# POLICY *Review*

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2002, NO. 115, $6.00

THE NEW TRANSATLANTIC PROJECT
RONALD D. ASMUS AND
KENNETH M. POLLACK

NOW, PLAY THE INDIA CARD
LLOYD RICHARDSON

THE FALSE PROMISE OF "FULL DISCLOSURE"
ROBERT W. HAHN

CLASSROOM RESEARCH AND CARGO CULTS
E.D. HIRSCH JR.

ALSO: ESSAYS AND REVIEWS BY
PETER BERKOWITZ,
BENJAMIN WALLACE-WELLS,
AND CHERYL MILLER

A PUBLICATION OF THE HOOVER INSTITUTION
STANFORD UNIVERSITY

THE HOOVER INSTITUTION was established at Stanford University in 1919 by Herbert Hoover, a member of Stanford's pioneer graduating class of 1895 and the thirty-first president of the United States. Since 1919 the Institution has evolved from a library and repository of documents to an active public policy research center. Simultaneously, the Institution has evolved into an internationally recognized library and archives housing tens of millions of books and documents relating to political, economic, and social change.

The Hoover Institution's overarching purposes are:

- To collect the requisite sources of knowledge pertaining to economic, political, and social changes in societies at home and abroad, as well as to understand their causes and consequences
- To analyze the effects of government actions relating to public policy
- To generate, publish, and disseminate ideas that encourage positive policy formation using reasoned arguments and intellectual rigor, converting conceptual insights into practical initiatives judged to be beneficial to society
- To convey to the public, the media, lawmakers, and others an understanding of important public policy issues and to promote vigorous dialogue

Ideas have consequences, and a free flow of competing ideas leads to an evolution of policy adoptions and associated consequences affecting the well-being of a free society. The Hoover Institution endeavors to be a prominent contributor of ideas having positive consequences.

In the words of President Hoover:

> *This Institution supports the Constitution of the United States, its Bill of Rights, and its method of representative government. Both our social and economic systems are based on private enterprise from which springs initiative and ingenuity. . . . The Federal Government should undertake no governmental, social or economic action, except where local government, or the people, cannot undertake it for themselves. . . . The overall mission of this Institution is . . . to recall the voice of experience against the making of war, and . . . to recall man's endeavors to make and preserve peace, and to sustain for America the safeguards of the American way of life. . . . The Institution itself must constantly and dynamically point the road to peace, to personal freedom, and to the safeguards of the American system.*

# POLICY *Review*

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2002, NO. 115

## Features



## Books



## Letters



A PUBLICATION OF THE HOOVER INSTITUTION
STANFORD UNIVERSITY

# POLICY *Review*

OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2002, NO. 115



*Policy Review*® (ISSN 0146-5945) is published bimonthly by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. For more information, write: The Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford CA 94305-6010. Or visit www.hoover.org. Periodicals postage paid at Washington DC and additional mailing offices. The opinions expressed in *Policy Review* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, or their supporters.

EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES: *Policy Review*, 818 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 601, Washington DC 20006-2701. Telephone: 202-466-6730. Email: polrev@hoover.stanford.edu. Website: www.policyreview.org.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION: Contact *Policy Review*, Subscriptions Department, P.O. Box 653, Shrub Oak NY 10588 or call toll-free 1-877-558-3727. For address changes (allow six weeks), provide old and new address, including ZIP codes. Second class postage paid at Washington DC and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Policy Review*, Subscriptions Department, P.O. Box 653, Shrub Oak NY 10588. Subscription rates: $36 per year. Add $10 per year for foreign delivery. 

# The New Transatlantic Project

## *A response to Robert Kagan*

*By* RONALD D. ASMUS AND KENNETH M. POLLACK

FOR 50 YEARS and more, the United States and our European allies cooperated in a grand strategic venture to create a democratic, peaceful, prosperous continent free of threats from within and without. At the dawn of a new century, that task is approaching completion. This autumn both NATO and the EU are likely to launch so-called "Big Bang" rounds of enlargement, encompassing up to seven and 10 countries, respectively. If successful, these moves will help lock in democracy and security from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

Relations between Russia and the West are also back on track. Russian President Vladimir Putin has opted to protect Moscow's interests by cooperating with the U.S. and Europe rather than by trying to play a spoiler role. The certitude of that decision and, above all, the depth of Moscow's commitment to democracy at home remain open questions. But Putin's turn to the West has further reduced the risk that Russia might again become a strategic adversary and has instead opened a window to put the West's rela-

---

*Ronald D. Asmus is senior transatlantic fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States and an adjunct senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. Kenneth M. Pollack is director of research at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. They both served in the Clinton administration.*

tions with Russia on a more stable and cooperative footing.

There is still work to be done. Not all of the European democracies are fully functional and not all of the European economies are prosperous. Completing Central and Eastern Europe's integration will take time even after they join NATO and the EU. Balkan instability has been stemmed but the underlying tensions are not yet resolved. Ukraine's westward integration and that of Russia will remain works in progress for years to come. And the West is only waking up to the challenge of the Caucasus and Central Asia.

But the key cornerstones of a new, peaceful European order are in place. The grand strategic issues that preoccupied statesmen and strategists for the second half of the twentieth century — Germany's internal order and place in Europe, the anchoring of Central and Eastern Europe to the West, and the establishment of the foundation for a democratic Russia to integrate itself with Europe — have been or are in the process of being largely resolved. Europe today is at peace with itself and more democratic and secure than at any time in history. If Harry Truman and his European counterparts could look down upon us today, they would no doubt be proud of what has been accomplished in their names.

*The key cornerstones of a new, peaceful European order are in place.*

Unfortunately, there is bad news too. The extraordinary accomplishment of the Atlantic alliance does not mean that America and Europe are now safe and secure. Success on the continent has been matched by the emergence of new threats from beyond. September 11 has brought home what a number of strategists have been predicting for years — that the new century would usher in new, different, and potentially very dangerous threats to our societies. On the verge of eradicating the danger to our societies from intra-European war and thermonuclear exchanges, we are faced with new scourges — terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, mass migrations, rogue and failed states, and the threat of disruptions to the economic lifelines of the world.

September 11 has become a symbol and metaphor for the new perils looming on the horizon. No one can doubt that Osama bin Laden would have used weapons of mass destruction on September 11 if he had had them. We know that al Qaeda and similar groups are trying to obtain such weapons and will, in all probability, use them if they succeed. The odds of their success are too good for comfort. Indeed, the likelihood of weapons of mass destruction being used against our citizens and societies is probably greater today than at any time since the Cuban missile crisis.

While America is the target of choice for these terrorists, Europe may not be far behind. It was certainly no accident that the United States was struck September 11, but it is not much of a stretch to imagine a similar attack on Europe in the future. There is already ample evidence of past terrorist plots

by these groups on the continent. As the U.S. hardens as a target, the temptation to strike in Europe may grow. If one examines the ideology and goals of many of these groups, their hatred is rooted as much in who we are as in the details of specific policies. For them, it is not a great leap to shift from striking Washington to hitting London, Paris, or Brussels.

Even if Europe is only a distant second on the target list of most terrorists today, it is threatened by other problems spawned by the same undercurrents that created al Qaeda and its anti-American allies. Terrorists have often made Europe their preferred shooting gallery, even when their victims have been Americans, Israelis, or their own dissidents. Weapons of mass destruction and medium-range ballistic missiles in the hands of rogue Middle Eastern states would be able to target European cities. Finally, the instability of the states on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean poses a threat to trade across the inland sea, potentially producing vast waves of desperate immigrants headed north and west toward the riches and opportunity of Europe.

The intersection of these trends requires the United States and Europe to rethink the purpose of the transatlantic relationship. For the past half-century, our common purpose was to defend Europe from threats on the continent. Today the most dangerous threats to both American and European security emanate from beyond Europe. The greatest risk of large numbers of Americans and Europeans being killed no longer comes from a Russian invasion or even ethnic war in the Balkans. It is the threat of terrorists or rogue states in the Greater Middle East armed with weapons of mass destruction attacking our citizens, our countries, or our vital interests abroad.

Addressing this threat is the strategic challenge of our time. It is for our generation of leaders the equivalent of what facing down Stalin was for Truman and his counterparts in 1949. The question is whether both sides of the Atlantic will demonstrate the wisdom and strategic foresight of their predecessors to recast the transatlantic relationship to meet this new test. Like building a secure and democratic Europe, the task will not be easy, it will not be cheap, and it will not be quick. But it will make our lives and the world a much better place, and it is a challenge we must meet, lest it threaten not only the Atlantic alliance, but the lives and livelihoods of our peoples themselves.

## The new challenge

NEITHER THE U.S. nor Europe has yet fully come to terms with the nature of the new threat we face, our inherent vulnerabilities as Western democracies, and the consequences for our future national security policies. This threat is not just terrorism of the sort many countries, particularly in Europe, have known in past decades. It is the inter-

weaving of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and failed and rogue states from Marrakesh to Bangladesh. Moreover, these problems are themselves only symptoms of the deeper economic and political turmoil afflicting the region.

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fisher has called the combination of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists driven by anti-Western ideologies a "new totalitarian threat." Like other twentieth century totalitarians, today's Islamic fanatics claim that they possess absolute truth, despise Western modernity yet borrow from its technological accomplishments in an effort to destroy it, and believe that force and terror are necessary for a new utopia to replace the current corrupt and decadent world.[1]

This new form of terrorism is fed by wells of hatred and disaffection throughout the region. The result is a Maoist "sea" in which terrorists swim and hide. Their ideologies and causes encourage attacks on American military targets one day, attacks on Israeli, German, or British civilians the next, and attacks on French businesses the day after that. Unfortunately, it may be only a matter of time before it involves the potentially catastrophic use of weapons of mass destruction by either terrorists or rogue states. The only question is whether those weapons will be used first by al Qaeda against the United States, by GIA against France, by Kashmiri separatists against India, or by some other group against some other nation.

It is understandable that the initial reaction to September 11, especially in the United States, has been the desire to bolster homeland defense and to go after the perpetrators of the attacks militarily. Yet the more we come to understand the challenge we face, the clearer it becomes that our current approach, though necessary, is inadequate. We can reduce but never eliminate our inherent vulnerabilities as democratic nations whose strength and vitality rest on our openness to the world. Even if we dramatically improve our defenses at home, we will never build anything near a failsafe system. A 90 percent success rate may be excellent in many areas, but it is not good enough when we are dealing with terrorist groups and regimes willing to use weapons of mass destruction against us. A 10 percent or even 1 percent failure rate can lead to the deaths of thousands or tens of thousands of our citizens.

It would therefore be wrong to adopt a modern-day version of a Maginot Line strategy. Instead, we need to go on the offensive to address the root causes and not just the symptoms of terrorism and the other problems we face. To be sure, such a strategy must have a military component. But terrorism is primarily a political problem and the war against terrorism must be won on the political battlefield as well as the military one. We need to think

---

[1]For a comparison of today's Islamic terrorists with twentieth century totalitarians see Jeffrey Herf, "What is Old and What is New in the Terrorism of Islamic Fundamentalism?" *Partisan Review* LXIX:1 (Winter 2002).

not only in terms of military preemption but political preemption as well.

While we often talk about the terrorist threat as a global one, the challenge we face is de facto concentrated in one specific geographic region — the Greater Middle East. That region starts with Northern Africa and Egypt and Israel at the eastern end of the Mediterranean and extends throughout the Persian Gulf to Afghanistan and Pakistan. In some ways, it can be seen as encompassing the turbulent regions of the Caucasus and perhaps even Central Asia to the extent that those regions suffer from the same underlying problems. It is from this region that the greatest threats to our security come — in the form of foot soldiers for future terrorist attacks, the funding and financing for such attacks, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction that can be used against us, the overflow of civil wars from one state to the next, and the refugee flows that all of these developments inevitably trigger.

*While most of the world marches into the twenty-first century, the Greater Middle East clings to the fourteenth.*

To make matters worse, the region itself is becoming a geopolitical tinderbox. Violent conflict there can have a direct impact on our economic livelihood and civilization. A new Arab-Israeli war could spark spillover effects in both Europe and the United States. One need only imagine the consequences of a radicalized anti-Western successor regime in Saudi Arabia or a nuclear-armed Pakistan in the hands of an anti-Western Islamic regime to understand the far-reaching impact that events in the region can have on Western security.

The Greater Middle East suffers from a crisis of governance coupled with the inability of its states to meet the challenges of modernity and globalization. While most of the world marches into the twenty-first century, the Greater Middle East clings to the fourteenth. Its regimes are increasingly out of step with its people. Its economies, even those buttressed by massive oil wealth, fail to provide prosperity or even dignity to its people. Its educational systems produce masses of literate but maleducated young people whom the floundering social safety net can no longer support, leaving them ripe for exploitation by the purveyors of hate and terror. Meanwhile, a new wave of modern communications has awakened the region to its own comparative backwardness and given voice to hatemongers seeking to blame that backwardness on the plots of the West.

The failure of the Greater Middle Eastern regimes in the most basic sense has, in turn, helped breed the extreme ideologies, movements, and rogue states that now pose a potentially existential threat to the West. Not all of the region's woes can be traced directly to the underlying problems of political, economic, and social stagnation, but even those that cannot have been greatly exacerbated by these larger effects of the failure of the Greater

Middle East. The Arab-Israeli conflict started for other reasons, but these deeper problems are now feeding it. Saddam Hussein is as much a symptom of the problem as its cause, but he too is capitalizing on it, making himself a far greater threat to the West than he would be if the region were not so volatile. America's problems are with Saddam Hussein while Europe's problems are with North African and Middle Eastern emigration and extremist groups, yet both are threatened by the Arab-Israeli violence that might detonate the entire region.

To meet this challenge, the West needs a strategy that is more than a military campaign. While killing Osama bin Laden and toppling Saddam are important objectives, by themselves they are not enough. Indeed, if pursued in isolation, they could fail or even be counterproductive. While we need to attack the capacity of terrorists and rogue states to inflict harm on us, we also need to change the dynamics that created such monstrous groups and regimes in the first place. If we do not, the names of the failed states, rogue states, and terrorists will change, but their causes and the threats we face will not. Instead, in five or 10 years, we could face new terrorist groups and new rogue states that have learned from the experience of their predecessors, and so will pose even greater dangers.

*Western strategy must address the root causes of this problem, not just the symptoms.*

Western strategy must address the root causes of this problem, not just the symptoms. While continuing to wage the military war on terrorism, we must make an equally firm commitment to a political strategy that would help transform the Middle East itself. It would mean changing the nature of the anti-Western regimes from which our enemies draw sanctuary, support, and successors by seeking to create more participatory, inclusive, and accountable regimes that can live in peace with one another. It would mean a new form of democracy in the Greater Middle East. It would mean a new economic system that could provide work, dignity, and livelihoods for the people of the region. It would mean helping Middle Eastern societies come to grips with modernity and create new civil societies that allow them to compete and integrate in the modern world without losing their sense of cultural uniqueness. Working to secure these kinds of changes must be at the center of our strategy. In the end, these issues will be critical to winning the war on terrorism and eradicating the litany of threats to our security from this region.

This is a tall order. Heretofore, such goals have been considered unreachable or simply a bridge too far. Talk about political and economic change has rarely turned into action. All too often we have embraced whichever autocratic leader seemed least undesirable and/or most inclined to share our views, ignoring the aspirations of the people of the Greater Middle East. Indeed, there are few places in the world where Western values and princi-

ples on one hand, and the reality of our policy on the other, stand in greater contradiction. This has only contributed to the widespread perception that the U.S. is a hypocritical country pursuing a double standard and caring little about the peoples of the region despite its lofty principles.

September 11 has shown us that the status quo is no longer tolerable and that our past policies have led us into a strategic dead end. Many of the regimes in the region are failing, and one of the consequences of their failures is a growing, possibly existential, and unacceptable threat to our countries. We therefore need a strategy to help this region transform itself from within into more equitable and open societies that no longer produce ideologies and people intent on killing us. Regime change cannot mean only getting rid of the current set of bad guys. It must also mean a long-term commitment to ensuring that the right kind of successor regimes follow in their wake.

This is a strategic project that will take not years, but decades. Its accomplishment exceeds the ability of any one country, including the United States. It will require sustained political, economic, and military cooperation. Critics will say that such a strategy is too ambitious, that we should scale back our goals and hope that a more circumscribed approach will be sufficient to stem the threat. But hope is not a policy.

## Elements of a strategy

WHAT WOULD A COMMON transatlantic strategy to address this threat look like in practice? The starting point would be the recognition that the greatest threats to both sides of the Atlantic today no longer come from within the continent but beyond it and in particular from the Greater Middle East. Those threats are not second-tier risks but very real and potentially existential dangers because they involve the growing likelihood of the use of weapons of mass destruction against our homelands.

We also need to stop looking at the problems and crises in the Greater Middle East as separate or distinct problems that can be addressed in isolation. A common set of driving forces across the region from Northern Africa to Pakistan is contributing to the toxic combination of radical anti-Western ideologies, terrorism, rogue states, failed states, and the drive to acquire weapons of mass destruction. The problems we face in Afghanistan, the Israeli-Arab conflict, Iraq, and Iran are all parts of the same interwoven tapestry and a larger strategic problem. Indeed, to some extent, their impact can be felt in the problems of the Caucasus and Central Asia as well.

Most of the people of the region suffer from underlying problems of economic stagnation, political alienation, maleducation, and an inability to come to terms with modernity. We need to encourage them to address these problems themselves, while we provide them with assistance — both

resources and expertise. Too often in the past, we have allowed democratization and economic liberalization to slip to the bottom of our list of concerns with our allies in the region. This must stop. The need for transformation must move to the top of both American and European priorities, which must also recognize that this will not be easy for the states of the region.

The West cannot and should not seek to impose its own models of governance on the region. The transformation of the Greater Middle East will inevitably entail elements of democratization, free market economics, rule of law, and progressive education as we understand them. But it is not up to us to dictate the final shape the region adopts. Instead, our goal should be to help the voices for progress in the region be heard and to help craft a new society. We do not know what Arab or Islamic modernity will look like. We can help the peoples of the region to lay the foundation for achieving it. But it will be up to them to define it.

*Our goal should be to help the voices for progress in the region be heard and to help craft a new society.*

The first place to start implementing this policy should be Afghanistan. We must be just as committed to the success of the new government in Afghanistan as we were to the military defeat of the Taliban. We cannot shy from the task of nation-building. The United States made the mistake of walking away from Afghanistan last time — and reaped the harvest of that mistake on September 11. If the U.S. again disengages, we will send the message to the rest of the region that we are only interested in destroying Islamic societies, not in building them. It will fuel the hatreds and the lies spread by Osama bin Laden and his ilk. It will make allies less willing to let us repeat Enduring Freedom against Saddam's Iraq — after all, the last thing they will want is for us to topple his regime if we plan to leave behind Afghan-style chaos.

Afghanistan is also an opportunity to set a precedent for positive change and transformation, and to show the rest of the region what the West is committed to. The opening up of Central Asia to an expanded U.S. and Western presence should also be used to encourage these regimes to reform and modernize and not as an excuse not to do so. After all, these countries — as members of the OSCE and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council — are already officially part of the Euro-Atlantic community. Our priority must be to ensure they become part of the solution and not part of the problem.

