to launch, by accident or misunderstanding if not deliberately, many thousands of nuclear warheads to annihilate one another. During his presidency, Dwight Eisenhower remarked that war with nuclear weapons can come close to “destruction of the enemy and suicide.” The fate of civilization as we know it lay in the balance. Although that specter of doom has passed, a grave new danger has emerged. It is the danger of nuclear weapons and the material that fuels them falling into very dangerous hands, whether they be those of state leaders or terrorists, or simply suicidal fanatics unrestrained by the norms of civilized behavior.

The top priority for U.S. nuclear-weapons policy must be to keep that from happening. It is easy to recognize and to state this priority — but it is a most difficult challenge to figure out how to prevent such proliferation. On the diplomatic front, which is the most challenging, we must strengthen and sustain an international nonproliferation consensus that today appears to be fragile and weakening. At the same time, on the technical front, so long as we retain a nuclear deterrent, we must work to ensure its security, reliability, and effectiveness against newly emerging threats.

A Cold War success

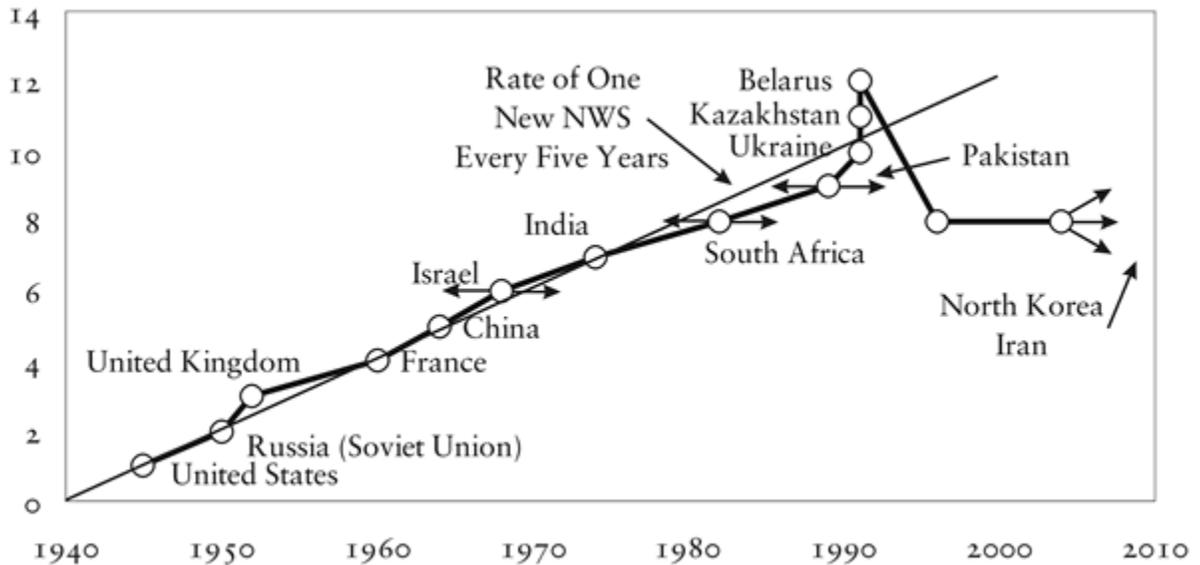
During the darkest days of the Cold War, we were successful in limiting the spread of nuclear weapons to no more than a handful of nations. A norm of nonpossession of these weapons was established, as was a norm of their nonuse in military combat that has extended over 60 turbulent years. This record belies a view frequently expressed by those who disparage the value of international cooperation and arms-

control treaties and who consider continuing negotiating efforts against nuclear proliferation to be futile.

Today only eight nations are confirmed nuclear-weapon states: the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, China, France, India, Pakistan, and Israel, a nondeclared nuclear-weapon state (see Figure 1). The evidence is unclear in the case of North Korea, though its government has the fuel for nuclear bombs and wishes the world to worry that it has them. Iran has been aggressively building a nuclear infrastructure. This number of eight nuclear weapons states is much smaller than was anticipated in the early 1960s; President Kennedy predicted 16 by the end of that decade. And the number hasn't grown over the past two decades.

This is all the more impressive when one recalls the many nations that flirted with the idea of going nuclear — and those that, in fact, started down the path to nuclear weapons and turned back. These include Argentina, Brazil, Taiwan, South Korea, and Sweden; and South Africa, Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, which gave them up. But we are reminded daily by events in North Korea, Iran, and Pakistan — with its precarious arsenal and the extensive nuclear-supplier network created by Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan — that the nuclear-restraint regime is facing tough challenges.

Number of States with Nuclear Weapons



The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (npt), which entered into force in 1970, has been a bulwark for worldwide efforts to counter the spread of nuclear technology and weapons to other nations for 35 years. These are its basic provisions:

It requires that there be no transfer of nuclear weapon technology between nuclear weapon states and nonnuclear weapon states.

It assigns authority to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna for full-scope safeguards over the declared sites for peaceful nuclear activities of all signatories, which is designed to prevent the diversion of nuclear materials to use for weapons.

It stipulates, as part of the Grand Bargain with the nonnuclear weapon states, that the peaceful benefits of nuclear technology will be made available to them.

The partners to the treaty are also committed to good-faith negotiating efforts toward an eventual goal of eliminating all nuclear weapons. At present the npt has almost universal support: 188 nations, all but four in the world, have signed on to it. The only outliers are India and Pakistan, which became nuclear after the treaty entered into force in 1970; Israel, which has never explicitly admitted to being a nuclear power; and North Korea, which withdrew in 2003. And Iran is threatening.

In the face of the new challenge of the spread of technology to rogue nations and terrorists, it is natural to question whether the npt still meets our security needs. The United States and our allies, including the other nuclear weapon states, recognize a need for new restraints and modifications to make the treaty effective in keeping the worst weapons out of the worst hands. On the other hand, many nonnuclear states expressed serious reservations about extending the treaty into the indefinite future, when it faced its final scheduled review in 1995 at the United Nations. They objected to its discriminatory features and, as a quid pro quo for their continuing to renounce nuclear weapons, called on the nuclear powers to make serious and timely progress in reducing their excessively large arsenals and reducing their reliance on nuclear weapons. They also called on them to continue to adhere to the moratorium on all underground nuclear explosive tests that had been initiated in 1992 by President George H.W. Bush and to continue to work toward a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (ctbt) that would formalize a test ban and extend it without a limit of time.

