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Springtime for Neocons

By Jacob Heilbrunn

In May 1968, Richard Hofstadter published an essay about the Vietnam War in the *New York Times Magazine*. It was called "Uncle Sam Has Cried 'Uncle!' Before." Hofstadter had earned fame for works such as *The American Political Tradition* and *Anti-Intellectualism In American Life* that upended traditional interpretations of American history. The two-time Pulitzer Prize–winning historian was also a colleague and close friend of Lionel Trilling, Jacques Barzun and Daniel Bell at Columbia University. It was a moment when the voice of the New York intellectuals carried, even as the paladins of the New Left assaulted everything that they cherished.

In the *Times*, Hofstadter now offered a characteristically revisionist (and insightful) reflection about American foreign policy:

> The American people, like their leaders, have very little familiarity with losing national enterprises. Although they have been uncommonly uneasy about the war in Vietnam almost from the beginning, they are equally uneasy with the idea of national failure, and an American "defeat" seems to many of them unthinkable and absurd.

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But it wasn't. Contrary to popular mythology, Hofstadter argued, the United States had never enjoyed a smooth rise to global dominance. Instead, pretty much like any other nation, it had experienced periodic setbacks and defeats.

Hofstadter thus pointed out that in 1794 George Washington had signed the deeply unpopular Jay's Treaty, which preserved the peace between Great Britain and the United States at the cost of numerous concessions. The United States also paid ransom to the Barbary states (in 1795 alone it handed over almost one million dollars to the dey of Algiers to rescue 115 sailors). Then there was the War of 1812. American bungling throughout the conflict was overshadowed by Andrew Jackson's spectacular victory at New Orleans, which created the impression of overwhelming U.S. military power even though it wasn't even necessary to fight (slow communications meant that neither the British nor Americans knew that a peace deal had already been reached). Battling Mexico and Native Americans, Hofstadter wrote, further fostered a complacent belief in American invincibility. So did World War I, which the United States entered late in the day. World War II propelled the United States to global power, but the Korean War proved an unpopular and intractable conflict that Dwight Eisenhower pledged to end upon entering the Oval Office. Now Hofstadter said that prolonging the Vietnam War would, in the words of his biographer David S. Brown, "almost certainly bring about a reaction from the Right" to avenge the failure of liberal elites in Southeast Asia.

What Hofstadter did not anticipate, however, is that perhaps the most fervent response to defeat in Vietnam would come from a militant faction within the liberal movement, the one that came to be known as neoconservatism. It was a neologism coined as a term of derision by Michael Harrington, but it would ultimately be embraced by its adherents. The desire to restore a perceived American dominance—to repudiate the "Vietnam syndrome"—helped lead to the birth of the neocons. Former critics of the war, such as *Commentary* editor Norman Podhoretz, came to champion it retrospectively as an essential crusade against Soviet aggression. This remarkable turnabout prompted Theodore Draper to warn presciently in the *New Republic* in March 1982 that Podhoretz's self-serving tract *Why We Were In Vietnam* "represents a trend of selective moralistic zealotry which, if permitted to spread, will give both anti-Communism and neoconservatism a bad name." But spread it did—so virulently that many neocons, including Podhoretz, assailed a succession of presidents ranging from Richard Nixon to Jimmy Carter to even Ronald Reagan for failing to take a harder line against the Kremlin. With blind bellicosity serving as their personal index of patriotism, no president could live up to the standards that the neocons wished to impose.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, however, came a course reversal, at least when it came to Reagan. Now the once-saturnine neocons were jubilant, and claimed all the credit for the demise of the Warsaw Pact. But triumphalism required more triumphs, and by 2003, when the neocons and liberal hawks championed the Iraq War as the final blow to the Vietnam syndrome, they were unable to produce them. Instead, it was back to the future: Iraq, like Vietnam, turned into a debacle for the euphoric promoters of democracy and liberty in a distant land.

Or so it seemed. Today, the neocons and liberal hawks are once more on the march. Writing in *Politico*, for example, Michael Hirsh observed that former vice president Dick Cheney's "advice is actively solicited by many Republicans in Congress, perhaps more than it has been in years." Perhaps no one has inadvertently done more to revive the fortunes of the neocons and liberal hawks than President Obama.

To listen to Obama's critics—and with his poll numbers reaching subterranean lows, who isn't one?—the trouble with his foreign policy is that it has represented an inexorable process of retrenchment. Smitten by his own lofty rhetoric about the end of great-power conflict and a new era of peace, Obama has steadily pulled back from the Middle East, Asia and Europe, at once alienating our allies and emboldening our foes. It began with his maladroit attempts to foist a peace process upon Israel that quickly descended into open warfare between him and Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Then came his tour of the Middle East, where he delivered a major speech in Cairo in June 2009 called "A New Beginning," which proved to be

none at all. In Iraq and Afghanistan, he accepted arbitrary timelines for withdrawal rather than seeing both missions through to completion. And in Ukraine, his negligent approach prompted Russian president Vladimir Putin to embark upon revanchism.

So, at any rate, goes the indictment from neoconservatives and liberal hawks. They're certainly right to complain about his overall performance, but their specific allegations miss the mark. The real problem with Obama's foreign policy is not that he has been intervening abroad too little. It is that he has too often intervened in an inconsistent and ineffective manner.

The belief that Obama has presided over an era of retrenchment presumes that he has had a coherent foreign policy. But in Syria as well as Asia, he engaged in empty talk about U.S. red lines. Asked about America's commitment to defend the Senkaku Islands, for example, he gave what *New York Times* columnist Roger Cohen generously called an "evasive" response: "The implication of the question, I think, . . . is that each and every time a country violates one of these norms, the United States should go to war or stand prepared to engage militarily, and if it doesn't, then somehow we're not serious about these norms. Well, that's not the case." Actually, it is. U.S. policy in Asia and elsewhere is supposed to be based on a credible deterrent, not on the whims of a president who airily decides when he does, and does not, choose to back up solemn commitments.

Nor is this all. For all the complaints about Obama retreating from the world stage, the truth is that he has in fact been

Perhaps no one has inadvertently done more to revive the fortunes of the neocons and liberal hawks than President Obama.

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quite ready to employ military force abroad. In 2009, Obama backed a "surge" of troops in Afghanistan that merely postponed the inevitable. In 2011, Obama, together with European allies, attacked Libya to avert a slaughter in Benghazi and ended up driving Muammar el-Qaddafi from power, thereby exceeding the UN mandate and convincing Russia that Washington had used the pretext of humanitarian intervention as a convenient smokescreen to install a regime more to its liking. In reality, Obama quickly washed his hands of Tripoli.

What's more, his original intervention merely helped set the stage for a conflict in Mali and an even bigger civil war in Syria, as Libyan militants and weapons poured out into the neighborhood. Unlike in Libya, however, Obama threatened to intervene but then retreated as Congress rebelled against the prospect of a new Middle East war. But with the collapse of Iraq and the rise of the Islamic State, the mood has palpably begun to change. Obama, in his recent national address on the Islamic State, adopted a more crusading credo in Iraq and Syria: "Our own safety, our own security, depends upon our willingness to do what it takes to defend this nation and uphold the values that we stand for—timeless ideals that will endure long after those who offer only hate and destruction have been vanquished from the Earth."

If this sounds redolent of David Frum and Richard Perle's neocon manifesto *An End to Evil*, that's because it is. Over a decade ago, Illinois state senator Obama denounced the impending Iraq War as a "cynical attempt by Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz and other armchair, weekend warriors in this administration to shove their own ideological agendas down our throats, irrespective of the costs in lives lost and in hardships borne." Now, under President Obama, it's suddenly springtime for neocons.

No sooner did Obama sound the tocsin on Iraq than the neocons declared that they had it right from the beginning (one of the honorable exceptions is none other than Frum, who recently acknowledged, "The United States overestimated the threat from Saddam Hussein in 2003. Without an active nuclear-weapons program, he was not a danger beyond his immediate vicinity. That war cost this country dearly"). "Dick Cheney Is Still Right," the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page announced. "Say what you will about George W. Bush: He got every one of these questions right while Mr. Obama got every one of them wrong," wrote the paper's columnist Bret Stephens.

The real dream of the neocons is not simply to defeat the Islamic State but also to engage in a renewed bout of regime change around the globe. Toppling the Syrian regime has been a long-standing goal of the neocons. In August 2013, the Foreign Policy Initiative—the successor to the Project for a New American Century (headed by William Kristol and Robert Kagan), which was itself the successor to the Committee for the Free World, which was the successor to the Congress for Cultural Freedom—issued a letter to

The counsel of the neocons is a curious mixture of defeatism and false bravado. All that the United States has to offer the rest of the globe, it seems, is unremitting combat.

Obama imploring him to take out Bashar al-Assad. At the time, Fouad Ajami wrote, "The regime itself—its barons, its secret police, its elite military units and its air bases—ought to be legitimate targets, and the same is true of Assad's presidential palace." That mantra is now being revived. In a *New York Times* op-ed, Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham wrote that to stop the Islamic State, it would be necessary to end the civil war in Syria and to create a political transition "because the regime of President Bashar al-Assad will never be a reliable partner against ISIS [an alternate name for the Islamic State]; in fact, it has abetted the rise of ISIS, just as it facilitated the terrorism of ISIS' predecessor, Al Qaeda in Iraq."

But in asserting that Assad and Al Qaeda are united, McCain and Graham are engaging in semantic jiggerypook that is reminiscent of older claims that Saddam Hussein was allied with Osama bin Laden. What's more, had Obama ousted Assad a year ago, it might well have expedited rather than retarded the rise of the Islamic State. McCain and the Foreign Policy Initiative, among others, have consistently declared that a moderate opposition could take power in Syria, but whether moderation backed by U.S. arms, which seem to have a penchant for ending up in the hands of militant Islamic rebel groupings, would really carry the day is a rather iffy proposition.

It's also the case that the neocon program for combating the Islamic State is considerably more expansive than anything Obama should contemplate. According to Max Boot:

> We need to send many more advisers and Special Operations Forces to Iraq, backed up by airpower, to aid not only the Iraqi security forces but also the Kurdish peshmerga and the Sunni tribes to fight back against ISIS—and . . . we should also step up our aid to the Free Syrian Army to put pressure on ISIS on the other side of the border.

Then there is the distinguished historian Gertrude Himmelfarb. In the *Weekly Standard*, she invokes Burke's sulfurous "Letters on a Regicide Peace" to issue a demand for an apocalyptic struggle against the Islamic State:

> With such an enemy, there cannot be a "red line" defining how far, and no further, we may go; a "no troops on the ground" policy, limiting our involvement in the war; an "end-of-war" strategy that prescribes at the outset when and how the war will be terminated. On the contrary, a war with such an enemy is a total war.

But America has already witnessed the depredations that the penchant for war without limits, domestic or foreign, has inflicted upon its reputation and democracy. It was Burke, after all, who warned about imperial hubris: "I must fairly say, I dread our being too much dreaded. It is ridiculous to say we are not men; and that as men, we shall never wish to aggrandize ourselves in some way or other."

The United States lacks the ability to suture the suppurating wounds of the Middle East. At most it can at-

tempt to cauterize them. What the neocons are offering, though, is a message of power worship, one that is a recipe for a permanent revolution abroad that will further ensnare the United States in foreign predicaments that it cannot reasonably hope to resolve. In this regard, the neocons themselves appear to have lost their confidence and are eager to blame America first for its foreign woes. In 2004, Joshua Micah Marshall perceptively observed in the *New Yorker* that the neocons, buffeted by the descent of Iraq into civil strife, were starting to exchange an imperial "tone of mastery" for "fire and foreboding." Gone was the "hopeful talk of a liberal-democratic domino effect." "As we head deeper into our version of the 1930s," wrote Robert Kagan recently in the *Wall Street Journal*, "we may be quite shocked, just as our forebears were, at how quickly things fall apart." And so the counsel of these warrior intellectuals is a curious mixture of defeatism and false bravado. All that the United States has to offer the rest of the globe, it seems, is unremitting combat.

"There can be no such thing as a little war," the Duke of Wellington said, "for a great nation." That is why warfare should never be a matter of convenience, guided by the triumph of hope over experience. Uncle Sam shouldn't have to cry uncle. But the very measures that the neocons advocate to reestablish American power would erode it. As Obama grapples with the rise of the Islamic State, however, it's also becoming increasingly clear that he saw what he wanted to see in Iraq and Syria. His missteps have given a new lease on life to the crew that is responsible for much of the mess in the first place. Now that the region has become more inflamed than ever, Obama's dream of extricating the United States from foreign entanglements has turned out to be a mirage that the neocons are deftly exploiting. □

Obama's Last Chance

By Leslie H. Gelb

Even President Obama's dwindling residue of faithfuls and retainers should not wager on his rewriting the history books in his closing two years. A presidency that began with lofty expectations has devolved into steadily defining them down, at home and abroad. The result has been prolonged paralysis.

At home, emboldened opponents of the White House are blocking spending on the crumbling physical and intellectual infrastructure necessary to stimulate a limping economy and to sustain U.S. power abroad. And while Obama inherited rather than caused many of the world's current crises, his habitual complacency and passivity prevent him from mitigating or resolving them. Whatever he tries to do on the international front will be tethered by an unavoidable fact: his second-term team is not nearly as strong as his first, and the best among them are now departing. Most depressingly, the president's almost pathological pattern of consensus building has hardened into concrete, and the interagency process is all about seeking the lowest common denominator. His priority, as far as possible, appears to be avoiding any kind of action abroad that might detract from his out-of-reach domestic agenda. In this context, it's easy to see why he resists the kind of bold moves essential to fashioning success internationally. Obama flowers in abstract intellectual discourse, but has been defiantly oblivious to hardheaded strategy—plans on what can be accomplished and how. And strategy is the essence of power.

All that said, Americans cannot and should not abandon hope. At home, to be sure, the president is imprisoned in a Vietnam-like tiger cage. His only recourse remains executive orders, a useful device but not nearly enough on important legislative matters. Congress is frozen by the ideological fervor of the Tea Party and by the fear that it generates among moderate Republicans, who might otherwise be tempted to reason and to bargain. Obama may also be on the verge of watching the Senate turn Republican in the midterm elections. Thus, while he may pray for domestic accomplishments, Obama will clasp his hands in vain. Far better he should lift his gaze beyond America's borders and become a foreign-policy president, an arena in which he can act decisively and effectively to inject some iron into an anemic record.

Even lackluster presidents can still act effectively in the international arena. It's amazing, but true. Foreign leaders may damn and disdain the man in the Oval Office, but if they want to get anything done or to prevent bad things from

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happening, they scamper to the White House no matter what they may think of its current inhabitant. For all of America's woes, for all of Obama's failures, and for all the American power frittered away over the last two decades, friends and foes alike still look first and last to the United States in times of crisis. And the second decade of the twenty-first century is a time of crisis. Thus, the world remains Obama's stage in his last two years.

Obama still has the time and the power to stop the terrorists about to lodge themselves in the Middle East, from whence they will threaten the rest of the world. But he must have a good strategy. He also has the opportunity to redefine two troubled and troubling strategic relationships: those with Russia and with the Asia-Pacific region. The first order of business, however, has to be the terrorists, and that will require something even more ambitious than Obama's recent call for a coalition to combat the Islamic State. It will, in fact, require nothing less than the reinvention of America's relationship with Iran.

Since the 1979 revolution and hostage crisis, and more still since President George W. Bush's preposterous "axis of evil" speech in 2002, Americans have singled out Iran as the locus of all evil. Indeed, Iran's backing of terrorist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas, support for cruel despots like Syria's Bashar al-Assad and antagonism toward Israel all justify Iran's place on America's most-wanted list. Add on top of this a secretive nuclear program and the memory of ghouls like former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and you have a genuine security concern.

Lost in this tenebrous picture, however, is a deeper understanding of the Iran that is—and of the Iran that might be. Underneath a decade of demonization lies an incredibly complicated country, one with a proud linguistic, cultural and political tradition dating back millennia. By any measure, Iran is one of the oldest, most stable and most dynamic countries in the Middle East today. Its population is not nearly as anti-American as those of most of the Sunni Arab nations, and it holds elections, which, though far from perfect, are fairer and freer than those in most countries in the region. It elected President Hassan Rouhani, a palpable reformer. (Can you imagine a reformer being *elected* in Vladimir Putin's Russia or Xi Jinping's China?) Iran is changing in ways neither Americans nor Iranians themselves can fully grasp. That evolution is more likely than not to unveil our underlying strategic commonalities.

The driving force in Iran right now is the need for economic development. And while Iran can look to many places, it continues to stare first at Washington. It knows full well that only the United States can fully restore its economic standing internationally and that the U.S.-led sanctions regime has taken a heavy, but not decisive, toll. That's the key to U.S. leverage, and economics is the core commonality between the two countries. It is not, however, their only common interest. The two sides also see the main threat in the Middle East basically the same way. It's the Sunni jihadis who threaten the interests of both, and both believe those jihadis must be neutralized. Both also realize that finding a way to cooperate in this battle will be a tricky enterprise.

These common interests don't end in the Middle East. In fact, Tehran's interests coincide with Washington's on almost every explosive issue in the world except Israel. The list includes Pakistan, perhaps the most dangerous and unstable nuclear power in the world, and Afghanistan, where Tehran and Washington cooperated until Bush, in a fit of hubris, made that cooperation impossible. The only serious conflict is

over Israel, and even that should not be an insurmountable obstacle. Traditionally, Iran and Israel have not been foes. Quite the contrary. U.S. strategy, therefore, should be to use cooperation in other areas to ease Tehran's hostility toward the Jewish state. The United States should be making a basic strategic decision to test whether Iran is prepared to act on its mutual interests with the United States.

Partnering with Iran would allow the West to bring major capabilities to bear on bombed targets in Iraq without opposition from Tehran, and only the united front of American and Iranian diplomatic pressure could have removed former prime minster Nuri Kamal al-Maliki so cleanly after he repeatedly vowed to retain power.

It would be unwise to assume, however, that the halt of these extremists has been anything but temporary. They will stage their own surge unless the United States and self-interested "friends" deliver them a real body blow soon. Any coalition to

the most pressing threats both to Western security and to Iran itself. Consider the Islamic State. The first push by these crazed but crafty jihadis toward Baghdad and other key cities in Iraq and Syria has been halted in no small part thanks to tacit U.S.-Iranian cooperation. Iran's drones have flown over Iraq without condemnation from Washington, the United States has armed the Kurdish peshmerga forces and do fatal damage to the Islamic State must include the Iranians and Assad's Syria. They feel even more threatened by the jihadis than does the United States, and they can put the necessary boots on the ground in conjunction with American air power and, yes, American special forces, if need be. Other nations can and should be included. This is the time to forge such a coalition and to prove that the jihadis are a relatively

A presidency that began with lofty expectations has devolved into steadily defining them down, at home and abroad. The result has been prolonged paralysis.

small and vulnerable group, one whose bark is more potent than its actual bite—in essence, a terrorist group rather than a caliphate.

Cooperation on the ground in Iraq and Syria is one thing, but the key to any overall thaw with Iran is the interim nuclear agreement. President Obama's opponents will continue to bellow and gibber that he is a credulous appeaser selling out American interests and pursuing a bad deal just so he can say that he achieved something. They assert that either Iran must capitulate totally or continue to endure crippling sanctions. They might as well demand the abolition of the Islamic Republic. It wouldn't make any difference; such is the depth of these critics' naïveté.

When Republican critics of the deal rant about "nuclear breakout capacity," they willfully forget that Iran is already well on the way to a bomb. Without a deal, it is certain to acquire a nuclear-weapons capability at some point.

No one with any credibility is arguing that a final agreement with Iran would be a panacea to all of our problems with the regime in Tehran. And, of course, Iran might cheat, but it would be far easier for it to develop a weapon without the inspection provisions of the agreement. Its breakout time now is less than what it would be with a deal, and the alternative to one is bleak indeed. The West—and especially Israel—is clearly safer with the agreement than without it.

The only worry—and this is serious—is that Tehran will use the deal to open up economic doors now closed and then restart all its nuclear programs. Iran is right to reckon that once open to the world, it will be hard to isolate again. It would be mistaken, however, to simply assume that it could get away with renuclearization without some real penalties and restrictions from most of the world. While a deal might forfeit a good chunk of American economic leverage, American economic power will never be too far from Iran's mind.

Under the best of circumstances, Obama will face long odds in gaining congressional approval for a final nuclear deal. If he signs a treaty with Tehran, it will be almost impossible to get sixty-seven votes in the Senate, particularly if the GOP wins a majority in that chamber in the November election. If he signs an executive agreement, the Republican-controlled House will certainly reject it. Israel's friends will go all-out to oppose the deal. In the face of this resistance, Obama should still conclude the pact with Iran and sell it as hard as he can in America and abroad. His case will be quite strong. One of his strongest selling points will be that almost all of the world will approve of the agreement with Tehran and gain its benefits thereby. For all the strategic benefits for America, this opening with Iran is worth fighting for even if Obama loses.

Whether or not the president dares the Herculean task of reconciliation with Iran, it is well within his scope and powers to undertake some much-needed steps in relations with Russia and the Asia-Pacific region. The first step involves yanking relations with Russia

Foreign leaders may disdain the man in the Oval Office, but if they want to get anything done, they scamper to the White House no matter what they may think of its current inhabitant.

out of the present rut and putting them on a more promising path. The second is to move clearly and decisively to establish a stronger American position in East Asia by actually making the famed "pivot" rather than just allowing matters to hang in limbo for two more years.

President Vladimir Putin deserves the lion's share of blame for the ongoing troubles in Ukraine. He thought he could make gains in traditional Russian territories by muscling the Ukrainians, and that he could get away with it at little or no cost. But what he got instead was a sustained and unwanted crisis. It would be a dangerous mistake, however, for Westerners to continue to think that the blame was solely his, and that they did nothing to precipitate the conflict.

The majority of Ukrainians wanted further integration into Europe, and Europe indulged them with an association agreement, apparently indifferent or oblivious to the reaction this would generate in Moscow. It was not an offer of admission into the EU, and in fact its principal short-term effect was simply to forestall Ukraine's inclusion into a Russian-backed trade alliance. The United States was remarkably quiescent about the whole matter, but might have done well to point out that we have all seen this movie before.

In the early 2000s, democratic revolutions brought Western-leaning presidents to power in both Georgia and Ukraine. To reward their anti-Russian turn and to consolidate a security foothold in Russia's traditional "near abroad," the Bush administration sought to grant both countries a NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP). This was to be an interim step on the way to full NATO accession. The effective result would be NATO encirclement of Russia's western flank.

While other Russo-skeptic nations like Poland firmly backed the MAP scheme, France and Germany staunchly opposed it. They knew that the provocation against Russia would be dangerous and might even invite an unwelcome test of NATO's commitment to its Article 5 collective-defense obligations. The matter came to a head at NATO's Budapest summit in April 2008, where a compromise was struck that denied MAPs to Ukraine and Georgia, but instead offered a promise of NATO accession sometime in the unspecified future.

This vague promise was intended both as a polite "no" and as a face-saving gesture for the United States, but it did little to assuage Russian concerns that its periphery was drifting west. The Budapest deal was one of many tit-for-tat provocations that led to the war in Georgia later that year, but the big picture was as clear for Georgia as it is for Ukraine today. When the West tries to pry off bits of the "near abroad," it is playing with fire, and it must remember that Russia can and will go to great lengths to preserve its regional hegemony.

The current crisis in Ukraine centers, of course, on the EU rather than NATO, but in Putin's mind these entities are interlinked. As he stated in his March 18 address announcing the annexation of Crimea, Russian forces will not "travel to Sevastopol to visit NATO sailors." Russia has demonstrated repeatedly that it will use

everything from clandestine asymmetrical tactics to all-out war to preserve its sphere of influence.

Georgians and Ukrainians who wish to live more free and prosperous lives as "Europeans" are done a tremendous disservice by the West when their security is imperiled by half promises, whether about the EU or NATO, that the West has no intention of keeping. They may not like having Russia as a bullying neighbor, but they ignore this fact of life at their peril.

The way out of the crisis in Ukraine is to put on the table some diplomatic understandings. Most importantly: Russia stands down its military role in Ukraine (save in Crimea, where its power is fully consolidated), and Ukraine does not join NATO or the EU. Greater regional autonomy for Ukraine's Southeast will likely be part of that solution too, but the devil will be in the details, as Kiev rightly fears that too much decentralization will retard growth and open the door to further Russian interference in its domestic affairs. Then, on that basis, we can and should work jointly with Moscow on righting Ukraine's limping economy. Ukraine can't get back to any degree of normalcy unless we take these steps. While the country is on a war footing, it will never be able to sustain the focus required to address its own domestic problems.

Speaking openly and honestly about Ukraine's geopolitical options is not the same as giving up on its European dream. As a practical matter, the West is going to play a greater and greater role there unless Russia strengthens itself economically, which its kleptocracy seems incapable of doing. Radical attempts to pull Kiev to the West, however, will inevitably be undone by a Kremlin that despises and fears revolution, is anxious about its standing in the world and has no qualms about terrorizing its neighbors. If and only if Russia can be made to believe that neither Ukraine nor Georgia poses an existential

security risk will the fight for democracy and economic opportunity within these countries have a chance at succeeding.

Finally, there is Asia. The pivot to Asia ain't what it used to be, because Asia didn't turn out to be what it was supposed to be. Over the last twenty years or so, it became a mantra in the West that Asia would become the center of the economic universe, but by 2010 unprecedented growth in China and the rest of Asia had slowed considerably. Asia has come back to economic and political reality; it is a region much better off than it used to be, but far from a new paradise. That said, it still outstrips Europe and Latin America and is second only to North America economically. Trade and investment will continue to find their way to this part of the world.

Asia will also attract unprecedented attention for another reason—the growing geopolitical competition among its principal powers. In the last five to ten years, tensions have increased between the following pairs of states: China and India, China and Malaysia, China and Vietnam, Japan and South Korea, China and the Philippines, and Japan and China. The last pair is perhaps the most worrisome. China is arming itself at an alarming pace, boosting its military spending by more than 10 percent each year. Japan has also been increasing its military spending. Even with its traditional cap of 1 percent of GDP, it has managed to amass the most technologically sophisticated navy and air force in the region.

The United States needs to strengthen its military presence in the region. The purpose is not to threaten China; it is to reassure all parties that differences (and there are substantial differences on many issues) are not going to be settled by military force. U.S. power should be deployed to convey a calming effect and to reassure the region that no state is going to be intimidated into subservience. This will be a delicate task, advanced as much by rhetoric and diplomacy as by naval maneuvers. Obama would do well not to delay it. And though Asia did not turn out to be an economic gold mine, it is at the very least a silver mine that will command the attention of the world for decades to come.

