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Reflections

A New Generation of Conservative Thought

Christians, rise up!



Obama's Watergate • American ethics • Venezuelan terrorism

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The conservative movement is in crisis. Modern conservatism was born in 1955 with the founding of *National Review*. Its editor, William F. Buckley Jr., said the publication's mission was to "stand athwart history, yelling stop!" But history has kept rolling along, smashing every traditional institution in its path. Family, faith, capitalism, our constitutional republic—they have all been shattered by modern liberalism. In the face of this ideological juggernaut, conservatives have offered sporadic and weak resistance. Their ideas have become stale. Too many prefer power to principles. The movement has become corrupt, lazy and ineffective. Having come to Washington to confront the political rot and moral decay, conservatives have become part of the establishment. In other words, they have become part of the problem.

The mission of *Reflections Magazine* is to launch a conservative moral and intellectual revival. We will bring together the finest minds and writers to defend the eternal principles of God, country and family. We seek to forge a reinvigorated conservative movement for the 21st century—one that champions a new nationalism, rooted in a culture of life, small government, a restoration of federalism and victory over Islamist terrorism. Capitol Building The time has come for a one-nation conservatism that reaches out to minorities and women, the unborn and the poor, workers and students. The movement must go beyond its traditional base or else suffer a slow, agonizing death. Our goal is unabashedly counter-revolutionary: to roll back the forces of progressivism. Since the 1960s, a destructive liberal revolution has swept across our land. Characterized by radical secular humanism, sexual permissiveness and milk-toast socialism, it is transforming America into something our Founding Fathers would not only find unrecognizable but repugnant. We stand for the real America, the historic America, the eternal America—an America based on moral traditionalism, an America of limited government, self-reliance and entrepreneurship, an America that won its independence from imperial British rule, triumphed over Nazi Germany and Communist Russia, and has shed precious blood and treasure to liberate hundreds of millions of people around the world, and an America that champions human rights and freedom, in which every individual—regardless of race, color, gender or religion—possesses innate dignity and equal value in the eyes of our creator. We ask like-minded Americans to join us in this struggle for the heart and soul of America.

Edmund Burke, the great philosopher and godfather of Western conservatism, once said: "All that's necessary for the forces of evil to win in the world is for enough good men to do nothing." We refuse to do nothing. We will fight for what is right, true and good. This is the rock upon which we take our stand.

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Mission:

The Edmund Burke Institute for American Renewal was founded in June, 2005 in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. We are a non-partisan, non-profit, education and outreach organization which aspires to engage and mobilize the millions of African Americans, Hispanics, women and other minorities in this country who share conservative values. We will inform conservative leaders about the needs and aspirations of minorities in order to make the latter feel welcome amongst us. Also, we want minorities to appreciate fully how conservatism is congruent with their values and goals. In short, we will build a steadfast alliance between conservative leaders and minority groups. We hope to preserve all those elements in the American republic that render us a strong and vibrant nation. Simultaneously, we are open to new ideas that will allow more citizens to enjoy the blessings of freedom, prosperity and moral renewal.



How We Differ From Other Conservative Organizations:

1. We seek to update conservative thought. We want to find original ideas on how to bolster timeless principles.
2. We are attentive to the needs of women and minorities. These are not peripheral but are a primary focus of our institute. We want the conservative movement to make adjustments in order to accommodate the unique aspirations of previously marginalized groups. We also want minorities to learn how the conservative movement can benefit them.
3. We are devoted to cultural issues, not just politics. The main battle of our time is to seize the initiative in the cultural arena.
4. We hope to foster a broad alliance with those who adhere to traditional moral principles. We seek to build bridges with individuals of all faiths in order to combat assaults on human dignity.
5. We write policy initiatives, opinion articles and monographs as well as organize symposiums and conferences that appeal to our audience. Hence we do not just think and write: we take action!
6. We do not focus exclusively on one group or on one issue. There are excellent minority conservative organizations across the United States that are currently working in isolation from one another. Instead, we bring these groups together on a variety of issues in order to find common ground and, thus, to be effective in achieving political and cultural change.

Christians, rise up!

By Dr. Grace Vuoto

Christianity is in retreat. The greatest victory that the American left has had over the last 100 years is to browbeat Christians and purge their influence from the public square, especially in politics. Yet, if American Christians were to simply flex their collective muscles, the nation would be immediately transformed and vastly improved.

Consider the glaring facts: The American population is approximately 309 million, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, and of these, 76 percent identify themselves as Christians. That means that approximately 234 million Americans adhere to Christianity. Even if we take into account that a proportion of these Christians are nominal or practice a watered-down form of Christianity, the fact remains that conservatives have a potential army at their fingertips. If these millions of Christians were self-confident, educated in sound constitutional principles and politically engaged at every level of government, liberalism would be rendered virtually impotent in America.

Such is the simple message of a brilliant political primer, "Coherent Conservatism: A Call to Action for American Christians" (*CreateSpace Publisher, Scotts Valley, California, 2009*). The author, Martin Bertram, is vice president of the Republican Assembly of Kern County, California. Mr. Bertram invites Christians to assume their responsibility as guardians and purveyors of American liberty. He insists that Christians have accepted misguided ideas about the nature of their role in the republic and have therefore abrogated their civic responsibilities.

"Today, as in times past, we find politics and religion at odds with each other; there are many who use politics as a weapon against religion and there are equally many who through



their religious beliefs view politics as ungodly by nature—an area to be avoided,” writes Mr. Bertram. His monograph presents the major arguments liberals have used to marginalize Christians and also counters the line of reasoning Christians have used to justify inaction in the public arena.