The second area in which the United States and Europe need to work together to help the region modernize is the Arab-Israeli conflict. The United States and Europe must bury their differences and make a more determined and sustained effort to address the problems there. Although solving this puzzle may take years or decades, we have learned that ignoring the problem only makes it much worse — and makes it harder for the United States

to do anything else in the region. Political and economic transformation can greatly ease the process of Arab-Israeli reconciliation, and this needs to be furthered. President Bush is certainly right that a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Palestinian state will require democracy and therefore, at some point, the old leadership will have to go. But the administration is putting the cart before the horse: We can't wait for a new Palestinian society to emerge before resuming negotiations because we cannot allow a festering Arab-Israeli wound to prevent the pursuit of our broader agenda in the region. We may not be able to solve the Israeli-Palestinian problem in the near term, but we need to get it under control so that we can get to work on the other threats. Consequently, the U.S. and Europe must find a way to come together behind a common approach — and to use their political, economic, and military clout to help maintain a settlement once it has been reached. If required, NATO allies should be prepared to help monitor such a settlement.

*Saddam Hussein and his regime must go, or else a strategy of promoting democratic change is impossible.*

Third, Saddam Hussein and his regime must go, both because his pursuit of nuclear weapons endangers the vital Persian Gulf region and because a longer-term strategy of promoting democratic change in the Greater Middle East is all but impossible as long as this modern-day Stalin maintains his brutal totalitarian state. This is going to require a full-scale invasion of Iraq. It would be far better for all concerned if the U.S. and Europe wage this campaign together, relying on NATO if possible. Not merely to bring the collective power of NATO to the military operation, which may be the less demanding part of such an endeavor, but because securing and rebuilding Iraq will be a long and potentially costly operation that will require a sustained security presence (albeit not nearly so costly as many suspect, thanks to Iraq's fabulous oil wealth) better handled collectively. Establishing a more democratic successor regime is as critical to our collective future as the destruction of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction.

Fourth, Iran too is a country where the United States and Europe need to help the process of regime change, albeit in ways very different from those appropriate to Iraq. The good news is that nowhere is the process of change more apparent than in Iran, where reform is only a matter of time and demographics. The bad news is that the country continues to be run by a narrow theocracy that has fought the process of democratic change at every step and pursues a foreign policy that is anathema to the United States and Europe. In the short term, this means finding ways to prevent the current Iranian government from terrorizing the region while finding ways to help the emergence of a new Iranian polity.

Finally, the United States and Europe need to promote change not only in

our adversaries but also among our friends and allies in the region. We cannot credibly insist on regime change in countries like Iraq and look the other way when it comes to Saudi Arabia and Egypt. September 11 drove home that the recruiting and financial base for many terrorist groups is in these countries. New opportunities to facilitate change may also be starting to emerge. There are now political forces in the region and an emerging civil society that themselves embrace the need for change. In spring 2002, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development published *Arab Human Development Report: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations*, authored by 22 distinguished Arab social scientists, which identified the same problems of political disenfranchisement, corruption, economic stagnation, arbitrary legal codes, and maleducation as the sources of regional ailments. The report called on the countries of the region to begin a process of transformation and on the developed world to provide the assistance necessary to make such a transformation a reality. Thus our job is not necessarily to force change on a wholly reluctant region, but to empower those striving for change and provide them with the support necessary to achieve it.

*The United States and Europe need to promote change among our friends and allies as well.*

Consequently we should not assume we will be alone in this endeavor. We will have allies in the men and women of the Greater Middle East who are seeking to embrace modernity and take advantage of globalization. In Saudi Arabia, the crown prince himself is working to reform Saudi education and law, curtail the corruption of his own family, create a more viable economy that is not wholly dependent on oil revenues, foster Islamic values of tolerance and charity, and give the Saudi people a greater say in their own governance. Among the Palestinians, there are groups who recognize that the Middle East does not need yet another corrupt Arab kleptocracy and are calling for political change, transparency, and accountability. Even in Egypt, where time is measured in centuries rather than years, President Hosni Mubarak has at times taken halting steps to privatize Egypt's moribund national industries and energize the Egyptian economy.

Taken together, even such tentative initiatives could serve as the blueprint for a grand strategy not only to win the war on terrorism, but also to build the foundation for peace in the region through political transformation and regional cooperation. Successfully implementing such a strategy will in all likelihood take decades. It will require systematic and sustained U.S.-European coordination and cooperation. In other words, it requires an alliance. Neither the U.S. nor Europe can fix the Greater Middle East by itself. By itself, Europe is not in a position to pursue such an ambitious agenda. Although the U.S. wields power on a far grander scale, American will

and might have their limits. We may not be able to do it even together. But together, and working with those in the region who aspire to the same changes, we would certainly have a much better chance to succeed.

## Can it be done?

CAN THIS GENERATION of Western leaders perform the modern-day equivalent of what Truman and European leaders did in 1949? The tone of recent transatlantic discourse suggests that the answer may be no. Although September 11 initially produced a tremendous outpouring of solidarity across the Atlantic, the mood has since soured into one of the ugliest U.S.-European spats in recent memory. It has become fashionable on both sides to argue that the differences today are deeper than ever, and that the values and interests that held this relationship together may be in danger of fraying or even breaking. Euro-trashing is as much in vogue in some right-wing circles in Washington as America-bashing is in left-wing circles in Europe.

Current transatlantic differences are real. But it is also important to look beyond the current intellectual fads and see what underlies them — and what doesn't. U.S.-European differences fall into two categories. The first are those disputes that arise from the fact that our societies are more integrated than any two parts of the planet. Clashes over the environment, child custody, the death penalty, and genetically modified food are important and make for great headlines. But they are not strategic in nature. The fact that we are debating them so intensely is a sign of how closely integrated our societies have become. They are the problems of success, not failure. Such differences were far greater in 1949. They did not prevent us from creating a strategic alliance then. They should not prevent us from working together on a new strategic agenda today.

But there is also a second category of differences. These disputes revolve around how the U.S. and Europe view the outside world, assess threats, and seek to meet them. They are rooted not only in our respective interests but are shaped by our size, historical experiences, strategic cultures, and the asymmetry in power and responsibility that both sides of the Atlantic bring to the table.[2] Such differences directly affect our ability, or lack thereof, to cooperate on questions of war and peace. They can become strategic in nature. The central question in the transatlantic relationship today is whether the U.S. and Europe can still harmonize these differences and coalesce around a new strategic purpose and paradigm to guide future cooperation across the Atlantic.

At first glance there are few issues or places where the gap across the

---

[2]See Robert Kagan, "Power and Weakness," *Policy Review* 113 (June-July 2002).

Atlantic would appear to be greater than the thorny strategic issues of bringing peace to the Greater Middle East. Making this challenge the centerpiece of transatlantic cooperation is akin to mission impossible, critics will suggest. Without underestimating or downplaying these differences, several caveats are nevertheless needed to put them into perspective.

First, until the present, neither the U.S. nor Europe felt a compelling strategic need to have a common strategy on these issues. Neither side of the Atlantic has been willing to make the political commitment to develop one. When it came to dealing with Moscow during the Cold War, both sides of the Atlantic relied on each other's counsel, cooperation, and commitment to forge a common approach. But this has rarely been the case in the Greater Middle East. The U.S. has often preferred to keep Europe on the sidelines, and key European countries had their own reasons to pursue a go-it-alone approach. Both sides no longer have that luxury in the wake of September 11.

*Past U.S.-European differences did not prevent the West from winning the Cold War.*

Second, U.S.-European differences on the key issues in the Greater Middle East, while often bitter, are largely tactical and not strategic in nature. They relate not to ends but to the means by which to reach them. Americans and Europeans do not disagree over Israel's right to exist or the need for a Palestinian state and a peace settlement — and, at the end of the day, Europe is likely to support almost any settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict that the U.S. can bring about. Nor does Europe oppose toppling Saddam Hussein, although it has grave doubts about how the Bush administration might go about doing so and what Washington's policy is for the day after. Yet these differences are not necessarily deeper than the issues that divided us during the Cold War over how best to deal with Moscow.

Third, past U.S.-European differences did not prevent the West from winning the Cold War. The alliance won not because we agreed on everything all the time but because there was a commitment to face the challenge together, to share risks and responsibilities, and to work within a common framework to iron out differences. U.S.-European consultations were not always a hindrance but often led to better policy as many a foolish American or European idea got shot down in the process. Nor did the West prevail simply because of U.S. military power. Americans and Europeans still debate whether Ronald Reagan's arms buildup or Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* was more important in bringing communism to its knees. Ultimately, it was the one-two punch of soft and hard power provided by Europe and America that helped undermine and eventually topple communism.

All of this suggests that bringing the U.S. and Europe together around such a new and ambitious strategic agenda, while certainly difficult, is

doable. The fundamental problem bedeviling the transatlantic relationship today is the lack of a common strategic purpose and a shared commitment on both sides of the Atlantic that would generate the will to harmonize divergent views and create a joint strategy.

Achieving such a new consensus would have clear-cut strategic benefits for both sides. A common U.S.-European front would leave our adversaries with less room for maneuver. Working together would give Washington a degree of political acceptance and international legitimacy the U.S. cannot acquire on its own. While the U.S. will be a dominant partner in many areas, there are other areas where Europe is not only more willing, but also potentially more able, to achieve the kinds of results we need.

A common approach could also give the U.S. more and better strategic options. If the U.S. chooses to go it alone, our actions will be circumscribed by what we can do on our own. It could lead us to opt for a more limited, largely military approach — but also one that would fail to get at the root causes of the problem and would therefore be less likely to succeed. While the administration often points to the problems that can come from trying to mount a coalition effort, unilateral action may also lead us into dangerous strategic choices.

As strong as the United States is today, we are deluding ourselves if we think we can meet this strategic challenge by ourselves. Afghanistan is a sober reminder in this regard. While the U.S. did the lion's share of fighting to defeat the Taliban, we soon discovered that our dependence on European assistance was considerable. Today there are more European forces on the ground than American. When it comes to the arduous effort of rebuilding Afghanistan, our policy is dependent on the close cooperation and support of our European and other allies.

The same is likely to be true when it comes to the other pieces of the Greater Middle Eastern puzzle. A sustainable peace settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict will require close U.S.-European support and cooperation. Some Americans may prefer that the U.S. fight Saddam Hussein on its own, but a common U.S.-European front would make the job much easier.[3] And when it comes to the thorny question of securing and rebuilding Iraq after Saddam is gone, we will be even more dependent on the assistance and support of our European allies. The list is almost endless.

Is Europe up to this challenge? Our allies have not yet had their own "Pearl Harbor," forcing them to fundamentally rethink their national priorities the way Americans have since September 11, 2001. One can only hope that Europe will learn from America's mistakes. It may take a major terrorist attack in Europe to provide that jolt — just as it did here. But this does not

---

[3]For a discussion of the utility of a coalition effort against Saddam Hussein, see Kenneth M. Pollack, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq* (Random House, forthcoming).

mean that European elite and public attitudes have not shifted at all. European governments have already gone farther than many expected in providing intelligence support, cooperating on law enforcement issues, and working together on the financial and economic aspects of the war on terrorism. While Europe has fallen behind the United States, collectively they remain the second most powerful set of militaries in the world. With modest investments in key areas, our allies can take on an even greater share of the burden in the future.

Europeans are also feeling increasingly vulnerable. In terms of public support, a recent study conducted by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and the German Marshall Fund, as well as the U.S. government's own public opinion polls, suggest that potential majority support exists in many key European states for the use of force to rid Saddam of his weapons of mass destruction. In spite of all the press coverage over European nervousness regarding U.S. policy on Iraq, many allies in private are signaling that they are prepared, in principle, to go to war in Iraq as long as they are convinced that it will be done right — that Washington will obtain UN authorization, has a credible strategy for ensuring that such a war does not destabilize the region, and is committed to working with Europe to rebuild Iraq after Saddam is gone.

Ultimately, Europeans, precisely because they share our values, are likely to be the most dependable allies we have. Indeed, for the more ambitious strategy this article lays out, their cooperation is indispensable. And in fact, the more ambitious agenda called for here is more likely to attract European support than the Bush administration's current approach.

This does not mean that Europe will give the U.S. a blank check. As they did during the Cold War, Europeans will ask realistic and, at times, pointed questions. We will have to work to gain their support. They are looking for a common strategic framework and a say commensurate with the risks they assume and the resources they devote. That is normal among friends and allies — and we would behave no differently if roles were reversed. We should listen to their questions and criticism. If we can't answer them, maybe we need to take a second look at our own strategy. If we are convinced that we need to go ahead in any case and despite their doubts, we can always do so.

## Toward a new purpose and paradigm

ON APRIL 4, 1949, Harry Truman spoke at NATO's founding in Washington, D.C. He defined NATO as an alliance to defend the common values and civilization of the democracies on both sides of the Atlantic. The existential threat that Truman and his colleagues faced was Stalin and the Soviet Union. In establishing NATO, Truman and his counterparts overcame the doubts of those who did not believe the U.S. and Europe

could forge a common strategy vis-à-vis Moscow. Fortunately, Truman ignored such counsel and decided that the strategic imperative of the day required the U.S. and Europe to forge a common strategy. In doing so, he changed the course of history. He would later view NATO's founding as one of the accomplishments of which he was most proud.

Today the United States and Europe once again face a potentially existential threat. There is little doubt that the same values and civilization that Truman spoke about defending in 1949 are again at risk. Meeting this very different challenge today requires no less unified a strategic response. What is less clear is whether today's leaders on either side of the Atlantic are capable of coming together around a new common purpose and the strategic framework needed to modernize and mobilize the Atlantic alliance for this task.

*Today the United States and Europe once again face a potentially existential threat.*

During the twentieth century, Europe was the locus of some of the greatest wars mankind has known. During the Cold War the greatest threat to international security emanated from the East-West standoff on the continent. Today, the Greater Middle East is the region with that distinction. In Europe, it took two world wars for us to understand that the key to an enduring peace on the continent was not simply managing or muting age-old hatreds and geopolitical rivalries, but overcoming them through political transformation, democracy, and integration. If history teaches us anything, it is that our best hope for a durable peace in the Greater Middle East, too, lies in the transformation of these countries into more democratic and prosperous societies capable of working together.

Forging a new strategic purpose across the Atlantic is not going to happen without the leadership of the United States and the president personally. While there is plenty that Europe must do, the lead in establishing this new direction and purpose must come from this side of the Atlantic. No one else has the authority and the influence to set the kind of new and bold strategic direction and priorities this article calls for. Yet that is precisely one of the ingredients that is missing today — a U.S. commitment to crafting a common U.S.-European approach to confront the most pressing strategic issues of the day — and to make the modernization of America's most important alliance a priority in meeting that challenge. The starting point for such an overhaul of the transatlantic agenda must be in Washington. Unilateralism and ad hoc coalitions will not be good enough.

Europe also needs to change. It must wake up to the fact that the threat we face is a common one — as well as one for which it, too, is woefully unprepared. It must stop seeking to define its identity and role in the world in contradistinction to that of America. It should learn from the mistakes of

the United States — and not wait until it, too, suffers a major attack resulting in horrific loss of life. If Europe wants to remain the great partner of the United States, it must put its money where its mouth is and devote the resources required for it to assume the stature to which it aspires.

History occasionally grants leaders opportunities to turn tragedies into opportunities. September 11 has given President Bush such an opportunity. As before, a U.S. president and his European counterparts have a chance to recast the transatlantic relationship to meet the new dangers of this new era. Thus far neither side of the Atlantic has stepped up to that challenge — and that needs to be the first change we make together.

# Now, Play the India Card

*By* LLOYD RICHARDSON

THE U.S. WAR in Afghanistan drives home this point: We can no longer afford to analyze U.S. security policy in Asia pursuant to paradigms developed to fit the realities of the Cold War. Many of these realities have changed. For example, in the 1970s, when the Soviet Union was still the principal threat to the U.S., we played the China card. The Chinese were happy to oblige, confronting the Soviet threat as they did along their common border in Central Asia. For almost two decades, that reality — the threat posed to China by the Soviets — ensured a degree of alignment in U.S.-China strategic interests. Through this experience we came to see our relationship with China as valuable in its own right, not simply as a foil to Soviet power. The strategic reality in Asia changed with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989. But over a decade later, that same Cold War paradigm still makes us tend to analyze our relationship with China as though it were the centerpiece of U.S. foreign policy in Asia.

By contrast, by the time we played the China card in 1971, India had

---

*Lloyd Richardson, a Washington lawyer, is a former U.S. foreign service officer and Asia specialist.*

been relegated to a lesser role in our strategic thinking. That was not always the case. In the first two decades of the Cold War, India and Pakistan both had been viewed as frontline states, critical to containing the expansion of Soviet and (after 1949) Chinese communism in South Asia. By the late 60s, however, India had proved to be a feckless partner — a would-be great power, with neither the military nor the economic strength to enforce its utopian foreign policy. Worse, India in 1971 abandoned its preachy neutrality to become a full-fledged member of the Soviet camp. Pakistan, for its part, had been a more loyal ally in the Cold War, but was fractious in its relations with India. By the late 60s, both countries had come to be considered in Washington as "too difficult" to deal with. This development coincided with doctrinal changes that had begun to downplay the strategic importance of South Asia generally.

*We ignore South Asia, including India, as irrelevant to U.S. interests until crisis strikes.*

This is where the paradigm got stuck. What has evolved since is a pattern in which we ignore South Asia, including India, as irrelevant to U.S. interests — until crisis strikes. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December of 1979, South Asia suddenly became important to us again, but at that point U.S. attention was focused primarily on Pakistan as a conduit for military aid to the Afghan mujahideen. Once the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, South Asia returned to the back burner.

Nuclear testing by both Pakistan and India in May 1998 provoked renewed U.S. concern with that now-nuclear rivalry, and nonproliferation economic and military sanctions followed. As a result, in the last two years of the Clinton administration, the India relationship enjoyed an unusual high-level focus, culminating in President Clinton's May 2000 trip to India, the first presidential visit in 22 years (perhaps fittingly, the last visit having been made by President Carter on his nonproliferation crusade).

The September 11 attacks on the United States have kept South Asia in the limelight, as we have recruited both India and Pakistan to the war on terrorism. That very war on terrorism, however, has exacerbated tensions between Pakistan and India over continuing political violence in Kashmir. The result? Another flurry of high-level diplomatic activity by the United States, seeking to defuse these tensions between our two allies. But this most recent round of activity — successful as it was — still fits the pattern of crisis management with India that evolved during the Cold War. What is clearly needed is a more sustained level of engagement with India. This will only happen if we begin to appreciate India's long-term strategic value to the United States. For this purpose, Kashmir, Pakistan, and even the war on terrorism are distractions. In the long term, our strategic interest in the region

is plain: India is a major Asian democratic power with the potential economic and military strength to counter the adverse effects of China's rise as a regional and world power. In other words, it is indeed time to "play the India card."

## The China paradigm

SINCE THE MID-90S, the foreign policy community has engaged in a vigorous debate over how to deal with China in the wake of the Cold War — simply put, whether to "engage" or "contain." Beyond a fundamental consensus that political liberalization in China would be a good thing, however, there is little agreement about ends and means. There is not even agreement across the board that China poses a strategic threat to the United States. Nonetheless, the relationship is widely viewed as vital to U.S. interests. It is not uncommon to hear otherwise responsible commentators intone that deterioration in the U.S.-China relationship will have "enormous negative consequences." This kind of hyperbole is typical in discussions about China. Moreover, such exaggerations about our China relationship are often intended to imply that the U.S. must take responsibility for any deterioration in the relationship if it does occur. This starting point hampers our ability to consider all available responses to China's periodic fits of intransigence.