The United States is in the middle of trade negotiations with Asian and Latin American states that seem to be stalled. Michael Froman, the U.S. trade representative, has been doing a great job trying to push matters along, but he will need major help from his president and from Congress to see that the next two years do not go down the drain. The Trans-Pacific Partnership is the best hope for increasing regional trade, and regional trade is the best hope for powering U.S. economic growth. All these constitute good reasons for Obama to focus on the Asia pivot.

The agenda proposed here—the opening to Iran, the fight against the jihadis, exploring diplomacy with Russia regarding Ukraine, and reinvigorating the pivot to Asia—does not represent an impossible dream. It can be accomplished by a wounded president without the services of a Brent Scowcroft or a James Baker. It can be done in the last two years of a second presidential term. It requires only a president who understands that he has the power to act if he puts strategies together with precision and explains them clearly to the American people and the world. □

The GOP's Road to Victory

By Mitchell B. Reiss

Wherever one looks these days, crises, conflicts and chaos seem to rule. From Tripoli to Tokyo, from Kiev to Caracas, the pace of violence appears to be accelerating. "Looking back over my more than half a century in intelligence," the director of national intelligence, James Clapper, testified earlier this year, "I have not experienced a time when we've been beset by more crises and threats around the globe. My list is long." How ironic, then, that national-security issues should dominate the headlines during President Obama's second term, given how little time was devoted to a serious or sustained discussion of these subjects during the 2012 presidential race.

I advised Governor Mitt Romney on national-security issues beginning in 2005, traveling with him to Asia, the Middle East and Europe, drafting policy memos and organizing briefings during both the 2008 and 2012 campaigns. Naturally, I thought that foreign policy should have been far more prominently discussed during the 2012 race, and knew that Romney had a genuine interest in these issues—he had read widely, met with numerous foreign leaders, and acquired a sophisticated understanding of international trade and financial markets. I also thought, as did all of the other foreign-policy experts on the campaign, that Obama was vulnerable to criticism of his conduct of American foreign policy.

There was no shortage of policies to criticize. Obama entered office with an ambitious agenda to negotiate a climate-change treaty, accelerate the Middle East peace process, reach out to the mullahs in Iran and our other adversaries, embrace global nuclear zero and "reset" relations with Russia; he ran aground on all counts. He distanced himself from our traditional allies, dramatically cut defense spending, and failed to promote trade agreements that would generate jobs and create prosperity. He failed to recognize and seize the historic potential of the Arab Spring and, more generally, failed to speak out forcefully for human rights and individual freedom at a time when many people around the world were yearning for America's support. He placed an inordinate faith in international institutions to maintain world order; he placed far less faith in America as an exceptional country that can and should shape world events.

So why did my candidate, with one large exception, tend to downplay foreign policy on the campaign trail? And what lessons does this treatment of foreign policy in the 2012 campaign hold for the GOP and for the Republican nominee in 2016?

Needless to say, campaigns are not run by foreign-policy experts; they are run by political professionals. The Romney

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At times during 2011 and 2012, it seemed as if the foreign-policy differences within the Republican Party were larger than our differences with the Democrats.

political brain trust made four early assumptions that shaped the rhythm, contours and focus of the campaign.

First, they reasoned correctly that Obama was most vulnerable on the economy. The country was slow to recover from the 2008 recession, homes were being foreclosed and unemployment remained stubbornly high. Any day not criticizing the president over the economy, they believed, was a day wasted. And economic success was Romney's sweet spot. His track record of growing companies and creating jobs in the private sector gave him credibility on this subject that the president could not match.

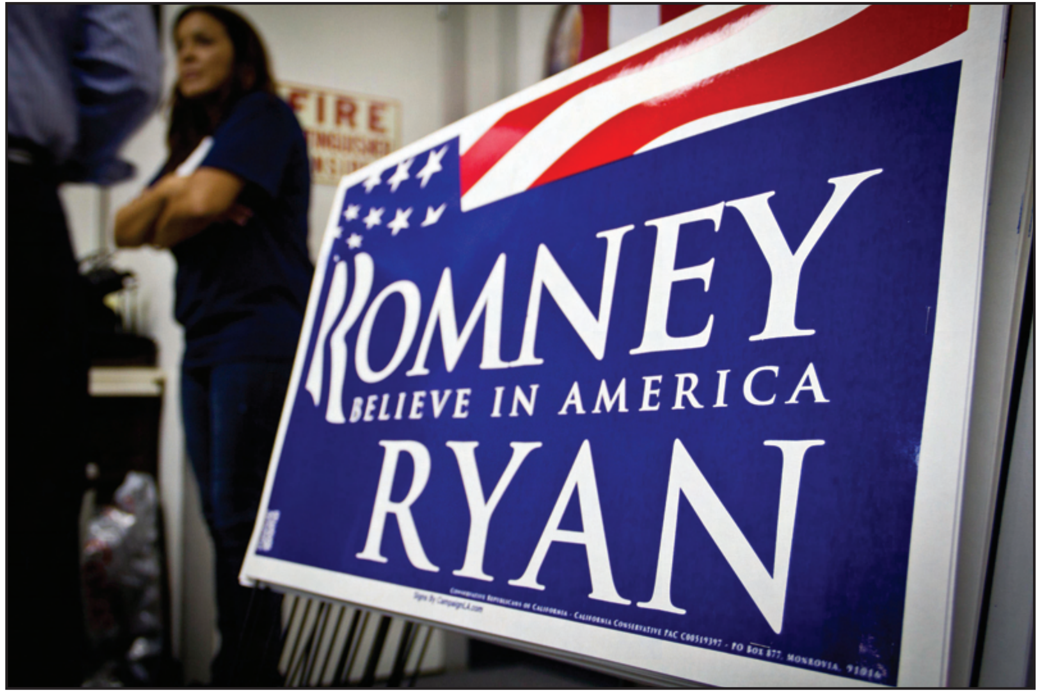
Second, eight years of President George W. Bush and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan cast a long shadow. Many members of the Romney foreign-policy team were veterans of the George W. Bush years, and we worried that the Obama campaign would try to spin any foreign-policy position or pronouncement as a warmed-over version of "failed" Bush policies. Or worse, that the Obama team would portray the Romney campaign as having been infiltrated by unrepentant "neocons" eager to launch new wars around the world. (Sadly, the media often abetted this effort; many journalists indiscriminately used the term "neocon" without understanding what it meant.) Any mention of foreign policy, especially as it related to the Middle East, always risked diverting attention from a sober discussion of the administration's shortcomings and forcing the Romney campaign to relitigate the Iraq War.

Third, the residue of these two wars, coupled with the lingering effects of the recession, produced an electorate that did not care very much about foreign policy; in fact, polls showed that the American people were "fatigued" from these conflicts and preferred to focus on domestic issues or, in the president's words, "nation building here at home."

Fourth, at times during 2011 and 2012, it seemed as if the foreign-policy differences within the Republican Party were larger than our differences with the Democrats. The challenge for the Romney campaign's stewards was to assemble as big a "tent" as possible, bridging the divide from libertarians who wanted a more restrained U.S. role in the world to internationalists who wanted a more active leadership role, and including social conservatives, business conservatives, evangelicals, free traders and Tea Partiers. Too much specificity could risk driving away key voters in the battleground states.

Combined with all these factors was a more traditional one: the fact that few career campaign officials have much experience in foreign policy. It is always easier for them to play to their strengths, such as raising money, securing the base, identifying hot-button wedge issues to attract new voters, and generally focusing on bread-and-butter issues closer to the hearts of the electorate. The candidate is thus advised to do the same. 2012 fit this pattern exactly.

This approach was certainly reasonable under the circumstances. Whether Romney would have won in November 2012 had he been more out-



spoken on foreign-policy issues is uncertain, at best. But the next race for the White House is likely to be far different from the last one. Foreign-policy and national-security issues will play a more prominent role than they did four years earlier, for two reasons.

First, the world is a dangerous place and is likely to become more so in the next few years. The Obama administration's second-term foreign-policy team has yet to demonstrate much competence in either anticipating crises or managing them diplomatically once they occur. The White House has been long on rhetorical flourishes and short on providing the resources to underwrite its policies; it has repeatedly willed the ends without providing the means. Relations with China have become contentious, and relations with Russia have become hostile. At the same time, our ties with friends and allies have deteriorated. Terrorism has continued unabated. Indeed, as Senator Dianne Feinstein, the chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, commented during a hearing earlier this year, "Terrorism is at an all-time high worldwide." With more than two years left in office, President Obama often seems diffident and hesitant, apparently resigned to accepting that there is little the United States can do to influence events. The fires will continue to burn.

Americans have seen this movie before. The Jimmy Carter years were distinguished by defense cuts, the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, attacks on U.S. embassies and our diplomats being held hostage. When seeking the presidency in 1980, Ronald Reagan famously asked the American people a week before the election, "Are you better off than you were four years ago? . . . Is America as respected throughout

Image: Flickr/Rosa Trieu/Neon Tommy. CC BY-SA 2.0.

the world as it was? Do you feel that our security is as safe, that we're as strong as we were four years ago?" His questions crystallized Americans' widespread dissatisfaction with the direction of the country and broke open a close race. Democrats in 2016 will be as vulnerable to this line of attack as they were under Jimmy Carter.

Second, it is likely that Hillary Clinton will be the standard-bearer for the Democrats and that she will point to her record as secretary of state as a prominent part of her case for why she ought to be elected president. Her recent interview in the *Atlantic* suggests she understands that she will be running as someone joined at the hip to Obama's failed foreign policies. But while she may criticize the lack of a strategic vision in his "don't do stupid stuff" approach, she will still have to defend her own "smart power" slogan as something more than a bumper sticker, as well as the fact that her actual accomplishments during her four years as chief diplomat were thin. Nonetheless, she will tout her expertise and attempt to portray her globe hopping as essential to restoring America's reputation. She will also challenge her Republican opponents to match her knowledge about foreign policy, seeking to portray them as unfit to handle a foreign-policy emergency when the phone rings at 3:00 a.m. (as she did with then senator Obama in 2008).

If the Republicans win back control of the Senate in the November elections, there will be a fine opportunity for the party to lead and shape a national conversation on foreign policy. Three respected senators—John McCain, Bob Corker and Dan Coats—are likely to assume leadership roles on the key national-security committees: Armed Services, Foreign Relations and Intelligence, respectively.

The objective here should be to use this victory to set a foreign-policy agenda that does more than just highlight the shortcomings of the Obama years, as tempting as that will be. A GOP majority in the Senate should also be used to identify those issues of traditional Republican strength and road test new ideas. This would ideally lead to a set of foreign-policy objectives that the party could tee up for the 2016 campaign.

What would that agenda look like? A short list should include hearings on the Obama defense budget and the impact of the sequester on American forces; energy security; the war on terror; trade; human rights and democracy promotion; and the future of our relationships with China and Russia.

There are precedents for this type of strategic, deliberative exercise. In 1966, Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas held televised hearings on Vietnam that won national attention and influenced his party's opposition to the war. In the 1980s, Congressman Les Aspin of Wisconsin sponsored wide-ranging seminars on defense planning and budgeting that helped move the Democratic Party's policies on these issues toward the political center.

Properly structured, a series of Senate hearings would attract national media attention, help rebuild the credibility of Republicans to tackle important foreign-policy issues, and show voters that the party does not reflexively oppose the Obama administration, but has its own, better vision. New ideas would help frame the coming debate and set a new, more forward-looking agenda. They would help inoculate Republicans from Democratic attempts to revisit the Bush years, misbrand the party and marginalize any candidate who discusses national security.

Senate Republicans should also consider identifying issues that can win bipartisan

The next race for the White House is likely to be far different than the last one. Foreign-policy and national-security issues will play a more prominent role than they did four years earlier.

support to demonstrate to a jaded public that the Republicans offer a better pathway for governing should they win the White House in 2016. One low-cost area would be to fast-track confirmation votes for State and Defense Department nominees. If individuals are incompetent, then of course they should be voted down; otherwise, it is simply good policy to get people in positions so they can do their jobs. It is also good politics, as it lays down a marker that can be cashed when the next Republican president submits his or her own nominees.

To be sure, there are dangers with this reframing. It is no secret that there are still serious foreign-policy differences within the Republican Party; exposing these fissures to the public may backfire. More importantly, polling data show that the American people do not really care about these issues. An April NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll found that almost half of all Americans thought the United States should be less active in world affairs, versus 19 percent who said we should be more active. A mid-July poll similarly showed that almost two-thirds of the American people said that the nation's biggest challenges are domestic ones. Focusing on foreign policy may suggest to voters that Republicans are out of touch with their everyday concerns and needs.

Yet Republicans should not shy away from foreign policy. If differences exist among the potential candidates, it is far better to have this debate in 2015 than to leave it unresolved and fought over during an election year.

Although it has become conventional wisdom that the American people are fatigued after two long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is difficult to understand why they should be so tired, since they have been asked to sacrifice so little. Only service members and their families have paid the full price for our foreign interventions. It may be more accurate to say that the American people are simply mistrustful of their leaders in Washington. They are skeptical that officials in either the executive or legislative branch can exercise good judgment, make smart decisions and competently execute them. They lack confidence that Washington knows what it is doing.

Polling data support this interpretation. President Obama has given the American people what one pundit described to me as a "Jenny Craig" foreign policy: lower defense spending, fewer international commitments and less support for human rights. Yet it appears that this approach has left a sour taste; polls also show that the American people have not rewarded the president with high marks for his stewardship of foreign affairs.

Further, it should be possible for Republicans to explain to the voters that many of these foreign-policy issues are not so "foreign" after all; many have significant domestic implications and can be placed in the broader context of personal and family security. For example, deep military cuts have led to layoffs in the defense industry. The president's slow rolling of the Keystone pipeline decision has undermined U.S. energy security and cost American jobs.

It is important to communicate a positive vision for what a Republican administration would want to accomplish in the world. No one wins the White House by only playing defense.

Foreign jihadists gathering in Syria and Iraq directly threaten the American homeland, according to the Obama administration's own counterterrorism officials. The president's lack of an aggressive trade agenda has stifled job creation at home. China's theft of intellectual property hurts American business competitiveness. Framing the issues this way can help the Republicans better connect with the voters as well as begin to stake out a coherent view of the world and America's role in it for the 2016 campaign.

It is important to communicate a positive vision for what a Republican administration would want to accomplish in the world. No one wins the White House by only playing defense. As Winston Churchill, a man who knew a few things about winning and losing elections, once remarked, "It is no good going to the country solely on the platform of your opponents' mistakes."

Churchill would also have agreed that it is essential to avoid making mistakes of your own. In past presidential campaigns, a foreign-policy crisis has often erupted that has tested the Republican nominee. Should that time come in 2016, it will advantage the nominee greatly if he or she has already spoken fluently and with authority about his or her vision for the country.

A more sustained focus on world affairs might have prevented the Romney campaign from committing one of its most serious errors: the mishandling of the Benghazi tragedy, when four American officials, including Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens, were murdered by Islamic terrorists. In the pressure cooker of a tight race, the Romney campaign initially rushed to judgment before the situation was clear and many of the facts were known.

The Romney campaign's misstep was seized upon and intensely scrutinized, while the media overlooked the larger story, which was that the Benghazi attack was one of four assaults by Al Qaeda affiliates on American embassies and consulates across North Africa, the Middle East and the Horn of Africa that day. These attacks not only undermined the president's major claim to being a competent steward of U.S. national security—that he was winning the war on terror and that Al Qaeda was in retreat—but they also challenged his argument that the United States could reduce its international commitments without any harmful consequences.

The Benghazi tragedy provided a short-term political opening for Romney, but a rigorous examination of the president's foreign-policy record never came to pass. The campaign was never able to place Benghazi within a larger foreign-policy critique of the Obama years. The narrative had not been adequately set in the minds of either the voters or the media that Obama's handling of foreign policy was not the ringing success he claimed and that Romney had a better strategy for dealing with the threats facing the United States. More frustrating still was that Romney in fact had a set of core foreign-policy guidelines and principles (dating back to the 2008 election cycle and outlined in his 2010 book, *No Apology: The Case for*

American Greatness), but did not talk much about them during the campaign (he gave a speech at the Citadel in October 2011 and one to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in July 2012). Would a more consistent and forceful articulation of his foreign-policy agenda have made a difference? I'd like to think so, but we'll never know.

What we do know is that we are now in the second decade of the post-9/11 era, that national-security issues will continue to simmer and boil for the next two years, and that the country will be looking for the Republicans to offer better policies and real leadership. President Obama and his supporters may claim that he has avoided catastrophe, although more than 190,000 people have died in Syria's civil war, the Islamic State has proclaimed a caliphate in Iraq and Syria, Iran's centrifuges continue to spin, Russia has threatened the post–World War II stability of Europe, and China has aggressively asserted maritime and territorial claims that challenge America's friends and allies in Asia, to mention just some of the more prominent foreign-policy setbacks that have occurred these past few years. The question Republicans need to be asking is: Can we do better? If we think we can, then we need to persuade the American people that they can once again entrust us with the stewardship of U.S. foreign policy.

Over two hundred years ago, Edmund Burke wrote, "No men could act with effect, who did not act in concert; that no men could act in concert, who did not act with confidence; that no men could act with confidence, who were not bound together by common opinions, common affections, and common interests." This November, the GOP should tackle the job of developing common opinions, affections and interests in earnest. □

Big Brother's Liberal Friends

By Henry Farrell

It is strange that the Obama administration has so avidly continued many of the national-security policies that the George W. Bush administration endorsed. The White House has sidelined the key recommendations of its own advisers about how to curtail the overreach of the National Security Agency (NSA). It has failed to prosecute those responsible for torture, on the principle that bygones should be bygones, extending a courtesy to high officials that it has notably declined to provide to leakers like Chelsea Manning. The result is a remarkable degree of continuity between the two administrations.

Yet this does not disconcert much of the liberal media elite. Many writers who used to focus on bashing Bush for his transgressions now direct their energies against those who are sounding alarms about the pervasiveness of the national-security state. Others, despite their liberal affectations, have perhaps always been enthusiasts for a strong security state. Over the last fifteen months, the columns and op-ed pages of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have bulged with the compressed flatulence of commentators intent on dismissing warnings about encroachments on civil liberties. Indeed, in recent months soi-disant liberal intellectuals such as Sean Wilentz, George Packer and Michael Kinsley have employed the Edward Snowden affair to mount a fresh series of attacks. They claim that Snowden, Glenn Greenwald and those associated with them neither respect democracy nor understand political responsibility.

These claims rest on willful misreading, quote clipping and the systematic evasion of crucial questions. Yet their problems go deeper than sloppy practice and shoddy logic. For one thing, Wilentz, Packer and Kinsley are all veterans of the Clinton-era battles between liberals and the Left. Wilentz in particular poses as a latter-day Arthur Schlesinger, shuttling backwards and forwards between his academic duties and his political fealties. As for Packer, he has championed a muscular liberalism, pugnacious in the fight against moral purists at home and political Islam abroad. And Kinsley, a veteran of the wars over neoliberalism, has always been a contrarian with a talent for repackaging the common wisdom of the establishment as something edgy and counterintuitive.

Each has manacled himself to an intellectual identity forged in decades-old combat with the Left. Each, as a result, is apparently incapable of understanding the actual challenge that Greenwald and Snowden pose to American politics.

National-security liberals like Wilentz and Packer believe that America should be, and much of the time is, a defender of liberty both at home and abroad. A strong America secures liberties at home against

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America's enemies, while promoting those liberties internationally, often through military interventions. This leads them to argue for deference to the political institutions that propagate liberalism in both spheres. Kinsley does not express a coherent political philosophy so much as straightforward horror at the idea that rabble-rousers might decide what national-security information gets published.

Snowden and his companions have shown that national-security liberals' arguments for deference rest on false assumptions. The truth is that not only are America's overseas interventions problematic by themselves, but they are also increasingly undermining domestic liberties. Intelligence efforts that are supposed to be focused abroad turn out to have sweeping domestic consequences. It's impossible to distinguish intelligence data on domestic and foreign actors. Security officials in various countries can work together across borders to circumvent and undermine domestic protections, actively helping each other to remake laws that restrict their freedom of operation. And at home, officials can use these new arrangements to work around and undermine civil rights. This commingling of domestic and international politics is complex and poorly understood. It helps explain why national-security liberals have such difficulty in comprehending—let alone refuting—Snowden's and Greenwald's arguments.

Three specific articles have played a central role in the liberal counterattack against Snowden and Greenwald. In January, Wilentz wrote a lengthy essay for the *New Republic*, lumping Snowden and Greenwald together with Julian Assange as purveyors of "paranoid libertarianism." In its June issue, the British magazine *Prospect* published an article by Packer, which cited Wilentz in support of the claim that Greenwald and Snowden were Manicheans and zealots. That same month, Kinsley's review of Greenwald's recent book, *No Place to Hide*, appeared in the *New York Times Book Review*, denouncing Snowden as a romantic with a martyr complex, Assange as a narcissist and Greenwald as a revolutionary wannabe.

Each of these pieces filters Snowden and Greenwald through a different distorting lens. Wilentz likes to think of himself as a muscular New Deal Democrat, protecting the legacy of liberalism (and, not incidentally, the politics of Clintonism) from both the Left and Right. On the one side, he has spent decades battling New Left historians who are suspicious of U.S. power. On the other, he has defended an ideal of Jacksonian democracy against the American Right's fear of the state. Hence, it is unsurprising that Wilentz should view Greenwald and Snowden—the one a left-wing skeptic of American foreign policy, the other a libertarian skeptic of the state—with unabashed horror. What is rather startling, given Wilentz's prominence as a writer and historian, is the absence of a coherent argument to structure and discipline his detestation.

To begin with, Wilentz claims that the paranoid libertarians' true agenda has largely been ignored by the media. The "leakers despise the modern liberal state, and they want to wound it," he writes. He treats Greenwald's claim that the NSA and the U.S. government more broadly are deliberately destroying privacy as compelling evidence that the leakers have given up on reform from the inside, and are intentionally attacking something "much larger," by "showing that the federal government has spun out of control" and "destroying the public's faith in their government's capacity to spy aggressively on our enemies while also protecting

Many writers who used to bash Bush for his transgressions now direct their energies against those who are sounding alarms about the pervasiveness of the national-security state.

the privacy of its citizens." Wilentz apparently sees Greenwald and Snowden, quite literally, as enemies of the state. By attacking the NSA, they are undermining faith in the federal government and hence, Wilentz intimates, in liberalism itself.

The greater part of Wilentz's essay is an exhibition of horribles from the past lives and careers of Greenwald, Snowden and Assange. Unfortunate statements are excavated from their native circumstances for dissection and display. Reconstructed personal philosophies are eviscerated, stuffed and carefully posed in lifelike dioramas. Dubious assertions and intimations of guilt-by-association add color, if not quite verisimilitude, to the artfully constructed scenes.

The whole exercise in amateur taxidermy has the rhetorical purpose of stitching two very different claims together, creating the illusion that they are naturally conjoint. The first is that Wilentz's antagonists are enemies of the "modern liberal state." The second is that they are enemies of the "national security state." The first, obviously, is rather more likely to worry liberal readers than the second. However, Wilentz's evidence largely concerns the second. He eschews logical argument in favor of a superficially impressive accumulation of quasi-relevant details about his antagonists' personal histories, which appear intended to suggest connections where none exist.

The resulting artificial monstrosity, like P. T. Barnum's Feejee Mermaid, doesn't hold up on close examination. Bits fall off if you poke it at all hard. If Wilentz's underlying thesis—that it's profoundly illiberal to oppose government spying—were expressed in seven words rather than seven thousand, it would be so obviously ridiculous as to be unpublishable in a serious magazine. A more scrupulous presentation of his opponents' actual words might hurt his case nearly as badly. When Wilentz quotes Greenwald on the NSA's radical agenda, he fails, for example, to inform the reader that Greenwald goes on, in the same interview, to suggest that we need to have the discussion about government spying "out in the open," allowing us

> as citizens, instead of having this massive surveillance apparatus built completely secretly and in the dark without us knowing anything that's going on, [to] be informed about what kinds of surveillance the government is engaged in and have a reasoned debate about whether that's the kind of world in which we want to live.

Calls for "reasoned debate" among informed citizens are the stuff of standard liberalism, not paranoid libertarian rants. For whatever reason, Wilentz declines to mention these and other similar quotes, behaving more as an inquisitor than a public intellectual.

George Packer's indictment of Snowden and Greenwald is better structured than Wilentz's, and by far better written. Perhaps no writer alive is as skilled as Packer at conveying an air of weary and hard-won rectitude in a world of ethically ambiguous choices. It is un-

fortunate that this moral aristocratism is so deplorably misemployed. If anything, Packer's article is more actively misleading than Wilentz's.

Like Wilentz, Packer views Snowden and Greenwald in the context of his own decades-long battle against the Left. However, Packer's animus is subtly different. Long before Snowden's revelations came out, Packer excoriated the American Left for its "coy relativism," accusing the American tradition of "political dissidence . . . at least since Thoreau" of having a "sneering contempt for average American life and a sentimental insistence that reality simply fall in line behind enlightened feelings."

Packer sees the American Left as irresponsible and naive, preferring to congratulate itself for its illusory moral purity rather than confront the difficult questions of how to use American power to advance the cause of liberalism. As an alternative, Packer has proposed a robust American liberalism that embraces the complexities of modernity and is unashamed to prosecute the international fight against "political Islam" and "all people who fear and hate the modern democratic world, with its fluidity, its openness, its assertion of the individual's freedom and of human equality."

This understanding of politics harks back to Max Weber's emphatic contempt for those who prize the purity of "ultimate ends" over the true political ethic of "responsibility," under which politicians do morally dubious but pragmatically necessary things to advance their causes. Unlike most realists (who have also been affected by Weber's ideas, as filtered through Hans Morgenthau), Packer believes that there is substantial scope for America to rework the world according to liberal ideals. First, however, American liberalism has to overcome two internal challenges—liberals' own pusillanimity and the broader tendency to abstain from the grind and compromise of everyday politics.

Hence Packer describes Snowden as an "American type" in the tradition of Thoreau, who follows his conscience "regardless of where it takes him." Packer quotes Snowden as saying that when driven to it, "you realise that you might be willing to accept any risk and it doesn't matter what the outcome is." For Packer, this is proof of Snowden's political absolutism. He says, "Not caring about the outcome is what Max Weber, in 'Politics as a Vocation,' called 'the ethic of ultimate ends,' in contrast with 'the ethic of responsibility.'" However, Packer does acknowledge that without "this ethic" and "the uncompromising Thoreauvians who wear it as a badge of honour," Americans might never have known about mass surveillance.