When the Puritans fled religious persecution in the 16th century and came to American shores, they envisioned a land in which Christianity would flourish. Yet, instead of America having become a land of religious freedom, by the 20th century, a new form of religious persecution emerged—one that uses the language of liberty and toleration to oppress Christians. “Secularism,” states Mr. Bertram, “seeks to stifle religion at every opportunity.”

This assault upon Christianity comes first and foremost in the very interpretation of America’s founding as a Christian nation. In other words, Christians have allowed secularists to rewrite our history. The left has sought to downplay the fervent religious faith that inspired the actions of the Founding Fathers; liberals have also sought to confound the religious principles that are at the heart of the founding documents and were the basis for our rights and freedoms. “Everything that is great about America is derived from that Christian foundation,” states Mr. Bertram. Even the abolition of slavery would not have occurred had it not been for the pivotal role of Christian abolitionists.

Another weapon that has been used against American Christians is the education system; the secular revolution was carried out in full force by indoctrinating the youth in humanist principles at the expense of a theological worldview. Secular humanists or “progressives” such as late-19th century President of Harvard Charles Eliot and Dean of Harvard Law School Christopher Columbus Langdell instituted reforms that undermined the nation’s Christian heritage and introduced relativity into interpretations of the law. The father of modern education, John Dewey, outlined principles that were widely adopted in the first half of the 20th century in America’s schools, whereby the focus of education is the realization of the human personality as defined by the state rather than the service of God and the greater good. Thus, students no longer received an education rooted in Christian values but one that is hostile to the Christian heritage. “Secularism is not religious neutrality;

it is itself a religion—one of contempt for biblically orthodox Christianity,” writes Mr. Bertram.

Simultaneously, Christians have disengaged due to ideas such as that they should not judge others, their faith is not for the things of this world, their involvement in politics turns people away from the faith or is tantamount to forcing their convictions on others. In reality, disengagement allows the state to enact heinous policies, such as abortion, that are contrary to the most sacred tenets of Christianity and that amount to a collective crime. Passivity by Christians does not lead to a more gracious state but an increasingly barbaric one. In order to fulfill the Christian mandate to evangelize and to love one another, participation in the civic arena is required.

“For Christians, there should be no such distinction as Christian and secular areas of our lives, or secular and Christian occupations,” states Mr. Bertram, “there should only be life and life should in its totality be seen as appropriate territory for the light of Christ to be carried.” He sees an intimate connection between social and fiscal conservatism; without an active citizenry curtailing the scope and reach of government, government influence spreads to corrode the morals and values of the people. Hence, Mr. Bertram urges all Christians to get involved: prayer, voting in general elections and primaries, offering financial support to candidates, participating in local government, sending letters to the media and elected officials, joining activist groups and running for political office are among the many choices Christians have to be influential.

The Tea Party movement that has emerged in reaction to the excessive spending of the Obama administration is a testament to the power of the people. Can we imagine how different our nation would be if on a daily basis, all of America’s Christians would act in concert to uphold traditional morality and our Christian heritage? By recognizing how our secular enemies are deliberately distorting our heritage, educating the citizenry about our Founding documents, seizing control over the education of our children and championing authentic Christian political leaders, American Christians can halt the destructive march of liberalism and restore our nation to its better self.

-Dr. Grace Vuoto is the Executive Director of the Edmund Burke Institute for American Renewal.

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Obama's Watergate

By Jeffrey T. Kuhner

The White House is facing a major scandal— one that threatens to bring down President Obama. It could be his Watergate.

Rep. Joe Sestak, Pennsylvania Democrat, is the man at the center of the growing political storm. He reconfirmed this week his allegation that a senior White House official offered him a high-ranking job in exchange for withdrawing from the Pennsylvania Democratic Senate primary. It is widely believed the position was that of secretary of the Navy.

Mr. Sestak challenged Sen. Arlen Specter, who was strongly backed by Mr. Obama. Mr. Specter defected from the GOP last year, giving the Democrats the coveted 60-vote, filibuster-proof majority in the

Senate. In Washington, nothing is for nothing. Mr. Specter surely asked for a quid pro quo: I switch parties in exchange for no primary opponent. The White House obliged. Hence, there was an effort to make Mr. Sestak an offer he couldn't refuse.

But refuse he did. And the irony is that Mr. Specter - the establishment candidate - was defeated by Mr. Sestak.

The White House is now in deep trouble. Either Mr. Sestak is lying, which means he is unfit to represent the people of Pennsylvania, or he is telling the truth: the White House offered him a senior post. Mr. Sestak has consistently told the same story for months. He has no reason to lie.



If true - and I believe it is - then the Obama administration has committed a serious felony. The White House has engaged in “high crimes and misdemeanors” - an impeachable offense.

The Sestak job offer is not only unethical, but also illegal. It is a federal crime - punishable by up to one year in prison— to seek to bribe a government official with a job or to use bribery in an attempt to interfere or manipulate an election publicly. The White House apparently committed several felonies of bribery and corruption.

Rep. Darrell Issa, California Republican and ranking member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, is demanding a special prosecutor investigate Mr. Sestak’s allegations.

“Congressman Sestak has continued to repeat his story whenever asked, without varying from the original version,” Mr. Issa said. “The White House, however, has arrogantly and wrongly assumed that they can sweep this matter under the rug.”

Republicans should not only demand an independent investigation, but they should also campaign on the issue for the November elections. The GOP should insist that, if they regain control of the House and Senate, they will pursue this matter all the way to impeachment proceedings.

The Sestak scandal symbolizes the arrogance and corruption of the Obama White House. The Chicago way has come to Washington. Mr. Obama has surrounded himself with sleazy thugs—starting with Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel and political adviser David Axelrod, Chicago boys who think that politics is about securing and maintaining power. For them, the ends justify the means.