Without a doubt, the leadership and example of the U.S. will be decisive in efforts to sustain and strengthen the nonproliferation regime. This is an important factor for Washington to weigh in our nuclear policy decisions and actions. The U.S. and Russian commitment to the npt, and to fulfilling their obligations under it, was explicitly affirmed by Presidents Bush and Putin in their Joint Declaration at the Moscow summit in May 2002. However, those words and promises have yet to be turned into the solid actions needed to convince the world that the U.S. and Russia, possessors of more than 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons, are serious and determined partners in the campaign against proliferation.

Theft or purchase

Cooperation among all nations — nonnuclear as well as nuclear — will be crucial in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. The most direct way for states or terrorist entities to acquire nuclear weapons is through theft or illegal purchase, and the danger is real. The best means of denying a nuclear capability to terrorists is to provide maximum protection for existing stockpiles of weapons and nuclear materials and to reduce their size. This calls for the geographic extension and aggressive application of effective cooperative threat reduction measures, first developed in the 1990s under the Nunn–Lugar legislation for the former Soviet Union, and an expedited implementation of the nuclear force reductions negotiated by Presidents Bush and Putin in Moscow in 2002.

Of particular concern in this regard is the large quantity of nuclear materials and warheads stored in the former Soviet Union in far less than ideal security circumstances. Russia's stockpiles are the largest in the world, containing many hundreds of tons of dangerous nuclear material as a legacy of the Cold War. This is

enough fuel for more than 50,000 nuclear warheads, in addition to the approximately 20,000 warheads that already exist in Russia. The material is spread over many dozens of sites in structures and bunkers, the majority of which are poorly guarded and protected. This constitutes a very rich treasure for would-be proliferators, and especially for terrorist organizations, emphasizing the importance of cooperative measures to secure them from theft or sale.

If they are unable to steal or illegally purchase nuclear weapons, the biggest hurdle for states or terrorist entities that seek to achieve a nuclear capability is getting their hands on uranium ore. This is the raw material from which to make the fuel for nuclear weapons, either by enriching the ore, which naturally occurs with only 0.7 percent of the fissioning isotope of uranium, $u(235)$, to 90-plus percent $u(235)$ for bomb fuel or by making it into fuel rods for a nuclear reactor producing plutonium, which does not occur in nature. Controlling access to this material will require cooperative procedures for export controls and interdiction of illegal shipments. For those nations that possess uranium deposits within their borders, the challenge to deny them a nuclear capability is quite stark: It is to keep them from acquiring or constructing the industrial infrastructure to enrich uranium or to manufacture plutonium. A nation with access to uranium ore that possesses such an operating facility is a potential and, in fact, a latent nuclear weapon state. This is the prospect looming today in Iran.

A blueprint meeting this challenge is contained in the May 2002 Bush–Putin Declaration of Moscow. It calls on all nations to cooperate to prevent such infrastructures from being developed by strictly enforcing export controls, interdicting illegal transfers, prosecuting violators, and tightening border controls. In addition to working to broaden the coalition of nations that are cooperating on implementing these powers, as called for in the Proliferation Security Initiative that has been proposed by the Bush administration, the authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency (iaea) will have to be expanded. Currently the iaea has the authority for inspecting only the declared peaceful nuclear activities of the signatory nations to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Its authority will have to be expanded to include on-site challenge inspections of undeclared and suspect activities as well. Such inspection rights are included in the Additional Protocol to the npt that has been negotiated with the iaea by many, but not all, nations. So far, 107 nonnuclear weapon states have signed, and 73 have ratified, the Additional Protocol. Effective enforcement will also require the United Nations Security Council to give appropriate enforcement powers in cases where nations refuse to admit or give access to inspectors.

As described above, a broad menu of intrusive procedures will be required to monitor compliance and to identify any and all serious efforts by a would-be nuclear power to build nuclear weapons covertly. Negotiating to bring them into force with clear inspection protocols presents a major intelligence and diplomatic challenge. But the nuclear powers must also recognize and deal with the concerns and basic motivations that drive some countries to seek to become nuclear powers. This requires offering appropriate incentives to npt signatories, in the form of compensating security guarantees and economic aid, to balance the restrictions and intrusive procedures being proposed to prevent nuclear proliferation. A targeted diplomatic approach, including cooperation as well as confrontation, will be required to deal with these concerns rather than each proliferant being viewed simply as a nuisance at best and a dangerous enemy at worst.

There is one more guarantee that will be of great importance. It is a guarantee of secure sources of energy, nuclear or otherwise, to npt signatories that accept the restrictions of the Proliferation Security Initiative. This guarantee is included in constructive and important proposals that have been made in considerable detail by Mohamed ElBaradei, director of the iaea. These proposals include creating multinational, regional facilities that would guarantee to provide the nuclear fuel to reactors engaged in research for peaceful purposes and for electrical power while at the same time prohibiting construction of such facilities by individual nations. In effect, there would be an internationally guaranteed supply of the fuel, remaining under international control, which would replace national control of materials that could be diverted to weapons use at some future date. This proposal is currently under discussion.

U.S. nukes

It is not necessary to look abroad for challenges to the present nonproliferation regime. There is also an apparent challenge originating in Washington as a result of American initiatives for new nuclear weapons that signal potential changes in our own policy. The Bush administration's Nuclear Posture Review (December 31, 2001), issued by the Department of Defense, highlighted a need for new earth-penetrating nuclear weapons to defeat emerging threats of hardened underground targets of military interest being built in many countries. This recommendation raises two important questions: What will be the effect of developing new nuclear weapons on the nonproliferation regime and U.S. security? And, on technical grounds, what is the military utility of such weapons?

Consider first the technical issues. The effectiveness of warheads for destroying hardened underground targets is enhanced if their designs are sufficiently rugged so that, when delivered by aircraft or missile, they can be rammed into the ground intact and penetrate some ten or so feet into the earth without damage before detonating. Such warheads will deliver a shock to destroy an underground bunker that is considerably stronger — by a factor of ten to 20 — relative to the shock from the same warhead if it is exploded at or above the earth's surface, in which case much more of its blast energy would be spent in the atmosphere.

Many hardened underground targets are at relatively shallow depths of a hundred or so feet, particularly large industrial targets for manufacturing weapons or producing fissile material (u and Pu) to fuel nuclear weapons. Others of very high value are more likely to be built at depths of 1,000 feet and hardened to withstand the order of 1,000 atmospheres over-pressure. Doing the very best possible, taking into account experimental data and known limits on material strengths, the yield of a warhead would have to be significantly larger than 100 kilotons for the shock from its blast to reach down to 1,000 feet with enough strength to destroy such targets.