Nonetheless, Snowden's "distrust of institutions and hostility to any intrusion on personal autonomy place him beyond the sphere in American politics where left and right are relevant categories." Instead, Packer describes Snowden as exemplifying a libertarianism that "tends towards absolutist positions, which grow best in the mental equivalent of a hermetic laboratory environment," and which is "often on the verge of rejecting politics itself, with its dissatisfying but necessary trade-offs." This libertarianism reflects Greenwald's views too, "though not completely." While Packer acknowledges that Snowden and Greenwald have made some important findings, he describes them as anti-institutionalist ideologues (Greenwald is a demagogue with a "pervasive absence of intellectual integrity") whose pursuit of radical individualism has marginalized them from ordinary democratic debate.

To be sure, Greenwald is a bit of a bruiser, with a litigator's eye for facts and arguments that promote his own cause while discrediting his opponent's (which is another way of saying that, from a Weberian point of view, Greenwald is not a scholar but a politician). Perhaps, then, Packer's patrician disdain can in part be forgiven. What is quite unforgivable are Packer's own dubious standards of argument, which are starkly at odds with his *de haut en bas* style of ethical condescension.

Packer plainly misrepresents Snowden. He is wrong to claim that Snowden's statement that the outcome doesn't matter fails Weber's test of political responsibility. Snowden is not saying that he doesn't care what happens as a result of his actions. He is saying (as the previous sentences, which Packer doesn't quote, make emphatically clear) that he doesn't care what happens *to him*. From a Weberian perspective (in which the true political actor derives the meaning of his vocation from his service to a cause), this is more admirable than problematic.

Packer furthermore cuts off this purportedly damning quote just before Snowden clarifies why he leaked the documents. In the original interview, Snowden says:

> If you realize that that's the world that you helped create, and it's going to get worse with the next generation and the next generation, who extend the capabilities of this sort of architecture of oppression, you realize that you might be willing to accept any risk and it doesn't matter what the outcome is *so long as the public gets to make their own decisions about how that's applied* [italics added].

Far from rejecting democratic politics, Snowden states that his actions were intended to provide the public with information that had been hidden from it, and choices that had been taken away (a point he has stressed in subsequent interviews). By cutting off the quote, Packer encourages the reader to infer that Snowden doesn't care about the consequences of his actions

> *Wilentz, Packer and Kinsley are a dismal advertisement for the current state of mainstream liberal thought in America.*

for American democracy, and is instead burnishing the mirror of his own moral rectitude. Perhaps Packer believes that this misleading truncation represents Snowden's true beliefs better than Snowden's own words. If so, he should have quoted those words in full, explained why he believes them to be untrue and allowed the reader to decide.

Michael Kinsley's aristocratism is more straightforward. He does not object to leaking so much as to these particular leakers. They are not, apparently, the sort of chaps to whom one ought to entrust such sensitive political decisions.

In his review, Kinsley argues that not only can we not trust Glenn Greenwald with decisions over the disclosure of information, but we shouldn't trust journalists or publishers either. While Kinsley acknowledges that the Snowden revelations were a "legitimate scoop," which revealed criminal behavior by the NSA, he argues that governments have to have the "final say" over which information gets published in democracies.

This apparently straightforward argument became more tangled as Kinsley responded to attacks by Margaret Sullivan, the public editor of the *New York Times*, and Sue Halpern in the *New York Review of Books.* As he has responded to these critics, it has become increasingly clear that his views are incoherent and muddled—less interesting for the questions they address than for those they avoid.

He agrees with his critics that certain previous leakers like Daniel Ellsberg and Neil Sheehan shouldn't have been imprisoned, and claims that leaks in the public interest should always be retrospectively protected. He declines to explain what the public interest is, or to discuss exactly when journalists should be sent to jail and when they should be allowed to leak, claiming that the question is "complicated and I have other things to do" (perhaps his conjecture is too large to fit between the margins of the *New York Times* website). Kinsley does suggest, in his response to Halpern, that at least one class of journalists can be relied on to do the right thing with sensitive information—trusted friends of Michael Kinsley like "Bart Gelman [*sic*]," who has indeed done excellent journalism. The "other characters in this drama," such as Snowden and Greenwald, "not so much."

Kinsley's objection concerns what a member of the British ruling classes might describe as Greenwald's and Snowden's lack of soundness. He clearly believes that neither Greenwald nor Snowden has the right disposition to make good choices in ticklish situations. In Kinsley's eyes, Snowden has the "sweet, innocently conspiratorial worldview of a precocious teenager," while Greenwald possesses the same personality type as Robespierre and Trotsky.

This obsession with personality means that Kinsley's review of Greenwald's book has remarkably little to say about its actual topic (NSA surveillance). Instead, he devotes most of his jejune essay to the far more urgent topic of the relationship

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between journalistic ethics and Greenwald's purported fanaticism, paranoia and self-obsession.

His arguments are both beside the point and dubiously sourced. For example, Kinsley claims that the fact that Greenwald and his fans can express their views without being punished "undermines his own argument that 'the authorities' brook no dissent." This might have been a respectable debating point if Greenwald's book had not discussed the repeated harassment and detention of his colleagues Laura Poitras and Jacob Appelbaum by immigration officials, apparently in retaliation for the high crime of annoying U.S. authorities. Similarly, Kinsley sneers at Greenwald's indignation at David Gregory, who asked Greenwald why he shouldn't be prosecuted as a criminal. The continued efforts of U.S. prosecutors to redefine the politics of leaking so as to indict journalists as well as their sources suggest that Greenwald had every right to be worried and angry.

No doubt Greenwald is not overly modest, subtle or generous to his opponents. Yet this is beside the point. Greenwald makes a strong case that the advent of the Internet has made mass surveillance far easier and more dangerous than in the past, and he provides mountains of well-documented evidence to support it. And Kinsley?

Rather than responding to this case, he prefers to pretend that Greenwald is a paranoid pseudorevolutionary, and goes on to pick a fight over journalistic ethics. In Kinsley's account, Greenwald's personality flaws and obsessions explain why he is frightened by ubiquitous online surveillance. Hence, there's no need to worry about whether he is right.

Kinsley here exemplifies a broader problem. Halpern has observed that Kinsley and other critics of the leakers like to focus on Greenwald's and Snowden's purported personal flaws rather than the issues that motivated them to act. Put differently, Kinsley, Wilentz and Packer have a hard time distinguishing between personality and politics. Each apparently believes that Greenwald's and Snowden's radical political beliefs show them to be paranoid demagogues, while their paranoid demagoguery demonstrates the worthlessness of their radical beliefs. This circular reasoning allows them to circumnavigate the difficult question of whether Snowden and Greenwald might be largely right, and what this might mean for liberalism.

In short, Wilentz, Packer and Kinsley are a dismal advertisement for the current state of mainstream liberal thought in America. The fundamental problem is not that they're disagreeable to their opponents (who can certainly be disagreeable themselves). It isn't even that their unpleasantness is hypocritical (although it surely is). It is that the unpleasantness and hypocrisy conceal an intellectual void. When the screen of misrepresentations, elisions, prevarications, misleadingly curtailed quotes, historical grudges and ad hominem attacks is removed, there is nothing behind it.

This absence is all the more depressing because Wilentz, Packer and Kinsley are

probably as good as it gets. There are no prominent national-security liberals who have done better—and a few who have done worse, lapsing into baroque conspiracy theories. Their failure is not simply a personal one. It's the failure of an entire intellectual tradition.

Why do national-security liberals have such a hard time thinking straight about Greenwald, Snowden and the politics of leaks? One reason is sheer laziness. National-security liberals have always defined themselves against their antagonists, and especially their left-wing antagonists. They have seen themselves as the decent Left, willing to deploy American power to make the world a happier place, and fighting the good fight against the knee-jerk anti-Americans.

This creates a nearly irresistible temptation: to see Greenwald, Snowden and the problems they raise as antique bugbears in modern dress. Wilentz intimates that Greenwald is plotting to create a United Front of anti-imperialist left-wingers, libertarians and isolationist paleoconservatives. Packer depicts Greenwald and Snowden as stalwarts of the old Thoreauvian tradition of sanctimonious absolutism and moral idiocy. Kinsley paints Snowden as a conspiracy-minded dupe and Greenwald as a frustrated Jacobin.

Yet laziness is only half the problem. A fundamental inability to comprehend Greenwald and Snowden's case, let alone to argue against it, is the other half. National-security liberals have enormous intellectual difficulties understanding the new politics of surveillance, because these politics are undermining the foundations of their worldview.

Since September 11, 2001, surveillance has been quietly remaking domestic politics and international relations. The forces of globalization, which rapidly accelerated during the 1990s, made travel, trade and communication far easier and cheaper between the advanced industrial democracies and a key group of less developed countries. The 9/11 attacks exposed the dangers of interdependence. Domestic-security agencies sought—and usually got—vastly expanded resources, allowing them to implement new forms of large-scale data gathering, analysis and sharing. The risks and opportunities of interdependence also led them to work together across borders in unprecedented ways. Not only was it far easier and cheaper than ever before to gather information on how ordinary members of the population were behaving and communicating with each other, but it was also far easier and cheaper to share this information across countries. It is hard to overstate the importance of these data-sharing arrangements. The current U.S. ambassador to the European Union describes the post-Snowden difficulties that have cropped up in data sharing as the single most important issue in the current transatlantic relationship.

What is difficult—and often effectively impossible—is to draw a clean separation between domestic and international flows of information. National laws in areas such as spying, policing and access to cryptography have usually drawn sharp distinctions between the kinds of things that the state could do with the information of citizens and the information of foreigners. These distinctions were deliberately weakened after September 11 to make it easier for law-enforcement authorities and foreign intelligence agencies to work together. Yet even without these changes, new communications technologies, such as the Internet, made it more difficult to distinguish the information of citizens from that of foreigners. Unsurprisingly, security agencies have often sought to take

The last thirteen years have seen a quiet internationalization of the surveillance state.

advantage of these ambiguities.

The result has been both a vast cross-national expansion of surveillance and a promiscuous commingling of information on citizens and foreigners. Spying, which used to be expensive and focused on individuals and small groups, now gathers extensive information about the communications patterns of entire populations, sifting vast seas of data for politically or economically relevant information. Cooperation and information sharing between different countries' intelligence and security agencies have expanded enormously. The confusion of domestic and foreign information makes it harder for intelligence agencies to distinguish the two, and very tempting to use the ambiguities to extend their grasp as far as possible.

This expansion in collection and sharing has been driven by deliberate political action. One of the most troubling revelations from the Snowden leaks is that national intelligence agencies have secretly worked together to weaken restrictions on what they can and cannot do. As Snowden described the process in his testimony to the European Parliament:

> One of the foremost activities of the NSA's FAD, or Foreign Affairs Division, is to pressure or incentivize EU member states to change their laws to enable mass surveillance. . . . [in] an intentional strategy to avoid public opposition and lawmakers' insistence that legal limits be respected, effects the GCHQ [Britain's equivalent of the NSA] internally described in its own documents as "damaging public debate."

More broadly, the vast expansion in information sharing and cooperation has created a tacit division of labor between different national spying agencies, in which State A may gather vast amounts of data on State B's population through surveillance, and vice versa, generating a form of universal coverage. While agencies usually formally decline to directly cooperate in gathering data on their own citizens, they may wink at foreign agencies' data-gathering efforts on their soil. Sometimes, they do not decline to cooperate. As Greenwald's book notes, the United States apparently shares raw unfiltered data on its citizens with Israeli intelligence.

The last thirteen years, then, have seen a quiet internationalization of the surveillance state. For sure, intelligence agencies are still reluctant to share their most prized secrets with other countries. Yet they have also created common data structures. Snowden was able to gather documents from the intelligence agencies of the United Kingdom and a few other countries because they systematically share Wikipedia-like databases with the United States and their other counterparts. No-fly lists and other documents are shared across countries with little accountability, but with enormous consequences for those whom they deliberately or accidentally target. Actors hoping to expand the security state tacitly coordinate their efforts with their counterparts overseas. America is at the center of this web of cooperation, which on the one hand secures it from political pressure to share information it does not want to share, but on the other presents

it with unprecedented opportunities to surreptitiously gather information on both the citizens of allies and its own citizens.

This vast expansion in international surveillance terrifies Snowden and Greenwald. Both acknowledge the inevitability (and, in Snowden's case, the desirability) of some spying, especially on hostile states. Both, however, fear the implications of increased spying for civil liberties within democracies, as these democracies' governments spy on their own citizens and on each other. Greenwald's rhetoric is uncompromising, but his actual political beliefs are squarely moderate-left liberal. Snowden is a libertarian on economic issues, but his understanding of the relationship between civil rights and national security is also perfectly compatible with standard liberalism.

Liberalism, if it is to stay genuine and relevant, has no choice but to engage with Snowden and Greenwald. The problems they identify have sweeping implications for the balance between security and liberty. When Greenwald says that the NSA wants access to everything, he is writing on the basis of the goals explicated in the NSA's own internal documents.

As the trio of Wilentz, Packer and Kinsley demonstrate, it will be especially difficult for national-security liberals to engage seriously with these problems. Most liberals assume a clear division between national politics, where we have strong rights and duties toward each other, and international politics, where these rights and duties are attenuated. National-security liberals, in contrast, start from the belief that we owe it to the world to remake it in more liberal ways and that America is uniquely willing to further this project and capable of doing so by projecting state power.

Snowden and Greenwald suggest that this project is not only doomed but also corrupt. The burgeoning of the surveillance state in the United States and its allies is leading not to the international spread of liberalism, but rather to its hollowing out in the core Western democracies. Accountability is escaping into a realm of secret decisions and shadowy forms of cross-national cooperation and connivance. As Princeton constitutional scholar Kim Lane Scheppele argues, international law no longer supports national constitutional rights so much as it undermines them. U.S. efforts to promote surveillance are hurting civil liberties at home as well as abroad, as practices more commonly associated with international espionage are redeployed domestically, and as security agencies (pursuing what they perceive as legitimate goals) arbitrage the commingling of domestic and international data to gather information that they should not be entitled to.

It is possible in principle that national-security liberalism might renew itself. There are reasonable arguments to be made for increased cross-national cooperation and security; terrorists are as capable of arbitraging cross-national differences as security agencies. However, if those arguments are to be genuinely *liberal*, they will have to take account of the profound changes in international surveillance and their systematic consequences for individual rights.

The comfortable prominence of writers like Wilentz, Packer and Kinsley suggests that such a radical rethinking is unlikely. Their environment does not give them any incentive to reconsider their views. If Hillary Clinton runs and wins, the marketplace for fatuous ideas about security might expand even further into the realm of elected decision makers. Even if their brand of national-security liberalism is intellectually bogus, it will continue to have plenty of customers. □

Torturing the Rule of Law

By Michael J. Glennon

The first great object of a constitution, believed many of the Framers of the United States Constitution, is to enable the government to protect the people from external attack. Relative to the track records of other countries, the U.S. government's success rate in that regard has been little short of astonishing. Through 225 years of threats from air, sea and land that have claimed hundreds of millions of lives in other countries, only a tiny handful of Americans have fallen victim to such attacks. So remarkable has been the government's record that in the aftermath of the tragedy of September 11, 2001, Americans were at a loss to recall the last major deadly attack within North America (in June 1876, when Sioux Indians wiped out Custer's cavalry at the Battle of the Little Big Horn, killing more than 250). Few today are surprised to learn that lightning strikes have killed more Americans in the last twenty years than terrorist attacks.

Enabling the government to protect the people, however, is hardly the Constitution's only purpose. Its second great object, the Framers believed, is to protect the people from the government. In this respect, the risk has risen considerably, for the greater the government's capacity to protect against external threats, the greater the internal threat from the government itself. The Framers sought to meet that internal threat in part by setting up a system in which the three branches of the federal government, in competing for power, would produce an equilibrium that would guard against autocracy. But today that equilibrium has largely broken down. In July, the CIA acknowledged that it had spied on its Senate oversight committee and then lied about it. Given the emblematic significance of that event, a brief recap is in order.

In 2009, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence initiated a study of the CIA's rendition, detention and interrogation activities. The CIA itself installed computers at a CIA facility for use by the committee staff in reviewing relevant documents. Some of the information on the computers was understood to consist of Senate documents and as such its availability was restricted to the committee staff. Nonetheless, five CIA officials—two attorneys and three information-technology staff members—surreptitiously accessed the documents. Following a related dispute with the committee staff, a CIA official accused that staff of crimes and filed a report with the Justice Department (which itself turned out to be based on inaccurate information).

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In response, Senator Dianne Feinstein, chairman of the committee, took to the Senate floor in March 2014 to say that "CIA personnel had conducted a 'search'—that was [CIA director] John Brennan's word—of the committee computers . . . of the 'stand-alone' and 'walled-off' committee network drive containing the committee's own internal work product and communications." In addition, she said, the agency had removed files from the committee's computers, read its staff members' e-mail messages and tried to intimidate them. Brennan, however, was quick to deny any wrongdoing by the agency. "Nothing could be further from the truth," he said. "I mean, we wouldn't do that. I mean, that's just beyond the scope of reason in terms of what we would do."

On July 31, four months later, the CIA inspector general issued a one-page statement confirming the spying. Brennan apologized to Feinstein and the committee's vice chairman, Senator Saxby Chambliss (though not to the committee, the Senate, the president or the public). President Barack Obama proceeded to assert his "full confidence" in Brennan. The CIA announced that a panel would be set up to look into the matter, including, presumably, Brennan's own role. Its members would be selected by Brennan. Though the Justice Department declined to investigate, major questions remained unanswered. Who ordered the search? How many intrusions occurred? Who within the CIA was given the purloined documents? Were they transmitted beyond the CIA? Who within the White House, if anyone, was informed of the CIA's searches? When did the White House learn of them? And what action did it take then?

This was not the first time that Obama had failed to take disciplinary action in response to a senior intelligence official's public falsehood. Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, the official Obama designated to oversee the declassification of the torture report, testified on behalf of the Obama administration before Feinstein's committee on March 12, 2013. He was asked directly about the National Security Agency's (NSA) surveillance by Senator Ron Wyden. "Does the NSA collect any type of data at all on millions or hundreds of millions of Americans?" Wyden asked. Clapper responded, "No, sir." Wyden followed up: "It does not?" Clapper replied, "Not wittingly." Following the Edward Snowden disclosures, Clapper admitted that his testimony was false. On June 9, 2013, he described his response to NBC's Andrea Mitchell as the "least untruthful" statement he could give, suggesting that he had understood the question and deliberated on how it should be answered. (Unlike Clapper's, Brennan's statement was not made to a congressional committee and therefore was not subject to potential criminal penalties.)

Even with the little that was publicly known, it was clear that the legal implications of the agency's spying on its Senate oversight committee were nonetheless significant. The Constitution's separation-of-powers doctrine supposes three separate and independent branches of government that do not encroach upon the constitutionally assigned functions of each other, including the oversight responsibilities of legislative committees. The Fourth Amendment prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures. The National Security Act of 1947, which set up the CIA, prohibits the agency from performing any "police, subpoena, law-enforcement powers, or internal-security functions." Executive Order 12333 prohibits the CIA from conducting domestic searches or surveillance. In addition, various statutes impose criminal penal-

> *When elements of the national-security apparatus deceive Congress or the courts, they undermine the very institutions that it is their mission to protect.*

ties. The Wiretap Act, for example, prohibits the intentional, unauthorized interception of electronic communications. The Computer Fraud and Abuse Act prohibits intentional, unauthorized access to computers. In a March 5, 2014, letter to Wyden, Brennan acknowledged that this act applies to the CIA.

The CIA's spying was thus no trivial staff quarrel requiring merely a personal apology. Willfully deceiving a governmental fact-finding body, whether a court or a congressional committee, undermines the integrity of the American legal system. In the constitutional design, these organs were intended to be the government's portals to truth. To carry out their duties, they depend upon an accurate assessment of the facts. When they are misled, their work product is suspect; judicial opinions and legislative findings then rest upon falsehood. The body politic casts votes based upon misinformation, electing candidates who would not otherwise hold office. The entire system of constitutional and electoral checks on abusive power is thereby corrupted.

Those who mislead no doubt believe that they do so for a greater good, the protection of the nation's security. They are mistaken. The CIA, the NSA and other elements of the military/intelligence community do not exist merely to prevent airplanes from flying into buildings. Their larger mission is to protect the nation's democratic institutions and the rule of law established by the Constitution. When elements of the national-security apparatus deceive Congress or the courts, they feed the perception that the whole system is rigged and undermine the very institutions that it is their mission to protect.

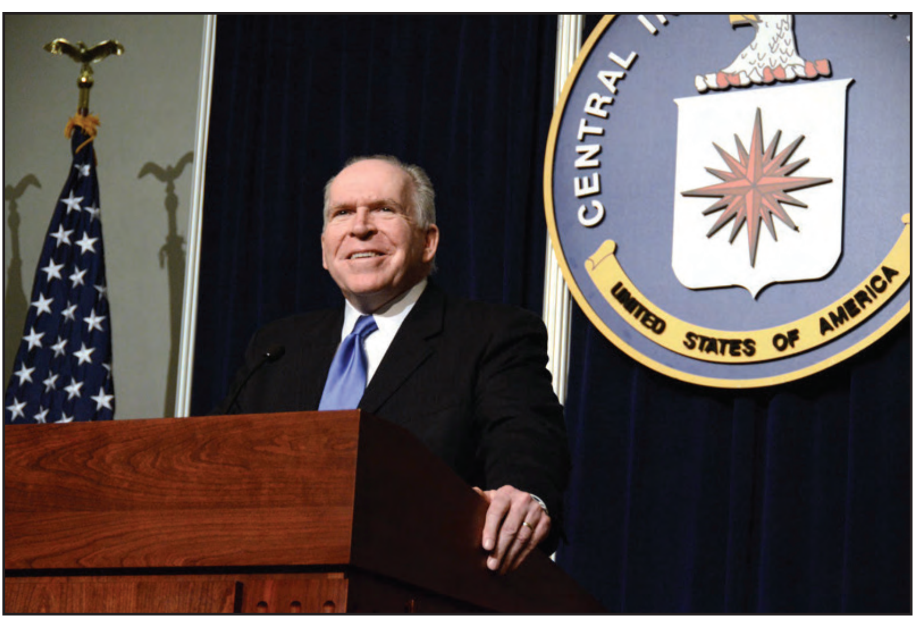
Distrust of government tends to become generalized. People who doubt government officials' assertions on national-security threats are inclined to extend their skepticism to other arenas. Governmental assurances concerning everything from vaccine and food safety to the fairness of stock-market regulation and IRS investigations (not without reason) become widely suspect. The protection of legitimate national-security interests itself suffers if the public is unable to distinguish between measures vital to its protection and those assumed to be undertaken for reasons of doubtful validity.

Further, it does not strengthen the United States in its relations with other nations to engage in deception. It weakens our government when its institutions are seen around the world as hollow or its officials as duplicitous. The United States' historic advantage in its international relations has been not merely military or economic. It has been reputational. Legislative and judicial monitors that operate independent of the executive branch, that are able to call the military and intelligence agencies to task when they run amok, lie at the core of America's reputation for a robust rule of law. Whether the United States thrives or declines in this century will rest in large part on its ability or inability to maintain democratic accountability by safeguarding the integrity of its institutions.

President Obama thus said more than he intended when he stated, referring only

to torture, that "we did some things that were contrary to our values." As Senator John McCain said, in some ways the spying incident was "worse than criminal." Had Obama acted consistently with American values—had the system worked—the president would have dismissed Brennan the moment his mistruth became evident. The Justice Department would immediately have initiated an investigation to determine whether CIA officials had violated the law by spying on the committee. The committee leadership would have subpoenaed Brennan at once and called him to testify, under oath, about what he knew and when he knew it. Congress would have been incentivized to do so by an outraged public, informed and galvanized by a record of judicial opinions from cases in which the courts had heard public testimony about the duplicity, kidnapping and brutality that every knowledgeable observer knew had stained American counterterrorism policy.

But the system did not work. Instead, Obama, more presider than decider, sat mutely for months while Clapper's earlier dishonesty festered, even though Obama knew, or should have known, that the intelligence chief's testimony was false.



Obama's silence signaled that official misstatement of the facts would now go unpunished, a premise that Brennan readily embraced. Indeed, the Justice Department, ever solicitous of maintaining friendships in Langley and Fort Meade, promptly dismissed Feinstein's request for a criminal investigation of the CIA's breach of trust, with the result that whether the CIA broke the law remained a matter of conjecture. The committee, thitherto led by cheerleaders for the CIA and the NSA, itself did nothing to fill the void. It had failed earlier to learn that the CIA ran secret prisons, waterboarded prisoners, made videotapes of the waterboarding or—after it found out—destroyed the videotapes. It had failed to learn how the administration used the phone records of American citizens

that the NSA collected, or that Angela Merkel's cell phone was being tapped—and a host of other embarrassments (many publicly revealed by Edward Snowden) that a competent oversight committee would have caught. The committee's leadership had little to gain by focusing further public scrutiny on its own omissions and indifference to Clapper's and Brennan's deceit. Even some defenders of NSA surveillance acknowledged that the oversight committees could not be trusted. "Clearly, they've been co-opted," said McCain. "There's no doubt about that."

The courts joined the committee in behaving as an annex of the military/intelligence community. The rubber-stamp record of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court—the closest thing the nation has to a national-security court—in approving warrant requests has made it the butt of jokes. But its lamentable history is not unique. At the time of Clapper's statement, it was well nigh impossible to find a single case in which anyone claiming to have suffered even the gravest injury as the result of the U.S. government's counterterrorism policies had recovered a dime in damages. In fact, it is still hard to find any case in which any plaintiff has even been allowed to litigate any counterterrorism claim on the merits. Challenges have been regularly dismissed before any plaintiff has had a chance to describe what happened either before the courts or, often more important, the court of public opinion.

The system's failure, then, has been far more than a failure of the truth-finding process, or even a failure to prevent torture; its failure has been nothing less than a collapse of the equilibrium of power, the balance expected to result from ambition set against ambition, the resistance to encroachment that was supposed to keep the three branches of the federal government in a state of equilibrium and to protect the people from the government.

How could this have happened?