If we stop focusing on the bilateral relationship with China — which is what the Cold War paradigm tends to make us do — and look at China in the context of what is at stake for U.S. interests in Asia as a whole, we could get different results. From this vantage point, even the question of whether China's military modernization poses a threat to the United States is less critical. It is enough that China's neighbors — Japan, Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, the countries of Southeast Asia, Australia, India — are concerned about China's military buildup, even if they do not always advertise the fact.[1] As a result, these countries always have one eye on Beijing, making them less attuned to U.S. regional and global concerns. If power is relational, as is often asserted, this result is by definition a setback to U.S. interests in Asia.

Moreover, these Asian nations have to see China not just as a potential military threat, but as an economic threat as well. To the extent that China uses its political muscle with the West to distort the allocation of foreign investment to China and to promote access for China to Western markets and technology, China is buying its own economic development at the

[1]See, for example, A.D. McLennan, "Balance, Not Containment: A Geopolitical Take from Canberra," *National Interest* (Fall 1997); and Gerald Segal, "'Asianism' and Asian Security," *National Interest* (Winter 1995-96).

expense of other developing countries in Asia. Many of those countries are democracies, and deserve our support against China for that reason alone.

Trade policy has proved to be singularly ineffective in promoting political liberalization in China. On the Chinese side, trade has strengthened the current political elite, turning them into classic rent-seekers, increasing prices and creating substantial distortions in the domestic allocation of economic resources for their own benefit.[2] In fact, if we are waiting for economic liberalization to foster political reform, we may be in for a long wait: At least one prominent development economist who has analyzed China's current economic liberalization program has concluded that it is neither liberal nor sustainable.[3]

*The U.S. is in no position to leverage its trade policy to promote Chinese liberalization.*

In any event, the U.S. is in no position to leverage its trade policy to promote Chinese liberalization, precisely because ours is an open society. Trade is conducted mainly by the private sector, and as constituents, private companies bring pressure to bear on the government to ensure that trade is not used as a political weapon. The debate over permanent MFN status for China is a case in point. Not under the same constraints, the Chinese government has proved itself highly adroit since the early 70s in using trade leverage to exact political concessions from the U.S. and other Western nations. Nor is the WTO regime likely to change matters. China has shown great skill over the years at manipulating multilaterals to its own advantage, as Taiwan's current diplomatic isolation well demonstrates.

Just because we are unable successfully to pressure the Chinese government through trade policy, however, does not mean that we cannot and should not use security policy to that end. We are in a position to exact a price for China's aggressive military and diplomatic behavior. One way to exert pressure is to force China's hand, making it increase its military expenditures to confront as many external threats as possible. We can make this economic burden unbearable. This was after all the strategy that President Reagan used so successfully with the Soviet Union. Such is containment in the strict military sense. But we can and must go beyond that. The best security for the United States will come from surrounding China with successful, economically sound democracies. These nations will have the resources to sustain military spending and economies strong enough to retain political independence. They will also challenge China ideologically — reminding

---

[2]David Zweig, "Undemocratic Capitalism," *National Interest* (Summer 1999).

[3]Deepak Lal, *Unfinished Business: India in the World Economy* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000).

China every day of what it has been unable to accomplish politically.

In Northeast Asia, the democratic tradition is strong, and we can count on Australia and New Zealand to anchor our efforts to the south. To the west and north of China, Russia will always be the principal player, and while Russia's future is by no means secured, its ties to the West seem stronger every year. The spread of radical Islam, however, reminds us that there is much work yet to be done with the states of Central Asia, in South Asia, and even in parts of Southeast Asia.

India is the most overlooked of our potential allies in a strategy of containing China in this broader sense. For decades, the Cold War helped obscure this strategic reality in continental Asia: China is a threat to India. In fact, since the end of the Cold War, and with advances in missile technology, that threat has increased exponentially.[4] India, the world's most populous democracy, now confronts China, the world's most populous autocratic state, in a strategic environment where minutes count. In a sense, India now finds itself vis-à-vis China in the same posture China was with respect to Russia 30 years ago. This fact alone should make us reassess our long-term relationship with India. There are, however, other factors in the relationship — in addition to the strategic — that will assure an alignment of interests between India and the U.S. in the years to come.

To understand why India is the right candidate to be a key U.S. ally in Asia, we must understand something of India's history, for it helps explain why India's relationship with the United States has been as bad as it has for 50 years, and why that is now changing.

## Who lost India?

INDIA'S STORY SINCE independence in 1947 is one of successive economic development failures. Many excuses are given for these failures. It is true that India as a nation confronts astounding obstacles by virtue of its own internal diversity — 24 languages (all mutually unintelligible) are spoken by at least a million people or more (and the usual perception aside, less than 7 percent of the population speaks English); at least four major cultural traditions survive; no fewer than seven different religions coexist; geography as varied as the Himalayas and the Gangetic delta flood plain exists within India's borders; and, at last count, more than 25 political parties vied for the Indian popular vote. It is equally true, however, that the British left India not only with a strong sense of national identity but also with democratic institutions; a well-developed transportation and communication infrastructure; some manufacturing base together with

[4]See generally Paul Bracken, *Fire in the East: The Rise of Asian Military Power and the Second Nuclear Age* (HarperCollins, 1999).

the management talent to run it; and a functioning banking and finance system. These assets, taken together with India's enormous human capital, should have provided a robust foundation for a successful Indian economy.

Unfortunately, Britain's principal legacy to India was bureaucrats. Millions of them. The critical juncture in India's modern intellectual and political history was the Indian War of 1857, fought between the British and their Indian subjects.[5] After the war, Whitehall assumed direct responsibility for the administration of India, ending 250 years of rule by the British East India Company. Whitehall's administration proved a triumph for the forces of progressivism. The British government moved quickly to establish new universities modeled on Cambridge and Oxford and intended specifically to train future generations of leaders for India. This policy had far-reaching consequences, for it permanently redefined the Indian political elite. At the time, there already existed in India a middle class of sorts — members of the traditional merchant class; moneylenders whose role had evolved since the introduction of private ownership of land in the late eighteenth century and the development of a money-based economy; civil servants who had served in the lower ranks of the East India Company's administration; and brahmins who for millennia had been key participants in India's political class. In time, this variety of interests may have created a middle class of the type that evolved in early Europe, for which commercial interests were always a factor. Instead, status as a member of the new Indian political elite would now require graduation from these elite universities.

*Britain's principal legacy to India was bureaucrats. Millions of them.*

By independence, this new elite had dominated India's political landscape for nearly a century, through institutions such as the Indian National Congress established by the British in 1885. They shared a remarkably uniform intellectual worldview, which in time came to include the tenets of Fabian socialism. This particular brand of socialism developed in the 1880s in England as an attempt to salvage Marxism from what then appeared to be its all too accurate predictions of class struggle and labor violence. Rejecting the "revolutionary struggle" aspects of Marxism, the Fabians nonetheless believed in state ownership and bureaucratic leadership, seeing this as a way to attain the ideals of socialism without the attendant violence. This new philosophy resonated with the traditional caste system, reinforcing the status of the Hindu brahmin against the lower merchant class. And the tenets of socialism, with their emphasis on a vigorous elite to lead the econo-

[5]See, for example, Stanley Wolpert, *India* (University of California Press, 1999); and Fernand Braudel, *A History of Civilizations* (London: Penguin, 1995).

my, were readily absorbed by a brahmin caste already confident of its role in a cosmic world order. The stage was set for India's selection after independence of a top-down economic development model, emphasizing central planning, an expansive public sector, and overbearing regulation of those sectors of the economy that were left in the private domain.

Ironically, Britain's Labour government after World War II, enraptured with the same Fabian principles, made a similar choice for Britain's postwar economy, but in a country at a much higher level of economic and social advancement. Britain eventually learned that some ideas are just too expensive. For India, however, the consequences of these ideas were nothing short of tragic.

India's ideological "monotheism" was reflected in its political system. From the outset, Indian politics was dominated by the Congress Party, whose power evolved out of the Indian National Congress. Until very recently, one family has controlled that Party and still wields enormous influence in it today. Jawaharlal Nehru was "Mahatma" Gandhi's handpicked successor to the National Congress, rising to prominence in the late 1920s. Nehru became India's first prime minister after independence and served continuously in that office until his death in 1964. In 1966, his daughter and only child, Indira Gandhi (no relation to the Mahatma) became prime minister, serving until her death by assassination in 1984, with only one brief period out of office (1977-1979). Indira's son, Rajiv, assumed the mantle after his mother's death and served until 1989, when he lost general elections as a result of a financial scandal. Rajiv was assassinated in 1991 during a campaign during which he appeared to be making a political comeback. Today, Rajiv's widow, Sonia, continues as an influential member of the Congress Party leadership.

*India's economy has expanded at the "Hindu rate of growth," or about 1.5 percent.*

Nehru was a devout Fabian, and his socialist credentials were impeccable. On his first visit to the Soviet Union in 1927, he was so impressed with what he saw that "he became India's foremost advocate of Five Year Plans as the key to 'resolving' her premier problem of poverty."[6] He instituted India's first central planning system, the system that was in place in India starting from the mid-1950s.

How bad has the performance of India's economy been since independence? It is often facetiously said that India's economy has expanded at the "Hindu rate of growth," or about 1.5 percent annually. This is at the same time that development economists agree that India's central planners were

[6]Wolpert, 224.

the world's best from a technical perspective.

The same utopian threads that ran through Nehru's approach to the economy colored his approach to foreign policy, where he early on set himself up as a moral arbiter of Western diplomacy in the Cold War. Most indicative of Nehru's efforts was India's participation in the Nonaligned Movement (NAM). In 1955, he was instrumental in organizing the Bandung Conference, the precursor to NAM. At Bandung, 29 former European colonies from Asia and Africa met to discuss an agenda that addressed such matters as economic development, cultural cooperation, human rights and national self-determination, the evils of colonialism, and world peace. The organization was racialist and anti-colonial from the beginning. NAM purported to provide an opportunity for developing countries to pursue a foreign policy independent of both the United States and the Soviet Union in the Cold War, but it was never really "nonaligned." Most NAM members were communists or socialists who blamed their ills on the former European colonialists. Thus they conveniently turned a blind eye to Russian and Chinese imperial activities, both at home and abroad, but were always ready to lecture the U.S. about the Cold War.

*India walked the line between the two superpowers but had little to show for its nonaligned efforts.*

India's early relationship with the Chinese communists is instructive on the naïveté of Nehru's foreign policy. Nehru made a great show at Bandung of bringing China into NAM under India's wing. This incensed the Chinese communists, who saw their place in the world quite differently, as heirs to the great power status granted to China at Yalta. India by contrast could only aspire to such status. Chou Enlai, who was China's representative at Bandung, was infuriated by Nehru's condescension. After Bandung, affairs with China continued to deteriorate, growing openly contentious over Tibet in 1959. The long-festering border disagreement between India and China erupted into a hot war in 1962 when China invaded India through the eastern range of the Himalayas. The United States came to India's aid with a massive airlift to put Indian troops and U.S. materiel where they were needed in the mountain engagement. The war with China was a blow to Nehru's foreign policy and to him personally, probably hastening his death.[7] India's relations with China remain strained to this day.

On Nehru's death in 1964, India still walked the line between the two superpowers in matters of foreign policy but had little to show for its nonaligned efforts. On the domestic front, India had just as little to show for its

[7]See Neville Maxwell, *India's China War* (Pantheon Books, 1970).

economic development efforts after 15 years of central planning. Moreover, by the mid-1960s, the efficacy of central planning itself should have appeared highly suspect. Khrushchev had been forced to declare his first Seven Year Plan a failure in 1963. The rioting that resulted from this failure led in part to Khrushchev's downfall in November of 1964.[8] Meanwhile, China's experiments in central planning had resulted in a series of tragic economic failures, including the Great Leap Forward in 1957-58 which destroyed Chinese industry and agriculture and left untold millions dead, victims of the three years of famine that followed. With Nehru's departure, there was a window of opportunity for India to experiment with more market-driven development models, but that was not to be, thanks largely to Indira Gandhi and her obsession for power.

## Left turn, right turn

INDIRA GANDHI WILL be best remembered for her shift to the left, both in foreign affairs and the economy. In 1971, Indira turned left in foreign policy. To win India's third undeclared war with Pakistan, Indira entered into a 20-year treaty with the Soviet Union. (The U.S. had refused to arm either side in the conflict.) India's success in the war resulted in the establishment of East Pakistan as Bangladesh and left the balance of Pakistan (the western half) in massive disarray. Had it not been for intense pressure from Washington, it is likely that India would have invaded and destroyed West Pakistan as well.[9]

The economy was not in good shape when Indira took office in 1966, and her advisers advocated liberalization to boost production in the private sector. Against this advice, Indira in 1969 chose to turn left on the economy, pumping up public sector spending, strengthening the central planning apparatus of the state, and nationalizing India's banking and financial industry. To implement her "reforms," Indira had to fire her own minister of finance, which caused bitter infighting within the Congress Party. To avoid ouster by her own party leadership, Indira turned to the left politically as well, forging a new left-wing alliance with several smaller socialist and communist parties.

The economy continued to plague Indira throughout the 1970s. In the early 80s, the prime minister was preoccupied with the rise of Sikh terrorism in northwest India. After one particularly bloody campaign against the militants, on October 31, 1984, Indira was assassinated by her own Sikh bodyguards.

---

[8]Norman Friedman, *The Fifty-Year War: Conflict and Strategy in the Cold War* (Naval Institute Press, 2000), 301-302.

[9]See, for example, Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (Little Brown & Co., 1979), 901.

When Rajiv assumed leadership in 1984 after his mother's death, things could hardly have looked gloomier for India — either in foreign policy or economic development. Recognizing this, Rajiv's administration attempted initiatives on both fronts.

The Indian economy at the time was characterized by a heavily regulated, inefficient private sector, a bloated public sector, labor market rigidities affecting both the public and private sectors, and government revenues stalled at a high level of government spending. Rajiv attempted some liberalization measures, aimed mainly at increasing efficiency in the private sector. These were steps in the right direction but had only a limited effect on productivity and growth and did nothing to curb government spending.

*The collapse of the Soviet Union and China's market reforms were not lost on Rao's government.*

In foreign policy, the mid-1980s were no better for India, which found itself diplomatically isolated. Russia had become bogged down in Afghanistan and could no longer be counted on for economic and military aid. In addition, starting in 1985 under Gorbachev, the Soviets eased tensions with the Chinese. Inasmuch as the Soviets had supported India principally to irritate China, Soviet interest in India was fading fast. The Soviet involvement in Afghanistan had caused renewed U.S. interest in Pakistan, India's long-standing rival. U.S. relations with China continued to improve. Rajiv attempted to rejuvenate Delhi's relationship with the U.S., making his first official trip to the U.S. in 1985 and another in 1987. Rajiv also traveled to China and Pakistan in efforts to break through India's isolation.

Rajiv may have been on the right track in foreign policy, but the domestic situation only worsened. For a time in the late 80s, Rajiv was able to subsidize excessive government spending through borrowing from the overseas Indian community, but inflation continued unabated. Defense industry scandals also plagued his administration. In 1989, Rajiv and his Congress Party lost national elections and were replaced by a coalition government, which fared no better. In the 1991 elections, a new, but minority, Congress Party coalition came to power under the leadership of Prime Minister Rao. The collapse of the Soviet Union and a decade of success in China under its market reforms were not lost on this government. This is the administration that is generally credited with implementation of India's "first generation" economic reforms, though as Lal notes, there is much "unfinished business" for India in liberalizing its domestic economy. For example, the reform of the labor markets will be critical to privatization of India's still overwhelming public sector and to greater efficiency in the private sector as well. India will also benefit from full "globalization" of its economy and the competition this will force on it. And in fact, India has little choice: Without access to foreign capital, it will

never be able to build the infrastructure it needs to fully modernize its economy.[10]

Much of India's success in this venture, however, will depend on new attitudes and new philosophies, without which the political elite cannot move India into the mainstream global economy or political order. Developments over the past decade shed light on how this process is evolving and suggest that real changes in the composition and attitudes of India's political elite are at last beginning to occur.

## Behind the BJP phenomenon

SUPPORT FOR RELIGIOUS riots hardly seems an auspicious start for a political party that may be destined to lead India out of its century-old intellectual and economic quagmire. Popular support for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) coalesced in 1992 around the most explosive ethnic issue India had confronted in a decade — should Hindus or Muslims have the right to build a temple at Ayodyah, land sacred to both religions in north central India? Like so many disputes in India, the issue goes back hundreds of years but still arouses modern passions — and violent riots. The temple is back in the news this year as rioting has erupted again over control of the land, causing hundreds of deaths on both sides. The matter is currently before the Indian Supreme Court, which has enjoined any construction at the site while it considers the issue.

Ayodyah raises questions about the true nature of the BJP and its political philosophy. At the very least, the BJP is a strongly nationalistic, conservative Hindu party. Detractors point to its political allies, such as Shiv Sena, led by one Bal Thackeray, who has been known to have kind words for Hitler. Other allies include the RSS (National Volunteers Organization) and the VHP (Hindu World Council). Both are fervent Hindu nationalistic grass roots organizations, and no strangers to violence. While the temple issue has political resonance with some members of these groups, the violence it fosters does not help the BJP to attract the support of the new, more secular middle class that is emerging in India — the new political elite.

This is an important group to understand, for they could not be more different from the old brahmin elite that has guided India in the past century. Certainly, the new middle class still has brahmin members, but there are key differences. First, these individuals are graduates of a much less elitist system of higher education. At independence in 1947, India had 20 universities and 500 colleges. Expansion of the system began immediately, and by 1990 there were 117 universities and 7,346 colleges. In the past decade alone, these numbers have increased to 283 universities and 10,600 colleges.

[10]Lal, 46-47.

Today, India's higher education system is one of the largest in the world, and it is still growing.[11] Many Indians have also been educated in the United States or are the children of parents who have attended U.S. universities since the 1970s.

Moreover, many of these people are in business. The day when the children of bureaucrats went on into the civil service is gone, thanks in part to falling relative incomes in the public sector. And those who are in business are most likely doing business with the United States. The U.S. is India's largest trading partner by a wide margin, and the New Economy has had a substantial impact in India, as well as the United States. Almost 40 percent of the technology start-ups in Silicon Valley are owned and financed by Indian money. Between business and professional ties, the Indian population in the U.S. now numbers almost 2 million, and they are the single most affluent ethnic group in America. These are people to whom economic liberalization in India will be beneficial. They also understand that a nation's economic power is the foundation of its military might. They appreciate fully the implications of the Soviet Union's collapse and China's economic growth.

One place where the new middle class makes common cause with its fellow countrymen, of all classes and castes, is in its nationalistic enthusiasm. All Indians want their country to take its place in the world as a recognized great power — another reason the China example is so compelling to them. The BJP has shown itself to be adroit at tapping this nationalist fervor, as it did in 1998 when it incurred the wrath of the U.S. by detonating a nuclear bomb. The domestic approval rating for their action was 91 percent.

Members of this new class may be nationalistic, but they are not supporters of domestic political violence. As violence over Ayodyah reared its ugly head again this year, the BJP was severely trounced in February in three major state elections where it has done well in the past. The BJP was not only affected locally but is also suffering repercussions within its ruling coalition, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The BJP's control of the national government does not appear to be in jeopardy for the time being, but the point has been made — the bulk of the BJP's supporters want no part of political and religious violence.