The Obama team has engaged in unprecedented bribery to advance seminal pieces of their socialist agenda. For example, during the health care debate, they used billions in taxpayer dollars, along with influence peddling, to buy off key congressional votes. The Louisiana Purchase, the Cornhusker Kickback, the offering of a judgeship to the brother of Democratic Rep. Jim Matheson of Utah, pork-barrel projects to build airports in honor of Democratic Rep. Bart Stupak in his Michigan district—all amounted to a massive swindle of the American people.

Mr. Obama is erecting a progressive kleptocracy: rampant corruption in the service of big-government

liberalism, a thug state as handmaid to the nanny state. The offering of a senior-level job to prevent a congressman from challenging a sitting senator is not the act of an administration rooted in the rule of law and constitutional democracy. It is more reminiscent of a Third World gangster regime that thinks it is above the law—and that every public official has a price.

After promising the most “transparent” administration in history, Mr. Obama is desperately seeking to stonewall the media’s growing interest in the scandal. His spokesman, Robert Gibbs, assures us that the White House’s lawyers have looked into the phone calls and “nothing inappropriate” happened. Mr. Gibbs wants us to take their word for it. That is not only arrogant, it is a cover-up. If nothing inappropriate took place, then the White House should fully disclose the details of the conversations.

The central question is: Who in the Obama White House approached Mr. Sestak? Moreover, it is almost impossible for a proposal of such magnitude—especially that of a Cabinet-level position like Navy secretary—to be offered without the knowledge and consent of the president. What did Mr. Obama know and when did he know it?

At its core, Watergate was about the criminality and abuse of power that pervaded the Nixon White House. It eventually destroyed Richard Nixon’s administration.

The Sestak scandal is Mr. Obama’s Watergate—a political cancer that will slowly devour his presidency. It will first consume the president’s men, as they desperately seek to contain the damage. Many may fall on their swords. But this cancer threatens to spread all the way to the top, claiming Mr. Obama as its ultimate progenitor and victim.

-Jeffrey T. Kuhner is a columnist at The Washington Times and president of the Edmund Burke Institute, a Washington think tank. He is the daily host of “The Kuhner Show” on WTNT 570-AM (www.talk570.com) from noon until 3 p.m.

-This article was first published in The Washington Times on May 27, 2010. <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/may/27/obamas-watergate/>

Israel’s fight for peace

By Kerry and Peggy McCarthy

The world forgets: Israel still faces an existential threat.

At four a.m. on May 31, 2010, Israeli forces descended onto the deck of the Mavi Marmara, a Turkish vessel attempting to break the joint Israeli-Egyptian blockade of the Gaza Strip. The Israelis did not anticipate resistance but were attacked by masked “activists” wielding sharpened pipes, clubs and knives. After 40 minutes of struggle during which an Israeli was thrown overboard and a pistol was taken from a defense force member and fired at the Israelis, the Israeli defense force was given permission to use firearms to defend themselves. Ten activists lost their lives.

Predictably, many Palestinians claimed these people were murdered and within hours the United Nations denounced Israel. Responding to this rapid condemnation, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu commented on June 2, 2010 that Israel “is guilty un-

til proven guilty.”

Censure is not new to Israelis. They successfully defended their very existence against Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria in 1947. In 1967, they again defended their original borders and, also in the act of repulsing their aggressors, captured what the world has branded Occupied Territory. Israel was almost immediately directed by the United Nations to give back territories legitimately captured in the course of their defense against the attacking armies of a multitude of aggressors.

For over 40 years, Israel has suffered under the designation Occupying Power, even though it holds the land reluctantly and has been willing to negotiate with responsible, non-aggressive states. For example, the Israelis returned the Sinai to Egypt in 1979.

In August of 2005, Israel unilaterally and completely withdrew from the Gaza Strip, using their



military to forcibly remove their own heartbroken citizens, whose homes were bulldozed because they knew the Palestinians would refuse to live in them. The Israelis did leave the greenhouses used to grow flowers supplied to Europe, but this valuable infrastructure that would have contributed to a successful economy was demolished by the Palestinians who refused to use anything Jewish.

Despite such evidence of Israel's compliant attitude, the world community, including the United States impatiently expects Israel to withdraw, reacting as if Israel is no longer threatened by her neighbors, when in fact the parties are still at war.

For decades, the world has expected to achieve peace in the Middle East through negotiation, which basically consists of concessions on the part of Israel, ignoring the Khartoum Resolution, which was signed in 1967 between Syria and the Joined Arab League nations. Paragraph three of the Resolution clearly states the main principles by which the Arab States abide, "namely, no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, no negotiations with it...."

The Khartoum Resolution, which the Arab League has never renounced, is such a clear statement of opposition and non-cooperation that it is known as "The Three Nos." But the rest of world wants to imagine that the parties are at peace—that if Israel would only follow the "road map" and offer land for peace the problem would be solved.

History illustrates the absurdity of this suggestion. There were many attempts to placate Adolf Hitler in the 1930s, but the one act that crystallized the folly of appeasement occurred when Britain and France, led by Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, renounced their pledge to guarantee the borders of Czechoslovakia which allowed Hitler a free hand. Chamberlain, after negotiating the Munich Agreement which gave territory to Hitler, is captured forever on film, waving the paper with Hitler's signature and proclaiming that they had achieved "peace for our time."

In light of history, Chamberlain's claim to have achieved peace seems ironic, but the world could justifiably fool itself into believing that Germany wanted to continue to be at peace because it had signed the Treaty of Versailles which ended World War I.