Much of the answer can be found in Walter Bagehot's theory of the British government. He presented it in the 1860s to explain the evolution of the country's political system. While not without critics, his theory has been widely acclaimed and has generated significant commentary. Indeed, it is something of a classic on the subject of institutional change, and it foreshadowed modern organizational theory. Bagehot's view went something like this:

Power in Britain reposed initially in the monarch alone. Over the decades, however, a dual set of institutions emerged. One set comprises the monarchy and the House of Lords. These Bagehot called the "dignified" institutions—dignified in the sense that they provide a link to the past and excite the public imagination. Through theatrical show, pomp and historical symbolism, they exercise an emotional hold on the public mind by evoking the grandeur of ages past. They embody memories of greatness. Yet it is a second, newer set of institutions—Britain's "efficient" institutions—that do the real work of governing. These are the House of Commons, the cabinet and the prime minister. As Bagehot put it:

> Its dignified parts are very complicated and somewhat imposing, very old and rather venerable; while its efficient part . . . is decidedly simple and rather modern. . . . Its essence is strong with the strength of modern simplicity; its exterior is august with the Gothic grandeur of a more imposing age.

Together these institutions make up a "disguised republic" that obscures the massive shift in power that has occurred, which, if widely understood, would

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create a crisis of public confidence. This crisis has been averted because the efficient institutions have been careful to hide where they begin and where the dignified institutions end. They do this, Bagehot suggested, by ensuring that the dignified institutions continue to partake in at least some real governance and that the efficient institutions partake in at least some inspiring public ceremony and ritual. This promotes continued public deference to the efficient institutions' decisions and continued belief that the dignified institutions retain real power. These dual institutions, one for show and the other for real, afford Britain expertise and experience in the actual art of governing while at the same time providing a façade that generates public acceptance of the experts' decisions. Bagehot called this Britain's "double government." The structural duality, some have suggested, is a modern reification of the "Noble Lie" that, two millennia before, Plato had thought necessary to insulate a state from the fatal excesses of democracy and to ensure deference to a class of efficient guardians.

Bagehot's theory may have overstated the naïveté of Britain's citizenry. When he wrote, probably few Britons believed that Queen Victoria actually governed. Nor is it likely that the country's prime ministers, let alone 658 members of the House of Commons, could or did consciously and intentionally conceal from the British public that it was really they who governed. Big groups keep big secrets poorly. Nonetheless, Bagehot's enduring insight—that dual institutions of governance, one public and the other concealed, work side by side to maximize both legitimacy and efficiency—is worth pondering as one possible explanation. There is no reason in principle why the institutions of Britain's juridical offspring, the United States, ought to be immune from the broader bifurcating forces that have driven British institutional evolution.

As it did in the early days of Britain's monarchy, power in the United States lay initially in one set of institutions—the presidency, Congress and the courts. These are America's "dignified" institutions. Later, however, a second institution emerged to safeguard the nation's security. This, America's "efficient" institution (actually, more a network than an institution), consists of the several hundred executive officials who sit atop the military, intelligence, diplomatic and law-enforcement departments and agencies that have as their mission the protection of America's security. Large segments of the public continue to believe that America's constitutionally established, dignified institutions are the locus of governmental power. That belief allows both sets of institutions to maintain public support and legitimacy. Enough exceptions exist to sustain that illusion. But when it comes to defining and protecting national security, the public's impression is mistaken. America's efficient institution makes most of the key decisions concerning national security, removed from public view and from the electoral and constitutional restrictions that check America's dignified institutions. The United States has, in short, moved beyond a mere imperial presidency

Even the president now exercises little substantive control over the general direction of U.S. national-security policy.

to a bifurcated system—a structure of double government—in which even the president now exercises little substantive control over the general direction of U.S. national-security policy. Whereas Britain's dual institutions evolved toward a concealed republic, America's have evolved in the opposite direction, toward greater centralization, less accountability and emergent autocracy.

The birth date of Britain's efficient institution is difficult to determine, having evolved over time. America's did not. President Harry S Truman, more than any other president, is responsible for creating the nation's "efficient" national-security apparatus. Under him, Congress enacted the National Security Act of 1947, which unified the military under a new secretary of defense, set up the CIA, created the modern Joint Chiefs of Staff and established the National Security Council (NSC). Truman also set up the NSA, which was intended at the time to monitor communications abroad. Friends as well as detractors viewed Truman's role as decisive. Honoring Truman's founding role, let us substitute "Trumanite" for "efficient," referring to the network of several hundred high-level military, intelligence, diplomatic and law-enforcement officials within the executive branch who are responsible for making national-security policy.

Truman's national-security initiatives were controversial, with liberal and conservative positions in the debate curiously inverted from those prevalent in current times. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, congressional liberals generally supported Truman's efforts to create more centralized national-security institutions on the theory, held by many and summarized by Michael Hogan, that "peace and freedom were indivisible, that American power had to be mobilized on behalf of democracy 'everywhere,' and that tradition had to give some ground to this new responsibility." Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, for example, dismissed objections to the constitutionality of the new arrangements: "It is one thing to have legalistic arguments about where the power rests," he said, but another to straitjacket a president in trying to deal with a totalitarian state capable of swift action. Stalin could strike a deathblow at any time, he argued; as a result, "those days of all the niceties and formalities of declarations of war are past." Under these conditions, "it is hard to tell . . . where war begins or where it ends." Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois insisted that U.S. military power should support democracy "everywhere." Unanswered aggression would lead only to further aggression, he suggested, requiring the United States to move to a posture of permanent military preparedness.

Congressional conservatives, by contrast, feared that Truman's ballooning national-security payrolls, reliance upon military solutions to tackle international problems and efforts to centralize decision making posed a threat to democratic institutions and the principle of civilian leadership. Republican senator Edward V. Robertson of Wyoming, for example, worried that Truman's military consolidations could amount to the creation of an "embryonic"

general staff similar to that of Germany's Wehrmacht. A new national intelligence agency, he said, could grow into an American "gestapo." Republican senator William Langer of North Dakota and his allies believed that the Soviet threat was exaggerated; in their eyes, the real enemy was the Pentagon, where "military leaders had an insatiable appetite for more money, more men, and more power, whatever the cost to democracy." The conservatives invoked the specter of a "garrison state," a "police state" and a "slave state" run by "power-grabbing bureaucrats." They saw peacetime military conscription as "aping the military clique of Hitler" and leading to a "complete militarization of the country," creating a "permanent military caste." Republican congresswoman Katherine St. George of New York, recalling George Washington's Farewell Address, foresaw the possibility of military domination of the nation's civilian leadership. Republican senators John Bricker and Robert Taft of Ohio and Homer Capehart of Indiana voted to cap the size of active U.S. military forces in part to halt what they regarded as "a drift from 'congressional responsibility' to 'administrative policymaking' . . . which would destroy the 'liberty of the people.'" "The truth is that we are slowly losing our freedoms as we move toward the garrison state," said the Republican leader of the House of Representatives, Joseph W. Martin of Massachusetts.

Truman himself appeared to share these concerns, at least to an extent. He was "very strongly anti-FBI," according to his aide Clark Clifford. Truman was "afraid of a 'Gestapo'" and wanted to "hold [the] FBI down." Although a military officer would be permitted to head the CIA, Truman accepted the proviso in the National Security Act described above, under which the agency would be prohibited from performing any police or law-enforcement functions. As for the military, while wasteful duplication had to be eliminated and better coordination established, Truman feared that collective deliberation could force the president to share responsibility and decision-making power, resulting in a diminution in presidential authority and a weakening of civilian control over the military. With half of the members of the new NSC coming from the military, Truman believed it would be difficult for the president to ignore their recommendations, even though their counsel was only advisory. Truman was particularly annoyed by interservice rivalries and pressure from military lobbyists to increase their services' budgets. "We must be very careful that the military does not overstep the bounds from an economic standpoint domestically," he wrote. He also believed that "most of them would like to go back to a war footing." But he considered the new national-security apparatus necessary to rein in the military as well as to improve the United States' ability to respond to the looming (though exaggerated) Soviet threat. The Hoover Commission warned in 1949 that the Joint Chiefs had come to act as "virtually a law unto themselves" and that "centralized civilian control scarcely exists" in certain military departments. Internecine warfare among the services had come to undermine the nation's defense. Truman believed that his new national-security architecture was the best bet to bolster the capacity of the nation to meet security threats while safeguarding the democratic institutions that the newly empowered military and intelligence organizations were expected to protect.

Sixty years later, sitting atop its national-security institutions, an intragovernmental network that has descended from what Truman created now manages the real work of protecting the nation's security. Its members are smart, hard-

working, public-spirited officials, careerists as well as in-and-outers. They exercise their authority not because of some vast, nefarious conspiracy, but rather as the result of structural incentives embedded deeply within the American political system. They define security primarily in military terms and tend to consider military options before political, diplomatic or law-enforcement alternatives for an understandable reason: relative to other governmental agencies, the American military is extremely proficient and widely respected. They share the premise of Madeleine Albright's famous question to Colin Powell: "What's the point of having this superb military . . . if we can't use it?" They also favor existing policies over new, different ones, in part because senior officials—their bosses—were their authors. In economic terms, their programs are "sticky down"—much more difficult to end than to expand or to continue.

This basic dynamic, well known to organizational behaviorists, represents the principal reason that U.S. national-security policy has changed so little from the George W. Bush to the Obama administration. As a candidate for president, Obama repeatedly, forcefully and eloquently promised fundamental change in that policy. It never happened. U.S. policies on rendition, covert operations, cyberwar, military detention without trial or counsel, drone strikes, NSA surveillance, whistle-blower prosecutions, nonprosecution of waterboarders, reliance on the state-secrets privilege and a variety of other national-security issues all have remained largely the same. The explanation lies not simply in the huge number of holdovers in high-level policy-making positions; the reality is that structural incentives have given these policies a life of their own—allowing them to run "on autopilot," as Secretary of State John Kerry described one NSA program, largely immune from constitutional and electoral restraints.

A variety of legislative and judicial reforms have been suggested, aimed generally at restoring a semblance of institutional balance. Given the prevailing incentive structure, however, none are likely to succeed. The first difficulty with the proposed reforms is circularity. All rely upon the Madisonian institutions—Congress, the courts and the presidency—to restore power to the Madisonian

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Whereas Britain's dual institutions evolved toward a concealed republic, America's have evolved toward greater centralization, less accountability and emergent autocracy.

institutions by exercising the very power that the Madisonian institutions lack. All assume that the Madisonian institutions, in which all reform proposals must necessarily originate, can somehow magically impose those reforms upon the Trumanite network or that the network will somehow merrily acquiesce. All suppose that the forces that gave rise to the Trumanite network can simply be ignored. All assume, at bottom, that Madison's scheme can be made to work—that an equilibrium of power can be restored—without regard to the root cause of the disequilibrium.

That root cause is difficult to discuss in a democracy, for it lies in the electorate's own deficiencies. This is the second great obstacle the reform proposals confront; on this point Bagehot's and Madison's theories converge. Bagehot argued that when the public becomes too sophisticated to be misled any longer about who holds governmental power but not informed enough to play a genuine role in governance, the whole structure will "fall to the earth," in his phrase. Madison, contrary to popular belief, did not suggest that the system that he and his colleagues designed was self-correcting. The Framers did not believe that merely setting "ambition against ambition" within the government would by itself save the people from autocracy. They believed that this competition for power would not occur *absent* an informed and engaged public—what Robert Dahl has called the "adequate citizen," the citizen able and willing to undertake the responsibilities required to make democracy work. Thomas Jefferson spoke for many of the Framers. He said: "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be." Competition between institutions was thus written into the constitutional architecture not as a substitute for civic virtue—there is none—but as a backstop, as an additional safeguard to forestall the rise of autocracy. But that backstop was not freestanding: it, too, depended upon an electorate possessed of civic virtue.

If anything, the essentiality of civic virtue has grown over the years. In the early days of the Republic, public-policy issues were less intricate, and the franchise was de jure or de facto more restricted. A smaller electorate was more capable of mastering the more straightforward issues it faced. As Louis Henkin pointed out, however, the United States has since changed gradually from a republic to a democracy—an "ultra-democracy," Bagehot believed. The problems government has faced over the years have become more complex, and a greater base of civic knowledge has thus become indispensable for responsible participation in the process of governance. Yet a cursory glance at consistent survey results confirms what former Supreme Court justice David Souter has described today as the public's "pervasive civic ignorance."

The numbers are sobering. A 2011 *Newsweek* survey showed that 80 percent of Americans did not know who was president during World War I; 40 percent did not know whom the United States fought in World War II; and 29 percent could not identify the current vice

president of the United States. Far more Americans can name the Three Stooges than any member of the Supreme Court. One poll has found that 71 percent of Americans believe that Iran already has nuclear weapons. In 2006, at the height of U.S. military involvement in the region, 88 percent of Americans aged eighteen to twenty-four could not find Afghanistan on a map of Asia, and 63 percent could not find Iraq or Saudi Arabia on a map of the Middle East. Ilya Somin's fine book *Democracy and Political Ignorance* analyzes the problem in depth. The great conundrum is that the public's ignorance does not derive from "stupidity"—average raw IQ scores actually have increased in recent decades—so much as it derives from simple rationality: Why spend time and energy learning about national-security policies that cannot be changed?

That is the nub of the negative feedback loop in which the United States is now locked. Resuscitating the Madisonian institutions requires an informed, engaged electorate, but voters have little incentive to be informed or engaged if they believe that their efforts would be for naught—and as they become more uninformed and unengaged, they have all the more reason to continue on that path. The Madisonian institutions thus continue to atrophy, the power of the Trumanite network continues to grow and the public continues to disengage.

Should this trend continue, and there is scant reason to believe it will not, it takes no great prescience to see what lies ahead: outward symbols and rituals of national-security governance that appear largely the same, concealing a Trumanite network that takes on the role of a silent directorate, and Madisonian institutions that, like the British monarchy and House of Lords, quietly and gradually are transformed into museum pieces. □

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The India Myth

By Rajan Menon

Over the last two decades, numerous books, articles and press commentaries have hailed India as the next global power. This flush of enthusiasm results partly from the marked acceleration in India's economic growth rate following reforms initiated in 1991. India's gross domestic product (GDP) grew at 6 percent per year for most of the 1990s, 5.5 percent from 1998 to 2002, and soared to nearly 9 percent from 2003 to 2007, before settling at an average of 6.5 percent until 2012. The upswing offered a contrast to what the Indian economist Raj Krishna dubbed "the Hindu rate of growth": an average of 2.5 percent for the first twenty-five years following India's independence in 1947. The brisker pace pulled millions from poverty, put Indian companies (such as Indian Oil, Tata Motors, Tata Steel, Infosys, Mahindra, Reliance Industries and Wipro) even more prominently on the global map, and spawned giddy headlines about India's prowess in IT, even though that sector accounts for a tiny proportion of the country's output and workforce. India also beckoned as a market for exports and a site for foreign investment.

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The attention to India has endured even though its economic boom has been stymied, partly by the 2008 global financial crisis, with growth remaining below 5 percent for eight consecutive quarters from early 2012 to early 2014. In the quarter lasting from April to June 2014, growth ticked back up to 5.7 percent, but it is too soon to tell whether or not this represents the beginning of a more sustained expansion. The persistent interest also stems from analyses that portray India's and China's resurgence as part of a shift that is ineluctably returning the center of global economic power to Asia, its home for centuries before the West's economic and military ascent some five hundred years ago. Yet even those who dismiss the proponents of this perspective as "declinists" are drawn to the "India rising" thesis, in part because of the transformation in U.S.-Indian relations during the last two decades and the allure of democratic India as a counterweight to authoritarian China. For much of the Cold War, the relationship between Washington and New Delhi ranged from "correct" to "chilly." Nowadays, in contrast, predictions that China's ascendency will produce an Indo-American entente, if not an alliance, are commonplace.

But is India really ready for prime time? India has many of the prerequisites for becoming a center of global power, and, assuming China's continued and unhindered ascent, it will play a part in transforming a world in which American power is peerless

into one marked by multipolarity. India has a vast landmass and coastline and a population of more than one billion, faces East Asia, China and the Persian Gulf, and has a wealth of scientific and technological talent along with a prosperous and well-placed diaspora. But the elemental problems produced by poverty, an inadequate educational system and pervasive corruption remain, and India's mix of cultural diversity and democracy hampers rapid reform. For now, therefore, the ubiquitous reports of India's emergence as a great power are premature at best. There's no denying India's ambition and potential, but as for its quest to join the club of great powers, the road is long, the advance slow and the arrival date uncertain. Prime Minister Narendra Modi of the Hindu-nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) may seek to be a reformer, and he enjoys a reputation as a charismatic leader and skilled manager. He is also a proponent of improving ties with the United States and Israel. But he will face daunting obstacles in his bid to push India into the front rank of nations.

Despite its many blemishes, India's democracy has increased the country's appeal in Europe and America and prevented quarrels over human rights from complicating the expansion of economic and security transactions with the West. This is in stark contrast to the intermittent skirmishes over human rights that have marred the West's relationship with China and Vladimir Putin's Russia. In defending the 2005 U.S.-Indian nuclear agreement, the George W. Bush administration (and American experts who backed the deal) noted that India is a fellow democracy. Barack Obama—who hosted Modi in September 2014—pledges to back India's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and invariably invokes the country's democratic record when he does so.

Yet in East and South Asia, two regions in which India has been most active on the diplomatic and strategic front, its democratic model hasn't yielded it much influence, or even stature. If anything, the economic achievements of China and Singapore—and the other Asian "tigers" during their undemocratic decades—in delivering rapid growth and modernization and improving living standards have made a bigger impression. India, weighed down by the compromises, delays and half measures necessitated by its democratic structure, comes across as a lumbering, slow-motion behemoth that's never quite able to sustain whatever momentum it manages to gain on occasion or to bridge the gap between proclaiming reforms and implementing them.

The Indian government, for its part, has crafted sundry soft-power slogans and strategies, among them "India Shining" and the even sappier "Incredible India." The latter was not simply rhetorical excess—though it was that—or even solely a catchphrase to capture additional tourist revenue. It was also part of a larger effort to increase transactions between India and the West and to recast India's image. Yet there's scant evidence that India is seeking to use culture as a means to create a transnational bloc in Asia, or anywhere else. With all due respect to the late Samuel P. Huntington, who listed "Hindu civilization" among the cultural-religious blocs whose rivalry he believed would supplant the competition and conflict among states, there's no sign that India plans to mobilize that form of soft power, or that it could if it tried. Hyping Hindu discourse in a multiconfessional country, one with more than one hundred million Muslims, would amount to jeopardizing internal security to road test a quixotic theory that emanated from Harvard Yard. Besides, Hinduism is too torn by divisions of class, caste, language and region to make such a strategy feasible;

The ubiquitous reports of India's emergence as a great power are premature at best.

the Hindu diasporas in Asia and Africa, for their part, would have little to gain and much to lose by embracing it. Modi and the BJP will doubtless spice up their rallies with Hindu-nationalist verbiage, but they are likely to find that this tactic, far from mobilizing unity, sows disunity in what is a country of multiple faiths and provokes India's neighbors, above all Pakistan, while yielding little of tangible value in return. Nor will the project of "Hindutva" help the BJP extend its base beyond northern India's "Hindu heartland" and into the country's southern regions, where its message has much less appeal.

The difficulty with "soft power," a concept now embedded in the lexicon thanks to another Harvard professor, Joseph Nye, is that it's hard to determine its effectiveness, or even to figure out quite how it works. Few would deny that a country's political system, cultural achievements and image can, in theory, add to its allure. What's much less clear, though, is how this amorphous advantage goes beyond evoking warm feelings and yields actual influence, defined as the capacity to shape the policies of other countries.

Did Americans (or Europeans or Japanese) gain a greater understanding and appreciation of India and begin to take it seriously because of India's soft power? Unlikely, given how little the outside world interests the citizens of the United States, never mind that their country is engaged in every corner of the globe on a host of issues and in ways that affect the lives of millions. Did the greater coverage of India, in part perhaps because of New Delhi's endeavors on the soft-power front, increase the attention it received from America's well educated, well heeled and politically powerful? Possibly, based on the data on tourism, the increased number of courses on India-related topics at universities, and the growing popularity of Indian prose-fiction writers and attire bearing traces of Indian culture. But one can yearn to see the Ajanta Caves, read R. K. Narayan or Arundhati Roy, sport a kurta, or be able to tell one genre of Indian classical music or dance from another without giving so much as a thought to the pros and cons of developing military ties with India, championing its quest for a spot on the UN Security Council, or expanding trade and investment ties with it. Soft power, apart from being a slippery principle, can only do so much in practice. It simply cannot compensate for the deficit India has in other, tangible forms of power, which remains the greatest impediment to India's becoming a global power.

The heyday of central planning and import-substitution-based economic policy, which had extraordinary influence in India, is over. The BJP's thumping victory over the Congress Party, which itself initiated economic reforms in the 1990s, betokens an even stronger push toward privatization and foreign direct investment (FDI). While the principal aims of India's economic strategy will naturally be growth and prosperity, the country's leaders understand the strategic benefits that are to be gained from having the business community of important democratic countries

Hyping Hindu discourse in a multiconfessional country would amount to jeopardizing internal security to road test a quixotic theory that emanated from Harvard Yard.

(the United States, Britain, Japan, Germany, France, South Korea and Brazil, for example) acquire a strong stake in India's market.

Still, to gain substantial economic influence, India's leaders will have to implement many politically unpopular reforms that are required to restore and maintain high rates of growth, boost trade and attract greater sums of FDI. These include cutting subsidies for basic commodities, revamping entrenched and rigid labor laws, opening protected sectors—such as retail, agriculture and services—to foreign competition, and stamping out tax evasion, which in India is both ubiquitous and an art form. These aren't the only steps needed to make the economy grow faster and more sustainably so that the increased resources required to bolster India's bid for great-power status become available.

Take education. While India's progress in educating what fifty years ago was a largely illiterate society has been impressive, there's much more that needs doing on this front to boost Indian economic power. The countries that are already front-rank economic powers achieved near-universal literacy long ago, while in China, Indonesia and Malaysia more than 90 percent of the population is literate. In India, the figure is 74 percent. While that's a massive increase compared to the proportion in 1947, the quality of Indian schools is uneven because problems such as moribund curricula, substandard classrooms and widespread absenteeism among teachers abound. The success of states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh contrasts starkly with the failures of the educational system in others, such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. What might be called the "effective literacy rate" is thus lower than suggested by the national average, especially in rural areas (where about 70 percent of the population still lives) and among females. Moreover, India's schools are not producing the skilled labor needed by local and foreign firms at anywhere near the required rate, and too many of those with degrees in science and engineering are not readily employable on account of the poor quality of their training. Indian higher education has a proud history that spans centuries and boasts some venerable institutions, but according to economists Jagdish Bhagwati and Arvind Panagariya, even its elite engineering and management schools don't make the "top 200" list in global surveys; by contrast, the best universities of other major Asian economic powers have cracked the top 100.

Likewise, vast sums will have to be mobilized (from tax revenues or government-backed, dollar-denominated bonds) to modernize and expand India's antediluvian infrastructure. The list of pressing needs is long. It includes building or revamping water-management and sanitation systems; bridges, railways and roads; harbors and airports; and power plants (to end chronic electricity shortages and even blackouts). Fixing India's infrastructure by building more rail and air networks, bridges and ports won't be cheap: the price tag is estimated to be $1 trillion. But absent a colossal effort, the drag on India's growth could amount to 2 percent a year. Access to com-

puters and the Internet must also be scaled up dramatically if India is to compete successfully in the global marketplace. Despite the publicity India's prowess in IT receives, society-wide access to information technologies remains unimpressive. In 2008, according to the World Bank, India had 7.9 Internet users per 100 people. That number had grown to 15.1 by 2013. But by then Guatemala had 19.7, Haiti 10.6, Kyrgyzstan 23.4 and the Dominican Republic 45.9. The figure for China was 45.8, in Germany and France and the United States it was over 80, and in Denmark it was 94.6. Even allowing for India's mammoth size and population, this dismal comparison speaks for itself.

India faces an even more fundamental problem—one that makes prognostications about its impending ascent to great-power status sound surreal. Simply put, the country still lacks the human capital required for acquiring the power and influence commensurate with its leaders' aspirations. Consider some pertinent numbers. India's per capita income in 2013 was $5,350. By comparison, China's was $11,850, Japan's was $37,630 and—tellingly—South Korea's, which was comparable to India's in the early 1950s, was $33,440. Nearly one-third of Indians still subsist on $1.25 a day or less. India places 135th out of 187 on the UNDP's Human Development Index, a composite measure of access to basic necessities. Similarly, it ranks 102nd out of 132 on the Social Progress Index, which assesses countries' records in meeting people's essential social and economic needs. In UNICEF's rankings, India (with 48 percent) places fourth in the proportion of children who are stunted and second (43 percent) in the percentage of those who are underweight ("severe" or "moderate"). The handful of Asian countries with worse records includes Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar and Papua New Guinea—not good company for a country that yearns to be global power. As Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen demonstrate in a recent book, despite its robust economic growth during much of the last two decades, India lags far behind the other "BRICS" in such measures as citizens' access to potable water and basic health and sanitation services, the immunization of children and nutrition. Worse, its performance is poor even relative to some of the world's poorest countries. In India's own neighborhood, Bangladesh and Nepal, despite having smaller per capita incomes and slower growth rates, have done better on several key quality-of-life measures.

Among the consequences of having shopworn infrastructure, relatively low literacy rates and a substandard educational system, along with an industrial manufacturing sector that's small relative to that of its competitors—all problems that the Asian "tigers," and China thereafter, overcame—is that, as wages in China have risen, multinational corporations haven't relocated to India to the degree one would expect given the size of the Indian market and the low cost of Indian labor. Instead, they have gone elsewhere—not just because of India's inadequate human capital and infrastructure, but also because of bureaucratic barriers that hinder business and investment and persist despite the reforms of the past two decades. These problems help explain why India places 134th out of 189—just below Yemen—in the World Bank's "Ease of Doing Business Index." Not surprisingly, India attracts far less FDI than it needs to boost growth and productivity. From 2010 to 2012, FDI inflows to India averaged $27 billion a year, compared to $119.5 billion for gargantuan China, $55 billion for tiny Singapore and $60 billion for Brazil, a member of the BRICS coalition to which India belongs. Malaysia attracted $10.3 billion and Thailand $8.3 billion—both far more than

India in per capita terms. Yet the former has a population of thirty million (2.3 percent of India's) and the latter sixty-seven million (5 percent of India's).