Very low-yield warheads allegedly offer a possibility of attacking underground military targets, particularly those containing biological or chemical warfare agents, at shallow depths and are purported to be "more useable" since they would cause reduced collateral damage. It is unavoidable, however, that any such warhead that has penetrated into the earth as deeply as it can before detonating will still create a huge cloud of radioactive debris and a very large crater. The blast of even a very "low-yield" one-kiloton earth penetrator detonated at the maximum depth to which it can penetrate intact in hard rock will eject more than one million cubic feet of radioactive debris from a crater about the size of ground zero at the World Trade

Center — bigger than a football field. A nuclear weapon with a yield capable of destroying a hard target 1,000 feet underground — well over 100 kilotons — will dig a very much larger crater and create a substantially larger amount of radioactive debris. That would certainly not be a low-yield weapon. The primitive atom bomb that pulverized Hiroshima had a yield of only 13 kilotons. The United States already has many high-yield weapons in its arsenal for attacking hardened, deeply buried targets. The main problem is being able to identify and locate such targets accurately.

The technical realities of nuclear weapons and their value in destroying biological and chemical weapons must also not be exaggerated. The effective range of nuclear weapons in neutralizing the deadly effects of biological pathogens and chemical gases is severely limited by the fact that the blast effects of nuclear weapons, when detonated in earth, extend beyond the range of high temperatures and radiation they create and that are required for destroying such agents. Therefore, they would be more likely to spread these agents widely than to destroy them completely. On quantitative technical grounds, one is led to conclude that low-yield penetrators are of marginal military value, useful only for relatively shallow targets. The collateral damage they cause may be reduced due to their lower yield, but it will still be very substantial. President Eisenhower's warning of "destruction and suicide" as the potential outcome of nuclear war suggests the dangers and risks if one crosses the nuclear threshold, especially for limited military missions.

Improvements in intelligence can lead to valuable payoffs in the ability of the military to destroy hardened underground targets. What is needed is the ability to locate, identify, and characterize such targets with accuracy and to define, identify, and seal off their vulnerable parts — such as air ducts and tunnel entrances for equipment, resources, and personnel. These vulnerabilities can be exploited with specialized delivery systems and conventional munitions with multiple detonations for enhanced earth penetration.

What is the likely impact on U.S. security of a new initiative for new low-yield weapons? First, it is generally agreed that already tested weapons are available for most bunker-busting missions. In view of that, a decision by the world's only superpower to develop and deploy such presumably "more usable," low-yield nuclear weapons as bunker busters would send a clear and negative signal about the nonproliferation regime to the nonnuclear states. If the United States, the strongest nation in the world, concludes that it cannot protect its vital interests without relying on nuclear weapons in limited war-fighting situations, it would be a clear signal to other nations that nuclear weapons are valuable, if not necessary, for their security purposes too. It would be counter to repeated urging by the nonnuclear weapon states, when they agreed to the npt extension at the un in 1995, for the nuclear-weapon states to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons, to continue the moratorium on underground explosive tests of nuclear weapons, leading to a ctbt, and for further reductions in nuclear forces. The United States could thereby be dealing a fatal blow to the nonproliferation regime in order to provide itself with a capability of questionable military value. The 188 signatories to the npt are calling on the nuclear-weapon states to decrease rather than increase the discriminatory nature of the nonproliferation regime by developing new warheads for new missions while they themselves renounce any such armaments.

For fiscal year 2006, Congress zeroed out funds supporting the development of new so-called bunker busters, or robust nuclear earth penetrators. This followed their

action in fiscal 2005 to remove spending for the development of new concepts for low-yield weapons designed to attack shallow hardened underground targets. Members did, however, fund an important new program for fiscal 2006 called the Reliable Replacement Warhead, or rrw. Its stated purpose is to adapt nuclear infrastructure and weapons so that the U.S. will be able to maintain long-term high confidence in its arsenal more efficiently and economically without requiring the resumption of nuclear testing. The specific direction given to the activities under this program, as stated in the House-Senate conference report on the authorizing legislation, forbids the development of new weapons for new military missions. It reads: "The conferees reiterate the direction provided in fiscal year 2005 that any weapon design work done under the rrw program must stay within the military requirements of the existing deployed stockpile and any new weapon design must stay within the design parameters validated by past nuclear tests."

That is very important. It would be a mistake if rrw were to turn into an effort to develop new warhead designs by altering the nature of the high explosives or the amount of nuclear fuel in the primary without explosive testing, as some have suggested. Would a responsible leader — president, general, or admiral — seriously consider relying on an untested new design to protect our national security? It takes an extraordinary flight of imagination to place higher confidence in a new design without a test pedigree than in our stockpile with a half-century of more than 1,000 tests in its making. It seems inconceivable that the nonproliferation regime would, or could, survive if the newly established Reliable Replacement Warhead program were to become a design program for new U.S. weapons, as some advocate, rather than focusing on increasing long-term confidence in our current arsenal within experimentally established parameters.

The case for the Test Ban Treaty

A genuinely important action by the United States against nuclear proliferation would be to affirm our continuing support for the moratorium on testing, in effect since 1992, and to work toward bringing into force the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. All U.S. allies in nato, including Great Britain, Germany, and France, have signed and ratified the ctbt, as have Japan and Russia. Israel has signed the ctbt and is participating energetically in the work of setting up a verification system. Others, including China, have indicated they will work to bring the treaty into force once the United States has ratified it. Currently 33 of the 44 states that have built nuclear reactors — the so-called nuclear-capable states that must ratify the treaty for it to enter into force — have done so. In all, 129 states have ratified and 176 have signed.

Forty-five years ago, in May 1961, shortly after he completed his eight years in the White House, President Eisenhower remarked that not achieving a nuclear test ban "would have to be classed as the greatest disappointment of any administration — of any decade — of any time and of any party." This is an appropriate time for the U.S. to reconsider the issue of ratifying the ctbt.

A serious debate between the White House and the Senate to clarify the underlying issues, both the concerns and opportunities, was not adequately joined in 1999 when the ctbt first came before the Senate for its advice and consent to ratification. To join the debate on the ctbt, the Bush administration will have to change its position, announced in 2001, that it had no intention to seek ratification of the ctbt.

Why is the United States reluctant to reopen the question of ratifying the ctbt? Opponents of the ctbt have raised two questions: How can the U.S. be sure that many years ahead, we will not need to resume underground explosive yield testing in order to rebuild the stockpile? And how can compliance by other ctbt signatories be monitored to standards consistent with U.S. national security?