Czechoslovakia was dismembered by Hitler and eventually fully captured. Czechoslovakia would

have been right to resist. If the Czechs had defended themselves against German aggression and captured German territory to act as a buffer against further attack, would people have thought the League of Nations was correct in demanding that Czechoslovakia return these lands to Germany? Further, if Germany had not signed an armistice but instead had been able to forge an agreement such as the Khartoum Resolution with their allies, no reasonable person would have expected peace in the area.

Article 42 of the 1907 Hague Regulations states that a "territory is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army. The occupation extends only to the territory where such authority has been established and can be exercised." Israel is correct in asserting that it is not an occupier: Israeli armies and citizens have left Gaza. The Palestinians established and elected a government. This government has engaged in warlike acts against Israel. Israel, along with Egypt, who is also concerned about her security, has a right to institute a blockade in accordance with international law.

The world community, in condemning Israel for legitimately intercepting ships which challenge its lawful blockade, acts as if Gaza remains an occupied territory and Israel has the responsibilities of an occupier. In reality, Gaza displays the attributes of a state that has launched a war against another sovereign state.

Some say Israel, as a creation of the United Nations should abide by the organization's resolutions. It should be noted that unlike Czechoslovakians in 1938 who were dependent on France and Britain for their defense, Israelis have fought for and defended their borders. Israel has achieved true statehood. It should be allowed to conduct its affairs with its neighbors accordingly.

It is time for Israel to make it clear to the United Nations and the world community that it will not be another Czechoslovakia. Israelis cannot be expected to continue to make peace all by themselves. Peace cannot be achieved by one party—no matter how many concessions are granted—if the other party remains at war.

-Kerry and Peggy McCarthy are writers living in Indiana.

Venezuela: A new global terrorist haven

By Anthony Rainone

Since assuming office as President of Venezuela in December 1998, Hugo Chavez has cultivated ties to numerous regimes such as Iran that advocate terrorism as an integral part of government policy.

According to several Colombian law enforcement documents and *El Tiempo*, a leading Colombian newspaper, Mr. Chavez allows the use of Venezuelan territory as a staging area for terrorist organizations such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (known as the FARC) to attack Colombia's armed forces. This attack is aimed at overthrowing the democratic government of Colombia. This threatens the peace and stability of the region.

The most recent counternarcotics report from September 17, 2007 released by the White House and the U.S. Department of State states that Venezuela is now a major transshipment point for drugs not only to the United States but to Africa and Europe. This is due to rampant corruption and a weak judicial system which has enabled terrorist organizations such as the FARC to move freely in Venezuela. This access allows the organization to move large quantities of narcotics in order to fund their brutal insurgency against the government of Colombia.

The State Department believes that the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Quds Force (IRGC) may have established a presence in Venezuela, according to an April 2010 report on Iran by STRATFOR, a global intelligence for-profit company founded in 1996. The mission of the Quds Forces is to train FARC terrorists to attack the Armed forces of Colombia from Venezuelan soil, gather intelligence and provide other security assistance to the government of Mr. Chavez. The Quds force also has a relationship with Hezbollah terrorists that may have had a hand in the 1992 and 1994 devastating attacks on the Jewish community in Argentina. These devastating attacks allowed Iran through the Quds forces to establish a strong presence in Latin America which has only been enhanced by allowing their presence



on Venezuelan territory by Mr. Chavez.

Moreover, Mr. Chavez also has turned a blind eye to document forgery on Margarita island off the Venezuelan coast which has been linked to suspected terrorists by giving them freedom of movement throughout Latin America without the suspicion of law enforcement and immigration officials according to an August 2008 report by the International Institute For Counter Terrorism a respected think tank. These suspected terrorists could use Margarita Island as a transient staging area to launch attacks in the Western hemisphere without true Venezuelan involvement. The Venezuelan government under the leadership of Mr. Chavez has relaxed immigration controls on specific groups of travelers that may have ties to regimes that support terrorism, such as Syria and Iran. Residents of these countries have relative freedom of movement in Venezuela which makes their accountability problematic. Venezuela, Iran and Syria now have established air links established that serve as a gateway to the Americas: Thus, those who have links to terrorists now also have a foothold in our hemisphere, with the support of the Venezuelan government.

Over the last 10 years, the government of Venezuela has procured over five billion dollars in arms

brought mostly from Russia. The arms purchases are vastly in excess of rational defense needs in order to protect Venezuelan territory. A troubling aspect of these purchases is a license that Venezuela received to manufacture small arms ammunition. There is little doubt that once this arms manufacturing facility is completed, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) will receive some of this ammunition in order to kill Colombia security personnel and innocent Colombian civilians. The rampant corruption and politicization of the Venezuelan Armed Forces allows for the transfer of arms to suspected terrorists and terrorist organizations in order to achieve the political and military goals of the Venezuelan government under the direction of Mr. Chavez.

Venezuela has also acquired huge amounts of surface to air missiles which pose a deadly threat to aircraft, especially helicopters. Terrorist organizations such as the FARC desperately desire these advanced weapons systems in order to neutralize the combat effectiveness of the Colombian air force which has inflicted devastating casualties and weakened the morale of FARC terrorist fighters in combat. Recent evidence uncovered by the government of Colombia and Sweden shows that some Swedish arms procured by Venezuela ended in the hands of Colombian

terrorists, according to a July 2009 BBC news report.

The Obama administration continues its very dangerous appeasement policy with America's enemies such as Venezuela, as well as with rouge nations that use terrorism as an instrument of state policy. It is not surprising that the Obama administration has no effective plan to counter Venezuela's growing corrosive influence in Latin America. The current administration simply will not strongly stand by our closest allies in the region such as Colombia and Peru. In addition, we have allowed Iran, Cuba, China and Russia to take the lead in asserting influence in Latin America—all to the detriment of America's national security and that of our allies.