It's often said that India, unlike China, has the advantage of a relatively young population and will therefore not face labor shortages. What often goes unmentioned is that the largest population increases are occurring in some of India's poorest states (Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar), not in those (such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu) that have been the best at meeting basic economic needs and in increasing literacy.

These same deficiencies have prevented India from establishing a significant position in global trade. While it does rank fifteenth on a list of the top twenty economies in the dollar value of merchandise trade, its exports and imports combined in 2012 totaled $784 billion. Several countries with smaller GDPs and much smaller populations outranked it, including Singapore, Belgium and the Netherlands. China's trade, valued at nearly $4 trillion and about on par with that of the United States, accounted for 10.5 percent of the value of all international trade in 2012. The dollar value of India's trade amounted to one-fifth of China's and to 2 percent of the global total, even though India has roughly 17.5 percent of the world's population, about the same proportion China does. India does fare better in trade in commercial services: in 2012, it ranked seventh in a list of the top exporting countries; but its share was still only 74 percent of China's (which still lacks a powerful service sector) and 4.4 percent of the world total, comparable to that of Spain and the Netherlands.

Apart from the quantity and complexity of the problems that have to be addressed, India's democratic system is not conducive to enacting controversial economic changes

Soft power, apart from being a slippery principle, can only do so much in practice. It simply cannot compensate for the deficit India has in tangible forms of power.

quickly. Because of their authoritarian political systems, China, as well as Taiwan and South Korea in their nondemocratic phases, could push through sweeping reforms that helped establish the foundation for rapid industrialization and economic growth. India's raucous, vibrant democracy is rightly admired, but it impedes the implementation of deep economic reform. Creaky coalition governments are common at the center, and headstrong local power brokers (the chief ministers of its twenty-nine states) can be veritable kingmakers. Labor unions are powerful, and militant and caste-based political alliances are impenetrable yet influential. Then there's an electorate that's not shy about registering its displeasure at the ballot box when economic reforms bring pain or when the increased competition from abroad threatens traditional sectors, such as small retail shops, agriculture or industries long shielded by various forms of protectionism. In principle, Modi, who faces the challenge of overcoming such obstacles, is well placed to do so given his economic track record, his popularity and the BJP's massive electoral mandate. Modi may style himself as a no-nonsense, business-friendly, results-oriented manager, but he won't be able to demolish these deeply rooted impediments to reform without a tough struggle. Running Gujarat was one thing. Acting as India's CEO will be quite another.

During the past two decades in particular, Indian leaders have looked beyond their immediate neighborhood and adopted a more ambitious strategy. The "Look East" policy, a case in point, seeks to expand and deepen India's presence in East Asia so that China does not have a free hand in shaping the strategic and institutional landscape there. More to the point, it is designed to strengthen security ties with the Asian countries located around China's perimeter, particularly those unnerved by the prospect of a Pax Sinica and anxious about America's staying power and the narrowing gap in power between the United States and China.

India has been active on a variety of fronts in East Asia. It has been training Myanmar's naval officers and selling the country maritime surveillance aircraft. It has provided Vietnam loans for buying Indian arms and has signed a deal, despite profuse Chinese protests, to tap Vietnamese oil deposits in the South China Sea, adjacent to islands claimed by Beijing. It has been engaged in regular security consultations with Japan, Israel, Australia, Indonesia and the United States, and has participated in naval exercises in the Pacific alongside America, Japan, Singapore and Australia. It also signed a free-trade agreement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2009. While specialists on Indian foreign policy tally these and other triumphs with care, what's sometimes missing from their analyses is a comparative perspective, which would show that China's presence in East Asia, and the resources it has deployed to gain influence there, far exceed India's on every dimension that matters, and by a wide margin.

Another part of India's strategy has been expanding the power and reach of its armed forces. Much has been accomplished, and

the balance between India and China is a far cry from what it was in 1962, when a military rout that revealed Indian troops' lack of basic equipment created a political firestorm at home. The Chinese would find it considerably harder now to prevail swiftly in a war along the border. Still, India trails China in military power, and a quick comparison makes the disparity evident. Though the two countries have populations of comparable size, India's GDP is a mere 22.5 percent of China's. This gap gives Beijing a big advantage in mobilizing and applying various power-relevant resources—and one that is likely to widen given that China's rate of growth, though it has slowed of late, still exceeds India's. India and China have devoted a comparable proportion of GDP to defense in recent years: about 2.5 percent and 2.0 percent between 2008 and 2013, respectively. Yet because of the GDP disparity China can, with a smaller burden on its economy, spend far more on its military machine than India: $188 billion compared to $47 billion in 2013. The actual gap is likely even larger, as China's official figures probably understate its true level of defense spending.

Nor is it just a matter of the spending mismatch: whether it's armor, airpower, cyberwarfare, air-defense systems or power-projection capacity, China retains a significant advantage over India, in qualitative and quantitative terms. Some numerical comparisons of major categories of armament make this evident. In combat aircraft, attack helicopters, submarines and destroyers, China's lead ranges from 2:1 to 4:1. Some strategists, Indian and Western, aver that the Indian navy now has the wherewithal to establish dominance over its Chinese counterpart and to block the lifeblood of the Chinese economy by controlling maritime passageways that provide China egress from East Asia. Leaving aside the fact that this scenario assumes a full-blown war in which the naval balance would be but one factor, the difficulty New Delhi faces is

that China has far more economic resources than India to devote to seapower in the coming years. Besides, in 2013, the Indian navy received only 18 percent of the military budget, compared to 49 percent for the army and 28 percent for the air force, and a reallocation of resources, certain to be contentious, would be required to ensure maritime dominance over China. That's possible in principle—leaving aside the inevitable interservice budget battles—but not easily accomplished given the threats India faces from the land and air forces of China and Pakistan, who continue to be aligned. Even if one concedes the claim about Indian naval superiority, Beijing can apply counterpressure in various ways, particularly by bolstering Pakistani military capabilities, using its well-developed strengths in cyberwarfare and striking across the Sino-Indian border. Even with India's recent move to further strengthen its border defenses by creating a "mountain strike corps" of fifty thousand troops, the Chinese are likely to retain the advantage in numbers, mobility and firepower—and thus the wherewithal to mount offensive operations across the three main sections of the border: Ladakh-Xinjiang, Tibet-Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh-Sikkim.

Modi has his work cut out for him. He will doubtless seek to reform India's defense industries but will have to continue relying mainly on external suppliers. Russia, whose armaments dominate India's army, navy and air force, will retain a natural advantage. But in recent years India has been dissatisfied by cost overruns in Russian armaments, the unreliability in the supply and quality of spare parts, and accidents aboard Russian-built submarines, and so it has sought to reduce its dependence on Moscow. Modi won't burn bridges with Russia, but he will open the door more widely to American, European and Israeli suppliers. While Israel will remain a niche supplier for India, since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992, trade between the two countries has grown (it totaled $6 billion in 2012); so have Israel's military sales, which cover radars, missiles of various sorts and reconnaissance aircraft. India has become Israel's leading market for its arms exports, the annual worldwide total value of which is $7.5 billion, with India accounting for as much as $1.5 billion. Such transactions, which include intelligence sharing related to counterterrorism, are no longer controversial within India; Modi, who visited Israel while running Gujarat and attracted billions of dollars of Israeli investment in his state, has voiced his admiration of Israel's economic and technological achievements and his desire to boost cooperation.

New Delhi's strategy toward China goes beyond strengthening India's armed forces. Since the bilateral military balance heavily favors Beijing, India has turned to a classic coalition strategy aimed at dispersing China's military strength across what, given the size of the Chinese landmass, are far-flung fronts. This gambit, already well under way, will gain momentum. For reasons rooted in history and geography, India's natural partners will be Australia, Indonesia, Japan, Vietnam and the United States, countries with which India's military ties have grown during the last two decades. The increasing security cooperation between New Delhi and Tokyo in recent years is particularly significant and will increase because of their shared apprehensions about China. Given Japan's economic and technological prowess, it could—if the increasing threat from China trumps domestic opposition—boost its military strength in fairly short order. With a GDP approaching $5 trillion, barely 1 percent of which it devotes to defense, this would only require a minimal increase in the defense burden. While East Asian states have been rattled by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's efforts to revise Japan's "peace

Developments between Washington and New Delhi have produced predictions of an alliance in the making. This forecast is faulty.

constitution" and to increase its military capabilities, India has welcomed them and embraces Japan as a strategic partner. In 2014, Japan and India decided to begin regular consultations between the two countries' national-security leaders. This decision followed the initiation of yearly trilateral meetings among India, Japan and the United States in 2011. There is more involved in this than talk. Japan has participated in three—in 2007, 2009 and 2014—of the annual U.S.-Indian "Malabar" naval exercises, which were initiated in 1992 (they were suspended following India's nuclear test in 1998). What bears watching is whether Japan's 2014 decision to lift the ban—which dates back to 1967—on the export of military technology and arms leads to purchases by India as part of its push for military modernization and diversification. Tokyo's 2013 offer to sell India the ShinMaywa US-2 amphibious aircraft, and India's interest in buying fifteen of them, may represent a harbinger. Already, Japan and Australia have been in discussions over the latter's purchase of ten Soryu-class Japanese submarines (worth $20 billion), a development that points to the potential for larger arms sales by Japan to India, especially given their shared concern about China's expanding power.

Using diplomatic and economic means, India is also establishing a presence on China's western and southwestern flank, in Afghanistan and Central Asia. It has positioned itself to play a major role in post-American Afghanistan by training Afghan security forces, building road networks and acquiring natural-resource deposits. But China has also been purchasing economic assets in Afghanistan, notably in energy and mining, and once the United States and its allies depart, Beijing will have to develop a strategy to defend these gains, which means that its presence in that country will grow, adding a new front to Sino-Indian competition.

China has overshadowed India in Central Asia, despite the emphasis the region receives from Indian strategists and New Delhi's efforts to strengthen its position. India remains an observer rather than a full member in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, among the many sources of Chinese influence in Central Asia. Indian energy companies have been bested by their Chinese counterparts in bids for shares in Kazakh companies and energy fields, most recently in the giant Kashagan offshore field, among the largest in the world. Pipelines recently built by China are drawing increasing volumes of Kazakh and Turkmen energy eastward. Trade and investment trends show that Beijing's economic presence is fast overshadowing Russia's, to say nothing of India's, in what has been a Russian sphere of influence since the nineteenth century. India's position is even weaker in the military sphere. Unlike China and Russia, it lacks direct access to the region. Its quest for access to the Ayni air base in Tajikistan, its first attempt to gain a military toehold, ran into Russian opposition—no matter that New Delhi had spent some $70 million to renovate it—and so Ayni's operational value to India as a combat-aircraft platform remains uncertain.

The United States will be the key partner in India's coalition strategy because it has more power to bring to the grouping than any other country and because Sino-American competition seems likely to intensify. Developments such as the 2005 U.S.-Indian nuclear deal—which effectively marked Washington's recognition of India as a nuclear-weapons state and an abandonment of its punitive antiproliferation approach to New Delhi—have produced predictions of an alliance in the making. This forecast is faulty. For one thing, it makes light of the political obstacles within India, which are a legacy of Cold War frictions and the abiding suspicion, even animus, toward the United States within India's left wing and on the nationalist right. It also underestimates India's apprehensions about the loss of autonomy that could follow an alliance with the United States, a sentiment that persists in a country that has prided itself on hewing to nonalignment. These are among the reasons New Delhi has opted for a flexible, ambiguous position, one that's unlikely to change under Modi, even as he expands the security cooperation with the United States that's already in place. India has forged multiple ties with the United States and Europe, but it also has continued high-level political exchanges with China and is seeking to increase Sino-Indian trade. (China has become India's biggest trade partner.) Moreover, during Chinese president Xi Jinping's September 2014 visit to India—the first by a Chinese president in eight years—the two leaders signed a deal providing for $20 billion in Chinese investment in India's infrastructure, especially railways, over five years. This was despite the controversy created by Chinese soldiers' encroachment across the (still undemarcated) border, which coincided with Xi's trip.

This multifaceted strategy is New Delhi's likely course for the future. It gives India greater flexibility than would an alliance

Image: Flickr/Narendra Modi. CC BY-SA 2.0.

with the United States and provides two attendant advantages. First, India can expand ties with the United States on all fronts, calculating that Beijing will be forced to take account of America's likely reaction should China contemplate coercive action against it. Second, India can improve its bargaining position against China, which will want to forestall the tightening of military bonds between India and the United States. A definitive alliance with America would deprive New Delhi of that strategic flexibility. As his predecessors did, Modi will continue to see China as India's main security threat, but it's simplistic to see him as a mere Sinophobe. He has expressed admiration on several occasions for China's economic achievements and, while governing Gujarat, visited China and succeeded in attracting more Chinese investment than the chief minister of any other Indian state.

If China presents problems for India, then Pakistan remains an even more acute one. The nature of India's Pakistan predicament has changed in three fundamental and unprecedented ways. First, India's conventional military advantage will be harder to use to good effect, because threats of war will be less credible now that the specter of nuclear escalation looms. This risk will be present in any war in which Pakistan suffers heavy losses, and will even constrain what India can do in response to another major terrorist attack that it traces to Pakistan. Stated differently, the greater the conventional military advantage India acquires over Pakistan, the more dangerous it may be to employ it. That's something that Modi will have to reckon with, even as his tough-guy image will put him under pressure to respond forcefully to Pakistan-based terrorism.

Second, Pakistan's *weakness* is also starting to worry Indian strategists. Should Pakistan, which is beset by internal violence, fragment, India will face serious problems. Refugees will flow east. Jihadist groups will be able to operate with greater leeway in Kashmir, and even the rest of India, in the absence of a robust Pakistani state that can be pressured to hold them in harness. It's not clear how such threats can be managed by utilizing India's economic and military superiority.

Third, nuclear weapons, by raising the risks involved in waging conventional war, provide Pakistan more opportunities to support extremist Islamist groups whose targets now extend beyond Indian-controlled Kashmir and include, as the 2001 attack on the Indian parliament and the 2008 attack on Mumbai showed, the Indian heartland. India has about as many Muslims as Pakistan does, and the repression of Indian Muslims, or a popular backlash against them following terrorist attacks inside India, could generate domestic violence and upheaval that alienate an important and substantial segment of Indian society while empowering India's radical nationalist forces. The result would be a vicious circle of violence that begets more violence and proves disastrous for India's future.

It's unclear whether Modi will be able to overcome these problems. Despite his smashing electoral victory, his success in office is anything but assured. The BJP, while generally seen as more favorable to private enterprise than the Congress Party (notwithstanding that it was on the latter's watch that many of India's market-friendly economic reforms were adopted), still contains constituencies committed to economic nationalism. They view globalization as a recipe for deindustrialization, foreign domination over key economic sectors, and impoverishment for small businesses and farmers. Their views, though sidelined in the 2014 campaign, could regain influence if Modi's economic policies falter or cause pain without producing visible gains for ordinary Indians. India the superpower? Don't bet on it. □

The Case for Cornwallis

By John Bew

In one memorable scene in the Hollywood spectacular *The Patriot*, Lord Cornwallis, the corpulent, pompous, preening servant of King George III, unleashes a volley of abuse at his subordinates. He denounces them for their inability to deal with the "farmers with pitchforks" (Mel Gibson among their ranks) who comprise the American revolutionary forces. Cornwallis himself appears more concerned about the whereabouts of his dogs (gifts from the king that had been kidnapped by the insurgents) and his tailored coat and tails (held up at sea because of the need to send rearmaments instead) than about his own men. In sum, the old boy is the epitome of ancien régime loucheness and absurdity—part villain, part bumbling buffoon.

The movie's depiction taps into a familiar vein of hostility toward him—every American schoolchild knows that 1st Marquess Cornwallis was sent by George III to snuff out the American Revolution, and that his surrender to George Washington at Yorktown on October 19, 1781, effectively signaled the end of the Revolutionary War. As Cornwallis sailed back to the Old World, the ideas of the Declaration of Independence were realized, signaling America's birth into nationhood and its successful struggle for freedom, which would make it a beacon for many others in the world. There the tale ends.

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Or does it? To dismiss Cornwallis so thoroughly comes at the expense of the next quarter century of his life—a panoramic and fascinating career that took him to India, Ireland, France and India again, in a series of bloody sagas, all of which were of world-historical significance. It also saw him play an integral part in setting the foundations for British global power for the next century and allowing Britain to recover from a defeat in America that many feared would be catastrophic—and perhaps even the beginning of the end.

It is not that Cornwallis has been misunderstood, or even so much that he has been caricatured. It is that his life has been strangely neglected. In this regard, the scant attention he has received from British historians is a more important factor than any vilification he has suffered in the United States. Despite being one of Britain's most important generals—and certainly one of the most politically able—he has no great, iconic victories to his name. Later contemporaries such as the Duke of Wellington or Admiral Nelson have tended to steal his thunder in terms of martial glory. And despite his accomplishments as a statesman, too, he is often relegated to the

role of supporting cast in the era of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. The British public prefers the swashbuckling heroes of the period. British academics, meanwhile, are much more taken with the leaders, intellectuals or ideologues—the William Pitts, Edmund Burkes and Thomas Paines. Cornwallis seems to fall between two stools in the historical imagination.

Those interested in the various phases of Cornwallis's life are still best served by the three-volume edition of his correspondence that was edited by Charles Ross and published in 1859. No British historian has ever attempted a comprehensive biography. The likelihood of this changing has actually decreased because of the way the historical profession has been increasingly divided into fields of domestic, foreign and imperial history—categories which would have made no sense to those who lived in Cornwallis's era but which the aspiring historian of today is expected to operate within. The last sustained discussion of Cornwallis's life was provided by an American couple, Franklin and Mary Wickwire, whose 1970 volume *Cornwallis: The American Adventure* was followed ten years later by *Cornwallis: The Imperial Years*, a sturdy examination of his career after the Revolutionary War. More recently, Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy gave him a sympathetic treatment in his award-winning 2013 book, *The Men Who Lost America: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of the Empire*. O'Shaughnessy suggests that he enjoyed the most successful postwar career of any of the British generals who served in America.

Yet these efforts go against the tide. As William Anthony Hay noted in his *National Interest* review of O'Shaughnessy's book, "British historians neglected a defeat that complicated the story of their country's rise to imperial greatness, while Americans operated within the prejudices and assumptions of nineteenth-century patriotic writers."

So the man who lost America (despite doing a better job than all of his predecessors), secured India for the British Empire, defeated the Irish Rebellion and briefly made peace with Napoleon is in danger of slipping off the historical radar as a result of Yorktown.

Cornwallis played an integral part in setting the foundations for British global power and allowing Britain to recover from a defeat in America that many feared would be catastrophic.

This is not to say that Cornwallis was some sort of undiscovered military or strategic genius, whom historians have denigrated unfairly. But the longevity of his career, the breadth of his experience and the lessons he learned along the way do provide some useful historical instruction—not least his ability to learn from the mistakes made in one politico-military theater and apply them in a different one. One need not conjure up a staunchly revisionist version of Cornwallis as a hero, then, in order to have reason to reconsider his career. The case for Cornwallis is simple: he presided over the stabilization of the British Empire after its greatest defeat, combined minute military maneuvers with a broader political objective, and wove together tactics and strategy. That he saw British power in operation firsthand across its various global fronts—and was able to reflect on the weaknesses and strengths of the British global system—is perhaps less relevant to modern British strategists, who are dealing with a rather more trim model these days. But it may just spark some interest among theorists of American power in the twenty-first century, still struggling with the implications of American empire, and hoping to create a sustainable version of global power.

Charles Cornwallis was born the sixth child and first son of Earl Cornwallis in London on New Year's Eve in 1738. He studied at Eton College, then Cambridge University, before seeking a military education on the Continent. He began by receiving tutelage under a senior Prussian officer and then moved to the respected military academy at Turin. He first saw action fighting for the defense of Hanover, the German protectorate of the British royal family, and fought as a volunteer in the army of Frederick the Great of Prussia during the Seven Years' War. In 1759, he received a commission as captain and rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel before the age of twenty-two.

The Cornwallis family had made its name and fortune through unstinting loyalty to the Crown over previous centuries. Yet it was not uncritical of the monarchy and leaned toward the Whig side in politics. Cornwallis took up his father's earldom in 1762, meaning that he sat in the House of Lords and maintained a close interest in matters of state as his military career developed. He sided with a group called the "Rockinghamite Whigs," a powerful opposition faction led by the 2nd Marquess of Rockingham. It was as a spokesman for this group that Edmund Burke made his name. On two of the defining issues of the mid-eighteenth century, the Rockinghamites were known for their opposition to George III and his government. The first was the trial of John Wilkes, a radical MP and journalist prosecuted for sedition by the government, something the Rockinghamites regarded as a tyrannical abuse of royal authority. The second was their condemnation of the Stamp Act of 1765, a direct tax imposed by England on newspapers in the American colonies, which was fiercely opposed by the colonists.

For Cornwallis, the lessons of the American experience were as much political as they were military. The war had been caused by bad policy, and bad policy had made it difficult to fight effectively.

Cornwallis's opposition to the government's American policy was well known to George III before the war broke out in 1775. Nonetheless, as a career soldier, he offered his services to the king and was entrusted with a senior command, arriving in Cape Fear River in North Carolina in May 1776. Cornwallis was initially reluctant to condemn his superiors, Sir Henry Clinton and Sir William Howe, though their mistakes had given the revolutionaries the early impetus. The Wickwires go so far as to claim that, had Cornwallis arrived in America sooner, Washington may have been defeated—perhaps even "crushed." This is a moot point, however. Cornwallis made colossal errors of his own, such as his failure to capitalize on his victory at the Second Battle of Trenton, where Washington escaped under the cover of darkness. Despite some of Cornwallis's notable successes, such as his victory at the Battle of Brandywine in September 1777, Washington generally got the better of him in their encounters—culminating at Yorktown in October 1781.

For Cornwallis, the lessons of the American experience were as much political as they were military. The war had been caused by bad policy, and bad policy had made it extremely difficult to fight effectively. While the British won most of the conventional military engagements, they were operating in a hostile environment, partly of their making. Their local allies—the loyalist militias—were not only hapless on the field; their reckless behavior helped to create a growing number of irreconcilables to swell the revolutionaries' ranks.

In trying to restore authority by cannon and sword, then, Cornwallis and his men were trying to fight their way back into a political game that had already been lost. The first lesson—as a growing number of British parliamentarians were prepared to say—was that an aggressive and overbearing version of governance on the periphery of the empire was unsustainable, and ultimately contrary to British interests. This was doubly important because of the way in which imperial overstretch was punished by other European states engaged in a broader geopolitical game with Britain. France's involvement in America was a case in point.

Cornwallis did not, however, suddenly become a critic of imperialism or empire per se. Indeed, he was among the most effective of all British empire builders. Defeat in 1781, while hard to take, was not met with despair or capitulation. Notably, Cornwallis did his best to steer clear of the recriminations in which other senior generals engaged. More important was the fact that he began to develop a more refined and thoughtful vision of what forms of British power worked efficaciously overseas in other portions of the empire—how to combine co-option and diplomacy with the tools of compulsion, and how to avoid the stretching of military capabilities on the fringes of the empire in a way that played into the hands of more serious rivals closer to home.

In this, he recognized that the spheres of domestic and foreign policy were indivisible. It was no coincidence, to

men like Cornwallis, that Britain's defeat in America had followed a particularly shabby period in domestic politics. In November 1781, for example, Marquess Rockingham linked the defeat at Yorktown to the personalistic system of government under George III—"a proscriptive system, a system of favoritism and secret government." A few years before, in 1776, Edward Gibbon had warned in the first volume of his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* that it was not only external enemies but also the creep of decadence, and the diminution of virtue, that had led to Rome's fall to the barbarians. In Parliament, Edmund Burke hounded the former governor-general of India, Warren Hastings, eventually instituting impeachment proceedings against him. This, in turn, provoked a wider debate about the pace at which the empire was expanding and the moral and military price that such expansionism entailed.

The gangrene in the domestic political system and the undermining of British authority overseas were two sides of the same coin. Inevitably, in the wake of the American debacle, attentions turned again to India, the jewel of the empire, where the East India Company—through which Britain governed the country—was mired in allegations of cronyism and corruption.

In 1786, after turning down two previous offers, Cornwallis was appointed as the new colonial governor-general in Bengal. For the prime minister, William Pitt, Cornwallis was a sort of eighteenth-century "special envoy" whose job was to clean up Indian governance, stabilize the country and protect British interests. It was

his personal reputation for probity that had made him so attractive to the government, as the "salvation of our dying interests in Asia." These were the words of Pitt's close ally Henry Dundas, who also described Cornwallis's purist credentials in memorable terms: "Here was no avarice to be gratified. Here was no beggardly mushroom kindred to be provided for—no crew of hungry followers gaping to be gorged."

Lest there be any ambiguity, it should be made clear that Cornwallis's record in India is no model for American foreign policy. Ultimately, this was still raw imperialism, predicated—when one scratches below the surface—on a sense of racial superiority. While Cornwallis gave a nod to the idea that Indian self-government was the ultimate end—and that "rational liberty makes peoples virtuous"—he believed that the local population was far from reaching that stage. His case was simpler: he believed the Hindu population would rather be governed by the British than the Mughal emperors. A similar logic had operated in America, in fact. As Maya Jasanoff observes in *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World*, the British had offered black slaves freedom in return for joining the loyalist forces. At Yorktown, Cornwallis's ranks had been swelled by some of Thomas Jefferson's own slaves. After defeat, he had sought to guarantee an amnesty for natives of Virginia fighting on his side, only for Washington to refuse.

Cornwallis's approach in India also had a hard military edge. In this respect, he had learned another lesson from America that he exported to India—the need for unity of purpose between the military and political strands. His one precondition for taking up the post of governor-general was that he would also be appointed commander in chief. In fact, Pitt passed an Act of Parliament to change the rules specifically for this purpose. Furthermore, when it came to dealing with irreconcilables, Cornwallis quickly decided that his preferred method—of co-option of local power brokers—had its limits. This led him into a series of military actions against the Tipu Sultan, ruler of the Kingdom of Mysore, in the Third Mysore War (1789–1792), in which he pioneered the use of elephants to move artillery.

Britain's sensitivity about preventing disorder in India had been heightened by the effects of the recent French Revolution, which raised the prospect of a potential war with France. Nonetheless, Cornwallis's main interest was the stabilization, rather than further expansion, of the empire. The practical consequences of overstretch—not least the difficulties of supplying troops scattered in faraway regions—had been impressed upon him by the American experience. As one of the directors of the East India Company had put it, "The wider British dominion in India spread, the more vulnerable it becomes." When he did eventually defeat the sultan, then, Cornwallis avoided imposing overly punitive terms—and eschewed interest in setting up "some miserable pageant of our own, to be supported by the Company's troops and treasures, and to be plundered by its servants."