To its credit, the BJP has demonstrated the ability to be pragmatic when circumstances require. The BJP may have many supporters who believe in a nation characterized by a revitalized, more assertive Hinduism. In a coalition government, however, the BJP cannot afford to cater to these demands while ignoring the demands of other parties' constituents. And coalition governments are now the defining characteristic of politics in New Delhi. With the decline of the Congress Party since 1989 and the rise of state parties, coalition government is here to stay for India. The BJP has demonstrated consid-

[11] Country Paper (India), UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century, Paris (October 5-9, 1998).

erable mastery of the skills necessary to survive in this political environment.

The ultimate test for the BJP, however, will be whether it can manage India's transition to a high-growth economy that is fully integrated with the rest of the world. If it succeeds in that task, it will be able to deliver the stability of government that India so badly needs. This is where the support of the new middle class will be essential. Here, too, the BJP has the advantage of not being wedded to the old discredited ideas of the Congress Party. It can move beyond the stale socialism of the traditional political elite to adopt economic and social reforms.

Despite the communal violence over issues like Ayodyah, India's political culture still deems the ballot box to be the only legitimate way to resolve political conflict. Evidence of this fact is that voter turnout has actually increased in the past decade; before 1989, turnout was typically well under 50 percent but has recently climbed into the 60 percent range.[12] Democracy in India has emerged from the past decade more vibrant than ever.

Certainly democracy complicates policy decisions for the central government. Just as in the United States, foreign policy in particular suffers because the executive branch has difficulty taking and maintaining long-term positions with foreign governments — which is precisely what successful foreign policy requires. We can expect the BJP, or any other coalition government, to confront this problem, just as we do. But the BJP for all its "xenophobia" has worked well with the U.S. in recent months, and notwithstanding our 1998 sanctions, progress has been made in the overall relationship for some time now. From the U.S. perspective, the BJP has been much more realistic in its foreign policy expectations and has shown little interest in reverting to the military adventurism in South Asia that marked Indian foreign policy during the 1970s and 80s under the idealistic "Nehruvians."

## The U.S. policy agenda

WE CANNOT CHANGE India, nor should we want to. If we articulate our own interests in Asia, however, it is impossible to ignore that a wealthy, armed India would be an asset to U.S. interests, with little downside risk. Others have described U.S. interests in Asia from a variety of perspectives — strategic, ideological, economic, and humanitarian.[13] Of these, the most likely to sustain long-term U.S. engage-

---

[12]Stephen P. Cohen, *India: Emerging Power* (Brookings Institution, 2001), 106-122 (turnout data at 108).

[13]See, for example, Zalmay Khalilzad et al., eds. *The United States and Asia: Toward a New U.S. Strategy and Force Posture* (RAND, 2001), 43; Shirin Tahir-Kheli, *India, Pakistan and the United States — Breaking with the Past* (Council on Foreign Relations, 1997), 125-26; and Cohen, 282.

ment with India is the strategic interest — the knowledge that successful development in India helps hedge our bets against an aggressive, undemocratic China. As noted at the outset, a strong India raises the price of China's military buildup and expansionist policies in Asia. A strong India would also send the message that democracy in a developing country is not incompatible with rapid growth and wealth. This is a message worth sending not just to China and other authoritarian states, but also to all the states of Asia troubled by Islamic fundamentalism. India has the unenviable distinction of lying at the heart of the Islamic world, spanning the globe as Islam does from North Africa through the Middle East to Southeast Asia and the Philippines. Not only can India deliver a positive economic message, but its success as a state composed of varying ethnic and religious groups is an important example for others.

*No one could seriously expect India to ignore the nuclear capabilities of Pakistan, China, or Russia.*

What would a sustained U.S. policy toward India look like? It would address at least five elements outlined below.

*Nuclear policy.* Non-proliferation policy in South Asia is bankrupt. No one could seriously expect a democratic government responsible for the welfare of a billion people to ignore the nuclear capabilities of Pakistan, China, or Russia. We must recognize this as a legitimate national security concern for India. The United States sensibly ignored the ABM Treaty when the strategic environment changed and the treaty imposed obstacles to the development of missile defense systems. So too, India has refused to be left permanently without nuclear options because it did not happen to have a nuclear weapon when the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) went into effect. It has been credibly asserted that the one thing U.S. nonproliferation diplomacy did accomplish during the 90s is to ensure that the Indian nuclear deterrent — whatever its ultimate composition — will be "most certainly 'weaponized' and probably 'deployed'."[14]

If we stop treating nonproliferation as a matter of ideological orthodoxy, we can determine how best to cope with India's stated goal of developing a nuclear deterrent to confront the Pakistani and Chinese threats. In developing our policy for India's nuclear future, we confront two levels of obstacles — our current treaty and multilateral obligations, and U.S. domestic law — all related to nuclear nonproliferation. U.S. law has hampered our policy toward South Asia since the 1970s but poses less of a problem today, main-

[14]James Sperling, "Ideals or Self-Interest?: The Indian Nuclear Deterrent and American Foreign Policy," in Ashok Kapur et al., eds., *India and the United States in a Changing World* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002), 477.

ly because the president now has the statutory authority to waive most automatic sanctions that would otherwise apply to countries that engage in nuclear weapons testing and related activities.[15] In the current political environment Congress is unlikely to challenge the president's waiver authority, but that environment can change. The war on terrorism represents an opportunity for the president to seek rescission of these legislative obstacles, putting discretion for these matters back where they belong — in the executive branch rather than in Congress. India's many friends in Congress should be willing to assist in this effort.

A more intractable set of issues arises from our treaty obligations, most specifically those contained in the NPT. The NPT obligates the five "nuclear-weapons States" (the U.S., the former Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, and China) not to transfer nuclear weapons technology to any recipient; the NPT obligates all other parties to the treaty — "non-nuclear-weapons States" — to refrain from receiving such technology. Non-nuclear states are also obligated to accept safeguards developed by the International Atomic Energy Agency, to prevent the diversion of fissionable material and equipment (mainly nuclear power plants) from peaceful to weapons applications. What the treaty does not contain is any requirement for sanctions against countries that refuse to participate, and India has never signed the treaty. Given the system's significant failure to halt proliferation, there is a principled case to be made for scrapping the whole or parts of the structure, or at least U.S. withdrawal from it. (Any state can withdraw from the treaty if that state determines that "extraordinary events . . . have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country.") Inasmuch as there seems to be little appetite in the U.S. government for such a course of action, however, we have two options: We can attempt to get India into the NPT system as a nuclear state, or we can make it U.S. policy to ignore India's nuclear program.

*We can make it U.S. policy to ignore India's nuclear program.*

Unfortunately, getting India into the treaty would require its amendment, and amendment requires, among other things, unanimous agreement of all the nuclear states as defined, that is, those who possessed nuclear weapons as of January 1, 1967. It is hard to imagine China's casting an affirmative vote on this issue, even though it was China's breach of its NPT obligations through transfers to Pakistan that raised the nuclear stakes to their current level in South Asia. The Chinese attitude may change, but probably not until

[15] See, for example, Arthur G. Rubinoff, "Legislative Perceptions of Indo-American Relations," in Kapur, 432-449. This authority is contained in the Brownback II Amendment.

India has successfully deployed nuclear missiles that can reach Chinese targets.

If we were starting from a clean slate, we would want to give careful consideration to assisting India's nuclear development, not just to advance U.S. strategic interests in Asia but also to keep tabs on what India is actually up to. Since that is unlikely, calculated ambiguity toward the India program may be the best policy option we have. This appears to be current U.S. policy, but policymakers also seem to have their fingers crossed that India will not conduct nuclear tests again any time soon, which is probably wishful thinking. If India tests again, expect to see nonproliferation advocates expressing their concerns vociferously. To preserve its policy options toward India, the administration would do well by that time to have rolled back congressional nonproliferation legislation as much as possible.

*India and Pakistan have engaged in open warfare five times — and India almost started a sixth.*

Of course India must expect to pay a price for our noninterference in its nuclear program and abstention from sanctions. At the very least, India must agree not to engage in proliferation of its own (Iran in particular comes to mind), nor to develop missiles capable of targeting the United States. In the meantime, the only development that is likely to change India's determination with respect to its nuclear program is access to U.S. missile defense capabilities as that technology becomes available.

*Pakistan.* Closely related to nuclear policy is the relationship among India, Pakistan, and the United States. That Pakistan even exists is viewed by most Indians as the result of an act of perfidy by the British at the time of independence. With a population that is 12 percent Muslim, India cannot accept that the two religions must have "two nations" and cannot live side-by-side. As a result, ever since partition in 1947, the relationship between Pakistan and India has been an emotional one. Its intensity is evidenced by the fact that India and Pakistan have engaged in open warfare five times — in 1948, 1965, 1971, 1984, and 1999 — and India almost started a sixth, all-out war during its military exercise "Brasstacks" in 1987. The relationship has been most recently aggravated by terrorist operations in Kashmir, which Pakistan has actively supported for some years.

Then there is the nuclear aspect of the relationship. India's defense minister, George Fernandez, has stated this year that Pakistan's nuclear facilities are safe and under the control of responsible and serious people. Instability in Pakistan — or ultimately the collapse of its government — would have two negative consequences for India. First, it would put Pakistan's nuclear capabilities in unknown hands, and very likely the hands of people who would no doubt be serious but not responsible. Second, instead of having

Pakistan and Afghanistan on the front lines of the war against fundamentalist Islamic terrorism, India would have those forces operating directly against its borders, with no buffer at all. U.S. and Indian concerns about Pakistan are closely aligned in this respect. An unstable Pakistan, combined with the lack of a prolonged U.S. involvement there, would also open the door to further mischief by China in that country.

All these factors seem to dictate a U.S. presence in Pakistan, and not just to prosecute the war on terrorism. India must not only accept that fact but recognize that U.S. aid — both economic and military — is essential if the U.S. is to have influence with the government there. Both India and the United States also have an interest in seeing the return of democracy in Pakistan. Democracy does not necessarily lead to a less aggressive nuclear policy — as we have seen in India under the BJP as well as in Pakistan during Benazir Bhutto's administration. But American support for democracy is the only way to attract the Pakistani middle class, as a force for moderation, back into the domestic political process.

*American support for democracy is the only way to attract the Pakistani middle class back into the political process.*

Even aid leverage is unlikely to be sufficient to get Pakistan to abandon its nuclear program. We appear to have two options: We can ignore the program (as we did during much of the 1980s), or we can offer further incentives to get Pakistan to cap or eliminate it. Possible incentives would include a U.S. guarantee of the peace between Pakistan and India or the transfer of missile defense technology to Pakistan (and India) as it becomes available. Transparency for India and Pakistan with respect to their nuclear programs would go a long way to assuaging their mutual concerns about living cheek-by-jowl on a nuclear subcontinent, and that is a process we can facilitate.

That leaves Kashmir as a principal impediment to improved Indo-Pakistani relations. The U.S. clearly has a role — which it is already asserting — in persuading Pakistan to stop support for the terrorist violence in Kashmir. In return, India must demonstrate that it is advancing democracy in Kashmir in a way that is acceptable to us and the international community. (This September's state elections in Kashmir should be a good starting point.) There can certainly be no U.S. support for a greater Indian role on the UN Security Council so long as the Kashmir situation continues unabated.

In all of these matters, the one lesson we must remember is that our efforts in working with India and Pakistan will only be successful to the extent that they are low-key. To see this, we need only contrast our successful handling of the Indus River water dispute between Pakistan and India in 1960 with our bungled efforts on human rights matters relating to Kashmir

during the first Clinton administration.[16] Based on its handling of the Kashmir situation in June of this year, the current administration seems to have taken that lesson to heart.

*Military cooperation.* The need for military cooperation with Pakistan is self-evident, if only to ensure that Pakistan does not look to China for these resources. As for India, we should wean it from its reliance on Russian weapons. Keeping both Pakistan and India reliant on technology and resupply from the United States would give us leverage with both states to help keep the peace in any future military confrontation. With India, there is an additional complication — its indigenous defense industry. It is hard to see why we would object to assisting India with development in that sector, which suffers from a variety of problems. At the very least, where we are dealing with a major democratic nation, it would be comforting to think that our military-to-military contacts would be at least "similar to those now conducted with the Chinese."[17] Moreover, improved relations with India could in time help us to cope with the forward basing problems we confront in Asia and the Middle East. On a more prosaic note, India is ideally situated to intercept and disrupt the intelligence networks of Islamic extremist groups. The current war on terrorism has thus ensured that military contacts will continue, and at a very high level, at least for now. For these contacts to endure, it is important that they be institutionalized. The creation of the Defense Policy Group on India at the Department of Defense was an important first step in that process.

*India is ideally situated to intercept and disrupt the intelligence networks of Islamic extremist groups.*

*Economic liberalization.* Inasmuch as India's future strategic importance will be directly related to its ability to sustain economic growth, this is a matter of paramount concern both to India and the United States. This may in some respects prove to be the hardest issue for the two countries to address on a government-to-government basis. These issues cannot be resolved by diplomatic signals and mutual gestures. The effectiveness of India's economic reforms will be tested in global markets. If they are found wanting, no amount of government posturing will change their defects. Still, in the context of a good overall relationship, the U.S. can encourage India to move forward with the reforms necessary to make itself attractive to foreign investors. These measures could be linked to continuing Western economic aid in the interim, to provide

[16]For a discussion of the Kashmir fiasco, see Reeta Chowdhari Tremblay, "Indo-US Relations and the Kashmir Issue," in Kapur, 519-525.

[17]Khalilzad, 54.

incentives for India to move quickly to implement these changes.

*Continuing high-level focus.* Even if we make progress on the above items, the relationship may become institutionalized, but only at a low level. Without a reassessment of the strategic value of India to U.S. interests in Asia taken as a whole, the current crisis will fade, and the White House will lose interest in India. The new "India lobby" developing in the U.S. may have some effect on the degree of high-level attention India gets in the future. But in the end, there must be an enduring U.S. interest at stake in India. That stake, if nothing else, is the success of an Asian democracy with the strength to offset China's rising power in Asia and with strategic interests that are aligned with our own for the long haul.

# The False Promise of "Full Disclosure"

*By* ROBERT W. HAHN

THE ENRON "SCANDAL" has raised several fascinating issues related to disclosing information and potential conflicts of interest. For example, an accounting firm that receives consulting fees from a company it is paid to audit may be less likely to report financial problems with that company. But contrary to conventional wisdom, simply not allowing that firm to consult will not necessarily solve the problem. The accounting firm will still have potential conflicts so long as it is getting paid by other firms to monitor their performance. In the past, accounting firms have used professional standards as a way of helping to ensure their reputation. In addition, they have tried to have a diverse client base, so the costs of losing one client would not be overwhelming.

---

*Robert W. Hahn, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and a research associate at Harvard University, is director of the AEI-Brookings Joint Center for Regulatory Studies. The views expressed in this paper reflect those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the institutions with which he is affiliated.*

Similarly, academics and pundits receiving monetary compensation from a company may be more likely to give that company's policy positions a favorable review. One solution to this problem is to have these folks come clean by identifying their conflicts of interest. Unfortunately, as we shall see, this is easier said than done and is likely to have unintended consequences.

Consider, for example, the problem of conflicts of interest in the context of funded research and opinions that are disseminated to the public by journalists, academics, and individuals affiliated with think tanks. This is a broad topic and one with which I have some personal experience as a scholar and a consultant to business and government.[1] My purpose is to evaluate the pros and cons of disclosing potential "conflicts of interest." "Full disclosure" may be a laudable goal, but is difficult to define and, therefore, not very useful. In addition, some disclosure norms imposed by the media are not likely to be very helpful in promoting useful information for their audiences, and will likely have unintended adverse consequences. The problem is not that disclosure is necessarily bad, though it may lead to bad outcomes in certain situations. Instead, the problem is that too often, the media and the public use partial disclosure as a substitute for critical thinking.

## The nature of the problem

PAUL KRUGMAN — ONE of the best known economists in academia — received $50,000 for serving on an advisory board to Enron. Krugman, of course, was not alone. For example, Larry Lindsey, President Bush's chief economic advisor, was reported to have received the same amount.

Defending himself in his *New York Times* column (January 25, 2002), Krugman noted that he complied with the *Times'* conflict of interest policy. When he agreed to write for the paper, he resigned from the Enron board. In addition, Krugman noted the potential conflict posed by his Enron advisory role in a *Fortune* piece he published three years ago.

Krugman's level of disclosure, however, did not seem to satisfy Andrew Sullivan — an excellent journalist. On his website, andrewsullivan.com

---

[1] I rely heavily on personal anecdotes in places to make my case, in part because I have some inside information that is useful. In addition, I do not wish to make my colleagues the targets of ad hominem attacks. I would like to thank Christopher C. DeMuth, Harold Furchtgott-Roth, Thomas W. Hazlett, Scott Hemphill, Charles Jackson, Clark Judge, Paul Krugman, Robert Litan, Peter Passell, Richard Posner, and Cass Sunstein for helpful comments, and Mary Beth Muething for excellent research assistance. This work was supported by the AEI-Brookings Joint Center for Regulatory Studies. A list of funders can be found on the Joint Center website: www.aei.brookings.org.

(January 25, 2002), Sullivan took Krugman to task for not noting the amount of money he received. Sullivan noted, "You'll notice one detail missing from Krugman's apologia — the amount of money he got. Why won't he mention it? Because it's the most damning evidence against him." He thinks "the reading public has a right to know" such information.

Sullivan raises an important question: What does the public have a right to know about a person's opinion or findings? That is, what should academics and pundits be required to say about their remarks or research when presenting it in public?

Sullivan thinks that full disclosure is the key. He made the point specifically with respect to talking heads: "What this is about is the enmeshment of some of the pundit class in major corporate money. It seems to me that an integral part of a journalist's vocation is independence — independence from any monetary interests that could even be perceived as clouding his or her judgment. Disclosure is a must — and not just when the subject matter comes up a few years down the line" (January 23, 2002).

*What constitutes "all relevant information" for purposes of disclosure?*

Unfortunately, Sullivan's suggestion has serious problems. There is no obvious place to draw the line on what needs to be disclosed. In some cases in public life, full disclosure has been interpreted to go beyond an individual to an individual's acquaintances or family. For example, when the AOL-Time Warner merger was approved by the FCC, the impartiality of the current chairman of the FCC, Michael Powell, was questioned because his father was on the AOL board of directors and owned stock in the company.

Take the Krugman example again. What constitutes all relevant information for purposes of disclosure? Is it relevant, for example, to know that Krugman received the Clark Medal — given every other year to the "best" economist under 40 or that he has published numerous pathbreaking books and journal articles? Krugman pointed out in his January 25 column, in his own defense, that "the compensation [he] received per day [from Enron] was actually somewhat less than other companies were paying [him] at the time for speeches on world economic issues." All of these things are arguably relevant, but some in the public would really like to know how much credence to put in Krugman's view on a particular subject. More generally, the public and interested parties might like to have mechanisms introduced that would lower the cost of obtaining and evaluating information on a particular subject.

Firms, non-profits, and individuals have dealt with the problem of establishing credibility in a number of ways. For example, *Consumer Reports*, which evaluates many kinds of consumer products, does not take money from business for advertising. Indeed, *Consumer Reports*'s subheading on

its website reads: "Our mission since 1936: Test, Inform, Protect. We accept no ads." The *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and many other media outlets place restrictions on what journalists can do in order to maintain their independence.