But there is a small sign that America is awaking to these dangers. In the last several days, 10 members of the United States Senate sent a letter to the White House demanding that the United States put Venezuela on the State Department's list of countries that support international terrorism. If the senators are successful, this will send a strong message that America is serious about stopping the spread of terrorism.

-Anthony Rainone is a retired Army intelligence officer.

War lessons from the past

By Joe Vigliotti

The current conflict in Afghanistan is the longest war in American history and there are now more than 1,000 dead. Victor Davis Hanson's book, "The Father of Us All: War and History, Ancient and Modern" (Bloomsbury Press, 2010) provides timely insight. A military historian, columnist and former classics professor, Mr. Hanson is well-adept at political analysis and commentary. He explains that war is in an inescapable tenet of human nature. For better and worse, war will always be with us and therefore, we need a better understanding of war.

Mr. Hanson notes that military history is like the black sheep of historical studies. Classes are devoted to the home front, to women's contributions to the war effort, to internment camps, but rarely to battlefield conditions, tactics, strategies or the men on the field. The study of war itself, uncultured and grotesque, is brushed aside by elite academics who prefer to focus on the circumstances of war. "The focus instead," writes Mr. Hanson, "is frequently on the race, class, and gender of combatants and wartime civilians, and so our attention is turned away from the front to larger questions of ideology and identity."



counterinsurgency strategy that focused on population protection, popularized as "the Surge."

For an American public unused to large-scale conventional warfare after the nation-building and strategic bombing missions that characterized American military action in the 1990s, and clean victories like Grenada (1983) and the Gulf War (1991), a drawn-out affair in faraway lands becomes taxing and tiring. Such a distant conflict becomes especially exhausting when initial sweeping success is overshadowed by insurgency attacks, and a media that daily reports the dire situations on the front, and lists the dead and wounded like a tally sheet. "Our will power is predicated upon inevitable mistakes being learned from and rectified far more competently and quickly than the enemy will learn from his," writes Mr. Hanson. The American public needs a more mature view of warfare: "If the United States is to fight future wars, our national wartime objective should be victory, a goal that brings with it the acceptance of tragic errors as well as the appreciation of heroic and brilliant conduct."

Studying military history also reveals the origins and evolution of warfare. Mr. Hanson finds that "today's conventional militaries are not only equipped with Western-designed weaponry and organized along Western lines, but they even look uniformly Western—if we can judge by Chinese boots, Egyptian camouflaged tanks and Venezuelan officer caps. Apparently, there is a universal consensus that the best way to marshal manpower and material for conventional war is to emulate the system that originated on the killing fields of Greece and Rome." And so it is all the better to understand Greece and Rome—and their military history.

Therefore, as Americans are confronted with drawing down the troops in Iraq and winning the war in Afghanistan, Mr. Hanson aptly reminds us that "Western military successes never progressed in linear or predetermined fashion." The study of military history gives us perspective and provides lessons for current and future conflicts. Even when wars are conducted to a successful conclusion, they are inevitably harsh and turbulent—and fraught with many mistakes along the way.

-Joe Vigliotti is a writer living in Maryland. His work can be found at: www.traditiontomorrow.blogspot.com.

Yet an understanding of the battlefield is important to wartime civilians and successive generations. Mr. Hanson notes that public support of the Korean War (1951-53) ebbed and flowed along with success on the field—the same is true with Operation Iraqi Freedom. The initial three-week victory over Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist forces in the early spring of 2003 was deceptive to the American public, as a determined insurgency and fierce internecine rivalry followed Saddam's toppling.

The Iraq War garnered overwhelming public support in the spring of 2003, which eventually declined as the insurgency dragged on and casualties mounted. "A sophisticated society takes for granted the ability to select from five hundred cable channels; so too, contemporary Americans, spurred on by 'greeted as liberators' assurances by our naïve leaders, almost expect Saddam instantly gone, Jeffersonian democracy up and running reliably, and the Iraqi economy growing like Dubai's in a few seasons," writes Mr. Hanson. Mr. Hanson explains that if this is not the case, "then someone must be blamed for ignorance, malfeasance, or inhumanity." President George W. Bush and the Republicans were held up by Democrats as scapegoats in the 2006 midterm elections, which resulted in the loss of a Republican-controlled Congress.

In such situations, at least a cursory knowledge of military history is helpful to understand harsh truths about war. When one nation begins a war, that nation must only ever intend to win, otherwise a country like Korea will be divided into free and totalitarian partitions poised in an impermanent truce. Wars are not always simple open-and-shut incidents; nor are bombing campaigns, strategic missile assaults, highly advanced weapons technology or limited operations like those in Panama (1989) and Kosovo (1999) tantamount to replacing infantry brigades and tanks in the field as was the case in Iraq in March 2003.

Mr. Hanson also notes that spectacular successes—for example, the Union success at Gettysburg in July, 1863—are only ever possible after failures lead to learning, as was the case with the Union failures at Fredericksburg (December, 1862) and Chancellorsville (May, 1863). In a similar manner, the "small-footprint" strategy of then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld during the Iraq War failed by 2006. It was replaced by General Petraeus' offensive

Obama's division and destruction

By Kelly Kathryn Llobet

“Hope and change” for America was the catch phrase for then-candidate Barack Hussein Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign. But “division and destruction” of America shall be the catch phrase of his current presidential political agenda. Julius Caesar coined the strategy of “divide and conquer” against his enemies, not his fellow Romans. Mr. Obama’s divisiveness is being waged against the classic American cultural institutions of the military and the family. The president should tackle issues where consensus, not separation, exists among the American people.