In *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*, Piers Brendon elegantly describes the two sides of Cornwallis's "fatherly governance" in India. On the one hand, he regulated the legal system and brought a kind of "Roman order," earning him the moniker "the Justinian of India." He also governed in a consciously more humane fashion, modernizing the civil administration and suppressing child slavery. On the other hand, he used the Indian princes in a "ruthless game of *realpolitik*" and acknowledged the murkier aspects of colonial governance. As he wrote in one letter back to London, in the

weary tones that characterize much of his correspondence, "There is scarcely a man to be found who has held any office of consequence, that has not been driven to make money in a manner which he ought to be ashamed of."

Having lost his wife in 1779—and much of his enthusiasm for life—Cornwallis approached his duties with a growing distaste for politicking and jobbery. That said, his soldierly distaste for dirty tactics did not blind him to their necessity. By the time he left India in 1794, he was ready for a quiet life with a government pension. To his chagrin, his reputation as a fixer of complex politico-military problems where British interests were under threat was now higher than anyone else's.

It was to Ireland, on the brink of rebellion and civil war, and expecting a French invasion at any moment, that he was sent next. Once again, Prime Minister Pitt had been forced to ask him to accept the offer of the Lord Lieutenancy (essentially the same position as that of governor-general) three times. Once again, he sought assurances that he would have full military and political command. It was only in May 1798, when the long-expected Irish Rebellion eventually broke out, that Cornwallis finally relented, grumbling and complaining every step of the way.

The day Cornwallis was sworn in, June 21, 1798, insurgents in Wexford were defeated decisively in the famous Battle of Vinegar Hill, near Enniscorthy, marking a turning point in the rebellion. Government forces now had the upper hand, but, as Cornwallis observed from Dublin Castle, the country was "streaming with blood." As in America, he lay much of the blame on loyalist forces who were "more numerous and powerful, and a thousand times more ferocious." He was shocked above all by the brutality of the counterinsurgency, complaining that "the only engines of government were the bayonet, the torch and the cat o' nine tails."

He wrote despairingly:

> The conversation of the principal persons of the country all tends to encourage the system of blood, and the conversation even at my table, where you will suppose I do all I can to prevent it, always turns on hanging, shooting, burning, &c, &c, and if a [Catholic] priest has been put to death, the greatest joy is expressed by the whole company. So much for Ireland and my wretched situation.

The first and most important thing Cornwallis did in Ireland was to rein in the loyalists and bring an end to the "numberless murders which are hourly committed by our people without any process or examination whatever." He still executed many of the ringleaders of the rebellion who had conspired directly with the French, but he was also known for his leniency when dealing with the rank and file—meaning that he faced censure from loyalists for being too weak.

The second aspect of his approach, in cooperation with William Pitt and the young chief secretary of Ireland, Lord Castlereagh, was to recognize that the whole system of Irish governance was faulty. These three men shared the view that the greatest enemy to stability in Ireland came from the privileged members of the colonial elite and their unwillingness to reform Irish governance. "The patriotic Irish gentlemen who are so enraged at the insolent interference of England in the management of their affairs," Cornwallis remarked disdainfully, "if they ever dare to go to their country-houses, barricade their ground-floor, and beg for a garrison of English Militia or Scottish Fencibles."

Thus, Cornwallis and his allies attempted nothing less than their own revolution

Modern theorists of security studies might categorize Cornwallis's approach as one of "smart power." The novelist Sir Walter Scott had perhaps a better name for it: "Common sense."

in Irish affairs—the aims of which were never fully realized but which were to change the course of Irish history forever. The first step was to abolish the old Irish colonial parliament through an Act of Union between Britain and Ireland, which came into being in 1801. The second part of the policy was more ambitious. It was to consummate the Act of Union with an Act of Catholic Emancipation by which Irish Catholics—the vast majority of the population—would be allowed to participate fully in the newly constituted political system for the first time.

Notably, it was the hawks in the British cabinet—concerned above all with the need to prosecute the war with France—who were foremost in making the case for political equality in Ireland. Napoleon's forces had already made three attempts to land in Ireland between 1796 and 1798, hoping to take advantage of Irish discontent. Put plainly, it was a grave threat to British national security that a large section of the Irish population felt alienated from the state. "Holding Ireland on our present tenure," said Cornwallis, "how are we to make head against all Europe leagued for our destruction?"

Modern theorists of security studies might categorize such an approach as one of "smart power." The novelist Sir Walter Scott, later reflecting on the career of Cornwallis and those who took their lead from him, had perhaps a better name for it: "Common sense."

How ironic, then, that it was King George III who exploded in anger when he learned that Pitt was planning an Act of Catholic Emancipation to win Irish loyalty! The king believed such an act contradicted his Coronation Oath to uphold the Protestant constitution of Britain—and, worse still, a reward for the disloyalty shown by the Irish. And so, in the midst of the war with Napoleon, George III vetoed the measure and forced Pitt, Cornwallis and Castlereagh to resign. "It is too mortifying a reflexion—when all the difficulties were surmounted . . . that the fatal blow should be struck from that quarter most interested to avert it, and that Ireland is again to become a millstone about the neck of Britain, and to be plunged into all its former horrors and miseries," remarked a deflated Cornwallis, defeated once again by the dunderheaded policies of George III.

Despite his hope that he would then be allowed to retire, Cornwallis's career was not quite over yet. In 1802, he was sent as a plenipotentiary to France to negotiate with Napoleon and signed the short-lived Treaty of Amiens—the subsequent collapse of which he could not have prevented. In 1805, when Pitt returned to office, he appointed Cornwallis as governor-general of India once again, with a mandate to curb the expansionist campaigns of his predecessor in the post—Lord Wellesley, the older brother of the future Duke of Wellington. But his tenure was short-lived. Just three months after arriving, he caught a fever and died at Ghazipur on the Ganges, where he was buried. His epitaph did not mention his time in America.

In Cornwallis we do not have a Marlborough or a Wellington. His career

was bookended by the defeat at Yorktown and the failed Treaty of Amiens. He did not die gloriously in battle, but instead faded out of view at the end of a long and complicated career in which he had grown ever more disillusioned. His bold vision of religious equality in Ireland may, some argue, have "solved" the Irish question, but it remained just that—a vision.

Nonetheless, while Cornwallis could boast few spectacular "victories," he did have achievements to his name that stood the test of time. For one thing, he stabilized Britain's international standing after Yorktown. He used the American lesson to identify—and begin to eradicate—the self-defeating features of the British global system. Cornwallis was the troubleshooter who implemented a more streamlined and more sustainable version of British power, steering it away from energy-sapping conflicts on its periphery, so that it could emerge triumphant and dominant on the global stage after 1815. Rather than simple retrenchment, this was an achievement of rebalancing, which aimed at "grand bargains" but also recognized the need to use power selectively but decisively.

Cornwallis's willingness to learn from his own mistakes and those of others was another feature of his creed. He developed a coherent sense of what might be called "grand strategy," but this never constituted a tactical blueprint—what had worked in India would not necessarily work in Ireland. It is hard to imagine a modern "special envoy" combining military and political command in the way that Cornwallis did, but his insistence that these strands needed to operate in harmony is a lesson we repeatedly seem to have to relearn. There were also more subtle strains to his thinking—such as his ability to combine diplomacy with force, and his capacity to distinguish between constructive co-option and counterproductive corruption. One might also remark on his ability to distinguish between vested interests and the national interest, and on his recognition of the need for internal political harmony as a precondition of external security. Beyond that, the modern parallels should probably stop; few these days would have the stomach for the techniques of late eighteenth-century counterinsurgency, as applied in Ireland in 1798 (even those willing to countenance waterboarding in the twenty-first century).

The lessons, if there are any, are bigger than one man. Nonetheless, the longevity of Cornwallis's career, and the existence of both successes and failures in it, says something about the business of great-power politics—a game in which patience is a virtue, "solutions" are often elusive and victories sometimes identifiable only in hindsight, and in which one is sometimes forced to court the people one would prefer to repudiate, both at home and abroad.

In closing, perhaps one final word on George III is merited, to whom Cornwallis was unfailingly loyal, but by whom he was periodically exasperated. Many years later, in 1945, Britain's recently appointed Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, the Labour Party's most ferocious cold warrior, entertained a delegation of American trade unionists at the Foreign Office. As the meeting began, one of the Americans asked: "What do you have a picture of that son-of-a-bitch there for?" Surprised by the question, Bevin turned around to see a portrait of George III, only to snap back: "If it hadn't been for that son-of-a-bitch, you would still be a part of the British Empire." If he could have been present, Cornwallis might well have been inclined to agree. □

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Reviews & Essays

Georgetown Gentry

By James Rosen

Gregg Herken, *The Georgetown Set: Friends and Rivals in Cold War Washington* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014), 512 pp., $30.00.

"I really hate this city," wrote Joseph Alsop, the legendary newspaper columnist and Washington bon vivant, in the spring of 1974. And with good reason: the capital in which Alsop and his brother and coauthor, Stewart, had for twenty-five years exercised outsized influence—as hosts to, and confidants of, the nation's elite politicians, generals, spymasters and fellow journalists—had quietly vanished.

In its heyday, the Alsops' world was a cloistered place, not untouched by rancor or partisanship but still governed by old-school WASP manners and aspirations for postwar America that were broadly shared across the ideological spectrum. It functioned as an unusual hybrid of court society and literary commune, its denizens given to elegant Sunday-night dinners, decades-long debates about international affairs and democratic values, and petty personal feuds resolved by the penning of heartfelt letters of apology, mailed to recipients who might have lived all of six blocks away.

This is the bygone kingdom, as fabled and dead as Atlantis, to which Gregg Herken returns us in *The Georgetown Set*. A gifted historian, Herken is the author of several well-regarded books about the politics and science of the atomic age. His progression to this terrain seems natural, if not inevitable. Surely no one is better suited to the material; the source notes include entries like "Author interview with Paul Nitze, July 12, 1984."

In assaying the chummy crowd of accomplished and vainglorious Washingtonians who consorted with the Alsops inside their Dumbarton Street maisonettes, and who in turn fed the brothers' hawkish columns, Herken conjures with skill and style those fretful years when America's nuclear standoff with the Soviet Union lurched from containment to confrontation, and the heightened stakes overseas plunged the nation's political classes into paranoia at home. Authoritative and reverential, *The Georgetown Set* joins the ranks of other accomplished "group portraits" of the Cold War, a genre distinguished by Evan Thomas and Walter Isaacson's *The Wise Men*, Burton Hersh's *The Old Boys* and Thomas's *The Very Best Men*.

The fact that so much of this ground has been covered before—in histories of the Cold War and the CIA, and in biographies like Robert W. Merry's definitive study of the Alsops, *Taking on the World*, and

James Rosen is chief Washington correspondent for Fox News and author of *The Strong Man: John Mitchell and the Secrets of Watergate* (Doubleday, 2008).

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John Lewis Gaddis's Pulitzer Prize–winning *George F. Kennan: An American Life*—is not the principal flaw of this volume. Rather, it is in the "group" construct itself, which, at least in these pages, leads to a scattered approach: a narrative only loosely held together by lines of friendship so tangled and overlapping that they confuse rather than clarify. Indeed, *The Georgetown Set* is probably the best-researched and best-written Bad Read I've ever read. The gang's all here, to an extent that some paragraphs induce vertigo:

> Tom Braden, former Jedburgh and Stewart Alsop's close friend and co-author, had joined the agency in 1950 as a patriotic response to the Korean war. Braden was made head of the CIA's International Organizations Division, which secretly funneled money to trade unions and freedom committees overseas. Another Jed veteran, and Frank Wisner's former law partner, was Tracy Barnes. Wisner put Barnes in charge of psychological and paramilitary warfare. Shortly after Korea, the ex-marine Phil Geyelin also joined Wisner in OPC's sweltering "tempos" on the Mall. (Geyelin lasted less than a year, however, before embarking on a journalism career that took him to *The Wall Street Journal* and eventually *The Washington Post*.) Another recruit, Desmond FitzGerald, was the divorced husband of Susan Mary's longtime friend and correspondent, Marietta Peabody. FitzGerald's Harvard roommate, Paul Nitze, had introduced Desie to Frank Wisner. An army veteran with wartime experience in China and Burma, FitzGerald was put in charge of the Far East division of the Plans Directorate.

Compounding this problem is the author's abdication of a signal responsibility of the portraitist: to provide compelling physical descriptions of the characters. Seldom do we get a good idea of what anyone looks like, and how an individual's appearance would have affected his comportment and treatment by peers. In the chapter, for example, that introduces us to Frank Wisner, the Office of Strategic Services veteran and Wall Street lawyer who helped build the modern CIA, fifteen pages pass before Herken makes hurried reference, seemingly as an afterthought, to "the growing-portly, rapidly balding Wisner." And this is only for the purpose of contrasting Wisner's appearance with that of Richard Helms, the career CIA man who would lead the agency from 1966 to 1973, said here to have been "tall, handsome [and] debonair"—a description that still gives the unknowing reader scant ability to conjure Helms's face.

This construct mandates that we repeatedly check in with multiple players whose paths never really converge in a climactic way—as they might, say, in a spy novel. The result is that the narrative often feels digressive. The introduction of George Kennan leads to a miniature history of the Policy Planning Staff, the State Department's in-house think tank; the recurring focus on Wisner produces long passages on the birth of the Office of Policy Coordination, the CIA's earliest clandestine branch, and a long-forgotten operation in Albania. Georgetown itself, the supposed epicenter of the characters' thoughts and actions, disappears for tens of pages at a time.

Nor do we ever really penetrate the sanctum sanctorum of the Georgetown set: the cocktail parties and dinners said to have been so grand, so lively and so influential. The book begins with a quote from Henry Kissinger, the one figure of the Nixon administration who enjoyed entrée to capital society, and perhaps the last individual over whom the Georgetown set, in its waning days, saw fit to fawn. "The hand that mixes the Georgetown martini," said Kissinger, "is time and again the hand that guides the destiny of the Western world." But by failing to escort the reader into such gaieties, *The Georgetown Set* is never really present at the creation—of either the martini or the destiny.

Combing the extant literature—the histories, memoirs, articles, letters, diaries and his own interviews—Herken has diligently unearthed, and woven into the narrative, every known reference to this or that gathering, held at this or that home on Q or 34th Street, where Subject A or B was discussed, and Set Member C or D famously clashed with Arthur Schlesinger or Kay Graham over policy X or Y. Never, however, do we experience one of these Georgetown salons with intimacy. No specific gathering, epic or routine, is examined in detail from start to finish, nor is there any sustained attention to physical layout, decor, cuisine, table settings, the progression of the courses, clothing or manners of speech.

These are the kinds of status details that Tom Wolfe, for example, delivered so brilliantly in *Radical Chic & Mau-Mauing the*

Georgetown functioned as an unusual hybrid of court society and literary commune.

Flak Catchers, when he took the reader inside Leonard Bernstein's penthouse duplex for an infamous, and thoroughly absurd, fundraiser for the Black Panthers. Wolfe, of course, having crashed the Bernstein party, was practicing eyewitness journalism, whereas Herken is saddled, decades after the fact, with the rather more difficult task of historical re-creation. But the wealth of private and public literature produced by the members of the Georgetown set, and Herken's probing interviews with their children, should have made it feasible—had it been the author's objective—to give the reader a sensory perception of one such party, or their feel in general: of what it was like, back in the day, to enter one of these splendid Georgetown homes; to have your coat taken by a butler; to receive your drink; to repair to an anteroom for banter before dinner; to converge on the dining-room table; and so on.

And because Herken's raw material is so fragmented—a reference to parties or discussions here or there, but no sustained set pieces—the author's segues from one subject to the next can feel forced. Consider this passage, in which Herken seeks to transition from McCarthyism, one of the topics broached during a gathering at the O Street home of Jane and Bob Joyce in July 1950, to Kennan's brief exile to Princeton University:

> Preparing to leave for Princeton's institute, Kennan was in the process of saying good-bye to his Georgetown friends. Yet the dinner conversation that night was not about Kennan's impending departure but about McCarthy's rising star. Stewart let Kennan know that he intended to use parts of the latter's Milwaukee speech in his forthcoming essay—confessing surprise "that the *Post* had consented to take an article so strongly anti-McCarthy."
>
> The conversation then turned to another topic: Kennan's legacy as he left Washington.
>
> Kennan had recently met with Frank Wisner to discuss a report the two men had just received from Joyce. It concerned Operation Rusty, the CIA's project to encourage Red Army defections, which had used Gustav Hilger as a consultant. Joyce based his report on the interrogation of ten Russian soldiers who had recently escaped to the West after listening to a VOA broadcast promising that defectors would not be returned to Soviet authorities. Kennan wrote in his diary of how he had been cheered by the news.

This passage encapsulates so much of what ails *The Georgetown Set*. Five lines after we are told that "the dinner conversation that night was not about Kennan's impending departure," we hear that the attendees discussed "Kennan's legacy as he left Washington." *So was Kennan's departure from the capital a topic during dinner that night—or not?* Moreover, the fulcrum for the transition ("the conversation then turned to another topic") hardly inspires confidence, precisely because, more than one hundred pages into the book, the reader hasn't once yet been treated to a detailed account of a given evening. *Did the conversation immediately turn to Kennan's legacy—or was it two or three topics later, or two hours later?* Indeed, while we are

The old debates about containment and confrontation, moral and military supremacy, still apply today, to some extent, with an assertive Russia and an ascendant China and Iran.

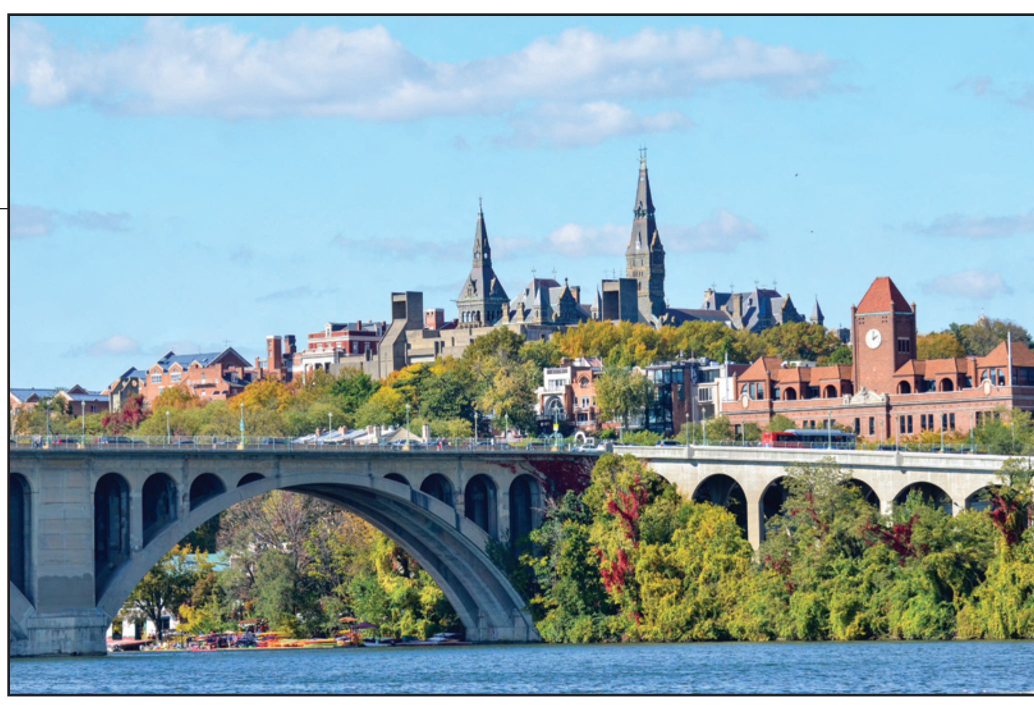
told that "the conversation" then turned to Kennan's legacy, that alleged conversation is never referenced again; instead, we are again immersed in the stew of faceless names—Kennan, Wisner, Joyce, Gustav Hilger, the Red Army—and the next source cited is Kennan's diary. *Was that where the conversation occurred? I thought it was at the Joyces'.*

Herken hits rock bottom with the occasional turn of phrase so poorly conceived as to be cringe-worthy. The worst example: his treatment of Senator Joseph McCarthy's attempts to impugn Joe Alsop on the basis of his homosexuality, an effort that the author tells us engendered, on the part of the editor of the *Saturday Evening Post* at the time, only "a flaccid defense."

Its compositional flaws notwithstanding, does *The Georgetown Set* contain insights on foreign policy of value to analysts and policy makers today? From where I sit, such latter-day utility should not be considered a prerequisite for a work of history focused on foreign affairs to be regarded as commendable, or even exceptional. In some cases, it should suffice simply that the historian has accurately and entertainingly related what happened, and thereby captured the essence of the time and place and central characters under scrutiny. In the case of Herken's latest volume, it so happens that its relevance to today's international stage is manifest but limited.

In the five-decade duel between Kennan and his more conservative successor at the Policy Planning Staff, Paul Nitze, the author sees "perhaps the longest continuous foreign policy debate in American history" over "whether it was Soviet capabilities or intentions that mattered more, and whether America's moral example or martial power was what kept the Russian bear at bay." Recently, President Obama has cautioned analysts not to view the Ukraine crisis as "some Cold War chessboard in which we're in competition with Russia." Yet, after Russia's annexation of Crimea, National Security Adviser Susan Rice told reporters that her goal was to avert a situation in which the crisis could "escalate and devolve into hot conflict"—a remark that signaled that the Obama administration recognized, its public protestations aside, that it was indeed engaged in a "cold" conflict. Given as much, the old debates about containment and confrontation, moral and military supremacy, still apply today, to some extent, with an assertive Russia and—far more than in the Alsops' time—an ascendant China and Iran.

For good or ill, however, the eyes of the world, as of this writing, are focused more narrowly on the jihadist army calling itself the Islamic State, whose malign presence in the Middle East the leader of the free world has just formed an international coalition to combat. With the grisly videos of beheadings it uploads to YouTube and its seizure of large swathes of territory in Syria and Iraq, including major oil-production complexes and central banks, the Islamic State has emerged as the richest and, by many metrics, the most successful terrorist group of modern times. Accordingly, it poses an unmistakable threat to Western interests.



The nature of that threat is, however, as in the Cold War era, the subject of intense debate. This uncertainty may have contributed to President Obama's halting and often-contradictory early statements about the Islamic State. In the course of a single news conference in Estonia in September, the commander in chief spoke alternately of aiming to "degrade and destroy" the Islamic State, of wanting to "roll them back" and of his aspiration to "shrink [the group's] sphere of influence . . . to the point where it is a manageable problem." To many, that performance served only to solidify the impression the president had conveyed the week before, during an appearance in the White House press briefing room, when he acknowledged: "We don't have a strategy yet."

Strategies mattered in the Cold War and they matter today. Yet it is far from clear that the debates of the Cold War era can neatly apply to the multinational effort to address malevolent nonstate actors using asymmetric means to erase borders between Middle Eastern and North African nations. What's more, the confluence of factors most directly contributing to twenty-first-century jihadism—globalization, technology and a cohort of one hundred million people in the Middle East under the age of thirty, hungry for work but not able to find it easily—is unprecedented. These facts are what Secretary of State John Kerry alluded to when he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at his confirmation hearing in January 2013:

> Today's world is more complicated than anything we have experienced—from the emergence of China, to the Arab Awakening; inextricably linked economic, health, environmental and demographic issues, proliferation, poverty, pandemic disease, refugees, conflict ongoing in Afghanistan, entire populations and faiths struggling with the demands of modernity, and the accelerating pace of technological innovation invading all of that, shifting power

from nation-states to individuals.

Americans surely grasp this chaotic and scary state of affairs—and correspondingly regard with some incredulity attempts by President Obama to persuade them to the contrary. At a fundraiser for the Democratic National Committee in August, Obama argued that it is the dissolution of "an old order" in the Middle East "that had been in place for 50 years, 60 years, 100 years," and the uncertain formation of its successor, that make the world seem "pretty frightening." Then the president harkened back to a more familiar time and order—the era of the Georgetown set—by way of providing some measure of reassurance. "The world has always been messy," he said. "I promise you things are much less dangerous now than they were 20 years ago, 25 years ago or 30 years ago." Today's Middle East, he continued, is "not something that is comparable to the challenges we faced during the Cold War. . . . when we had an entire block of Communist countries that were trying to do us in."

Even those persuaded by such arguments might nonetheless yearn for what seems to have been, in retrospect, a simpler time, when the world was at least neatly divided into two easily differentiated camps, and successive presidents could benefit from the considered advice of a small coterie of journalists, pundits and intellectuals. Today's inhabitants of the Oval Office could be forgiven for not knowing where to find such advisers—perhaps because, in today's media environment, they are everywhere, and there is no getting away from them. □

Wright Is Wrong

By Benny Morris

Lawrence Wright, *Thirteen Days in September: Carter, Begin, and Sadat at Camp David* (New York: Knopf, 2014), 368 pp., $27.95.

I remember sitting on the carpet on the typist's living-room floor in a London suburb collating, in stacks, the original and carbon copies of my PhD dissertation. The next day I was to deliver the copies to the Faculty of History in Cambridge. It was evening, November 19, 1977, and in the center of the TV screen, live, appeared Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, his arms raised and a big, perhaps nervous, smile across his face, white teeth glittering in the spotlight, as he emerged from the door of the Boeing that had flown him from Cairo to Tel Aviv. It was a historic moment, of course, but it was also surreal and magical; indeed, it was almost messianic, bearing with it a foretaste of peace and the promise of deliverance after decades of unremitting Arab-Israeli warfare.

Almost thirty years earlier, on May 15, 1948, Arab armies, including Egypt's, had crossed the frontiers and invaded the territory of the State of Israel, established the

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day before. During the following decades, the Arab states maintained a comprehensive boycott of Israel, and in effect waged a low-key guerrilla war along its frontiers. Periodically, Egypt and Israel met in full-scale conventional battle, and no Arab leader openly met or spoke with an Israeli. Indeed, Arab leaders refrained from even uttering the taboo name "*yisraeel*" (Israel).