The answer to the first question is that total certainty can never be achieved. But I am confident that the United States can be assured of the reliability of our nuclear forces under the ctbt. I say this because we are successfully pursuing a strong technical and scientific program at the national weapons laboratories (Los Alamos, Lawrence Livermore, and Sandia) that is providing a deeper understanding of their performance and is maintaining and refurbishing them as appropriate. This is a rigorous and a well-supported and executed program relying on extensive surveillance, forensics, diagnostics, extensive simulations with new computers, and experiments with advanced facilities. It is, in fact, enhancing U.S. confidence in the arsenal — and in the ability to hear any warning bells of unanticipated problems that may develop in the future. No leader at the weapons laboratories at present identifies a need for nuclear testing. Issues that arise due to aging of the stockpile weapons have been identified and are being resolved by appropriate measures including refurbishment of parts when and where a need is found.

Concerning the question of compliance, there is broad, if not unanimous, agreement, based on detailed technical analyses, that the United States would be able to monitor compliance with a ctbt to standards consistent with its national security. With or without the ctbt, the U.S. will want all the information we can get on clandestine testing activities by other countries seeking to develop nuclear weapons. The ctbt would make such clandestine efforts more difficult and more risky for those nations by strengthening the global verification system and adding on-site inspection rights when the treaty enters into force.

What if?

We must face the fact that, despite our best efforts, we may fail to keep dangerous people from getting their hands on the most dangerous material. They may do so by theft, by illegal purchase, or simply by refusing to cooperate with our anti-proliferation efforts and building the infrastructure to enrich uranium and make nuclear weapons. What is the appropriate U.S. response in such circumstances? This is not an idle theoretical question. This issue is very much on the agenda, and was explicitly raised in the most recent official U.S. National Security Strategy document in March. It states that, against emerging threats of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, the United States must be prepared to take “anticipatory action to defend ourselves even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack”; that is, we will take preventive military action before the existence of an established threat. While we cannot rule out the use of force under any circumstance, we have to recognize that the use of force brings its own serious risks and raises tough new questions. Under what circumstances can and should we apply military force? Against whom? Which targets? When and how?

Preventive military action requires exquisite intelligence to evaluate the danger accurately and to identify the critical targets correctly. Current difficulties and debates about U.S. policy in the Middle East, however one may view the choice that the U.S. made to initiate war against Iraq, are clear evidence of the risks of taking such actions. Most decisions to initiate preventive action have to be made even

though there may be big uncertainties, as well as gaps and wrong information on essential facts. This is almost inevitable. It is the very nature of intelligence information. These circumstances may result in divided support and challenges to the legitimacy of the mission, both at home and abroad, if not its outright failure. That is all the more reason to exhaust all possible avenues of diplomacy before relying on force only as a last resort.

To be sure, it is a very tall order and a frustrating ordeal to engage in patient, multinational diplomacy with rogue nations that are bent on joining the nuclear club. It is even more daunting to get at the roots of what generates fanatical destructive behavior in terrorists. Changing such behavior patterns takes a lot of time and determined effort. In the short term, it is necessary to pursue practical measures that can be effective in keeping evil despots and suicidal terrorists from being able to threaten us with nuclear weapons.

We have several examples from recent history that illustrate the three conditions that almost certainly will have to be satisfied simultaneously if preventive military action, or even its threat, is to be effective: 1) There is very little likelihood of successful retaliation by the potential proliferant against the homelands of the attacking powers; 2) the proliferant is viewed by large parts of the international community as a threat to its neighbors; 3) peaceful means of blocking nuclear weapons programs have failed or seem unlikely to work.

To support this judgment, we can recall cases where not all three conditions existed, and military force or the threat of force was not credible and was not brought into play. They include the Soviet Union in the 1950s, as it tested and began to deploy nuclear weapons, and China when it began to move toward a nuclear weapons capability in the 1960s.

There were influential voices in the United States that spoke out for preventive war against the Soviet Union in the 1950s, fearing that a Soviet nuclear arsenal would prove devastating for America's position in the world and for the American homeland itself. Fortunately President Eisenhower knew better. A similar discussion took place at high levels of the American and Soviet governments during the Kennedy administration when China was seen to be nearing a nuclear weapons capability. The discussion led nowhere, another example of the disutility of military force under the circumstances then existing. In both these cases patient diplomacy proved its superior mettle.

What about today's most worrisome cases, North Korea and Iran? North Korea is already close to posing an actual nuclear threat, if indeed it doesn't already exist, and our military options are tightly constrained by the existence of their million-man army with many, many thousands of artillery tubes almost on the outskirts of Seoul. In targeting diplomacy for halting and reversing North Korea's nuclear programs, the U.S. and our allies in the region will undoubtedly have to negotiate a nonuse of force commitment in the context of a freeze and dismantlement of all North Korea's nuclear weapons programs. The Clinton administration's Agreed Framework of 1994 froze North Korea's nuclear reactor and reprocessing activities in return for promises of power for civilian needs and of limited economic aid. We now would insist on the return of iaea inspectors with the authority to inspect not only the reactors and the plutonium they have already produced, but also the elements of a gas centrifuge facility for enriching uranium components which North Korea has recently been acquiring in violation of the Agreed Framework. We would also insist on setting a

firm schedule for removing the plutonium, including all spent fuel rods, from North Korea and dismantling its nuclear weapons facilities and program.

It would be a serious mistake to allow the process to stop there. The North Korean leadership is primarily interested in survival and seems to be aware that economic changes will be necessary for that to happen. Our diplomacy must help support efforts on their part to make such changes and convince them that it will be safe for them to pursue them. A broad program of economic cooperation and security guarantees should ultimately include North Korea's neighbors — South Korea above all. Since North Korea poses a threat to its neighbors, guarantees must be a two-way street.

Are the U.S. Congress and the American public ready for this? With presidential leadership, perhaps so, especially since the alternative very likely will be not only a nuclear-armed North Korea but also, as a consequence, the entry of Japan and South Korea — and maybe even Taiwan — into the ranks of nuclear-weapon states. This would affect China, which would affect India, which would affect Pakistan. An Asian arms race rivaling the Cold War's U.S.–Soviet nuclear arms race could be the result. The situation sounds grim, but recall Libya's decision to abandon its nuclear program after much pressure and difficulties from abroad.

Finally, we have to ask: Is it possible for the United States and its friends to agree on criteria for diplomatic initiatives to head off other crises like the one we now face in North Korea and the one looming with Iran? And if the diplomatic initiatives fail in North Korea and Iran, and perhaps elsewhere in the future, will we be able to agree on criteria appropriate for imposing sanctions and, perhaps, eventually for initiating forceful actions against those who insist on moving ahead toward acquiring nuclear capabilities and are behaving aggressively? The experience at the United Nations leading up to the invasion of Iraq shows how difficult that challenge will be. A serious effort to come to such agreements will have to start by restoring and strengthening the international consensus against nuclear proliferation, and defining clear responsibilities and authority for action by the UN Security Council.