On May 26, 2010 Gallup’s annual Values and Beliefs survey concluded that “Americans generally agree about the morality of 12 out of 16 behaviors or social policies that sometimes spark public controversy, with sizable majorities saying each is either “morally acceptable” or “morally wrong.” By contrast, views on doctor-assisted suicide, gay and lesbian relations, abortion and having a baby outside of marriage are closely divided—the percentage supporting and the percentage opposing are within 15 points of each other.”

Opinion regarding the moral acceptability of doctor-assisted suicide split 46 percent in favor to 46 percent against. This division was brought to light during the heated Health Reform debate of 2009. Obamacare has certainly been called into question on end-of-life issues by Betsy McCaughey, former lieutenant governor of New York, Sarah Palin, former governor of Alaska, and average citizens across America. Obamacare would authorize Medicare to



pay for a consultation every five years between a patient and doctor or nurse, to discuss how much or little medical care is desired in the event of incapacitation. Patients could be instructed on how to write an advanced healthcare directive. It defines standard categories of care that can be included in such a document as nutrition, hydration, antibiotics and resuscitation in the event of a lack of pulse.

On the issue of “having a baby outside of marriage,” the split among Americans was 54 percent of Americans said this morally acceptable to and 40 percent said it is wrong. President Barack Obama

falls into the minority opinion, as evidenced by his statement on the campaign trail in 2008. He said, “Look, I’ve got two daughters. 9-years-old and 6-years-old....if they make a mistake, I don’t want them punished with a baby.” Mr. Obama favors late-term abortion, as evidenced by his voting record in the Illinois Senate. We know what Mr. Obama’s remedy is for babies conceived out of marriage.

The Gallup Poll findings on abortion show that 38 percent believe it is morally acceptable, while 50 percent believe it is morally wrong. Our chief executive has mounted numerous policy assaults on this issue. He signed two executive orders promoting abortion within the first days of his presidency. On Jan 23, 2009 he overturned the Mexico City policy which required all non-governmental organizations that receive federal funding to refrain from performing or promoting abortion services, as a method of family planning, in foreign countries. Essentially, taxpayer money now funds abortion worldwide. On March 9, 2009, he signed Executive Order 13505 Removing Barriers to Responsible Scientific Research Involving Human Stem Cells. With this act, he declared open season on the tiniest of human life.

Mr. Obama continues to disregard majority opinion on abortion by including in his administration or appointing to key positions those who favor this abomination. For example, Chief-of-Staff Rahm Emmanuel, Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano, Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Seblius and Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan—these are the transmitters of his pro-abortion policy.

Finally, gay or lesbian relations are the second most politically divisive behavioral or social issue, according to the Gallup Poll. Fifty-two percent of Americans say homosexual relations are accept-

able and 43 percent called it wrong. Here again, Mr. Obama’s appointees and policy pursuits seem out of step with the American people. In his 2008 book, “Nudge,” Administrator of the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs Cass Sunstein refers to state-recognized marriage as an “official license scheme” and promotes civil unions. Kevin Jennings founder and one-time executive director of the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) has praised the North American Man/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA) founder and yet was appointed as the president’s safe schools czar. In March 2010, Mr. Obama made a recess appointment of Chai Feldblum from Georgetown Law who helped author the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). The act is now before Congress and would prohibit employment discrimination based on someone’s real or perceived sexual orientation.

With the repeal of the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy on the horizon, the U.S. military is Mr. Obama’s next target. Currently, the Clinton-era act prohibits any homosexual or bisexual person from disclosing his or her sexual orientation or from speaking about any homosexual relationships. On May 24, 2010, in response to the looming repeal, Republican Congressman Mike Pence of Indiana said, “The American people don’t want the American military to be used to advance a liberal political agenda. And House Republicans will stand on that principle.” Yet, Republicans have thus far been ineffective: The House has passed a bill along party lines that will repeal the policy after a military review; the legislation will now be reviewed by the Senate.

Mr. Obama has forsaken the more centrist ideas he campaigned on and is instead advancing a radical and divisive agenda. The Tea Party movement is a spontaneous response to the aggressive advances in the culture war and in government spending that has occurred over the past 17 months. Being the champion of a platform that placates a minority of the population on sensitive moral issues is not admirable governance. Perhaps the president should focus on matters upon which more agreement exists amongst the people: win our foreign wars, secure our domestic borders and fix the oil spilling in the Gulf of Mexico. Mr. President, stop litigating and start leading.

-Kelly Kathryn Llobet is a writer living in Baltimore, a veteran Navy spouse and a proud mother of five.

The volcanic truth about climate change

By Dr. Leigh Broadhurst

The recent eruption of a volcano in Iceland demonstrates the folly of the theory of man-made global warming. We cannot clamp down on Western capitalist economies based on what *might happen* in crude theoretical models of global scale systems. On the contrary, the real, inexorable force of plate tectonics strains our economic development and challenges our very existence—day after day, with no end in sight.

A volcano beneath Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull glacier is erupting for the first time since 1820, causing rapid flooding and a huge steam-driven plume of volcanic ash and smoke. When the volcano erupted in April, thousands of flights were grounded and millions of passengers were stranded. Airlines incurred billions of dollars in uninsured losses. Equally hard-hit were thousands of businesses dependent on rapid,

dependable European air cargo flights that transport goods as diverse as Chinese auto parts and fresh African flowers. And ironically, after the airline crash which killed Polish President Kaczynski and decimated his country's leadership, many world leaders—including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and President Barack Obama—could not make it to the state funeral due to unsafe air travel conditions.