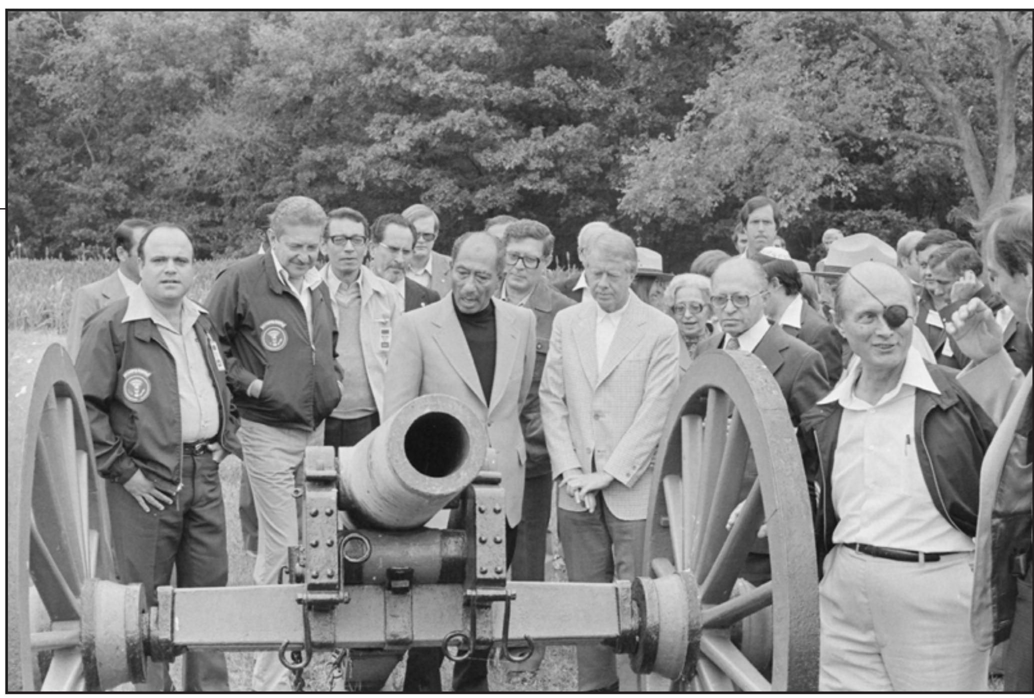
The idea that an Arab head of state—and especially the head of the Arab world's most important state, Egypt, which had traumatized Israel four years earlier when its army had lunged across the Suez Canal into the Israeli-held Sinai—would fly to Israel and shake the hands of Israel's recently installed right-wing prime minister, Menachem Begin, and Ariel Sharon, the general who had led the Israeli countercharge across the canal in October 1973, was simply inconceivable.

Yet, there I was, along with probably 99 percent of Israelis, at home and abroad, staring at the TV screen, mouth agape. But perhaps I shouldn't have been quite so surprised. After all, it was Egypt in February 1949 that was the first among the Arab states to reach an armistice agreement with Israel, ending its participation in the 1948 war; Lebanon, Jordan and Syria rapidly followed. And in the early 1970s, Sadat had secretly and repeatedly informed Israel, under Prime Minister Golda Meir, that he was interested in reaching an interim agreement or a nonbelligerency agreement or even full peace—it was never really clear which—with the Jewish state. But Meir and her senior ministers didn't believe that he was sincere or thought the price he was asking was too high, or both, and nothing came of these overtures, and so we got the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Still, Sadat's appearance on the tarmac at Ben Gurion Airport four years later was little short of astonishing; nothing that followed could be anything but anticlimactic. Now we have Lawrence Wright's description of the first major anticlimax, the Camp David conference of September 1978, when, during thirteen days of often-bitter negotiations between Begin, Sadat and the mediating U.S. president, Jimmy Carter, the three leaders hammered out the framework of an accord that would result in the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, signed by the same threesome on the White House lawn on March 26, 1979.

Let it be quickly said that perhaps no less remarkable than the signing of that treaty is the fact that the peace it delivered has held ever since. In 1979, many—Israelis and others—predicted that it would not last, that the Egyptians were insincere, that Sadat's successors would not honor his signature and that Arab-Israeli warfare elsewhere in the Middle East would inevitably suck in the Egyptians. They were wrong.

The accord remains one of the few stable fixtures in a region that has known nothing but turmoil and wars (and, most recently, revolutions and civil war) during the past three and a half decades. The peace survived Sadat's assassination by Islamist fanatics, Israel's invasion of Lebanon, the first Gulf War and Iraq's missile assault on Israel, the first and second Palestinian intifadas against



Israel, and even the year or two of Muslim Brotherhood rule in Egypt. True, the peace between Egypt and Israel never evolved into a warm one. There is almost no trade between the two countries, Egyptians are not allowed by their government to visit Israel (though many Israelis have toured Egypt), and the Egyptian education system, media and professional associations (doctors, lawyers, artists) have remained implacably hostile toward the Jewish state. But even the Islamist president Mohamed Morsi didn't tear up the treaty, tacitly acknowledging that the peace served Egypt's national interests, bringing in American largesse and freeing the country from the constant expenditure of blood and treasure that the fight for Palestine, or the Palestinians, has entailed since 1948.

Wright, who previously published a marvelous study about Al Qaeda and the lead-up to 9/11, *The Looming Tower*, has now written a workmanlike history of Camp David, devoting a chapter to each of the thirteen days of the talks. Most of the chapters also contain "flashbacks," in which Wright traces a variety of historical themes pertaining, in some way, to what happened at Camp David—including the course of the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948; the 1973 Yom Kippur War; Carter's, Begin's and Sadat's political biographies; and even a retelling of the biblical stories of the exodus from Egypt and Joshua's conquest of Canaan. Taken together, the "flashbacks" provide a sort of thumbnail history of the whole conflict.

His account is based almost exclusively on memoirs and secondary works, with a sprinkling of interviews with participants, including Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, Walter Mondale, Gerald Rafshoon (Carter's press adviser) and Yehiel Kadishai (a Begin aide). Wright has not tapped any archive or collection of private political papers, which, in terms of proper historiography,

necessarily renders the book an interim assessment at best, and he doesn't add much of real substance above and beyond what William Quandt presented in his 1986 work *Camp David*, except in terms of anecdote.

Some of the anecdotes Wright has mobilized from memoirs and interviews are eye-opening and historically significant. He certainly adds to our understanding of the psychological dimensions of what transpired. One of the more moving episodes he describes—the summiteers' excursion to Gettysburg, on the sixth day of the conference—probably had a real impact on Begin. One of Carter's great-grandfathers had fought there, and the president "emotionally" related the story of the Confederate failure and what had followed—the devastation and defeat of the South—to his guests. When Carter got to Lincoln's famous address, Begin, in a Polish accent, suddenly chimed in, and recited by heart the classic 272-word speech. Rosalynn told Wright that perhaps, for Begin, that was "a turning point," when he realized how beneficial peace might be for Israel.

In another luminous anecdote, Wright relates that on the final day, at a moment when it appeared that an argument over an American side letter to the Egyptians on the issue of Jerusalem had annoyed Begin and was about to scuttle the summit, Carter signed a bunch of photos of the three summiteers "with love" and inscribed each with the name of one of Begin's grandchildren. Begin had merely asked Carter to sign and give him some photographs. A depressed Carter walked over to Begin's cabin to hand them over. Wright recounts:

> "Mr. Prime Minister, I brought you the photographs you asked for," Carter said.
>
> "Thank you, Mr. President."
>
> Carter handed Begin the photographs and the prime minister coolly thanked him again. Then he noticed that Carter had signed the top photograph "To Ayelet."
>
> Begin froze. He looked at the next one. "To Osnat." His lip trembled and tears suddenly sprang into his eyes. . . . Carter also broke down. "I wanted to be able to say 'This is when your grandfather and I brought peace to the Middle East,'" he said.

Begin relented and agreed to a slightly modified side letter on Jerusalem. The talks were saved.

But the days leading up to that moment were a difficult, almost Sisyphean haul. Wright suggests, perhaps correctly, that Camp David was launched because of a "misunderstanding by a madman." The madman in question was Hassan Tohamy, the Egyptian deputy prime minister and an old intelligence hand (in the 1950s, he had orchestrated anti-Israeli terrorist attacks). In September 1977, Sadat had sent him on a secret mission—to personally sound out, in Morocco, Israeli foreign minister Moshe Dayan about what Israel was willing to give up for peace with Egypt. According to conventional wisdom, Dayan assured Tohamy—who by most accounts

Perhaps no less remarkable than the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli treaty is the fact that the peace it delivered has held ever since.

was quite crazy (Tohamy, a Sufi mystic, maintained that he could stop his heartbeat at will and that he was in conversation with God and dead saints)—that Israel was willing to give back all of the Sinai Peninsula, which Israel had captured in the 1967 Six-Day War, in exchange for peace. But according to Wright, Tohamy said to Sadat that Dayan had told him that Begin was willing "to withdraw from [all] the occupied territories," not just from Sinai. This was certainly untrue and there is no way that Dayan would have said such a thing; indeed, it is by no means certain that Dayan even explicitly assured Tohamy that Israel was willing to concede the whole of Sinai.

The talks ground on from point to point like a drawn-out Chinese torture, the three delegations feeling trapped and claustrophobic in the remote presidential retreat. Bad personal chemistry also came into play. Carter liked, or even loved, Sadat from the get-go. (We don't really know what Sadat thought of Carter.) But neither Carter nor Sadat took to Begin. After their first meeting, Carter described Begin as seeming "rigid and unimaginative, parsing every syllable; he was entrenched in the past." At one point, Carter even described him as a "psycho." Begin was certainly pedantic, legalistic, distant and haunted by the Holocaust. Sadat was something of the opposite. Warm and visionary, he looked at the big picture, a man of grand gestures. Carter and Sadat shared religious piety, but Carter was also an engineer and naval officer by training; he was interested in the nuts and bolts of things. Given Carter's past support for Palestinian self-determination, Begin suspected Carter of harboring anti-Israeli, if not downright anti-Semitic, sentiments. Begin's past, among hostile Poles and Russians during the Holocaust, anti-Semitic British officers during the mandate, and inimical Arabs through the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, left him with a distrust of all Gentiles.

Begin, at least at first, was unpersuaded about the genuineness of Sadat's quest for peace. After all, Sadat had launched the Yom Kippur War and, in his younger days, during World War II, had collaborated with the Nazis. Like many Muslims, he had an anti-Semitic streak ("I knew that a Jew would do anything if the price was right," Sadat once said). Ezer Weizman, a Begin aide and the only Israeli Sadat bonded with before and during Camp David, described, probably quite fairly, the difference between Sadat and Begin: "Both desired peace. But whereas Sadat wanted to take it by storm . . . Begin preferred to creep forward inch by inch. He took the dream of peace and ground it down into the fine, dry powder of details, legal clauses, and quotes from international law." Weizman and Begin fell out at Camp David and after, and Weizman resigned from the cabinet in 1980 after concluding that Begin was not serious about negotiating with the Palestinians and had no intention to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza.

Sadat came to Jerusalem, and then to Camp David, interested in reaching an Egyptian-Israeli peace. But he initially insisted that it be contingent on arriving

at a solution to the Palestinian problem—meaning Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian-populated territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. This linkage was rejected by Begin, who wanted to retain for Israel the West Bank or, in his terminology, Judea and Samaria. Eventually, Begin, supported by Carter, wore Sadat down. Two agreements were eventually reached, one relating to Egypt and Sinai, and the other to the Palestinian territories, but no real linkage or contingency was established.

Thus, Sadat within months signed a separate, bilateral Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty even though no substantive progress was achieved on the Palestinian track. Begin ultimately got what he wanted, and Sadat, for the (brief) remainder of his life, was reviled by the Palestinians and many other Arabs as having sold the Palestinians down the river. Sadat countered that the Egyptians had expended enough blood and treasure on behalf of the Palestinians and it was high time the Egyptians looked to their own welfare and interests. Sadat probably had, in the back of his mind, not merely the costs of the past and ongoing Egyptian-Israeli struggle but also the possible ultimate devastation of Egypt by Israel's nuclear arsenal. This thought may have predominated in Sadat's calculus when he decided to pursue his dramatic peace initiative.

Carter, for his part, was particularly focused on solving the Palestinian problem. But during Camp David he bowed, at least for the moment, to Begin's resolve not to establish a Palestinian state and made do with what he regarded as a lesser achievement, Israeli-Egyptian peace. There is a surfeit of ironies here, not least of which is that Carter engineered a lasting peace between two powerful enemies and never received the Nobel Peace Prize he most certainly deserved (alongside Begin and Sadat, who both received one) while one of his Democratic successors, Barack Obama, was awarded a Nobel for achieving absolutely nothing, a state of affairs that has not noticeably altered since he received the honor, at least when it comes to the Middle East. (Shouldn't Nobel committees have the right—duty?—to demand the return of prizes when their recipients renege or fail to

The Camp David talks ground on from point to point like a drawn-out Chinese torture, the three delegations feeling trapped and claustrophobic in the remote presidential retreat.

deliver? The late Yasir Arafat also comes to mind in this context.)

Apart from the linkage issue, the main point of contention during the protracted negotiation was Israel's initial insistence on retaining its settlement complex, around and including the town of Yamit, in the northeastern corner of the Sinai Peninsula. Begin had earlier told reporters that he himself intended to settle in Yamit when he went into retirement. But more importantly, the Israelis feared, or argued, that the Israeli-Egyptian peace might at some point break down and that Egypt might once again send its armored divisions into Sinai. In that event, the Yamit bloc would serve as a trip wire and initial obstacle to a possible Egyptian lunge at Israel's heartland, and at least slow it down. The Israelis also feared that the precedent of uprooting the Rafah Approaches settlement bloc, as it was called, would possibly be perceived as a sign of a readiness to uproot its settlements in the Palestinian territories. (In general, Zionist leaders since the 1920s have been extremely resistant to the idea of uprooting Jewish settlements, as it would lead to loss of territory and project infirmity of purpose.)

But Sadat flatly refused to countenance the continued presence on Egyptian soil of Israeli settlers; they were both the reality and symbol of Israeli expansionism, and leaving them in place would complicate any effort to remove the more substantial settlement enterprise in the West Bank. Moreover, the Yamit settlements were seen as a delimitation of Egyptian sovereignty and, as such, as a slight to Egyptian honor, and almost certainly would give rise to future imbroglios. What if Arab terrorists took Yamit settlers hostage? How would Israel react and how would this affect Israeli-Egyptian relations?

For days, Sadat and Begin, to Carter's frustration, haggled over the Sinai settlements. In the end, Begin backed down—partly because he feared that he would be blamed for the collapse of the talks and the damage it would inflict on U.S.-Israeli relations, and partly, it seems, because he received the assent of Ariel Sharon, his agriculture minister, who was also the patron of the settlement venture and whom Begin greatly admired as a military figure. If Sharon believed that Israel could and should give up the settlements—that this was an acceptable price to achieve peace—then he, Begin, could live with it. But the main reason Begin backed down, of course, was because he wanted peace with Egypt and understood its benefits for Israel.

Begin withdrew his veto and agreed to bring the matter to a vote in the cabinet and in the Knesset—and if these bodies approved the deal, including the removal of the settlements, he would bow to the people's will. He also agreed not to impose party discipline on the matter, allowing his fellow party members to vote their conscience.

At the end of the thirteen days, the three summiteers were exhausted. "There was no sense of jubilation," as Wright puts it. On September 17, 1978, the three leaders signed two agreements in the White House. The first, "Framework for Peace in the

Wright's book is marred by a profusion of factual errors not common in good history, even in good journalistic history.

Middle East," dealt with the future of the Palestinians and the West Bank and Gaza; the second, "Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel," dealt with future relations between Egypt and Israel.

The first accord provided for "transitional arrangements" for the West Bank and Gaza, lasting no more than five years, during which time the inhabitants would enjoy "full autonomy" under "a self-governing [freely elected] authority" or "administrative council." Israeli troops would be redeployed out of parts of these territories, and a "local police force" would be established. Negotiations between representatives of Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza on the "final status" of the territories would begin no later than three years after the start of the transitional period. The negotiations were to "recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements."

This accord can be said to have led nowhere, as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the umbrella organization of the Palestinian national movement, immediately spurned it. The PLO rejected Israel's existence and legitimacy, claimed all of historic Palestine and rejected all thought of a territorial compromise based on a two-state solution. (Had Yasir Arafat accepted the Camp David accords, and then built on the "autonomy" that was being offered, the futures of Israel and Palestine might well have been quite different. And it is highly likely that Begin was willing at Camp David to offer the Palestinians "autonomy" in the belief that the PLO would, indeed, reject the deal.) But a decade and a half later, the Israeli government under Yitzhak Rabin, one of Begin's successors as prime minister, and the PLO under Arafat agreed in the Oslo accords to "autonomy" for the bulk of the Palestinian territories. And, between 1993 and 1995, Israel withdrew from the core areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and an "autonomous" Palestinian National Authority took control, "police force" and all. So it can be said that the seed planted by Begin, Sadat and Carter at Camp David did in the end bear some fruit.

The Israeli-Egyptian bilateral framework agreement laid out the principles that would govern the eventual Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Egypt would get all of Sinai, up to the international frontier (the line demarcated in 1906 by representatives of Britain, which then ruled Egypt, and the Ottoman Empire, which then ruled Palestine). The accord called for the establishment of full diplomatic, cultural and commercial relations. Israeli ships would have the right of passage through the Suez Canal, the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba. Egyptian forces in Sinai were to be severely limited, and Israeli forces along the Negev border would be limited to four battalions. UN forces would be stationed between the two sides on the Egyptian side of the border. Israel would withdraw to a north-south line running down the middle of the Sinai Peninsula within three to nine months of the signing of the peace treaty. It was agreed that the treaty would be signed within three months.

During the signing ceremony, Begin thanked Carter profusely and said: "I think he worked harder than our forefathers did in Egypt building the pyramids." Sadat may not have enjoyed this comparison, as, being a proud Egyptian, he found the idea that Jewish slaves had built the pyramids offensive.

Wright's book is marred by a profusion of factual errors not common in good history, even in good journalistic history. Many of the mistakes relate to the 1948 war. Wright wrongly assumes that the 1948 war began with the Arab regular armies' invasion of Palestine on May 15, 1948; in fact, it began on November 30, 1947, when Palestinian irregulars opened hostilities by ambushing two Jewish buses near Petah Tikva. Wright completely omits mention of the first half of the 1948 war, between November 1947 and May 1948, when Palestinian militiamen battled Jewish militiamen for control. He also says that the Lebanese Army was among the Arab armies invading Palestine on May 15. It wasn't. He seems to assume that Arab anti-Semitism, rampant in the Arab world and in today's Europe, began with the traumatic events of 1947–1949. But anti-Semitism was rife in Arab societies long before 1948 (as in the pogroms around the Arab lands in the Middle Ages and in modern times—in Baghdad in 1828 and 1941, and in Fez in 1912, for example).

Likewise, Wright's description of what happened in the Arab town of Lydda on July 11–13, 1948—which he partly bases on my own research but also on Ari Shavit's *My Promised Land*—is wrongheaded. There was no "systematic massacre of hundreds" of townspeople (even Shavit, in his tendentious account, doesn't claim that)—and it is not true that "many" of the twenty to thirty thousand Arabs who trekked out of Lydda died on the march eastward (one Arab writer later wrote of "four hundred," but a more reasonable estimate would probably put the figure at a dozen or several dozen). Moreover, Israel did not annex "eight thousand square miles" in 1948. The Jews were awarded six thousand square miles of Palestine for their state in the UN partition resolution of November 1947, and conquered and "annexed" another two thousand square miles in 1948–1949.

Wright also tells us that "most of the [1948 war's] Palestinian refugees fled into neighboring Arab countries." Actually, only one-third of them fled to neighboring countries—Jordan, Syria and Lebanon—while two-thirds were displaced from one part of mandatory Palestine to another (from Jaffa and Haifa to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, for instance). I also can't agree with Wright's assertion that toward the end of the 1948 war, "forced expulsion had become the policy of the new Jewish state." Had this been true, there would be no explaining why the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) left some thirty to fifty thousand Arab inhabitants in central-upper Galilee during Operation Hiram in October that year.

There are also many errors unrelated to 1948. The Germans conquered Brisk (Brest-Litovsk), Begin's hometown, in June 1941 (not "on July 22, 1942"). It's not

Wright seems to be condemning the Israelites of three thousand years ago by the light of twenty-first-century morality.

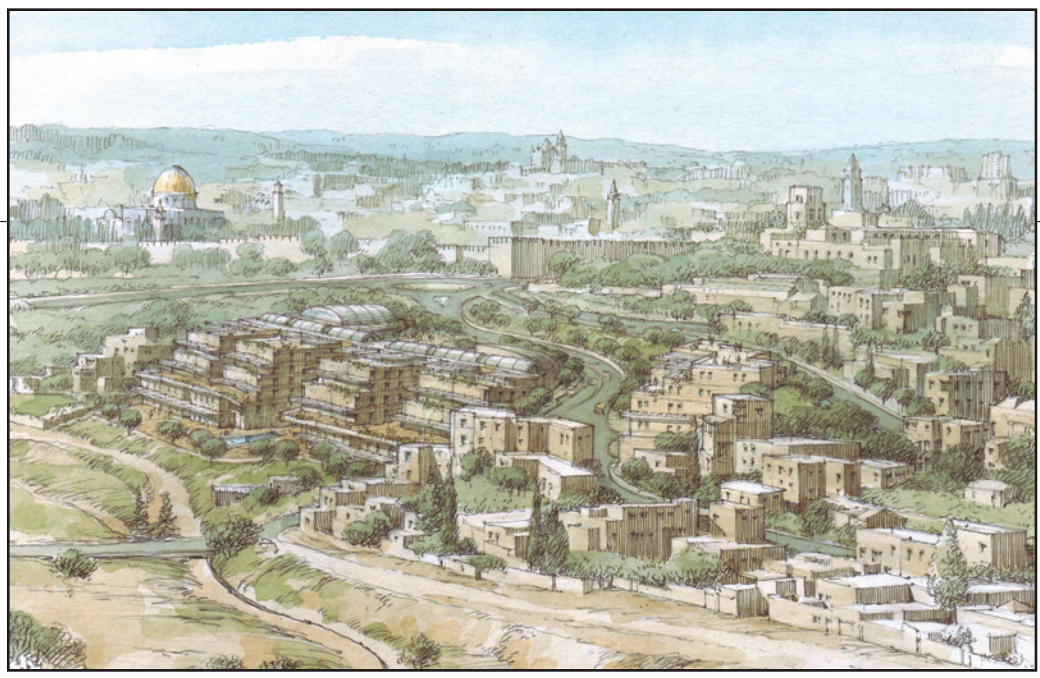
true that in the summer of 1942, Rommel had "bottled up the British Eighth Army" at El Alamein. The Arab revolt began in 1936, not in "1934." It was not the "ultra-Orthodox" but the Orthodox Jews who "spearheaded the settler movement" in the West Bank beginning in 1967. And the turning point of the 1973 Yom Kippur War was not on October 18, when the Israelis set up a pontoon bridge across the Suez Canal, but on the night of October 15–16, when lead elements of Sharon's division crossed the canal and took up positions on the west bank, signaling the successful breach of the Egyptian lines and the crossing by Israel of the canal. This was to lead to the complete encirclement of the Egyptian Third Army, stranded east of the canal, and to Egypt's desperate plea for a cease-fire.

Wright does his readers a major service by providing verbatim Dayan's famous eulogy over the grave of Roy Rothberg in Nahal Oz, next to the Gaza Strip, in 1956. Rothberg was shot dead by Arab infiltrators in the kibbutz fields. But Wright writes that Dayan had met Rothberg "during the siege of Gaza." What siege? There was none; Gaza was then under Egyptian rule. The only "siege" of Gaza I know of is the one imposed by Israel on the Strip since 2007, when Hamas took over the Strip from the Palestinian Authority in an armed coup. And the kibbutz didn't "commandeer" the Arabs' fields—the fields were part of the territory conquered by Israel in the 1948 war, a war that the Palestinian Arabs and the Arab armies had launched.

Beyond these factual errors, I found Wright's book rather slanted. He has every right to prefer Sadat and Carter to Menachem Begin. Many, if not most, Israelis found Begin's expansionist policies vis-à-vis the Palestinian territories and his war in Lebanon in 1982 abhorrent. Many also found him personally irritating and unlikable—though his reputation has definitely improved, in Israeli minds, since his death in 1992. This is partly due to the country's steady drift to the right. But it also owes much to Begin's personal honesty and reverence for the law.

But Wright's tendentiousness goes way beyond his attitude toward the Israeli prime minister. In a way, he lets the cat out of the bag when he writes, regarding the Lebanese Christian Phalangist massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps in Beirut in September 1982, that "the Israelis had a clear view of the slaughter from the rooftop of the Kuwaiti embassy, which they occupied. To assist the Phalangists in their work, the Israelis provided illuminating flares at night." The implication is that the IDF deliberately aided the killers. This is essentially untrue. Israel's subsequent Kahan Commission of Inquiry found fault in Defense Minister Ariel Sharon's conduct and in that of several senior generals (all of whom were fired)—but ruled that the army had been unaware that a massacre was taking place and that when awareness finally dawned, it intervened and stopped it. None of this is in Wright's book.

Wright's detailed description of the Israelite conquest of Canaan circa 1200



BC—which he bases solely on the Bible—is in a similar vein. To begin with, he calls Palestine a "vast tract" of land. "Vast"? By comparison, for example, with the lands that the Arabs rule, from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf? He speaks of "the Israeli horde" that crossed the Jordan River. (I know that "horde" can mean a wandering mass of tribesmen; but in current usage it has a definitely savage connotation.) He tells of Joshua's conquests and attendant massacres of Canaanite tribesmen—which all sounds very immoral in 2014 but was quite the norm in the thirteenth century BC. Wright seems to be condemning the Israelites of three thousand years ago by the light of twenty-first-century morality. And he directly connects 1200 BC to 1978—or 2014—by writing:

> For many believers, the account of the annihilation of the peoples of Canaan is one of the most troubling stories in the Bible. For Begin, however, Joshua was the original incarnation of the Fighting Jew. Joshua's mission was to carve out a living space [a reference to the Nazi quest for *Lebensraum*?] for the Israelites, much as modern Jews sought to do so in the Arab world. . . . Begin certainly wasn't the only Israeli leader who believed that spilling blood was a necessary ritual for the unification and spiritual restoration of the Jewish people, and that enacting revenge on the Arabs was a way of healing the traumas of the Jewish experience in Europe and elsewhere.

Curiously, Wright then goes on to say that much of the biblical story that he has just related is actually untrue or of doubtful veracity, given recent archaeological discoveries—that the town of Ai was not conquered by Joshua but was destroyed a thousand years earlier, for example, or that Jericho was not a fortified town. Nonetheless, Wright is telling his readers that Zionism—he mentions Begin, Dayan and David Ben Gurion in the same bloodlusting breath—is a conquering, vengeful ideology.