It will be essential for the United States to change a perception that the use of elective, or preventive, force has become a dominant strain in American thinking about international challenges such as nuclear proliferation. The lesson that the United States and our allies and friends have learned since the dawn of the nuclear era in 1945 is that deterrence waged with patient and firm diplomacy will be key to keeping the worst weapons out of the most dangerous hands. This will require that we resort to a continuum of means keyed on patient, determined diplomacy, supported by coercion if or when required, to face the challenge to us, and indeed to civilization, posed by these terrible weapons. The Bush administration needs to be encouraged to continue building on the recent evidence of multilateralism in our diplomatic approach to this challenge.

Specifics

The nuclear genie cannot be put back in the bottle. It would be a noble thing to strive for a world of such human perfection that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons would no longer be a distant dream. I fear that such a day is far beyond the horizon of the most ambitious plans of the world's visionaries.

For the present, the United States must engage diplomatically and give the strongest support for specific actions that can serve as effective instruments in the effort against proliferation. These include, to summarize:

1. Expanding the authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency to carry out on-site challenge inspections of all suspect nuclear sites under the Additional Protocols to the NPT;
2. Broadening the international participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative allowing interdiction of suspect shipments and improved export controls;
3. Guaranteeing nuclear fuel under international control for peaceful purposes as an alternative to indigenous fuel cycles for enriching uranium and processing plutonium, which henceforth will be forbidden;
4. Giving strong support to beefing up protection of large stores of dangerous nuclear materials around the world, in particular the Nunn–Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program for securing repositories of nuclear material in the former Soviet Union and around the world, as protection against terrorists and their kin with the goal of providing effective controls and accountability for the material on a time scale of within four or five years, as called for by a national bipartisan commission that deemed this “the most urgent unmet security threat to the United States”; and
5. Continuing to adhere to the moratorium on underground nuclear bomb testing.

We should work to bring the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty into force rather than developing new, putatively more useable, nuclear weapons. At the very least we should continue U.S. adherence to the moratorium.

The urgency for such a commitment to deal with the nuclear threat — a danger with no precedent in human history — has been expressed powerfully and dramatically by Father Bryan Hehir, former dean of Harvard Divinity School, in his keynote address on “Ethical Considerations of Living in the Nuclear Age” at a Stanford University conference in 1987:

For millennia people believed that if anyone had the right to call the ultimate moment of truth, one must name that person God. Since the dawn of the nuclear age we have progressively acquired the capacity to call the ultimate moment of truth and we are not gods. But we must live with what we have created.

This is our challenge.

ARAB MEDIA

The Last Word--Wadah Khanfar: Al-Jazeera, All the Time

Newsweek

By Vibhuti Patel

4/10

Al-Jazeera has its sights set on CNN and the BBC. Founded 10 years ago in Doha, the controversial Arab television network plans to launch a 24/7 English-language channel at the end of May, Al-Jazeera International. Big-name Western journalists like the BBC's David Frost and former "Nightline" reporter David Marash have already

signed on, and news

centers are soon to open in Kuala Lumpur, London and Washington. Heading up the ambitious expansion is 38-year-old director-general Wadah Khanfar, appointed in late March to the network's top spot. Palestinian by birth, Jordanian by education, Khanfar spoke to NEWSWEEK's Vibhuti Patel in Doha about the station's reputation and its future. Excerpts:

Why go international now?

Al-Jazeera is a Pan-Arab regional network. In 10 years, it's become an internationally recognized brand name. Now we're looking beyond our region to introduce a fresh perspective. Ours will be the only 24-hour news channel in English headquartered in the Middle East.

The new venture has attracted several high-profile Western journalists.

These people have high credentials; they've done a beautiful job in the media. Their experience will result in magnificent programming at Al-Jazeera. So far, the limitation of the Arabic language has not allowed people from all over the world to see our network. Now, with the best English-speaking journalists, global understanding of what we're saying will be enhanced.

Right now, who watches you?

Our statistics show that most Arabs look up to Al-Jazeera as their most reliable source of news. The masses watch us; the rulers and the elite find us an important source of information; they're concerned about what we cover. Al-Jazeera has changed the political landscape in the Middle East. People now receive the opposition's discourse directly. Al-Jazeera opened it up for intellectuals, thinkers, critics to speak their mind. It was the first democratic exercise in the region. The Arab world is changing. Reform, democracy and freedom of speech are issues integral to this period of transformation.

But you still offer Osama bin Laden his biggest platform.

Our motto is, opinion and counteropinion. Up to 2001, Western media and governments celebrated Al-Jazeera as the foremost force for freedom in the region, but when we implemented the same motto internationally on the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, America protested. We report the news, so when there's a newsworthy item, we put it on the screen, be it Osama, or Ayman al-Zawahiri, or Al Qaeda in Iraq--they are part of a developing news story and we're a news channel. I can't censor hard news for political gain. We are not a propaganda tool for anyone. George W. Bush and Donald Rumsfeld complain about us, but we've broadcast more than 5,000 hours of Bush's speeches, live, translated into Arabic; we have not aired more than five hours of bin Laden's. So, no, we're not bin Laden's mouthpiece.

You got kicked out of Iraq after the government accused you of inciting violence. Do you want a bureau back in Iraq?

Without doubt. Iraq is a big story that we're covering through news-agency reports and our Doha newsroom. Our presence in Iraq would allow us coverage that's more in touch with the reality of the field. Some accusations were made against us, but

now we've been banned for a year and a half. Al-Jazeera has not been behind any trouble or political situation. The banning makes no sense: Al-Jazeera was giving the best picture of the reality in Iraq. We urge the government of Iraq to open our bureau and allow our correspondents--most of whom are Iraqis--to return to be in touch with the day-to-day story in the field. We've contacted many Iraqi officials, and received many promises that the bureau will open. But so far nothing has materialized. Al-Jazeera does not sympathize with insurgents--we are not for or against anyone.

Reporting in Iraq, though, has been a struggle.

More than 20 of our journalists were detained by U.S. forces in '03, '04, some for a few hours, others more than 30 days. Some were tortured physically by U.S. armed forces; some were in Abu Ghraib jail. One colleague was killed in Najaf while he was filming; another was killed the day before Baghdad fell. Then U.S. forces bombed our offices. Now it's Atwar Bahjat [who was killed by insurgents on Feb. 22] ... I had recruited her personally when I was bureau chief in Baghdad.