In Iceland, this is not an unusual occurrence, since the whole island is nothing but a massive volcanic complex. Iceland is the only surface manifestation of the planet's mid-ocean spreading ridge system, which is a 50,000 km long geologically active strip on the ocean floor (Fig. 1). The Mid-Atlantic Ridge is so active in Iceland that lava has built up high enough to breach the ocean's surface.

Figure 1. Ocean floor structure, spreading ridges and subduction trenches shown in darker blue. Note Iceland to the east of Greenland (white due to ice cover) directly on the Mid Atlantic Ridge.



Every geologist, oceanographer and atmospheric scientist knows that Earth's plate tectonic system, oceans and position in the solar system play the major roles in our climate. These forces are inevitable and uncontrollable. Among scientists, serious discussions regarding potential global climate change take as understood these powerful, long-term, planetary scale forces rule, thus anything that might be happening to the climate in the short term of a human lifespan is relatively minor. But somewhere along the way, some scientists became disingenuous—they realized they could influence both politicians and the public by preying on their collective ignorance of earth science, and the inherent inability of the untrained mind to fully grasp the enormity of geologic time and astronomical distances. These predominantly left-leaning scientists now have the ability to influence global politics and economic development by peddling the mantra of man-made global warming.

The Earth's crust and part of the upper mantle is divided into a set of tectonic plates (Fig. 2). Most seismic and volcanic activity occurs at the plate margins; also, the rock composition of continental crust

differs from that of the ocean floor crust. Tectonic plate margins can involve continental collisions (Himalayas, Alps); subduction where oceanic crust slides below continental crust (Peru-Chile Trench, Aleutian Trench); oceanic or continental crust sliding laterally (California, Mediterranean); or oceanic or continental crust rifting apart (East Pacific Rise, African Rift Valley). Most land-based volcanic activity occurs near subduction zones; note the "Pacific Ring of Fire" in Fig 2. However, 75 to 80 percent of all eruptions occur along the mid-ocean ridges. These rift areas are a 50,000 km chain of underwater volcanoes, spewing lava, belching gases and heating seawater. Eventually most of these gases enter our atmosphere.

Oceanic plates separate at different rates: the Arctic Ridge has the slowest rate (less than 2.5 cm/yr) and the East Pacific Rise near Easter Island has the fastest rate (greater than 15 cm/yr). The rifting rate of a ridge segment can change, which in turn dramatically increases or decreases the volcanic activity—vis-à-vis Eyjafjallajökull. Geophysicists do not know why plate motion is non-uniform or why it suddenly accelerates or decelerates. Such activity

Figure 2. The Earth's tectonic plates.

Active Volcanoes, Plate Tectonics, and the "Ring of Fire"



is as unpredictable as earthquakes. We know where earthquakes are likely to occur, but geoscience has not advanced enough to tell us when they will take place. If an undersea ridge segment acts up, all the carbon taxes in the world cannot offset the gases that will pour out, maybe for 1,000 years non-stop. And some of these gases cool the planet, rather than warm it.

Although humans are “continent-centric,” it is well to note in the contemporary climate change debate that oceans cover 70 percent of the planet. The ocean-atmosphere interaction dominates our climate, but remains poorly understood. The historical temperature record of the open ocean is minimal, and even today’s satellite measurements are lacking compared to continental measurements. The oceans are the major source of carbon—including greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide and methane. Oceans are also the major source of the most abundant and active greenhouse gas: water vapor. After nitrogen and oxygen, water vapor is the third most abundant gas in the atmosphere. (Keep in mind, also, that we have more of the unreactive noble gas argon in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide). We do not have any significant control over water vapor levels in the atmosphere, but they certainly control us: without atmospheric water, higher life forms would not exist.

In the northern hemisphere, ocean-atmosphere interactions and atmospheric circulation patterns

Islamic female genital mutilation in America

By Herbert London

In a policy shift that smacks of appeasement, the American Academy of Pediatrics suggested American doctors should be given permission to perform a ceremonial pinprick on girls from Muslim culture in order to keep their families from imposing full circumcision cliterdectomies.

The academy’s committee on bioethics justified their position by noting federal law “makes criminal any nonmedical procedure performed on the genitals” of a girl in the United States, thereby driving some families to take their daughters overseas to undergo mutilation. Presumably, the ritual “nick” is a compromise to avoid greater harm.

But whatever the intention, this policy shift vouchsafes legitimacy to a practice that should not be permitted.

change over a 30-year cycle, which affects precipitation levels and the severity of winters. However this cycle was only identified in 1913, so we do not have enough complete data cycles to determine whether increases in snow, rain, hurricanes or tornado frequency have occurred since the Industrial Revolution.

As early as 1988, some scientists started a quiet revolt, seeing their research twisted and debased; nonetheless two decades passed with man-made global warming and its attendant catastrophe being virtual gospel. Then in 2007, British courts ruled that a disclaimer and erratum sheet had to accompany Al Gore’s documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*, if shown in schools. And in 2009, computer hackers published numerous private emails proving that leading climate scientists at the University of East Anglia’s Climate Research Unit conspired to falsify global temperature records and prevent dissenting scientific viewpoints from being published (someone please nominate these folks for the Nobel Prize). The scandal, known as “climategate,” gave us perspective on disingenuousness morphing into scientific misconduct, blackballing and criminal misuse of taxpayer funds. Today, the inconvenient truth of volcano Eyjafjallajokull mocks the catastrophists.

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How much bloodletting will satisfy parents? And at what point do compromises end? For example, if Muslim countries allow wife beating and slavery, do we allow a little of these practices in the United States in order to avoid more extreme examples? Perhaps a punch or two would be acceptable.