The rules governing academicians and think tank types generally require some form of disclosure. For example, the AEI-Brookings Joint Center, which I direct, requires that authors submitting analyses of specific regulations do not receive any support from industry for the regulatory policy under study. We do that in order to preserve our reputation for impartiality in this area. With regard to other publications, we ask authors to note sources of financial support. And research journals are increasingly interested in knowing about sources of funding for research work.

*Universities restrict how professors may identify themselves when doing outside consulting.*

Universities place restrictions on how professors identify themselves when doing outside consulting and testimony. Think tanks do as well. For example, authors are typically required to differentiate consulting products from university or think tank products by noting the source of support and not using the institution's logo without permission.

Many in the press ask for similar kinds of disclosure. When I receive a call from the press about one of my studies, one of the first questions asked is who funded it. Indeed, that question often seems to be more important to the journalist than how I arrived at the results. That suggests a fundamental problem to me. Many journalists either don't have the time to, or simply cannot, evaluate the validity of studies. Instead, they simply take cues from less important aspects, such as the source of funding or the affiliation of the individual.

Judge Richard Posner, in *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline* (Harvard University Press, 2001) argues that there is little accountability for public intellectuals — most notably, professors — and that the quality of their public work has declined. A media that performs "virtually no gatekeeping function" is partially responsible for an environment with "nobody watching, nobody keeping score."

Posner attributes the decline in the quality of public intellectual work to the "growth in the specialization of knowledge." He states that "the fact that most public intellectuals today are academics, and thus engaged in public-intellectual work on only a part-time basis, enables them to exit the public-intellectual market at a low cost and by doing so has reduced to a trivial level the penalty for the public intellectual caught selling a defective product."

The problem of assessing quality is not restricted to the press. Even academic peer review has serious problems, albeit for different reasons. Peer

review has been shown to be an unreliable indicator of a paper's quality, accuracy, or integrity. A study that examined several articles from a prominent economics journal found that the papers almost always contained errors that were not caught by the peer refereeing process. The errors were sufficiently serious that the results could not easily be replicated. The authors also found that, notwithstanding both the general norm that data be available and the requirement of the National Science Foundation (NSF) that data be produced on NSF-funded projects, their requests for data were ignored, denied, or otherwise frustrated in a substantial number of cases.[2] Moreover, peer review is undermined by the difficulty of actually procuring the relevant data that are supposedly available.

Finally, peer review cannot necessarily prevent or reveal dishonesty in academic work. A prominent sociology professor at the University of Texas recently resigned after acknowledging scientific misconduct. She had been accused of falsifying data that supported her research. A historian at Emory University was accused of supporting an acclaimed book with untrue statistics on gun ownership. And historian and author Stephen E. Ambrose has been the subject of well-publicized plagiarism accusations.

## The benefits of disclosure — and the costs

THE BENEFIT OF MORE disclosure is that the media public is given additional information about possible conflicts of interest. When disclosure raises a red flag that makes an editor or journalist examine arguments more closely, this is a benefit. Additionally, disclosure is also valuable for its potential to deter what Richard Posner calls "improper and irresponsible moonlighting." More disclosure, unfortunately, has costs as well. These include difficulties in monitoring and enforcement, difficulties in defining an appropriate level of disclosure, and the impact on who provides information and how they respond to disclosure rules.

*Monitoring and enforcement.* Some time ago, I was on a radio show offering my views on the Microsoft case, a firm for which I occasionally consult. The talk show host correctly identified me as a consultant and academic, but failed to note that one of the other "experts" on the show had done a great deal of consulting for another firm on some key policy issues related to the case. In doing so, she left the audience with the mistaken impression that my counterpart in the debate was in some sense "clean" because he had not consulted.

This is an example of providing incomplete information to the public that tilts the playing field toward the side that is viewed as clean. I think it is a

[2]William G. Dewald, Jerry G. Thursby, and Richard G. Anderson, *American Economic Review* 76 (1986).

very serious problem. The problem arises in part because the disclosure rules are difficult to monitor and in part because they are not always enforced with the same vigor. Moreover, the penalties for not disclosing are not that high in most situations.

Take another example. I am aware of many people who write opinion pieces on a particular subject for direct compensation. Some disclose that information while many others do not. No one seems to care, except editors at major newspapers. They are less likely to publish op-eds that come with some kind of disclosure statement because they do not want to be viewed as supporting free advertisements for a particular point of view. This creates an incentive not to disclose. The incentive is just one factor that determines whether a piece will contain a disclosure statement. In a study of biomedical articles, 34 percent of the articles had an author with a financial interest related to the topic of the article. None of those authors disclosed a conflict of interest. The study's author explained that even when the publishing journals have disclosure policies, poor compliance with those policies is prevalent.[3]

*Newspapers are less likely to publish op-eds that come with some kind of disclosure statement.*

*Difficulties in defining an appropriate level of disclosure.* The basic problem is that we are all walking conflicts of interest because most of us have to work for a living. And in exchange for money, most of us make compromises. For academics and other professionals, it is not unusual to work for several companies, either giving speeches or on other short-term contracts. Over time, it can be easy to develop connections with businesses in the routine process of making a living. Not all of these connections pose a conflict of interest. When considering what to disclose, it is sensible to focus on activities that could pose a substantial conflict.

Richard Posner suggests a norm in which "academic public intellectuals disclose their income from all their public intellectual work." Posner qualifies his position with the caveat that compared to public officials' disclosure of their income, it is not as important that academics comply with strict disclosure standards because they are not as powerful. But he argues that "revelation of the lucrative character of some of this moonlighting would help the public to evaluate public intellectual work and would deter some of the most questionable forms of it."

While some disclosure is justified, it is difficult to know where to draw the line. How should we deal, for example, with firms that link pay to visi-

[3]See Steven Phillips, "A Conflict that Might Interest the Ethicists," *Times Higher Education Supplement* (April 27, 2001).

bility in the media? Should I note on the bottom of my op-eds that a small part of my compensation at AEI and Brookings is related to the number of op-eds I publish in newspapers? This, indeed, has an effect on the number of op-eds I write, if not their bias.

In some cases, the linkage between salary and taking a particular position in the media is more direct. I know several people at so-called public interest groups who get paid to take particular positions in the media. I do not doubt that they believe these positions, but why, in principle, should they be treated any differently from a business consultant taking money in exchange for writing an op-ed? Yet they are treated very differently by the media — with the opinion of the business consultant being given less credence.

*Disclosure policies do not provide much information on whether an opinion is likely to be biased.*

Again, let me return to the Microsoft example to illustrate a problem with the incompleteness in the definition of disclosure. I wrote an article for *Regulation* on the Microsoft case before I became a consultant for Microsoft. Just prior to the publication of the article, I was asked by someone representing an opponent of Microsoft if the article could be withdrawn, and if I would consider a consultancy with that firm. I said no and, frankly, was offended by the offer.

I use this example because it says lots about the limitations of actual disclosure policies. You are not asked to disclose clients that you turn away on principled grounds — only those for whom you do work. We might learn more about an individual from how she discriminates among potential clients if we could observe that, but, unfortunately, that's difficult to do.

If disclosure policies do not provide much information on whether an opinion is likely to be biased, we could examine an individual's incentive to preserve her reputation. Academics have some incentive to preserve their professional reputation among their colleagues. This can help to put constraints on their public pronouncements, but may not solve the problem. Those academics who care less about their reputation and are more interested in public exposure will be more likely to become pundits or talking heads. This could decrease the overall quality of punditry, assuming that were possible.

Let me offer another example from the Joint Center website that will illustrate some of the problems with "cleanliness" as perceived by the media. I have signed one statement on liberalizing spectrum auctions at the Federal Communications Commission and helped write a Supreme Court brief signed by 39 leading economists on the need to consider costs, benefits, and other relevant factors in regulatory decision making. While I did not take any money for either endeavor, I fully expect that being on both documents

will enhance my market prospects and market value, both as an academician and as a consultant. So, it would be a bit disingenuous for me to say that I did not have a direct financial interest in these activities. Frankly, though, that was not the primary reason I got involved. The main reason I got involved is because I care deeply about how public policies affect real people outside the beltway. Should I be required to disclose that?

So, here we have an example of activities that would be viewed as clean (and therefore, no disclosure is currently required), which give me substantial monetary and nonmonetary benefits. Should we care more about my future benefits likely to be derived from an activity than past payments? I think so, but unfortunately, these benefits are hard to observe.

*There is a tradeoff between available expertise and the degree of disclosure required.*

The difficulty of observing many features of disclosure taken together with gaining agreement on a reasonable definition of full disclosure makes it a difficult goal at best. But I fear that achieving the goal would actually do more harm than good by reducing the pool of experts and encouraging people to circumvent the system in ways that do not aid in the search for "truth."

*Impact on who responds and how they respond.* Andrew Sullivan has suggested that an individual who consults for a company should not write about issues related to that company. He believes that individual's journalistic independence has been compromised — no matter how innocent or transparent the consulting arrangement. "Let's say [Krugman and Peggy Noonan] just took $50,000 minimum from this company for legit extracurricular work," he wrote. "Haven't these pundits essentially undermined themselves as independent watchdogs of the culture?"

Sullivan's position, while extreme, has some empirical support. When an individual consults for a company, she is more likely to take on the perspective of that company as a result of continued interactions with a group of like-minded individuals. Even if a consultant tries diligently to preserve her impartiality, there is a likelihood that a company's views will grow on her, and seem more sensible than they did before the consulting arrangement. Sullivan's rather extreme policy could reduce such conflicts, but at the expense of reducing the available pool of experts. Who, after all, is in a better position to write about a company, or a policy related to that company, than someone who knows the business firsthand? Thus, there is a tradeoff between available expertise and the degree of disclosure required.

Even stopping short of Sullivan's suggestion to disallow any writing by a consultant, calls for greater disclosure could be counterproductive. The pool of potential experts on the subject may be reduced because some individuals will prefer not to disclose and not participate in the public discussion.

Moreover, some may simply evade the requirements and hope they don't get caught. Still others — the entrepreneurial types — will create "fronts" that make the probability of detection less likely. A front is anything that obscures the connection between an individual and that person's sources of support. It could be a business, a non-governmental organization, or an individual serving as an intermediary.

What kind of fronts might be created? A look around at how the various think tanks operate can offer some food for thought. Even the top think tanks, like AEI and Brookings, get much of their money from — dare I say it? — business, or foundations whose wealth typically comes from business. The foundations supporting think tanks run the gamut from anti-business to pro-business, but a typical foundation will only provide support if it has a reasonable expectation of the kind of results that will be produced. And even if think tanks get their money from government — read: the taxpayer — that will create conflicts because of an interest in pleasing that funder.

*Most money, even so-called government money, comes with some strings related to expected results.*

The way think tanks deal with potential conflicts is to introduce mechanisms that help preserve their reputation for doing quality work. These mechanisms include: hiring scholars who are interested in preserving their academic reputations, peer-reviewing their major published works, such as books, and encouraging their scholars to publish in peer-reviewed journals.

Another important mechanism that think tanks and universities use to preserve their reputation is to obtain funding from a variety of sources. Such diversification makes it easier for these institutions to have their scholars take positions that may be at odds with the views of their funders. Free trade is a good example. AEI scholars are generally very supportive of free trade, even though some of AEI's funders have argued for protectionist policies related to their firm or industry.

The mechanisms for preserving reputation are not perfect, however. Scholars may still be subjected to pressures from particular firms on particular issues. Those places concerned about their academic reputations tend to be more adept at giving their scholars freer rein. But the bottom line is that most money, even so-called government money, comes with some strings related to expected results.

And the competition for funds is fierce, which means there may be greater emphasis on producing work that increases funding rather than first-rate scholarship. Still, at the leading think thanks and universities, I think these mechanisms work reasonably well for scholarship published in a scholar's area of expertise. Work published outside of a scholar's area of expertise is another matter.

Unfortunately, not all think tanks or universities take the same degree of pride in academic freedom as AEI or Brookings. Posner, for example, provides an account of the Independent Institute's support of Microsoft while it was receiving funding from the firm. But if disclosure requirements were enforced more rigorously, I would expect more think tanks to emerge that serve as fronts for all sorts of preferred interest group policies.

The same is true of websites. While I can say that the AEI-Brookings Joint Center website has not been influenced one iota by our funders, I know other websites where that is not the case, and I'm sure you do too. Moreover, revealing the sources of support typically provides little, if any, useful information about whether the work produced or featured by a site represents independent analysis, or is merely a convenient vehicle for advertising a funder's preferred policy position. This creates a real problem for people wishing to use disclosure as a meaningful measure of potential conflicts of interest.

In some cases, disclosure is selective. Posner notes that after the Valdez oil spill, Exxon paid several academics to write articles on punitive damages. In the articles, the authors noted that Exxon had paid them for their work. But when Exxon used the articles as cited sources in briefs it prepared for its appeal proceedings, it failed to disclose that it had paid for the articles. Moreover, neither Exxon nor the commissioned academics would disclose the amount of the received payment.

The point is that calls for greater disclosure will lead to more innovative ways to circumvent disclosure and we should keep that in mind in crafting solutions.

## What needs to be done?

CONSIDER DISCLOSURE. A requirement of full disclosure is not meaningful because it is hard to know how to implement and is likely to create perverse incentives. The current system of disclosure, for all its warts, is not a bad starting point. That system generally requires a scholar to identify conflicts that would not pass a political "smell test." That is, if there is a reason to think that an average reader would be suspicious if a scholar did not disclose something, then she should disclose it.

The basic problem with the current system of disclosure is that it is incomplete. The media need to recognize this and do a better job. Here are five concrete suggestions.

*Suggestion 1: Place less reliance on disclosure as a signal.* Disclosure can provide a useful hint about a conflict of interest, but several other factors should be taken into account. For example, does the "expert" have a reputation to preserve (e.g., in her field of expertise)? How do reputable colleagues view her?

*Suggestion 2: Apply rules for evaluating experts across the board.* That

means doing due diligence on all participants in a debate, not just those where the conflicts are most obvious. The notion that taking money from industry should necessarily taint someone is naïve. But if it is going to be treated as a practice that warrants disclosure, the self-interest of individuals who appear to be clean, such as those from so-called public interest groups and government, should also be highlighted.

*Suggestion 3: Find out whether the person is really an expert.* I'm an economist — Ph.D. and all. I can't tell you how many times I've heard "talking heads" get up there on TV and radio talk shows and get treated with great respect on the stock market and forecasting issues, when they actually know next to nothing on the subject. The press should not give these people a pass, just because they sound good.

*Suggestion 4: The media should think harder.* The press needs to be more critical in an academic sense. There is no substitute for actually reading some reports to determine their quality. If this skill is in short supply, as I think it is for many journalists, then leading media outlets, such as the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal,* and CNN, should hire people to support reporters who can think critically about technical issues. Some of these skills can be taught and they should be.

*Suggestion 5: We all should think harder.* One of the things I try to teach in the classroom is critical thinking. Does the argument the person is making really hold water? If more people learn to think critically, this would help.

*The media seem to be happy with the status quo, and for the most part, so is the public.*

What's wrong with these recommendations? The media seem to be happy with the status quo, and for the most part, so is the public. So there is nothing that is likely to move us in this direction quickly unless some foundation, or foundations, with serious money decides to take up the cause.[4] One might consider government help, but beyond a voucher program to stimulate competition and improve quality in education, I do not see a useful government role.

Posner has suggested that, in addition to disclosing income related to public intellectual work, academics should provide all of their work on public intellectual activities in some kind of form that is easily retrieved, such as posting to a website. He suggests that "one solution might be for universities to require their faculty members to post annually, on the university's web page, all the non-academic writing . . . and public speaking that they have

[4]Posner notes that "the public-intellectual market does not appear to exhibit, at least to any marked degree, 'market failure' in the economic sense" and that the shortcomings of the market "do not warrant costly methods of correction."

done during the preceding year. . . . At the end of the year the contents of the web page would be downloaded and printed out, and copies deposited in the major university libraries."

Posner's ideas could, of course, be extended to pundits in general. The question is what good they would do. I'm not so sure. I am certain that it would decrease the supply of opinion makers on key public policy issues, but whether it would improve the overall quality of information is another matter.

## Reform?

We began with a tale of Paul Krugman and a controversy over disclosure, but I don't think Krugman is the real story here. I think the real story is that disclosure has serious limitations, there are lots of major conflicts of interest out there that don't get reported, and that the press tends to tilt the playing field in ways that have not been adequately considered.

Full disclosure, far from being a panacea, could make things worse. My basic suggestions for fixing the problem are a press that thinks more critically and a public that does the same. Don't hold your breath.

# Classroom Research and Cargo Cults

*By* E.D. Hirsch Jr.

> "We really ought to look into theories that don't work, and science that isn't science. I think the educational . . . studies I mentioned are examples of what I would like to call cargo cult science. In the South Seas there is a cargo cult of people. During the war they saw airplanes with lots of good materials, and they want the same thing to happen now. So they've arranged to make things like runways, to put fires along the sides of the runways, to make a wooden hut for a man to sit in, with two wooden pieces on his head for headphones and bars of bamboo sticking out like antennas — he's the controller — and they wait for the airplanes to land. They're doing everything right. The form is perfect. It looks exactly the way it looked before. But it doesn't work. No airplanes land. So I call these things cargo cult science, because they follow all the apparent precepts and forms of scientific investigation, but they're missing something essential, because the planes don't land."
>
> — Richard P. Feynman, "Cargo Cult Science," *Surely You're Joking, Mr Feynman!: Adventures of a Curious Character* (Norton, 1985).

After many years of educational research, it is disconcerting — and also deeply significant — that we have little dependable research guidance for school policy. We have useful statistics in the form of test scores that indicate the achievement level of children, schools, and districts. But we do not have causal analyses of these data that could reliably lead to significant improvement. Richard Feynman, in his comment on

---

*E.D. Hirsch Jr., a distinguished visiting fellow at the Hoover Institution, is president of the Core Knowledge Foundation and professor emeritus of education and humanities at the University of Virginia.* *Special thanks to Eric Hanushek, Liz McPike, Ralph Raimi, Louisa Spencer, Steven Stahl, and Grover Whitehurst for their suggestions.*

"cargo cult science," identifies part of the reason for this shortcoming — that while educational research sometimes adopts the outward form of science, it does not burrow to its essence. For Feynman, the essence of good science is doing whatever is necessary to get to reliable and usable knowledge — a goal not necessarily achieved by merely following the external forms of a "method."

The statistical methods of educational research have become highly sophisticated. But the quality of the statistical analysis is much higher than its practical utility. Despite the high claims being made for statistical techniques like regression analysis, or experimental techniques like random assignment of students into experimental and control groups, classroom-based research (as contrasted with laboratory research) has not been able to rid itself of uncontrolled influences called "noise" that have made it impossible to tease out the relative contributions of the various factors that have led to "statistically significant" results. This is a chief reason for the unreliability and fruitlessness of current classroom research. An uncertainty principle subsists at its heart. As a consequence, every partisan in the education wars is able to utter the words "research has shown" in support of almost any position. Thus "research" is invoked as a rhetorical weapon — its main current use.

In this essay I shall outline some fundamental reasons why educational research has not provided dependable guidance for policy, and suggest how to repair what it lacks. On a positive note, there already exists some reliable research on which educational policy could and should be based, found mainly (though not exclusively) in cognitive psychology. In the end, both naturalistic research and laboratory research in education have a duty to accompany their findings with plausible accounts of their actual implications for policy — as regards both the relative cost of the policy in money and time and the relative gain that may be expected from it in comparison with rival policies. Including this neglected dimension might wonderfully concentrate the research mind, and lead to better science in the high sense defined by Feynman.