How do you view Al-Jazeera's success?

Our founding mission was to free the Arab media from being manipulated by authoritarian regimes in this part of the world; to give audiences choices--the right to knowledge, to be better informed, to decide for themselves without interference from political authorities. Before 1996, no one here took journalists seriously. Everyone knew that it was propaganda, the spin that intelligence agencies and governments wanted published. We introduced free journalism. Now other networks are following our model.

RELIGION

Apostates from Islam

Weekly Standard

By Paul Marshall

4/10

THE NEWS THAT, DESPITE the Afghan parliament's last-minute attempts to prevent him from leaving, Abdul Rahman has been given asylum in Italy has drawn a global sigh of relief. But now is not the time to forget the issue. The case of Rahman--an Afghan Christian tried for the capital crime of apostasy--is not the only one, even in Afghanistan, and is unusual only in that, for once, the world paid attention and demanded his release. But there are untold numbers in similar situations that the world is ignoring.

Two other Afghan converts to Christianity were arrested in March, though, for security reasons, locals have asked that their names and locations be withheld. In February, yet other converts had their homes raided by police.

Some other Muslim countries have laws similar to Afghanistan's. Apart from its other depredations, in the last ten years Saudi Arabia has executed people for the crimes of apostasy, heresy, and blasphemy. The death penalty for apostates is also in the legal code in Iran, Sudan, Mauritania, and the Comoros Islands.

In the 1990s, the Islamic Republic of Iran used death squads against converts, including major Protestant leaders, and the situation is worsening under President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The regime is currently engaged in a systematic campaign to track down and reconvert or kill those who have changed their religion from Islam.

Iran also regards Baha'is as heretics from Islam and denies them any legal rights, including the right to life: There is no penalty for killing a Baha'i. On March 20, Asma Jahangir, the United Nations special rapporteur on religious freedom, made public a confidential letter sent on October 29, 2005, by the chairman of the Command Headquarters of the Iranian Armed Forces. The letter stated that Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei had instructed the Command Headquarters to identify Baha'is and monitor their activities, and asked the Ministry of Information, the Revolutionary Guard, and the Police Force to collect any and all information about them.

Other countries, like Egypt, that have no laws against apostasy, instead use laws against "insulting Islam" or "creating sectarian strife." In 2003, Egyptian security forces arrested 22 converts and people who had helped them. Some were tortured, and one, Isam Abdul Fathr, died in custody. Last year, Gaseer Mohamed Mahmoud was whipped and had his toenails pulled out by police, and was told he would be imprisoned until he gave up Christianity.

While there has been no systematic study of the matter, and many punishments are not publicized, it appears that actual state-ordered executions are rarer than killings by vigilantes, mobs, and family members, sometimes with state acquiescence. In the last two years in Afghanistan, Islamist militants have murdered at least five Christians who had converted from Islam.

Vigilantes have killed, beaten, and threatened converts in Pakistan, the Palestinian areas, Turkey, Nigeria, Indonesia, Somalia, and Kenya. In November, Iranian convert Ghorban Dordi Tourani was stabbed to death by a group of fanatical Muslims. In December, Nigerian pastor Zacheous Habu Bu Ngwenche was attacked for allegedly hiding a convert. In January, in Turkey, Kamil Kiroglu was beaten unconscious and threatened with death if he refused to deny his Christian faith and return to Islam.

Meanwhile, on March 21, the Algerian parliament approved a new law requiring imprisonment for two to five years and a fine between five and ten thousand euros for anyone "trying to call on a Muslim to embrace another religion." The same penalty applies to anyone who "stores or circulates publications or audio-visual or other means aiming at destabilizing attachment to Islam."

Converts and Baha'is are not the only ones subject to such violence. Ahmadis, whom many Muslims regard as heretics, suffer a similar fate throughout the Muslim world. The victims also include many Muslims who question restrictive interpretations of Islam. In traditionally moderate Indonesia, Yusman Roy is now serving two years in prison for leading prayers in Indonesian and Arabic instead of only in Arabic.

Abdul Rahman's plight is merely the tip of the iceberg. Like the violence over the Danish cartoons of Muhammad, or the Ayatollah Khomeini's demand that Salman Rushdie be killed for blasphemy, it reveals a systematic, worldwide attempt by Islamists to imprison, kill, or otherwise silence anyone who challenges their ideology.

We need to go beyond the individual case of Abdul Rahman and push for genuine religious freedom throughout the Muslim world. Especially we need to push for the elimination of laws against apostasy, blasphemy, heresy, and "insulting Islam." They seek to place dominant, reactionary interpretations of Islam beyond all criticism. Thus--since politics and religion are intertwined--they seek to make political freedom impossible.

Paul Marshall, a senior fellow at Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom, is the editor, most recently, of *Radical Islam's Rules: The Worldwide Spread of Extreme Shari'a Law*.

HARVARD PAPER

Oil and Vinegar

New Republic
By Martin Peretz
4/10

"The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy," a "faculty research working paper" recently produced for Harvard's John F. Kennedy (trade) School of Government by Stephen Walt, its academic dean, and John Mearsheimer, a professor of political science at the University of Chicago, weighs in at nearly 35,000 words. The word "oil," however, appears in the document exactly seven times--all of them generic or trivial. None of the references relate to the systemic U.S. dependence on foreign crude or, more to the point, to the truly powerful lobby that has worked for many decades to satisfy it through arranging that the producer governments get what they want: mainly protection against radical Muslims or Muslim radicals and against fuel-efficient cars. Israel's friends--foreign affairs idealists and realists, rightists, leftists, centrists, Christians, Jews, nonbelievers--know the power of this oil lobby, with which they have tangled to ensure that the United States supports an ally against its many unworthy enemies.