Insisting that the practice of mutilation is wrong, unacceptable and barbaric does not indicate “insensitivity” to another culture. There are humane considerations which transcend cultural practice and that should be honored everywhere.

Currently, 130 million females worldwide have undergone genital mutilation according to the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. It is mostly performed on girls

under the age of 15. Very often, this procedure results in severe complications with pregnancy and sexual dysfunction.

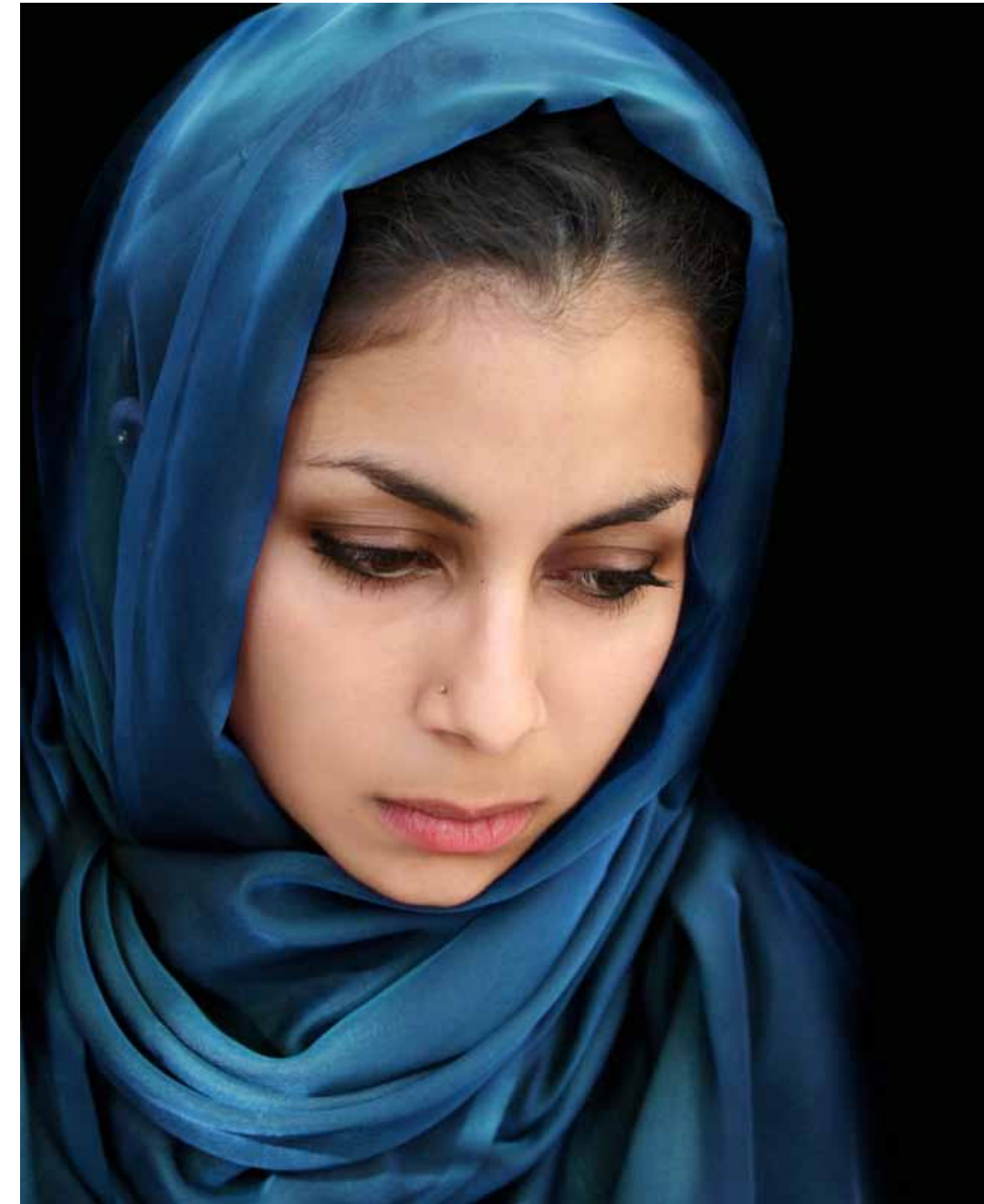
But where are the feminists? If there were ever an issue that should bring feminists to the barricades, this is it. Moreover, a compromise that legitimates even the recognition of this monstrous practice should be seen for what it is: the thin edge of the wedge that will allow for other barbaric acts.

On a larger front, this decision by pediatricians reveals a sentiment widespread in Europe and now gaining traction in the United States: a desire to avoid conflict through preemptive compromises. Since intimidation is a backstage theme, Western nations prefer conciliation to violence, even if it means undermining the fabric of society. That explains why British and Danish representatives have discussed acknowledging Sharia law in legal matters. Of course, reconciliation isn’t possible since Sharia law is not capable of accommodating common law and Constitutional principles. For Muslims, it is all or nothing and, since they recognize the vulnerability of Western institutions, it is more “all” than “nothing.”

That an intelligent group of doctors do not recognize the implications in their actions is truly puzzling. But then again, so many are blinded by fear and hope that a “modest” measure of compromise will satisfy the demanding voices. Rarely, of course, does reciprocity enter the equation. What is good for the goose should be good for the gander. Unfortunately, that is not the way Islam is treated in most Western capitals.

This is not the end of this cultural tale; there are and will be further compromises and from many surprising sources. Where this is leading is frighteningly clear: the incremental adjustment in Western standards will lead ultimately to civilizational change that champions extreme Islamic sentiment.

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