## A tale of two studies

THE NOVEMBER 2001 issue of *Scientific American* includes an article called "Does Class Size Matter?" about the policy consequences of research into the beneficial effects of smaller class size. The centerpiece of the article is the famous multimillion dollar STAR (Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio) study — considered to be a methodological model for educational research — which showed with exemplary technique that reducing class size will enhance equity and achievement in early grades.

But when California legislators dutifully spent $5 billion to reduce class

size in early grades, the predicted significant effect did not result. Educational researchers, including the authors of the *Scientific American* article itself, complained that the California policy was implemented with "too little forethought and insight." Presumably this complaint implies that there are many factors that affect educational outcomes, and that we should not rely on a single one like class size. This after-the-fact criticism is valid. But if the California legislators had searched for useful "insight" in the STAR research they would have been disappointed. "Forethought and insight" cannot compensate for the deeper problem that *the process of generalizing directly from classroom research is inherently unreliable.*

Also in November 2001, there appeared an article in *Education Week* that summarized research into the multimillion dollar "whole-school reform" effort ("Whole School Projects Show Mixed Results"). According to the article, the researchers could not reliably discriminate between those programs that worked well and those that did not. The evaluators blamed the inconclusiveness of the results on uneven implementation of the various programs by the schools — an unhelpful observation. As a consequence, neither the expensive "whole-school" programs nor the expensive research into their effectiveness can usefully guide policy across the nation — which was a chief aim of the enterprise.

*Neither the expensive whole-school programs nor the expensive research into their effectiveness can usefully guide policy.*

These are but two recent examples of the general inconclusiveness of educational research. The historical record — like these two particular studies — supports Feynman's contention that even when educational research follows the external forms of science, it misses the essence. It dutifully gathers complex data, and uses control groups and experimental groups, and it applies sophisticated statistical techniques. In rare cases, as in the STAR study, it follows the still more rigorous practice of purely random assignment of students to the experimental and control groups. But even after researchers have dutifully followed "all the apparent precepts and forms of scientific investigation," the planes don't land. The test-score gaps between social classes do not narrow.

What is missing from this research? How, for example, might the STAR study have been made scientifically more solid, and ultimately more useful for the policymakers of California? These improvements would not have been achieved by using the now widely advocated technique of random assignment, since random assignment was in fact used. In fact, it was not the experimental structure of STAR but its intellectual structure that was deficient. This multimillion dollar study does not hazard a clear and detailed theoretical interpretation of its own findings. It does not, for example,

answer such nitty-gritty questions as: What are the various causal factors that make smaller class size more effective for earlier grades than for later ones? Could there be alternative and even more reliable ways of achieving similar or higher student gains? Much of the literature I have read in connection with STAR quietly assumes that smaller class size is itself the causal agent. But even the more sophisticated interpretations of STAR which posit deeper causal factors do not systematically explore the following critical issue: Given the probable causes of student gain, are there even more effective and less costly ways of applying those causes and achieving the same or greater gains? If, for example, an important causal advantage of smaller class size is more interaction time between student and teacher, are there alternative, less expensive policies for achieving more interaction time and even greater student gains? These are the questions that a policymaker needs to have answered, and it is the duty of the informed researcher on the ground — not the beset legislator — to ponder and answer those questions.

Traditionally, scientific work is considered "good" if its results foster deeper theoretical understanding. One of the most disdainful remarks in the sciences is that a piece of work is "a-theoretical." It's true that in common parlance the word "theory" has an overtone of impracticality. Scientists, however, regard the formulation of theories about deep causal factors to be the motive force of scientific progress — a view that has rightly replaced an earlier just-the-facts conception of scientific advance. The STAR study is a first-rate illustration of the way in which the a-theoretical tradition in education research hinders its utility. Wolfgang Pauli once remarked about a scientific paper: "It is not even wrong." That is exactly what can be said about the STAR study, and by extension many other classroom studies. Most of them are profoundly a-theoretical. They neither enable good policy inferences nor advance the research agenda. And they have other problems as well.

## Difficult and undependable research

AN APOLOGETIC ARGUMENT heard in education schools is that educational research can never be as clean and decisive as controlled laboratory experiments because, on ethical grounds, one cannot treat children like rats in a maze. Admittedly, there is truth in this defense. Even the most carefully conducted school research must operate in circumstances that preclude certainty. Unfortunately, however, the limitations of classroom research eliminate not only certainty, but also the very possibility of scientific consensus — a very serious problem indeed.

If we take an example of the best educational research — say the Tennessee class-size experiment — and ponder why it fails to serve policymakers well, some very basic reasons present themselves. The STAR researchers were at pains not to interfere with anything in the school setting

except class size. Had they manipulated other factors, they would have introduced unmanageable uncertainties into the analysis. They wanted to disclose what might be expected if the only policy change was the reduction of average class size from 24 to 15. Given such careful control and analysis, why was class-size reduction so much less effective in California than it seemed to be in Tennessee? There's one immediate and self-evident answer: In some settings, class-size reduction helps an average .2 of a standard deviation; in other settings it helps only .075 of a standard deviation (neither effect being much to write home about).

This simple restating of the results, while almost too obvious to mention, goes straight to the heart of one educational-research problem: the fact that results cannot be generalized. Such research carries with it an implicit claim to reproducibility in other settings. Otherwise, why undertake it? But its multiplex character almost guarantees non-reproducibility. If just one factor such as class size is being analyzed, then its relative contribution to student outcomes (which might be co-dependent on many other real-world factors) may not be revealed by even the most careful analysis. On the other hand, if other classroom factors had been experimentally controlled at the same time, then it would be extremely hard if not impossible to determine — even by the most sophisticated means — just which of the experimental interventions caused or failed to cause which improvements. And if a whole host of factors are simultaneously evaluated as in "whole-school reform," it is not just difficult but, despite the claims made for regression analysis, impossible to determine relative causality with confidence.

In his essay on cargo cult science, Feynman described how one researcher managed with great persistence finally to obtain a reliable result in studying rats in a maze. Here is his description:

> There have been many experiments running rats through all kinds of mazes, and so on — with little clear result. But in 1937 a man named Young did a very interesting one. He had a long corridor with doors all along one side where the rats came in, and doors along the other side where the food was. He wanted to see if he could train the rats to go in at the third door down from wherever he started them off. No. The rats went immediately to the door where the food had been the time before.
>
> The question was, how did the rats know, because the corridor was so beautifully built and so uniform, that this was the same door as before? Obviously there was something about the door that was different from the other doors. So he painted the doors very carefully, arranging the textures on the faces of the doors exactly the same. Still the rats could tell. Then he thought maybe the rats were smelling the food, so he used chemicals to change the smell after each run. Still the rats could tell. Then he realized the rats might be able to tell by seeing the lights and the arrangement in the laboratory like any commonsense person. So he covered the corridor, and still the rats could tell. He finally found that they

> could tell by the way the floor sounded when they ran over it. And he could only fix that by putting his corridor in sand. So he covered one after another of all possible clues and finally was able to fool the rats so that they had to learn to go in the third door. If he relaxed any of his conditions, the rats could tell.

As mentioned, given ethical constraints, the likelihood of conducting such a scientifically rigorous experiment on American schoolchildren would appear to be rather low.

There are other fundamental difficulties standing in the way of generalization from classroom research. Young children learn slowly. The cumulative effects of interventions are gradual, extending over years. Yet most educational research is conducted over spans measured in months rather than years, ensuring that effect sizes will tend to be small. These effects may be rendered almost invisible by another difficulty — the fact that the process of schooling is exceedingly context-dependent. Children's learning is deeply social, lending each classroom context a different dynamic. Moreover, learning is critically dependent on students' relevant prior knowledge. Neither of these contextual variables, the social and the cognitive, can be experimentally controlled in real-world classroom settings. The social context of schooling depends on unpredictable interactions between teachers and students, and among students themselves. And what students bring to a classroom depends not only on what they previously learned in school, but also — as is well-established — on unpredictable knowledge they gained outside of school.

*Children learn slowly, yet most educational research is conducted over spans measured in months rather than years.*

Detailed analyses of the contextual factors that influence learning are greatly to be desired, of course, but progress in understanding those contextual factors is unlikely to result from coarse-grained classroom studies. Progress is more likely to result from highly controlled "artificial" experiments that reveal the fine-grained underlying causes. It used to be thought that damp, low-lying air causes "swamp fever." (The other term for swamp fever, "malaria," means "bad air.") That theory of the cause of the disease was accepted by medical science as long as researchers stuck to coarse-grained observations which indicated that if you live in a swamp you are likely to get swamp fever from the bad air. It was not until the disease was put under the microscope that progress began to be made in determining the true causes and vectors of malaria. Medical science continues to advance as it becomes allied with ever more refined laboratory understandings. Its most striking and reliable advances have occurred since medicine became closely

tied to biochemistry at a still more fine-grained level — the molecular. By analogy, it is plausible to think that progress in educational research, if it occurs at all, will follow this sort of pattern.

Another hard-to-control contextual variable is, of course, teacher quality. One argument of this essay is that deep-lying principles of learning are more reliable than specific teaching methods, because a decision about which teaching methods will be most effective will depend on unpredictable contextual variables, with the result that the same underlying principle may require very different methods in different contexts. This means that the teacher's role as the on-the-spot translator of principles into methods is critical. But teacher training, though crucial, is not my subject here. Leaving aside the vexed and critical question of "teacher quality," the two other uncontrolled-for context variables that I mentioned — the social and the cognitive — are so important that their influences alone tend to drown out most experimental interventions. That will be true even when (as in STAR) the number of students being sampled is large enough to allow the hopeful assumption that the variables will cancel out. In those cases, the influence of contextual variables has been so great that the effect-sizes of most experimental interventions have been small.

The smallness of effect sizes has prompted disinterested scholars like H.J. Walberg, Barak Rosenshine, and Jeanne Chall to analyze whole masses of relevant studies on given educational topics to see if a reliable pattern emerges. These meta-studies are the most dependable sources of the meager insights that educational research has uncovered. But the end result of these painstaking analyses is that most conclusions still remain insecure, and still reflect the uncertainty and ambiguity of the underlying studies.

To summarize so far: Educational data are difficult to apply in a dependable way because of contextual variables that change from classroom to classroom and from year to year, and that drown out the effects of single or multiple interventions. Clearly, therefore, one major assumption of educational research needs to be examined and modified — i.e., the assumption that data about what works in schools could be gathered from schools and then applied directly to improve schools.

## Changing the thought model

IS THERE A WAY in which this inherent uncertainty principle in educational data can be diminished? Yes, by placing less reliance on traditional educational research that makes inferences from school data and applies those inferences directly back to schools.

Here is an example of traditional educational research in action from the government's educational database called ERIC:

ERIC NO: ED394125 TITLE: Vocabulary Teaching Strategies: Effects

on Vocabulary Recognition and Comprehension at the First Grade Level. AUTHOR: Peitz, Patricia; Vena, Patricia PUBLICATION DATE: 1996

ABSTRACT: A study examined teaching methods for vocabulary at the first grade level. The study compared teaching vocabulary in context and teaching vocabulary in isolation. Subjects were 32 culturally diverse first-grade students from varying socio-economic backgrounds. The sample consisted of 14 boys and 18 girls, heterogeneously grouped. Two teacher-made tests were used, each consisting of 30 multiple choice items: Test A, to test vocabulary in isolation; and Test B, to test vocabulary in context. Target words for the tests were taken from the Dolch list, the Harris-Jacob list, and the reading material used in the classroom on a regular basis. Both tests were administered as pretests prior to instruction. After a 3-month period of instruction, Tests A and B were readministered as posttests to determine students' vocabulary growth. Results indicated that there was no significant difference in vocabulary acquisition by the sample. Results also indicated that, although there was vocabulary growth with both methods, the sample group's growth in vocabulary taught in isolation was greater than that of the vocabulary taught in context. Findings suggest that both methods of learning vocabulary will enable children to increase their vocabulary base and should be used. (Four tables of data are included; contains 37 references, 4 appendixes containing lists of vocabulary in context and in isolation, and related literature on vocabulary building.)

To paraphrase, there seems to be a slight benefit to teaching high-frequency vocabulary words in isolation rather than in context, but no significant difference in vocabulary growth as between the two methods. If the experiment had been made on a grander scale with thousands of students, random assignments, and a duration longer than three months, the data might have shifted in favor of teaching words in context. To repeat, however, it is unlikely that the results of a more massive experiment would supply dependable guidance. Again, we simply do not know enough about the uncontrolled factors at play in either sort of result to move confidently from research to policy.

But suppose a policymaker had to form a decision on how teachers should best achieve first-grade vocabulary enhancement (an extremely important issue). What decision should be made? Someone who read the work of cognitive scientists (rather than classroom reports) would find well-tested advice on how to teach vocabulary. They would find a consensus that, depending on the prior knowledge of students, both isolated and contextual methods need to be used — isolated instruction for certain high-frequency words students may not know or may not recognize by sight, like the prepositions "about," "under," "before," "behind," but carefully guided contextual instruction for other words. Teachers and administrators would learn

that word meanings are acquired gradually over time through multiple exposures to whole systems of related words, and that the most effective type of contextual word study is an extended exposure to coherent subject matters.

This scientific consensus arose not just from classroom educational research but principally from laboratory studies and theoretical considerations unconnected to the classroom. One theoretical consideration, for instance, is that a top-of-the-class 17-year-old high-school graduate knows around 60,000 different words. That averages out to a learning rate of 11 new words a day from age two. Although this estimate varies in the literature from 8 to 18, its range implies by any reckoning a word-acquisition rate that cannot be achieved by studying words in isolation. There is notable cognitive research on the subject of vocabulary acquisition. Synthesis of this research is a more dependable guide to education policy than the data derived from classrooms.

*The most reliable guidance is not found in data from schools but rather in inferences from the laboratory.*

If we follow this line of thought where it leads, we come to the conclusion that the most reliable guidance to what works in school is not to be found by looking at data from schools but rather by looking at inferences from the laboratory. ("By indirections find directions out.") Of course, these scientific inferences must prove themselves in the schools; they can't be permitted to produce worse educational outcomes than we had before. But because of the variability of the local contexts from which the school data is taken, the probability that an inference from school data is wrong is much greater than the probability that a scientific consensus is wrong.

Education-school proponents of "qualitative" research criticize quantitative research by taking note of the variability of classroom contexts, and claiming that all education, like all politics, is local. (They use the term "situated learning.") They pride themselves on following "ethnographic" methods, and taking into account the uniqueness of the classroom context. They rightly object that quantitative research tries to apply oranges to apples. But if their descriptions do not disclose something general that I could confidently apply to my own classroom, their studies are not very useful. And if their inferences did have general application, then the value of an "ethnographic" rather than a straightforward general description would lie in the literary vividness of a concrete example. But literary value is rarely claimed or observed in these productions.

Descriptive educational research suffers a fundamental shortcoming. To describe is to select what is important to describe out of an uncountable multitude of classroom happenings. How do I know that the chosen events are the ones that have made a difference? Overt behaviors like calling on shy

students or building medieval castles out of milk cartons may or may not be the behaviors that have mainly caused one classroom to learn more about medieval castles than another. To be useful, even in the abstract, the descriptions would have to be selected on the basis of a prior theory about what is important to be described. This begs the research question. What is important to be described is what careful research should be trying to find out, not what it should be taking for granted. Although advocates of qualitative research are right to point out the unreliability of quantitative analyses like the STAR study, they need to apply a similar skepticism to their own efforts.

The reliability picture changes dramatically when we apply consensus science to education. Cognitive scientists have reached agreement, for example, about the chief ways in which vocabulary is acquired. This theory gained consensus because it explains data from many kinds of studies and a diversity of sources. While incomplete in causal detail, it explains more of what we know about vocabulary acquisition than does any other theory. When we apply it, we are no longer applying oranges to apples, but well-validated general principles to particular instances, in confidence that the principles will work when accommodated to the classroom or other context.

*A teacher needs not just practical maxims but also underlying general principles.*

One might object that teachers should not have to think back to first principles every time they make lesson plans. Highly probable maxims that work most of the time (Francis Bacon called them "middle axioms") get us through the day. True enough, but for reasons I have already advanced, classroom research has been undependable in offering middle-level generalizations. Its maxims tend to be overgeneralized beyond their highly uncertain sphere of validity, so they are often inapplicable to particular circumstances. Teachers who were to read a different research report such as ERIC ED246392 or ED392012 would conclude they should favor the words-in-context approach.

Yet neither conclusion would be warranted. According to more general principles gleaned from cognitive science, it would be premature for teachers to follow either approach without further consideration. If students in a particular class already know and recognize by sight critical foundational words like "under," "over," "about," "beside," beneath," it wastes class time chiefly to use a words-in-isolation approach. This more general maxim is grounded not just in classroom research but in an interpretation of data from a diversity of domains.

Middle axioms are inherently probabilistic, and, in education, the probabilities change greatly in different circumstances. A teacher needs not just practical maxims but also underlying general principles that can guide their intelligent application. The wider public shows an understanding of this

truth in the adage "teaching is an art, not a science." This is another way of saying that the variabilities of classrooms demand a flexible application of deep general principles, not a mechanical application of methods and maxims.

## What are "reliable general principles"?

FIFTY YEARS AGO, psychology was dominated by the guru principle. One declared an allegiance to B.F. Skinner and behaviorism, or to Piaget and stage theory, or to Vygotsky and social theory. Today, by contrast, a new generation of "cognitive scientists," while duly respectful of these important figures, have leavened their insights with further evidence (not least, thanks to new technology), and have been able to take a less speculative and guru-dominated approach. This is not to suggest that psychology has now reached the maturity and consensus level of solid-state physics. But it is now more reliable than it was, say, in the Thorndike era with its endless debates over "transfer of training."

To lend some credence to the proposition that general cognitive principles tend to be more dependable than maxims from direct classroom research, I shall now outline some issues in cognitive science about which a degree of consensus has been reached. Shrewd applications of these consensus principles would almost certainly enhance classroom learning, and ought also to encourage a shift in the way policymakers use educational data and research.

*Prior knowledge as a prerequisite to effective learning.* I have put this principle first, because so many other principles and policy implications flow from it. If "fortune favors the prepared mind," so does learning. One of the themes currently dominant in our education schools is that learning should be based on the mastery of formal habits of thinking rather than on "mere facts," that learning how to think is more important than mere accumulation of "factoids." The modicum of truth in this widely-held notion would appear to go something like this: After a student has reached a certain threshold of enabling knowledge, then acquiring a habit of critical thinking may be more valuable than acquiring a few more facts.

But it would be a profound mistake, uncountenanced by cognitive science, to suppose that skillful thinking can be mastered independently of broad subject-matter knowledge. The fallacy of derogating content is obvious in mathematics, where everyone concedes that skill and understanding in multiplication depend on a preparatory knowledge of addition. And the principle of preparatory knowledge applies not just to math, but to most other intellectual domains.

The research that offers the most dramatic evidence that relevant prior knowledge is critical to thinking skill is the area of expert-novice studies. The expert learns more from a given experience than a novice does, even

though the novice has much more still to learn. That's because being presented with too many not-yet-interpreted items overloads and confuses the mind, whereas prior knowledge makes experience salient and meaningful (see "meaningfulness" below), and the expert need interpret less novelty than the non-expert (see "attention" below).