Support for Israel is, deep down, an expression of America's best view of itself. Mearsheimer and Walt clearly have no clue that U.S. support for the Jewish restoration, rather than a result of Zionist machinations, dates back to the Puritans. And it carries through Woodrow Wilson and Harry Truman to, if you'll forgive me, George W. Bush. But rarely without colossal struggle. Indeed, how could the authors forget Truman's certified nutcase secretary of defense, James Forrestal, who held paranoid views of Zionist perfidy congruent with their own and could only relieve himself of them by jumping from a sixteenth-story window at the Bethesda Naval Hospital? (In a TNR article at the time, Harold Ickes wrote that Forrestal was a satisfied reader of this magazine!) As that incident shows, Israel's opponents were overruled during the Truman administration. But they were not when James Baker was the steward of U.S. foreign policy under Bush pere. The truth is that the Clinton-era peace processors (Martin Indyk, Dennis Ross, Aaron David Miller), whom Walt and Mearsheimer blithely and falsely associate with the Lobby, were either leftovers from the Baker team or held a stubborn view of how to force peace: Squeeze Israel. Time and again, they imperiled Israel in order to get Yasir Arafat to accede to, in De Gaulle's phrase, the "peace of the brave." This paper is not research in any serious sense, although its academic paraphernalia--211 scholia, most with more than one

reference--are intended to lend it an undeserved seriousness. But the apparatus deployed in this tendentious work is the labor of obsessives with dark and conspiratorial minds. Have you ever received a letter from a crackpot in which every stray fact fits together in a coherent whole? Sometimes the academy produces genuine theories-of-everything, such as those of Spengler and Sorel, Sorokin and B.F. Skinner, men of immense learning. Ingenuous and suggestive, yes. Still, even these serious men were touched by maniacal fantasies. Mearsheimer and Walt, despite their standing as exemplars of the realist school of international politics, know ironically little about reality. They are abstractionists, constructing imaginary solutions to real conflict. Mearsheimer, for instance, has argued that nuclear proliferation is the best guarantee of peace. Germany should have the bomb--also Japan and Ukraine. This, he maintains, is not simply manageable, but preferable. What's so dangerous if Iraq and Iran have it, too? To be sure, there is a pro-Israel lobby--or, to be precise, many pro-Israel lobbies (some of them favoring what others oppose)--and it wields some influence. But this is not at all the devious, capital-L "Lobby" that Mearsheimer and Walt claim. After all, the Lobby includes everyone from Jerry Falwell to New York Representative Eliot Engel to, well, me. Thank God I was not left out, as I was from Richard Nixon's enemies list. I don't recall whether I've written urging the administration to go after Syria. If I haven't, it was in defiance of the Lobby, for, as Mearsheimer and Walt argue, the U.S. confrontation of Damascus was a huge achievement of the Jews. This is preposterous. The White House barely acknowledged Syria until two circumstances came together. The first was that French President Jacques Chirac, eager to return France to some prominence in Beirut and offended that Bashar Assad's security services had murdered his client, Rafik Hariri, prodded Washington to dislodge the ophthalmologist's forces from Lebanon. The second was that our commanders in Iraq saw the Syrians encouraging foreign terrorists to spill Shia blood and wreak havoc in Baghdad. And so Assad's vicious gendarmerie was expelled from Lebanon. The authors also debit the Iraq war to the Jews. Douglas Feith and Scooter Libby and Paul Wolfowitz (who, by the way, has many stated qualms with our Israel policy) apparently seduced pillars of the Protestant establishment--Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, and Bush--into attacking Saddam Hussein. They did all this on behalf of the Lobby--the same Lobby that is now seducing the country into a military confrontation with Iran. Of course, Israel can take care of itself vis-a-vis Tehran, thank you very much. In fact, it is Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait that are truly endangered by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's mad Shia regime. Indeed, our own supply of oil is in danger--as is the whole effort to keep nukes out of the control of mad states, mad movements, mad men. Mearsheimer and Walt assert, "Readers may reject our conclusions, of course, but the evidence on which they rest is not controversial." But, to take but one example, look at the evidence for their proposition that "Israel's presence in Jerusalem and the plight of the Palestinians" are the chief motivations of terrorists like those in Al Qaeda. (Never mind that Osama bin Laden doesn't speak much of this, and then only as an afterthought to the Islamic reconquest of Andalusia.) The first person they cite is "Middle East expert Shibley Telhami," who said, "No other issue resonates with the public in the Arab world, and many other parts of the Muslim world, more deeply than Palestine. No other issue shapes the regional perceptions of America more fundamentally than the issue of Palestine." Forgive me, but this is a pathetic citation. Telhami is a simpleminded person--good for a CNN sound bite, but no more--and so he has a simple explanation for Arab hatreds. But where does he hang his hat? At the very Saban Center for Middle East Studies that Mearsheimer and Walt characterize as one of the Lobby's intellectual headquarters. Apparently, the Jews work in mysterious ways. For further evidence, the authors

turn to Hosni Mubarak, who has also claimed it is Washington's Israel policy that spurs anti-American sentiment in the Arab world. It would be too much for Mubarak to fault his own regime, but perhaps it is our support for that despotic and debased government that makes Egyptians hate us. Mearsheimer and Walt's third authoritative mustering is to Lakhdar Brahimi, a tiers-mondiste Algerian who was a functionary of the League of Arab States and onetime U.N. special envoy to Iraq. He is quoted asserting that Israeli policy toward the Palestinians is "the great poison in the region" and that "in the region, and beyond," people recognize the "injustice of this policy and the equally unjust support of the United States for this policy." Even Kofi Annan could not countenance such stupidity, and he chastised Brahimi for it. This is nonsense scholarship. "It is really the stuff," Fouad Ajami told me this week, "of easy chatter in the coffeehouses of Ramallah and Nablus, Cairo and Amman. The lurid fantasies endemic to the Arab world have been given a false but sustaining authority with the imprimatur of two great universities, Harvard in particular. The conspiracy of the Jews and their American friends against the Palestinians, and against Arabs generally, has now been demonstrated by two eminent professors. Intrigue and plot have been certified as the real engines of history." Jeffry Frieden, Harvard's Stanfield Professor of International Peace (given his title, I can't imagine what he actually teaches), acknowledges that many on the faculty were "very surprised by the vitriolic response provoked by the paper in the American public." Well, at least this academic recognizes that the demos actually supports Israel, even if the professoriate doesn't. Still, Frieden himself finds the "paper's central premise ... not controversial." The professor is wrong. The "working paper" aims to prove that there is a largely Jewish pro-Israel conspiracy triumphant against U.S. democracy and U.S. interests. But the body politic itself is Israel's ally--and the body politic determines what U.S. interests are. Professor Walt is vacating his position as academic dean of the Kennedy School in June. Even though he decided to leave the job of his own volition some time ago, Harvard should be grateful for his departure from this seat. An academic dean is supposed to be the shepherd of his faculty's (and his students') respect for evidence and scholarship. Having traduced the rules of evidence and the spirit of scholarly inquiry, he can no longer perform this function. Regrettably, Walt will not likely suffer any crueller fate than this. He has tenure, and tenure insulates one from all kinds of infractions against truth and honor.