Wright also attacks Israel and the Zionist

narrative from another angle, this one at least equally propagandistic. He tells us, buying into the Arab narrative about Palestinian origins, that "most scholars" believe "the Philistines . . . to be the ancestors of today's Palestinians." This is sheer nonsense. It is true that there is a linguistic nexus: the Latin name "Palestine" (*Palestina*) derives from the Latin "*Philistia*"—or the land of the Philistines, roughly the coastal area between Gaza and Jaffa. The Arabs later adopted the Roman-Christian name "Palestine" to designate the whole territory between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, and, still later, the name "Palestinians" for those Arabs who lived in the area.

But, in terms of political, cultural and religious substance, there is no connection between the Philistines, the mid-second-millennium-BC sea people from the Greek islands, and today's Arabs of Palestine. They do not share a common or even proximate language, religion, culture or historical consciousness. In fact, the Philistines simply dropped out of history sometime after the start of the first millennium BC and vanished. The Arabs, who were Muslims, and came from the Hejaz, in Arabia, entered the world stage and conquered Palestine in the seventh century AD.

Today's Palestinians are descendants of those Muslim conquerors, some of whom settled in Palestine and intermingled with and married and converted, forcibly or otherwise, the local population, which was largely Christian-Byzantine and Jewish at the time. That local population, no doubt, over the previous nineteen centuries had acquired genes from the pre-Joshua Canaanite tribes, with whom the Israelites had intermingled and married, and from the various other conquerors who had washed over the country during those centuries—Assyrians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans and so on. After the seventh century AD, Palestine's Arabs also acquired genes from the European Crusaders who ruled Palestine in the Middle Ages and from the Mamluks, Turks and Britons who came afterwards. Similarly, the Jews who lived in Palestine throughout the past three thousand years acquired genes from all they came into contact with, including Arabs. But to say that the Palestinians are descendants of the Philistines is rank nonsense.

At one point, Wright even calls Procopius a "sixth-century Palestinian historian." Well, it is true that Procopius, a Christian, was a native of Caesarea, which was located in the Byzantine province of Palestina Prima. But if "Palestinian" today means anything, it means an Arab, a speaker of Arabic, usually a Muslim, who regards himself as part of the greater Arab nation and the Islamic ummah. So defined, Procopius definitely wasn't a "Palestinian." To say so is about as true as calling Herod the Great a "Palestinian King" or Jesus a "Palestinian Prophet (or Son of God)." Perhaps Israelis should start calling Procopius one of the first "Israeli historians." The Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian school systems may twist history and definitions to burnish their claims to Palestine, but there is no reason an intelligent Western intellectual should join in. □

In Search of Adams

By Andrew J. Bacevich

Charles N. Edel, *Nation Builder: John Quincy Adams and the Grand Strategy of the Republic* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 432 pp., $29.95.

Think of John Quincy Adams as the Elvis of American statecraft: creative genius, preeminent practitioner and enduring inspiration. Well, make that Elvis minus the charisma.

So Charles Edel argues in *Nation Builder*. Edel, who teaches at the U.S. Naval War College, believes that Adams personally devised the "comprehensive grand strategy" that guided the United States for decades and "set the nation on a course to long-term security, stability, and prosperity." The "detailed policy road map" that Adams developed sought "to harness the country's geographic, military, economic, and moral resources," with the ultimate aim of bringing "America to a position of preeminence in the world."

The problem here starts with misplaced paternity. To credit Adams with fathering U.S. grand strategy is the equivalent of saying that Elvis invented rock and roll. Doing so ignores all the other worthies, predecessors and contemporaries alike who lent a hand. The King was as much product as he was pioneer. Meanwhile, what may rank as Adams's most lasting contribution somehow escapes Edel's notice altogether.

Raised by John and Abigail Adams—who never doubted that their oldest son was meant for greatness—John Quincy Adams lived an exceedingly consequential life, virtually all of it spent in service to antebellum America. He knew everyone from Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson to Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln. As a diplomat, he was the Ryan Crocker of his day, serving every president from George Washington to James Madison with quiet distinction. Next came elevation to the post of secretary of state, followed by a term as president and, finally, seventeen years as a member of the House of Representatives. Appropriately, he died in harness, after suffering a stroke while on the House floor.

The time that Adams spent as the nation's chief diplomat under James Monroe marked the pinnacle of his illustrious career. Edel's account sustains the common assessment that Adams was not only the right candidate for that job, but also that he was appointed to fill it at precisely the right time. Man and moment aligned perfectly.

By comparison, the four years Adams lived in the White House surely represent his professional low point. The qualities that made him such a superb secretary of state—subtlety, prudence and constancy—did not easily translate into the hurly-burly world of electoral politics filled with

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backslapping wheeler-dealers. So one of our most effective secretaries of state became one of our least effective chief executives. Edel's description of Adams's presidency as an "abject failure" seems about right.

Yet even when he was at the top of his game, Adams was adapting a playbook that was largely the handiwork of others. Although he kept a diary that eventually ran to almost seventeen thousand pages, Adams never got around to expressing his strategic vision in so many words. He never penned a "Long Telegram." He never published an equivalent of George F. Kennan's "X" article.

So by pasting together what Adams said on this occasion and did on that one, Edel infers that strategy. This is a bit like divining the philosophy of Homer by taking bits and pieces from episodes of *The Simpsons*—a clever enough trick but not to be taken too seriously. The same can be said of Edel's efforts at divination. As he himself concedes at the outset, "The challenge to the historian is that Adams's grand strategy for himself and for the country was far from explicit. . . . His strategy is something that must be inferred." It is difficult to avoid the impression that rather than an explication of Adams's thinking, this is an exercise in ventriloquism.

The grand strategy that Edel credits Adams with devising consists of several elements, which share this common characteristic: they are as recognizable as a box of Cheerios and as familiar as a Budweiser commercial. Among the key elements are these. First, steer clear of foreign entanglements, especially any that might draw the young Republic into unneeded conflicts and create division at home. Second, exploit opportunities for expansion, both commercial and territorial. Third, invest in the infrastructure and institutions needed to promote internal development. The overarching aim was clear: to enhance American security, prosperity and power. The endgame: greatness.

For early America, this was indeed an ideal framework for policy, as events soon proved. Yet Adams hadn't invented that framework. He had merely embraced it. To claim, as does Edel, that Adams "crafted a strategy of continental expansion and hegemony" is misleading and bogus.

If American grand strategy during this era actually had an author, it was George Washington. With its warning against "passionate attachments" and its "great rule of conduct," Washington's Farewell Address of 1796 charted an appropriate path for a small nation entertaining big ambitions. "If we remain one people under an efficient government," Washington wrote, "the period is not far off when we may defy material injury from external annoyance." Neutrality today pointed toward freedom of action tomorrow, holding the promise that in time the United States would be able to "choose peace or war, as our interest, guided by justice, shall counsel."

Even in the near term, however, the neutrality envisioned by Washington did not imply passivity. Keeping Europe at arm's length—that's what neutrality meant in practice—offered a posture well suited to facilitate acquisition, which was the over-

riding priority. The real centerpiece of U.S. grand strategy was opportunistic expansionism, acquiring by means fair or foul whatever Americans deemed worth taking. As minister to the Netherlands, Russia and Great Britain under successive presidents, Adams demonstrated considerable dexterity in facilitating this project. Yet his role was to carry out policy, not to design it. He was an agent, not an architect.

During his years as secretary of state, when he did have a direct role in policy formulation, Adams made this crucial contribution: he redefined the objective of expansionism to incorporate the entire Western Hemisphere. Control of North America, not yet fully gained, was an essential but now insufficient objective. The collapse of Spain's New World empire meant that Latin America was up for grabs. Adams's singular achievement, articulated in the Monroe Doctrine, was to position the United States for hemispheric hegemony, while still heeding Washington's dictum to avoid "interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe." It was a brilliant stroke, but one that grew out of the young nation's diplomatic tradition rather than breaking with it.

Edel portrays his protagonist's postpresidential career as a continuation and even culmination of the many years he had spent dealing with foreign policy. During his time in Congress, the aging Adams won widespread renown (and in some quarters loathing) for his vociferous opposition to

slavery. Without providing much in the way of supporting evidence (because none is to be had), Edel contends that Adams's antislavery stance represented "the final component of his grand strategy," which "required that the United States be not only powerful, but also moral."

As if in passing, Edel notes that Adams had shown "no hint of a desire to abolish or even restrict slavery during his presidency." Indeed, he had "spent most of his career avoiding taking a strong stand against slavery. And when he did take a public stand, it was generally in defense of the institution."

As a diplomatist and upwardly mobile political figure, Adams had good reason to soft-pedal slavery. If any one issue threatened the tenuous cohesion of the young Republic—not to mention a New Englander's prospects for high office—it was slavery. To allay the suspicion of Southerners, best to keep mum.

Now, in the twilight of his professional life, realism gave way to idealism, pragmatism to passion. Adams was neither the first nor the last prominent American to discover a belated compulsion to acknowledge truths that he had spent decades denying. Truth telling is easier when it comes without penalty to the truth teller.

In opposing slavery, Edel writes, Adams was intent on making the United States "morally attractive." For the nation to fulfill its mission as global exemplar of liberty and popular government, "it needed to revitalize its moral foundation." The elimination of slavery would ostensibly do just that.

In his diary, Adams speculated that abolition might "cost the blood of MILLIONS OF WHITE MEN." Yet he was not deterred. Were the Union itself to be destroyed as a consequence, he believed the price to be worth paying. In effect, to end the abomination of slavery, Adams was willing to risk everything that the nation had achieved since its founding.

The position that Adams staked out on slavery contains much to admire. But in its willingness to risk everything on one roll of the dice, it hardly qualifies as a basis for sound strategy. Fanaticism and statecraft go ill together. Indeed, one can easily imagine Secretary of State Adams urging Congressman Adams to chill out—with Congressman Adams responding by telling Secretary Adams to show some backbone.

Adams did not live to see the argument over slavery culminate in the cataclysm of civil war. No doubt the war's outcome would have won his approval. As to whether he would have assessed the consequences of emancipation as "morally attractive," we can only speculate. In the eyes of others, did purging America of its original sin render the country sinless? Or did it merely bring to the fore other sins that had accumulated?

This much we can say for certain: Adams's belated insistence that U.S. diplomacy should have a moral component, with prudential considerations taking a backseat to moral (or ideological) imperatives—if that actually describes his reasoning and motivation—outlived him. If Edel is correct, then the neoconservatives and crusading internationalists of our own day number among his hero's issue.

Adams did not confuse example with passivity. He saw it as a form of action, offering a way to use power without squandering it, to wield influence without forfeiting control or flexibility.

Whether on the left or the right, those keen to spread American values around the world assume that those values are universal and that activism—usually involving some form of military action—offers the best way to ensure their embrace by others. Anything less amounts to pusillanimity, appeasement or moral cowardice. As *New York Times* columnist David Brooks sputtered in a recent op-ed, "If America isn't a champion of universal democracy, what is the country for?"

For an authoritative answer to his question, Brooks might want to consult the preamble of the Constitution, which offers an admirably succinct statement of purpose—while containing no mention of democracy, universal or otherwise. "We the People," it reads, aspire "to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity"—no more, no less. Well over two centuries later, those aspirations still await fulfillment. We may be closer, but we are surely not there yet.

Of course, as if anticipating Brooks's question, Adams had himself once offered his own view of America's purpose and its implications for foreign policy. This occurred on July 4, 1821, when in accordance with the custom of that era, Adams accepted an invitation from Congress to reflect on the significance of American independence. The secretary of state used the occasion to stake out a position that has discomfited proponents of militarized liberation or benign hegemony or empire gussied up as social uplift ever since.

America, Adams declared, in a vivid turn of phrase that many readers of this magazine probably know by heart, "goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy." America was "the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all," but "the champion and vindicator only of her own." The gendered language might strike us today as violating the canons of political correctness. Yet Adams attributed to the feminized nation very considerable wisdom and shrewdness. The dame was not stupid. Adams added:

> She well knows that by once enlisting under other banners than her own, were they even the banners of foreign Independence, she would involve herself beyond the power of extrication, in all the wars of interest and intrigue, of individual avarice, envy, and ambition, which assume the colors and usurp the standard of freedom. The fundamental maxims of her policy would insensibly change from *liberty* to *force*.

And then the kicker: "She might become the dictatress of the world. She would be no longer the ruler of her own spirit."

During the twentieth century, particularly its latter half, Americans abandoned the precepts that had guided policy makers back in Adams's day. For a nation grown accustomed to seeing itself as a superpower, the warning that Adams himself had voiced in 1821 lost its salience. Meddling—always in a worthy cause, of course—became fashionable.

By the 1990s, with policy makers no longer inhibited by the Cold War, engaging in

distant wars of interest and intrigue had become a signature of U.S. policy. To invade Panama, bomb the Balkans, chase warlords in the Horn of Africa or fling cruise missiles about with abandon expressed America's status as the world's "indispensable nation." Only during the first decade of the twenty-first century, largely as a consequence of the unhappy crusades in Iraq and Afghanistan, did many Americans begin to sense that something might be amiss.

Yet by this time, political elites had all but lost the ability to conceptualize a role for the United States that was not based on complacent assumptions of militarized "global leadership." Extricating the United States from the various wars of avarice, envy and ambition in which it had become involved posed an intellectual problem for which Washington no longer possessed the necessary tools—as the Obama administration's aimless drift and the predictability of Brooks's op-eds amply illustrate.

Adams firmly believed, writes Edel, that "it was through the power of example, not the power of interference, that America's mission would be fulfilled." Adams did not confuse example with passivity. He saw it as a form of action, offering a way to use power without squandering it, to wield influence without forfeiting control or flexibility.

To posit the United States in the role of exemplar may not itself constitute a grand strategy. But it does provide a point of departure for reassessing grand strategy, at a time when such a reassessment is long past due. And for that alone, Adams deserves our lasting gratitude. □

The Spy Who Loved Himself

By Aram Bakshian Jr.

Ben Macintyre, *A Spy Among Friends: Kim Philby and the Great Betrayal* (New York: Crown, 2014), 384 pp., $27.00.

It should be easy for the intelligence community to spot potential traitors early on, except for one problem. Many of the attributes that make for a potential traitor are the same ones that make for a successful agent, most notably a capacity for deception and the ability to lead two or more conflicting lives at the same time, a truly Freudian form of multitasking most normal people are incapable of. Anyone who has encountered practicing or retired spooks over the years—and as a native Washingtonian and three-time presidential aide I've certainly been exposed to my share—will be familiar with certain widely shared professional characteristics. Among these are a love of the mysterious for its own sake, a fascination with real or imagined conspiracies, the conviction that a straight line is almost never the shortest distance between a problem and a solution, and both a talent and a taste for juggling multiple identities—usually out of neces-

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sity, but sometimes for the sheer pleasure of it.

The exceptions to this ambiguous and often-conflicted mind-set—and fortunately there are many of them—are skilled espionage professionals with a secure sense of self, firm values and loyalty, and a willingness to serve their country in ways they may sometimes find distasteful, just as a good cop routinely must deal with sordid people and disgusting behavior while fighting crime.

Potential traitors, on the other hand, seem to be drawn to deceit for its own sake. Fooling those around them—usually including their own families, friends and loved ones—and being the secret sharers of forbidden knowledge gives them a much-yearned-for feeling of superiority. In the case of double agents such as the CIA's Aldrich Ames and the FBI's Robert Hanssen, the desire to outshine distant, scornful and, in some cases, abusive fathers may have lent treason extra appeal: a symbolic act of patricide on a national scale. Such may have also been the case with Kim Philby, whose taste for betrayal and talent for lying made him perhaps the most successful double agent in modern British history. He has certainly been the most written about, with well-respected observers like Anthony Cave Brown and Patrick Seale, along with many others, weighing in at length on the subject. It is therefore understandable that, in *A Spy Among Friends*, British author-journalist Ben Macintyre set out to write "not another biography of Kim Philby" but instead a description of "a particular sort of friendship that played an important role in history, told in the form of a narrative. It is less about politics, ideology, and accountability than personality, character, and a very British relationship that has never been explored before."

Herein lies both the strength and weakness of this generally sound and highly readable tale of friendship and betrayal. By trying to fit the story of Philby's treachery into a neatly novelistic structure, the author occasionally lets art trump historical perspective. Philby's story, as told by Macintyre, is all about friendship betrayed—especially the betrayal of Philby's two most important professional friends, MI6's Nicholas Elliott and the CIA's James Angleton. Elliott, who might best be described as an armed, dangerous version of P. G. Wodehouse's Bertie Wooster, emerges as a thoroughly decent, delightful character in over his head. One of Macintyre's more enjoyable passages describes the family background that predestined Elliott for high government service:

> The Elliotts were part of the backbone of the empire; for generations, they had furnished military officers, senior clerics, lawyers, and colonial administrators who ensured that Britain continued to rule the waves—and much of the globe in between. One of Elliott's grandfathers had been the lieutenant governor of Bengal; the other, a senior judge. Like many powerful English families, the Elliotts were also notable for their eccentricity. Nicholas's great-uncle Edgar famously took a bet with another Indian Army officer that he could smoke his height in cheroots every day for three months, then

Philby couldn't have asked for two more ideal pushovers than Angleton and Elliott. Both were completely taken in by him.

smoked himself to death in two. Great-aunt Blanche was said to have been "crossed in love" at the age of twenty-six and thereafter took to her bed, where she remained for the next fifty years. Aunt Nancy firmly believed that Catholics were not fit to own pets since they did not believe animals had souls. The family also displayed a profound but frequently fatal fascination with mountain climbing. Nicholas's uncle, the Reverend Julius Elliott, fell off the Matterhorn in 1869, shortly after meeting Gustave Flaubert, who declared him "the epitome of the English gentleman."

"Eccentricity," Macintyre concludes, "is one of those English traits that look like frailty but mask a concealed strength; individuality disguised as oddity." Even Philby, in an otherwise snide report to one of his early Soviet handlers, paid grudging tribute to "MR NICHOLAS ELLIOTT. 24, 5ft 9in. Brown hair, prominent lips, black glasses." Philby called Elliott "ugly and rather pig-like to look at," but also added, "Good brain, good sense of humor."

Angleton, the other great betrayed friend of Philby's career, was a loopy Anglophile. In Macintyre's words, he was "the product of a romantic and unlikely marriage between Hugh Angleton, a soldier-turned-cash register salesman, and Carmen Mercedes Moreno, an uneducated, fiery, and exceptionally beautiful woman from Nogales, Arizona, with a mixture of Mexican and Apache blood."

Born in Boise, Idaho, Angleton accompanied his parents to Italy, where his father ran the Milan office of the National Cash Register Company. He was then sent off to England for a "proper" public-school education that, according to Macintyre, left him with "courteous manners, a sense of fair play, an air of cultivated eccentricity, and a faint English accent that never left him. The boy from Idaho was already 'more English than the English,' a disguise he would wear, along with his Savile Row suits, for the rest of his life."

Philby couldn't have asked for two more ideal pushovers than Angleton and Elliott. Both were completely taken in by him despite the fact that, in most respects, they were competent, conscientious intelligence officers. They simply could not imagine the possibility that their trusted, respected friend and mentor was a traitor, especially one who had made fools of them both.

Emphasizing the uniquely English aspects of Philby's case, his taste for London club life, his superficial, pipe-smoking tweediness and the way he exploited upper-class solidarity, Macintyre tends to gloss over the more generic similarities Philby's treason bears to the betrayals of other Cold War traitors. Those people came from a variety of social milieus, but were all motivated by the same mixture of vanity, innate deceitfulness, and pleasure derived from duping friends, colleagues and loved ones, all the while playing what they thought of as a brilliant solo game. Almost always, a large dose of megalomania was involved, along with the traitor's conviction that he was a far smarter, more meritorious man than any of his colleagues or superiors. The social backdrop can vary, but the traitorous personality type—vain,

capable of total detachment from normal emotional bonds and with no sense of accountability to a higher moral authority—is consistent. This is true whether the culprit is a supposedly devout Catholic attendee of daily mass like the FBI's Robert Hanssen, an inconspicuous code clerk like the U.S. Navy's John Anthony Walker, who successfully spied for the Soviets from 1968 to 1985, or a boozy, big-spending mediocrity like Aldrich Ames, a second-generation CIA hack who blew the covers—and thereby caused the deaths—of some of his agency's most important intelligence assets behind the Iron Curtain. Philby was merely a more polished model.

Still, by concentrating on the intricacies of the old boys' network that dominated British intelligence throughout the nineteenth century and for the first half of the twentieth, Macintyre helps us to understand why it was so easy for Philby to get away with so much treason for so long. It also explains why far more inept British traitors like Guy Burgess (a roaring drunk) and Donald Maclean (a guilt-ridden and violent neurotic) long managed to escape detection. Ironically, the best cover Burgess had going for him was his own outrageous behavior; friends and foes alike could scarcely believe he was able to hold onto his day job, much less function as a double agent for the Soviets. Macintyre excels at showing us how and why such betrayals were possible in their particular time and place; it tells us less about the qualities of the individuals that attracted them to treason.

Once they chose their course, they could take advantage of the culture of privileged entitlement to gain free entry into the world they sought to betray. But why did they want to betray it? For generations, sons of the upper-middle class and gentry who went to the right schools and played cricket together had run not only British intelligence, but also the army, the navy, the Church of England, Parliament, the banking world, and the colonial and civil services. As members of that class, men

like Philby were protected by an invisible coat of class armor. Their overwhelmingly loyal colleagues (and social peers) simply could not conceive of "one of their own" ever committing acts of base betrayal they themselves considered unthinkable. And the fact is that, overall, British espionage and counterespionage running on this unwritten honor code worked remarkably well throughout the heyday of the empire.

It was the very strength of the British ruling class—its ability to turn out successive generations of tough, resourceful and largely honorable soldiers and statesmen like the Duke of Wellington, Lord Nelson, the elder and younger Pitts, Lord Palmerston, William Gladstone and even an exotic transplant like the Jewish-born (but hastily christened) Benjamin Disraeli, along with legions of dim but dutiful upper-class twits—that left it prone to betrayal from within once old certainties and loyalties began to falter. If there was a measure of truth in Wellington's apocryphal quote that the Battle of Waterloo had been won on the playing fields of Eton, the world—and the confident worldview—that victory had represented began to dissolve a century later in the mud and slaughter of World War I. At war's end, the superficial structure of Britain's ruling class still stood and the empire it ruled over was larger than ever. But the unquestioning faith of the governing class in itself and its imperial mission had been shaken to the core. Leaders like Winston Churchill, old enough to remember Victorian glory at its height, remained true believers. But the generation that had served in the trenches, both as officers and privates, would never be quite so certain again. And a few of them—along with some of their younger siblings—would trade their blind faith in the old imperial order for blind faith in the heroic myth of the new Soviet order.

There is no evidence that Kim Philby had a real working knowledge of Marxism-Leninism or that he even found it very interesting. But he seems to have viewed the Kremlin as an elect—the sanctum sanctorum of a new elite, an exclusive, secret circle that would one day rule the whole world. And, at an early age, he decided he wanted to join it. Recruited to Marxism at Cambridge and clandestinely married to an Austrian Communist he met on a visit to Vienna just after college, Philby's gift for duplicity served him well. He won an award for bravery from Francisco Franco as a foreign correspondent covering the Spanish Civil War, though he secretly supported the Communist-backed Spanish loyalists.

Thanks to his Cambridge degree and his father, Harry St. John Philby—a distinguished if highly eccentric savant, Arabist and imperial adventurer with strong establishment connections—Kim had all of the social assets needed for entry into the pre–World War II British intelligence establishment. Once in, there was no stopping him. By the time World War II was over, Philby had been awarded the Order of the British Empire for his wartime services—alongside a secret medal from the Soviets—and was "increasingly seen by his colleagues in British intelligence as a man

It was the very strength of the British ruling class that left it prone to betrayal from within once old certainties and loyalties began to falter.

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marked out for great things." His standing was best summed up by the historian and former intelligence officer Hugh Trevor-Roper:

> I looked around at the part-time stockbrokers and retired Indian policemen, the agreeable epicureans from the bars of White's and Boodle's, the jolly, conventional ex-Navy officers and the robust adventurers from the bucket shop; and then I looked at Philby. . . . He alone was real. I was convinced that he was destined to head the service.

But, then and later, judging what was "real" was never Trevor-Roper's strong suit. In his later years, in return for a hefty retainer, he would "authenticate" a set of clumsily forged Hitler diaries, once more mistaking a fake for the real thing.

By the time Philby was finally exposed and fled to the Soviet Union in 1963, he had wrecked the lives of his second and third wives as well as the career and mental health of James Angleton. Even in Soviet exile he maintained his flair for betrayal:

> Philby rekindled his friendship with Donald Maclean and his wife, Melinda, and the two exiled couples were naturally thrown together. Maclean spoke fluent Russian and had been given a job analyzing British foreign policy. He often worked late. Philby and Melinda started going to the opera and then on shopping trips together. In 1964 Eleanor [Philby's third wife, who had accompanied him into exile, although she had played no part in his treason] returned to the United States to renew her passport and see her daughter [from a previous marriage]. In her absence Kim Philby and Melinda Maclean started an affair. It was a fitting liaison: Philby was secretly sleeping with the wife of an ideological comrade and cheating on his own wife, repeating once again the strange cycle of friendship and betrayal that defined his world.

It is comforting to know that by the time he died in a Moscow hospital on May 11, 1988, Philby must have realized that he had joined the wrong club and bet on the losing team. The Berlin Wall hadn't come down yet, but the old Soviet order was crumbling all around him.

Yet it is just possible that, in his closing Moscow years, Kim Philby chalked up one more win for his side. In a 1986 conversation with John le Carré, himself an MI6 veteran, Nicholas Elliott, who had survived his friendship with Philby less singed than most, offered a number of useful insights into his erstwhile friend and betrayer, all recounted by le Carré in a highly amusing afterword to *A Spy Among Friends.* Speculating on what kind of advice Philby had given his Soviet hosts, Elliott was emphatic:

> One of the things Philby *has* told them is to polish up their goons. Make 'em dress properly, smell less. Sophisticated. They're a totally different-looking crowd these days. Smart as hell, smooth, first-class chaps. Philby's work, that was, you bet your boots.

Who knows? Vladimir Putin, the Russian Federation's leading former KGB agent, may be the living embodiment of Kim Philby's legacy of betrayal. □

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