*Meaningfulness.* A lot of learning is, of necessity, pretty meaningless. The connection between the sound and the sense of many words is entirely arbitrary. That the words "brother" or "sister" sound like they do is, for a child, just a brute fact that has to be learned. But, once the arbitrary sound-sense connection is learned, the meaningfulness of those words ensures that they will be remembered. Meaningfulness implies connectedness by experiential association (episodic memory), by schematic structure (semantic memory), or by emotional associations. In the expert-novice experiments, it is thought that prior knowledge enables the expert not only to connect the elements of an experience, but also to pick out what is meaningful and salient in it. Moreover, prior knowledge enables the expert to deduce more from the experience than the novice can. A novice looking at the outside of an Italian villa wouldn't understand that it has an unseen central courtyard; the expert, equipped with prior knowledge, would comprehend the unseen interior courtyard as well as the exterior walls.

*One of the tasks of teaching is to make learning meaningful.*

The familiar distinction between "rote learning" and "meaningful learning" is thus well grounded — if understood liberally. But, since not all learning is inherently meaningful to a child (e.g. "SIS-tuh," "BRUH-thuh") one of the tasks of teaching is to make it so. A brilliant kindergarten teacher once described to me some tricks she used to teach children the names of the numbers. One trick was to bring in a pretzel, "Look, this is the shape of the number 8." She plopped it into her mouth. "Look, I ate it! I 8 it." It's hard to believe that this method of making "rote learning" meaningful, which incidentally invoked the children's prior knowledge of the verb "to eat," could have been easily forgotten by the children.

*The right mix of generalization and example.* Learning in school requires generalization. Nothing could be more abstract and general than arithmetic. But to acquire the concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division (or as Lewis Carroll would have it: "Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision"), you have to learn more than the abstract conceptions. You have to work with a lot of examples. No one advocates saying to first graders "OK, kids, this is the commutative law of addition. You memorize that — and never mind fiddling around with all those beans." The beans or their equivalent are absolutely essential.

The optimal mode for learning most subjects is through a carefully devised combination of the general concept and well-selected examples. This

idea of teaching by both precept and example is so old — going back to the earliest literature in many cultures — that its confirmation in experiment is no surprise. Examples serve a number of functions that can't be retailed here. Researchers say that it's important to get the right mix and number of examples. If arithmetic exercises are too numerous and similar, time will be wasted. It is important to vary the angle of attack in examples, to illustrate different key aspects of the underlying concepts, and not to forget that explicit restatements of the general concept are equally important. The way we store these concepts is typically enmeshed with models or examples. One famous experiment showed that the concept "bird" is stored (by North Americans) as something about the size of a robin, not the size of a hummingbird or ostrich. Concept and example are deeply connected with one another in how we think and remember as well as how we learn.

*Education aims to enable the mind to transcend the narrow constraints of working memory.*

*Attention determines learning*. Although "motivation" and "interest" are perennial themes of education, and important to any practicing teacher, it is sobering to discover from cognitive science that motivation is only an indirect and dispensable aid to learning. Intention to learn, whether internally imposed by intrinsic interest and ambition, or imposed from outside through rewards and punishments, may be sometimes a condition for learning, but it is not a necessary or sufficient condition. Some things that we involuntarily pay attention to are learned and remembered better than things we are trying to learn and remember. What is learned is that which is paid attention to, and, typically, what is paid attention to is what is learned.

Attention is an aspect of our "working memory," a function that lasts just a few seconds. Out of the whirr of perceptual features that impinge on working memory every instant, we attend only to a salient few. That few is very, very limited in number, even for the most brilliant minds. A famous article about the limited number of things we can attend to at one time was called "The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two" (by G.A. Miller, first published in 1956). In some cases the limiting number is nearer to four. An expert with prior knowledge will be able to attend to many more things than a novice, not because of greater mental capacity, but because of "chunking." For an expert, noticing one thing is automatically to notice a myriad of things implied by it and known to be chunked with it, whereas the novice has to get through dozens of connections, which, because of the limitations of working memory, is impossible.

One chief aim of education is to enable the mind to transcend the narrow constraints of working memory by concentrating an immense wealth of individual elements into a single symbol or name that can be attended to all at

once. This concentration effect is one of the marvels of language, and it illustrates the immense importance of imparting a sufficient vocabulary. As individuals and societies learn more, they form and learn new names for these large complexes of concepts and perceptions. By means of effective names and symbols, the vastness of what an ordinary school child can retain, use, and pay attention to in, say, mathematics, exceeds the capacity of the most learned doctors of fourteenth-century Oxford.

If the attended-to things are given meaning by being connected with what we already know, we will learn (remember) them. If we do not attend to them and do not accommodate them to some known structure, we will usually not learn them. Although this finding is not surprising to common sense, it is a sobering reminder that we should not be overly distracted by the vast and unreliable literature on what will or will not properly motivate students — a debate that seems baffling to many teachers, since what motivates some students does not motivate others. A teacher's job is to ensure meaningful attention by as many students as possible towards that which is to be learned — using whatever methods may come to hand, including, above all, giving students the preparatory knowledge that will make attention meaningful.

*Effective learning depends on rehearsal by one means or by another.*

*Rehearsal (repetition) is usually necessary for retention.* How long something will be remembered is typically determined by how often it has been attended to. Rehearsal has the double purpose of retention and making meaningful connections between experiences. There is evidence that the need for rehearsal has a physical basis in the neuron structure of the brain. The need for repetition to maintain what is learned has been well understood in every culture. We teach children little poems or songs so they can retain the letters of the alphabet or the days of the months. All this the world knows well, however contemporary slogans may disparage it.

The disagreeable need for rehearsal is called in the educational parlance "drill and kill." Good teachers try to find ways of making rehearsal less obviously painful, when that is possible. But effective learning depends on rehearsal by one means or by another. In the old argument between "natural development" and "practice makes perfect," it is the latter that has the support of cognitive science.

Some useful findings can make practice effective. It has long been known that massed practice is less effective than distributed practice. Cramming for an exam is less effective for long-term retention than keeping up with assignments as you go along. Frequent classroom testing of students (another disparaged method) is a very effective distributed-practice technique. To test students shortly after they learn something rehearses that knowledge.

Moreover, students' awareness that a test is coming focuses their attention during original learning — giving classroom tests a double whammy for learning. A maximally effective mode of practice is to rehearse something just shortly before getting rusty, thus gradually extending the time span between rehearsals. So superior is distributed practice to massed practice that the cognitive scientist Ulrich Neisser was moved to poetry:

> *You can get a good deal from rehearsal*
> *If it just has the proper dispersal.*
> *You would just be an ass*
> *To do it en masse:*
> *Your remembering would turn out much worsal.*

*Automaticity (through rehearsal) is essential to higher skills.* Rehearsal serves other purposes beyond long-term retention and the constructing of meaningful connections. It also serves to make certain operations non-conscious and automatic. An obvious example is reading. The beginning reader must consciously correlate sound and symbol, and consciously move the eye from left to right, and consciously form the symbols into words. The beginning student does not have much "channel capacity" left for paying attention to what the words are saying. Since working memory can attend to just a few things at a time, the meaning of the sentence and even its component sounds are likely to spill into oblivion. As these underlying processes become more and more unconscious and automatic, the possibility grows for meaningful reading, and finally for thinking about the meaning. The processes do not become automatic just because children grow older, as the term "development" is often used to imply. Skills become automatic by being practiced.

What is true for reading is also true for other activities. Obvious examples come from sports; the more one has to think about all the motions required for hitting a tennis ball well, the less one is likely to do so. In sports no one doubts the need to gain automaticity. And it is no less true of other skills including academic ones. Automaticity frees up the working memory and allows it to concentrate on higher-order thinking.

*Implicit instruction of beginners is usually less effective.* A theme in the literature of American education research is that natural, real-world simulations (hands-on projects), in which the student gains knowledge implicitly, are superior to the artificial, step-by-step methods of traditional schooling. It is initially plausible that exposure to the complex realities of reading — the "whole language" method — would lead to more sophisticated reading skill than stumbling along step by step with the bricks and mortar of the alphabetic code. The more general question is this, however: Should students be immersed right away in complex situations that simulate real life — the method of implicit learning — or should they first be provided with explicit modes of instruction that are focused on small chunks deliberately isolated from the complexities of actual situations?

The answer one gets from cognitivists is complex. A teacher needs to

engage in both implicit and explicit teaching. Because of the limitations of working memory, a step-by-step, explicit approach is good for beginners. A new tennis player has to be able to hold the racket and hit the ball over the net, and usually needs instruction in those sub-skills before going on to play a game. On the other hand, it's hard to see how one could gain knowledge of the ways subskills work together except in an actual game. Successful coaches provide guided practice in isolated subskills, and also in how to put them together in real-world simulations.

Since the resolution of the implicit-explicit debate is that teachers should use both, the main point of considering the issue here is that explicit learning has been subjected to widespread "research-based" condemnation in education schools. Hence the subject forms a good illustration of the contrast between educational research and cognitive research.

*Explicit learning has been subjected to widespread "research-based" condemnation.*

There's a dramatic experiment in the literature. At issue was the problem of how to teach people to discern the sex of day-old chicks. The protosexual characteristics are extremely subtle and variable, and even after weeks of guidance from a mentor, trainees rarely attain a correctness rate of more than 80 per cent. Learning this skill has important financial implications for egg-producing farmers, and chick-sexing schools have been set up in Canada and California. The school training, which involves implicit learning from real-world live chicks, lasts from six to 12 weeks.

It occurred to two cognitive scientists familiar with the literature on implicit vs. explicit learning that these chick-sexing schools might present an experimental opportunity. They wondered if they could construct a more efficient learning program based on their knowledge of the literature. They decided to capitalize on the experience of a Mr. Carlson, who had spent 50 years sexing over 55 million chicks. From a set of 18 chick photographs representing the different types, Mr. Carlson was able to identify the range of critical features distinctive to each sex, and on the basis of his trait-analysis, a single-page instruction leaflet was created. Training was to consist in looking at this analytical leaflet for one minute.

To conduct the experiment, people without any chick-sexing experience were randomly divided into two groups, one of which looked at the leaflet. Thereafter, both groups were tested. Those who did not study the leaflet scored about 50 percent, that is, at the level of pure chance. Those who looked at the leaflet scored 84 percent, which was even better than the scores achieved by professional chick-sexers. Alan Baddeley, the distinguished psychologist from whose book this example was taken, interprets the experiment as "an extremely effective demonstration that . . . one minute of explicit learning can be more effective than a month of implicit learning."

Reading and other academic skills are, at least in some respects, analogous to chick-sexing. Mr. Carlson's 50 years of experience enabled him to isolate the protosexual traits of chicks into an analytical chart that could be learned in 60 seconds. This feat is analogous in its form to the achievement of ancient scholars in isolating the phonemic structure of speech into an alphabet of 26 letters. Their work, one of the great intellectual feats of human history, can now be recited or sung by a non-precocious preschooler by the age of four. Teachers and students can then be trained in the approximately 43 phonemes of English and their various correlations with the 26 alphabetic letters by using focused, analytical techniques. There is now ample evidence that carefully planned explicit instruction in phoneme-letter correlations is the fastest and surest way of empowering all beginners to decode alphabetic writing. In instances like these, explicit instruction with clearly defined goals is superior to implicit instruction and constitutes the most effective use of that precious commodity, school time.

Implicit rather than explicit learning is, as we have seen, the superior method for vocabulary growth, since word acquisition occurs over a very long period, and advances very, very gradually along a broad front. On the other hand, explicitly learning a few foundational words is much faster than implicitly learning them. It may be that explicit learning is best for a limited number of foundational elements, while implicit learning is best for advancing slowly on a broad front. It is not yet clear whether this division of labor between explicit and implicit learning applies to domains other than vocabulary growth, but even after that issue is sorted out, common sense will remain a valuable classroom commodity.

## Of convergence and consensus

In recommending skepticism towards the findings of classroom research, I have at the same time counseled confidence in the findings of cognitive science as the more reliable guide to educational practice. Cognitive science, in contrast to school-based research, gathers data from many sources and explains why they converge on a consensus interpretation. I do not mean that cognitive research is always good or that educational research is always bad. The difference in the two fields is that, whereas classroom research, in the nature of the case, rarely converges on a consensus view, cognitive science has recently begun to do so.

The principle of independent convergence has always been the hallmark of dependable science. In the nineteenth century, for example, evidence from many directions converged on the germ theory of disease. Once policymakers accepted that consensus, hospital operating rooms, under penalty of being shut down, had to meet high standards of cleanliness. The case has been very different with schools. Educational policymakers, in the grip of their own strong sentiments or in thrall to the latest bulletins from the edu-

cation-research front, have authorized experimentation upon children on a vast scale, often under assumptions that conflict with the relevant scientific consensus.

What policymakers should demand from the research community is consensus. This has been achieved in some cases. Under the aegis of the National Institutes of Health, a high degree of consensus has been reached among both mainline psychologists and school-based researchers regarding effective modes of teaching early reading. This NIH work is notable for having integrated both laboratory and classroom research and for having supplied theoretical accounts of the underlying causal processes at a detailed level.

*Without greater theoretical sophistication we are unlikely to achieve greater practical results.*

Policymakers can further demand that laboratory researchers take the plunge that they have not yet taken and offer us theoretical extrapolations to classrooms. On the other side, policymakers can demand that classroom researchers take the extra effort and study needed to offer theoretical descriptions (deduced from laboratory research) of the causal factors that have produced the classroom results they report. This was the theoretical element so glaringly absent in the STAR study. The nation needs both groups — basic researchers and school-level researchers, acting in concert to begin a tradition of hard theoretical effort at the most profound and intricate level. Without greater theoretical sophistication we are unlikely to achieve greater practical results. With it, educational research could begin to earn the high gratitude and prestige that it currently lacks but which, given its potential importance, it could some day justify.

Recently, an impressive book on educational research has appeared called *Evidence Matters* (Brookings Institution, 2002). It contains a fine essay by Thomas D. Cook and Monique R. Payne advocating the method followed in the STAR study — random assignment of students into experimental and control groups. The Cook and Payne essay argues that randomization is the most convincing way to determine whether the outcomes of educational interventions have statistical significance. Currently, the method of random assignment is advocated as the herald of a new research era.

One may concede to Cook and Payne and others that the practice of random assignment may yield more convincing evidence of statistical significance than other methods of data gathering, but that is not to concede that statistical significance is itself a reliable guide to educational policy. When an intervention yields effects that have statistical significance, we can infer only that the effects are not accidental in the given circumstances. As was evident in the STAR study, we cannot necessarily be confident that the observed effect

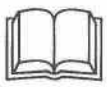
size will be repeated in new circumstances.

Brute empirical data does not speak its own meaning. The main policy use of educational research is to enable us to make good predictions about which interventions will yield significant effects in new situations — by understanding of the root causes of the observed effects. In a domain as causally complex as mass education, "statistical significance" no matter how rigorously derived must be interpreted with a wary eye.

For instance, it is dangerous to predict long-term benefits from short-term results. Random assignment research has shown short-term gains from teaching "metacognitive" reading strategies (such as looking for the main idea). At the same time, cognitive theory predicts that the rate of student improvement with such interventions will not only reach a ceiling but will ultimately slow down a student's progress in reading — an important illustration that theory (based on extensive data) is more important and useful than ad hoc data.

In short while the new stress on random assignment is welcome, it doesn't affect the validity of Feynman's strictures about the limitations of method in educational research. A companion volume to *Evidence Matters* needs to be issued entitled *Theory Matters*. By all means let us use random assignments where plausible in educational data gathering. But then let us interpret the results warily in light of the deepest and most detailed theoretical insights into root causes that science has currently achieved.

In commenting on a draft of this essay, a federal administrator of research who has pursued both classroom and laboratory research observes that, ideally, the relationship between classroom research and cognitive science ought to parallel the collegial and fruitful relationship between medical research and biochemistry. This hopeful analogy, he concedes, could not be validly drawn in describing the educational research of the past, but he is determined to make the analogy more applicable in the future. Godspeed!



# BOOKS

# The Pathos of The Kass Report

*By* PETER BERKOWITZ

A REPORT ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON BIOETHICS. *Human Cloning and Human Dignity: An Ethical Inquiry.* PUBLICAFFAIRS. 400 PAGES. $14.00

IN ANTICIPATION of the first report of the President's Council on Bioethics, critics on the left and not a few right-wing libertarians had been sharpening their swords and replenishing their reserves of moral indignation and intellectual contempt. But those who had been eagerly preparing to take up arms against a manifesto of traditional pieties grounded in literary fictions and religious faith should have been sorely disappointed in mid-July, when the council delivered its report to President Bush. In fact, *Human Cloning and Human Dignity* — now appearing as a book, and scrupulously laying bare the moral case for and against human cloning — is an enlightened and enlightening document, and Dr. Leon Kass, chosen last fall by President Bush to chair the council, deserves much credit.

Not the least reason for the report's value is the seriousness with which the council under Kass's leadership took to heart the November 2001 presidential Executive Order that brought it into being, directing the members, first of all, "to undertake fundamental inquiry into the human and moral significance of developments in biomedical and behavioral science and technology," and also "to explore specific ethical and policy questions related to these developments." In responding to this presidential mandate, the council has provided a model of liberal inquiry in the service of the public interest. It has also dramatized the inescapable priority of the good of freedom in our judgments about cloning, as in all of our considered moral judgments and policy prescriptions.

The council chose the ethics of, and public policy related to, human cloning as its first topics of inquiry, and it produced policy recommendations on two issues. All 17 members of the council who cast votes recommended an outright congressional ban on reproductive cloning or, in the report's preferred language, "cloning-to-produce-children." This unanimity reflects both a consensus embodied in the conclusions of previous presidential commissions and the views of a substantial majority of the American people.

Concerning therapeutic cloning or,

*Peter Berkowitz teaches at George Mason University School of Law and is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.*

again in the report's preferred language, "cloning-for-biomedical-research," a majority of 10 members of the council recommended a four-year national moratorium to allow for further study of the moral, political, and scientific issues, and a seven-member minority recommended that cloning-for-biomedical-research be allowed to proceed promptly, subject to strict federal regulation. (Since debate concerning regulatory mechanisms has scarcely begun, however, the initiation of research even under the minority recommendation could take some time.)

*More important is the spirit, liberal in the best sense — generous, open, and devoted to the dignity of the individual while ever aware of the multifarious threats to which that dignity is constantly exposed — that animates the council's report.*

There is good reason to suppose that the majority position, which Kass supports, will not carry the day or that should Congress enact a national moratorium of some duration it will be followed by a decision to proceed with cloning-for-biomedical-research. But this political reality only makes the council's exploration of the ethics of human cloning, and the elaboration by the majority of the moral harms threatened by human cloning, all the more significant, for what is politically necessary or unavoidable may nevertheless carry menaces to our moral well-being of which the public should be apprised.

The council got off on the right foot. It is composed of a politically, religiously, and intellectually diverse group of distinguished individuals — six medical doctors, three practicing scientists, four legal scholars, three political scientists, a moral philosopher, and a theologian — many of whom were nominated by Kass (himself an M.D. as well as a Ph.D. in biochemistry), all of whom were ultimately appointed by the president. To be sure, and neither surprisingly nor deplorably, the composition of the council established by a conservative president has a conservative tilt (though not by much: perhaps as many as eight of the 18 members voted for Gore in 2000). More important though is the spirit, liberal in the best sense — generous, open, and devoted to the dignity of the individual while ever aware of the multifarious threats to which that dignity is constantly exposed — that animates the council's report.