Quiet Riot

New Republic

By Michael B. Oren

4/10

What does Jerry Falwell have in common with Paul Wolfowitz and Howard Dean? What links columnist George Will with The New Republic? All, according to a recently issued "working paper," a shortened version of which appeared in the London Review of Books, are agents of an amorphous but incalculably powerful "Israel Lobby." That same inscrutable organization, the paper alleges, has dictated the decisions of politicians from George W. Bush to Jimmy Carter and determined the content of The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. The goal of the lobby? Quite simply, it wants to impose the will of a racist, colonialist, antidemocratic state on the unsuspecting American people, to provoke conflict between the United States and the world, and to endanger American lives for its own sake.

Exposes of Jewish conspiracies have long been the bailiwick of white supremacists

and Islamic radicals. Indeed, the former Klan leader David Duke has lauded this document for "validat[ing] every major point" he had ever made, and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood has also praised it. But "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy," as the paper is titled, was written not by lunatics, but rather by Stephen Walt, the academic dean of Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, and by University of Chicago political scientist John Mearsheimer--two of America's most reputable scholars. Well, scholars in most regards--but not in this case. To prove their argument, the professors don't rely on such banal sources as declassified records, presidential memoirs, or State Department documents. These would unimpeachably show that Arab oil (and not Israel) was America's persistent focus in the Middle East--and that presidents have supported Israel for strategic and moral reasons, not political ones. But, instead of citing archival sources, Walt and Mearsheimer pack their footnotes with newspaper articles and references to the polemical writings of Noam Chomsky and Norman Finklestein, as well as the unreservedly pro-Arab Washington Report on Middle East Affairs. The paper's slipshod quality was so evident that the Kennedy School removed its official seal from the treatise. Criticisms have rained down upon on it from across the political spectrum, with one notable exception--the field most pertinent to their paper: Middle Eastern studies. The refusal of this faculty to distance itself from a report that fails to meet rudimentary research standards, posits unsubstantiated conspiracies, and, if directed against any other ethnic group, would surely be renounced as racist, raises serious questions about the state of today's academy. It should compel all those outside of academia to ask: Why? The answer can quickly be discerned from a tour of recent writings by the leaders of Middle Eastern studies. One eminence, Juan Cole of the University of Michigan, has argued, "[K]nee-jerk US support for Israeli expansionism is at the root of anti-Americanism in the Arab world." According to Cole, "pro-Likud intellectuals" have plotted "to use the Pentagon as Israel's Gurkha regiment, fighting elective wars on behalf of Tel-Aviv." At Columbia, the political scientist Joseph Massad has proclaimed that Israel is "a racist Jewish state." Indeed, the contention that support for Israel is the primary cause of Arab rage against America has long been regarded as unassailable doctrine among American scholars of the Middle East, along with a grossly inflated estimation of the Israel lobby's potency. The radical politicization of Middle Eastern studies stems from one generation's romance with an idea. The generation was that of the 1960s New Left, which briefly succeeded in seizing many campuses but failed to capture the society surrounding them. Retreating into the safety of their universities, these rebels set about institutionalizing their postmodernist creed, which denied the existence of objective truths and treated all narratives as equally valid. "I don't pretend to write history," Avi Shlaim, an anti-Zionist professor extensively cited by Walt and Mearsheimer, once proclaimed. "I write my history." Infused with the nihilism of postmodern French philosophers, this coterie was also deeply skeptical of its own country's virtue and of Western civilization in general. Ten years after the student revolts of 1968, those students had become junior professors, but they still needed a galvanizing idea, an all-encompassing manifesto that encapsulated their relativist approach to history and cynicism about the West. That credo was just then furnished by a charismatic and gifted scholar who, though a professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia, wrote as a Palestinian attacking the venerable discipline of Middle Eastern studies. The academic impact of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, first published in 1978, was seismic. That's because its core argument was so powerful: "[E]very European, in what he could say about the Orient, was ... a racist, an imperialist, and almost totally ethnocentric," Said maintained. He accused the old "Orientalist" professors, who once dominated the discipline, of "essentializing" the Middle East into a primitive "other," thus rendering it

conquerable by the West. To cleanse themselves of these impurities, Said implied, scholars would have to identify "wholeheartedly with the Arabs," and, as he later explained, become "genuinely engaged and sympathetic ... to the Islamic world." As a work of history, Orientalism is patently unsound. (For instance, Germany and Hungary, which produced the greatest Orientalists, never coveted a granule of Middle Eastern territory.) Yet, by condemning laudable curiosity about other cultures as a symptom of imperialism, by planting this sequoia of self-doubt in the innermost courtyard of academic inquiry, Said provided the New Left academics with a road map for their intellectual assault. Said's thesis swept through Middle Eastern studies departments, which, in large measure, were transformed into platforms for advocating the Arab worldview. Scholars who challenged this dictum were branded Orientalists, and students who rejected the regnant canon were unable to publish their work or obtain tenure. Special enmity was reserved for those who portrayed the United States as anything other than a force for oppression in the Middle East or who defended Israel against charges of racism and colonialism. All narratives were valid, suddenly, except those of unapologetic Americans and Zionists. But the idea behind Orientalism did not remain within the confines of Middle Eastern studies. Inexorably, it spread to the emergent fields of gender and postcolonial studies, and, in time, it grew to dominate the humanities departments. (One Harvard junior recently told me that she has already been assigned to read Orientalism twice--once for a course on French colonial literature and another for an Italian-language class on Africa.) It's precisely this triumph that makes Walt and Mearsheimer's complaints about the Lobby's efforts "to stifle criticism of Israel by professors and students" ring so hollow. Organizations like the Israel on Campus Coalition, which the working paper specifically targets, emerged because real academic debate over the Middle East has become virtually impossible. Consider the case of Michael Doran, the promising former Princeton professor who, after venturing to suggest, in Foreign Affairs and elsewhere, that the Arabs--not Israel, not the United States--bore primary responsibility for their malaise, was publicly excoriated and never granted tenure. Indeed, it seems the only real disputation among scholars today is over which is the more sinister, Zionism or U.S. imperialism. Massad, for example, reproved Walt and Mearsheimer for fixating on the Lobby's power rather than on U.S. crimes in the region. "[T]he very centrality of Israel to U.S. strategy in the Middle East ... accounts, in part, for the strength of the pro-Israel Lobby and not the other way around," he argued. "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy" in fact reveals little about the conduct of U.S. foreign affairs. It does, however, afford a disquieting look into just how far the pernicious ideology of Middle Eastern studies has penetrated the humanities and helped render the academy irrelevant. Gripped by absolutist theories that quash all opposition, some of America's finest universities provide environments in which partisan and shoddily documented screeds like the working paper can pass as serious research.

-- Michael B. Oren, a senior fellow at the Shalem Center in Jerusalem, is a visiting lecturer at Harvard and Yale.