The liberal spirit of the report should not be passed over lightly. And not only because rising above the partisan fray is an understandably rare event in Washington. For some time now, getting past politics has been a rare event at our universities, where officially partisanship is supposed to take a back seat to disinterested inquiry. In particular, the report stands in stark contrast to the spirit embodied

in the standard operating procedure at university-based centers for the study of ethics and the professions, the primary sites in the country for the study of the morality of biomedical research. Typically these centers lack, seemingly with a clean conscience, intellectual diversity: You would be hard pressed to find among the top programs on professional and practical ethics more than a token conservative among the year's visiting fellows or on the faculty advisory committees.

However, in the effort to understand complex questions where science, morals, and politics converge, intellectual diversity is not merely an ornament, as the Kass report illustrates. A many-sided inquiry is indispensable to the achievement of a correct grasp of a many-sided issue. Indeed, it is thanks to the council's commitment to air and to address opposing opinions that the pathos of the majority position comes into focus.

On one hand, a majority of council members supports the four-year moratorium on embryonic stem cell research because of the variety of threats it believes such research poses to the moral preconditions of human freedom. On the other hand, the freedom whose moral preconditions the majority wishes to protect is on a collision course with the restrictions embodied in the moratorium.

Indeed, the quest for a moratorium, as well as for many of the federal regulations that will be designed to permit such research while keeping it within limits, will very likely prove incompatible with and eventually fall before the very freedom to inquire, the freedom to improve our condition, and the freedom to master our world that liberal democracy in America secures, and the hunger for ever more of which it steadfastly encourages.

THE CASE OF cloning-to-produce-children was a relatively easy one for the council, because the members did not find that it presented any serious clash of competing goods. What united the council members in voting to ban such cloning altogether were concerns about the consequences that flow from "the idea of designing and manufacturing our children." While recognizing the claims of parents' freedom to choose and the claims of parents' happiness or well-being, the council members concluded that cloning-to-produce-children "is not only unsafe but also morally unacceptable." Cloning human children will of necessity involve using human beings as "experimental guinea pigs for scientific research," requiring much trial and error; experimentation that has already been performed with animals suggests that a huge percentage of deformed fetuses and severely impaired viable babies would result. Moreover, cloning children will encourage parents to see their children as a function of their deliberate choice and will, rather than as independent beings arising as a gift from a man and a woman freely giving themselves to each other in love. It will deprive the cloned children of the sense of a unique identity and individuality. It will create treacherous family dynamics because a child that is cloned with the cells from one of his or her parents will have a vivid biological tie to that parent (its genetic double) and no genetic tie at all to the other. And through its endorsement in law of the design and manufacture of children, the cloning of

children may well put society at risk by coarsening our sensibilities and inclining us to transfer even more terms and styles of thinking and ways of judging drawn from production and commercial life into the realm of intimate relations.

The case of cloning-for-biomedical-research, however, was a hard one for the council, and with excellent reason. Whereas the benefits supposedly yielded by cloning-to-produce-children are at best ambiguous, the potential benefits of cloning-for-biomedical-research — alleviating suffering by developing a variety of treatments for degenerative diseases that ravage millions of Americans — are a great good. And whereas the costs of cloning-to-produce-children seem unacceptably high to nearly everybody, the costs of cloning-for-biomedical-research are intensely controversial, revolving around the moral status of the cloned human embryos that are destroyed in the process of extracting from them the versatile stem cells, which have the potential to develop into any sort of cell in the body.

*The most important divisions on the council spring from questions about the moral status of the cloned human embryo and the consequences for our moral sensibilities of routinizing their production and destruction.*

Indeed, the most important divisions on the council and perhaps in the debate over human cloning as a whole spring from questions about the moral status of the cloned human embryo and the consequences for our moral sensibilities of routinizing and legalizing their production and destruction. Appropriately, the council's report highlights these divisions and explores them from several angles.

On one end of the spectrum, where many scientists seem to reside, is the view that the cloned human embryo "should be treated essentially like all other human cells," and hence is deserving of no more respect than any other microscopic particle. For those who hold this view, embryonic stem cell research presents no moral dilemmas, and therefore it follows that research should proceed forthwith. On the other end of the spectrum, where many pro-life conservatives stand, is the view that a human embryo, however it came into being, is deserving of the same respect and rights as a fully developed human being. For them, too, the moral issue is uncomplicated by consideration of other goods: Since it is immoral to create and then destroy a human being for the benefit of another, cloning-for-biomedical-research should be banned immediately and permanently (and indeed is in a sense worse than cloning-to-produce-children, which at least aims to bring a human being into existence, not to harvest certain parts of a developing human life and then

discard it).

In the middle are those who believe that the human embryo, a human being in the very earliest stages of development, is deserving of heightened respect, but less respect than a human being at later stages of development, say a fetus or a viable baby or an adult human being. And they believe that policies that implement systematic disrespect for developing human life are likely to have consequences for how fully developed human beings come to think of themselves and others. Unlike those who see no moral obstacle to the use and destruction of human embryos on one hand, and unlike those who see an insuperable moral obstacle to such use even for a good cause on the other hand, those who attach "intermediate and developing moral status" to the embryo face a stiff challenge in formulating policy. For not only must they give some content to the in-between sort of respect they believe is owed to nascent human life, they must also balance that good and its implications against other competing human goods.

Some council members who accord heightened moral respect to human embryos nevertheless joined the minority and favored proceeding with research without delay, on the grounds that what is owed to the millions who suffer debilitating diseases overrides what is owed to the human embryos. And they discerned no serious harm to a society as a consequence of legitimating and routinizing the systematic production and destruction of the life embodied in human embryos.

Other council members who accord heightened moral respect to nascent human life voted with the majority in favor of the four-year moratorium on research. They believe that the potential of making discoveries that may reduce suffering and cure disease is, at this moment, outweighed by the combination of several considerations: the respect that is owed to developing human life; the need to debate and design effective regulatory mechanisms before research on cloned human embryos begins; and the need to prevent the moral harm to society that would result from further undermining our shared sense, under siege from many sides, that human life must not be reduced to manufacture and marketing. Nevertheless, the moratorium for which they call, far from embodying final conclusions about what is to be done about cloning-for-biomedical-research, reflects their conviction that more thought and discussion is urgently needed before national policy is set.

THE ESSENTIAL liberalism of the council's report has been lost on many critics. Most alarmingly, despite the measure with which the council's arguments are put forward, some liberal critics have been determined to depict Kass as a reactionary moralist and to dismiss the majority position he joined as utterly devoid of merit. Prominent among such critics is Dr. Jerome Groopman, who last winter published a mocking critique of the council's first public meeting in the *New Yorker* ("Science Fiction," February 4, 2002), suggesting that in the debate over cloning Kass was bent on substituting literary fiction for scientific fact. More recently, this summer in the *New Republic* ("Holding Cell," August 5 & 12, 2002) Groopman found that the council's majority recommendation calling

for a four-year moratorium on biomedical cloning confirmed his initial perceptions: "It shackles lifesaving research and provides no clear framework to advance the ethical debate. What's more, the arguments deployed on its behalf don't withstand scrutiny."

In fact, it is Groopman's scrutiny that does not hold up. To the majority's argument that cloning for biomedical research involves terminating a "nascent human being," Groopman replies that an early stage human embryo, a zygote, "is crucially different" from other types of "vulnerable human life" because lacking organs or a nervous system, it "cannot receive any form of stimulation related to the senses, cannot perceive or cogitate, and thus cannot be hurt or suffer." This is a valuable observation, but its reach is uncertain and its implications are unclear. That the human embryo in its earliest stages is different in an important respect from developed human life does not mean that it is different in all important respects. That it cannot be hurt or suffer does not distinguish the developing human embryo from a sleeping person, who can be killed painlessly in his sleep by a variety of means. And it is silly for Groopman to argue that since the majority thinks the reason for protecting the embryo is that "the embryo's human individual genetic identity is present from the start," therefore the majority is committed to the conclusion that "no human cell could ever be discarded." While every cell contains the individual's unique genetic identity, only the embryo, when permitted to follow its natural course of development, grows into a human being. Finally, Groopman simply fails to move beyond the question of the *rights* of the developing human embryo to address the question of the *consequences* for us as members of a society in which nascent human life is used as a resource. By the way, this latter question about the effects on our humane sensibilities of the use and disposal of human embryos is an empirical question. That such effects may be difficult to measure does not transform them into metaphysical questions or render them irrelevant to disputes about public policy.

*The question about the effects on our humane sensibilities is an empirical one. That such effects may be difficult to measure does not transform them into metaphysical questions or render them irrelevant to public policy.*

Groopman also finds no cause for concern regarding the majority's fear that cloning for biomedical research will create a slippery slope that will inevitably lead to the reproductive cloning that all members of the council oppose as well as to the production of embryonic and even fetal organs for therapeutic purposes. To this he counters that "there is always a slippery slope," and that all scientific advances

bring with them dangers and the possibility of abuse. True enough, but this hardly disposes of the matter. While there is always a slippery slope, some slopes are more slippery than others. Moreover, that we have effectively regulated previous scientific breakthroughs does not prove that the dangers inherent in new scientific breakthroughs will be equally subject to effective regulation. As the fine print on the mutual fund ads correctly states, past performance is no guarantee of future success. Yet Groopman proceeds as if the answer to the question of whether we can effectively regulate cloning for biomedical research is readily knowable in advance of investigation.

Why does Groopman, who professes devotion to the facts, overlook or attempt to answer without investigation key empirical questions posed by the majority? Perhaps it is because his objection to the majority position is not really empirical but based on an unexamined faith in progress and enlightenment.

Indeed, the alacrity with which he seeks to expose what he takes to be the Kass report's irreducible religious foundations both disguises and reveals Groopman's own faith. Groopman insinuates that the Kass majority sought to conceal the real foundation of its argument against cloning:

> The report studiously avoids mentioning religion — perhaps to preempt charges that theology undergirds the anti-cloning case — but in so doing, it overstates the possibility for moral compromise. For many Americans, theology is central to their opposition to therapeutic cloning. Four years from now the theology of the Vatican or of evangelical Protestantism is unlikely to be revised. Science will not produce data on when the soul appears, because this is a metaphysical question not amenable to experimentation; thus those who believe a cluster of cells from a manipulated egg represents sacred human life will have nothing new to consider. The council seems to anticipate new, nontheological ethical insights that will transform the cloning debate. But the report itself comprehensively delineates the secular moral positions, pro and con. It is hard to imagine new ethical insights from further debate or discussion that will turn minds one way or another, producing the "public consensus" the council's majority seeks.

In fact the report does not mention religion because, contrary to Groopman's suggestion of a cover-up, the majority position does not rely upon it. No more at least than does any position that begins from the premise that human beings are by nature free and equal, and that our politics should protect the rights we share in a manner consistent with those rights.

Notwithstanding Groopman's allegations, it is he who averts his glance from and seeks to cover up the hard empirical questions. And it is Groopman who proudly proclaims his refusal to tolerate compromise: "The council's moratorium is indeed a compromise — too much of one. It is a compromise of faith in our society's ability to regulate itself." Groopman's

unexamined faith in effective regulation, which he refuses to compromise to the extent of shielding it from empirical investigation, reveals itself to be the theological underpinnings of the pro-cloning case. As can happen with faith-based arguments, the zeal with which Groopman holds his blinds him to the merits of the arguments on the other side of the question.

ONE SHOULD NOT make too much of the council's majority recommendation on cloning for biomedical research. Government of course must take action, and the decision not to act or to postpone a final decision is certainly an action fraught with consequences. But the council's report does not carry the force of law. It is not a judicial decision. Nor is it a draft bill. It is an advisory study. It carries the force of argument. The recommendation to impose a moratorium on cloning-for-biomedical-research may not prevail. However, if such cloning is permitted, the forceful articulation of the moral dangers associated with it may serve to make regulation more respectful of the claims of human dignity than they might otherwise have been.

In the end, perhaps the most enduring argument the report makes, both explicitly and in practice, is for the value to public debate of liberal deliberation. Indeed, if the president, members of Congress, interested citizens, and not least our academic ethicists allow themselves to be instructed by the council's report, they could help maintain the nation on the right path in the debate about human cloning, helping us to avoid the error that for so long hampered the debate over abortion, which was the refusal by both camps to grasp the good that lay on the other side of the question.

At the same time, the most enduring argument the report does not make but which it quite vividly dramatizes is the primacy of our commitment to freedom, and the tension between our demand for ever more of it, and the maintenance of the moral preconditions that enable us to use our freedom wisely. Freedom, of course, is a great good. The extension of equality in freedom to an ever broader spectrum of citizens is our nation's outstanding achievement. However, as no debate before it, the debate over human cloning throws into sharp relief the question of freedom's limits; and the extent to which progress in the freedom to inquire, to improve our condition, and to master our world pose threats to freedom; and whether, even if the extension of freedom threatens freedom, we can limit freedom in a manner consistent with the principles of a free society.

We owe Leon Kass and the President's Council on Bioethics that he chairs a debt of gratitude. It is not only that *Human Cloning and Human Dignity* clarifies the human significance of the questions raised by, and the clash of goods implicated in, the awesome new powers scientists have developed to create human life. In addition, the council's report provides a sterling example of the political benefit in a free society that comes from scholars who address urgent and weighty ethical questions and policy options governed not by narrow partisan interest but by a broader conception of the public good and the imperatives of intellectual integrity.

# A Village Upon A Hill

By Benjamin Wallace-Wells

Ross Wetzsteon. *Republic of Dreams: Greenwich Village: The American Bohemia, 1910-1960.* Simon & Schuster. 617 pages. $35.00

I know a guy in New York City, a brakeman's son from Grand Junction, Colorado, who tells a true story about the Great American Lettuce Train. Each day at dawn, according to the brakeman's son — and he knows, he says, since his father has worked on this train — a locomotive sets out from Stockton, California bound for New York City with dozens of cars, several reserved for lettuce, some for tomatoes, one or two for carrots — the whole brilliant range of American vegetable produce. This train has near-mythic powers of right of way — signalmen from Grand Island, Nebraska to Reading, Pennsylvania know that unless it's an Army train, it's got to get out of the way for the lettuce. Amtraks have to pull over for turnips. Thirty-six hours after departure — and just before dinnertime the next day — the lettuce train arrives in the grimy freight sections of Penn Station and, the brakeman's son says, fourth-tier assistant chefs from all New York's finest restaurants cluster to buy the best, freshest American vegetables.

New York's culture — the dynamism of it, the uniqueness of it — has never been a topic to want for printed matter. This is particularly true in the current American moment: You can buy good paeans to New York at better rates than a dime a dozen. This new, posthumous book by the *Village Voice*'s career critic Ross Wetzsteon adds to the pile, sometimes delightfully. Its ambition is to use a long series of character sketches to delineate — more than explain — the mythic cultural centrality of Greenwich Village: how that once-ratty Italian immigrant neighborhood became a worldwide cue-word for bohemianism, artistic and intellectual ambition, and New York's position as the world's edgiest cultural capital.

But Wetzsteon's account, like so many books about New York, can be frustratingly parochial. *Republic of Dreams* reads, after a hundred pages or so, as a rather crowingly long list of the life stories of artistic celebrities linked not by common inspiration or theme or even time period but by the simple fact that they had lived substantial periods of their adult lives in the same physical space, Greenwich Village. And so this very New York book has a very New York flaw: It forgoes substance for triumphalism and celebrates the city's cul-

---

*Benjamin Wallace-Wells is a metro reporter for the* Philadelphia Inquirer. *His essay, "Creating September 12," was published last month in the collection* At Ground Zero *(Thunder's Mouth Press).*

tural dynamism so much it refuses to acknowledge New York's cultural dependence on the rest of the country.

Theodore Dreiser and William Carlos Williams and Hart Crane may have lived or partied in Greenwich Village at roughly the same period, but they were from Chicago and New Jersey and Cleveland, and their art had less to do with their Village experiences than with the wherever-they-came-from. Housing artists isn't the same as creating them. When Wetzsteon tries to make claims for the liberating (usually sexually) or inspirational effect the Village had on one of his figures (Edna St. Vincent Millay, say, or Eugene O'Neill), he usually undermines himself when he gets around to fuller biographical explanation. Liberation and inspiration, for most of Wetzsteon's characters, predate their moves to the Village: If something dynamic was going on in New York, it was dependent on the underground dynamisms of Iowa, Maine, and Rochester to sustain it. Ideas travel by lettuce train, too. The lettuce may arrive in New York eventually, and be put together there in strikingly pretty arrays, but it is California lettuce, after all.

This is an error with some pretty deep implications for Ross Wetzsteon's book. He tries to keep his text light and narrative, which is all right up to a point, but Wetzsteon passes that point quickly. He ends up describing Greenwich Village as a rule-less playpen for the intellectual elite, populated by the eager and nubile, a fantasy waiting to be personalized. Wetzsteon misses a chance to take a real look at the culture of artistic ambition and genius, and to say something more complex about artists in America than: Unappreciated, they tend to cluster in this lower Manhattan ghetto and, in between spurts of genuine brilliance, act very silly indeed. The book starts out promisingly enough, but ends up reading like a celebrity gossip sheet for the modernist movements, a sort of proto-*Wild On*.

I'm a native New Yorker, and Greenwich Village really is a wonderful place. The streets seem clean, quiet, and personal without sacrificing any of the city's essential energy. Wetzsteon isn't concerned so much with that Village, but a more mythic place: home not just to artists and writers and political radicals, but the home of the feminist movement, sexual liberation, human liberation in general, decadence wrought into fashion, and general, fetter-free flamboyance. It's a more compelling place than the geographic Greenwich Village, but it's not clear it ever really existed.

Wetzsteon died before he could finish this book; we're told, in an epilogue written by his daughter, that he planned to write a chapter covering the period from 1960-1998. There's a lot of meat in those 40 years: Larry Kramer and ACT UP, a real-estate market that has made those narrow streets inaccessible to all but New York's jogging classes — television producers and investment bankers. Other reviewers have caged their treatments of *Republic of Dreams*, saying they would have loved to see Wetzsteon take on those subjects, issues, and events he actually lived with.

Not me. *Republic of Dreams* covers, in time span, the period from 1910-1960, but Wetzsteon's real joy is very evidently with the formative Village, the period from 1910-1930. During

this period, Wetzsteon makes a pretty fair claim that criticism of mainstream American culture was embodied by the Village's inhabitants and its institutions, and so when he uses a history of those people and institutions to shape a narrative of the American counterculture, his arguments are pretty credible. This was a period when, Wetzsteon says, New York's cultural and political life was dominated by two institutions reflective of the sensibilities of the moment. First, Greenwich Village was dominated by *The Masses* magazine, with its deeply, cynically socialist perspective. Then, in the twenties, the Village's key institution was the Provincetown Theater Company, through which Wetzsteon watches the Village move from cynicism to irony to absurdism, from politics to theater, and eventually, in the 1930s, to nothing at all.

These are far and away Wetzsteon's best sections, when he gets to concentrate not on isolated, individual efforts but on collective projects. He's got a good sense of humor, a strong eye for character, and a feel for the dynamics of the creative collective enterprise. When he argues, for example, that the sexual longings of a lonely Irish secretary kept her attached to the Provincetown Players in its early years and, because of her talent for organization and bookkeeping, functionally kept the theater company afloat, it's a credible read.

He's got a good eye for event and symbolism as well. Here's Wetzsteon describing a moment at the trial of five editors of the influential left-wing journal *The Masses* for treason — publishing nasty anti-war cartoons during World War I:

> A Liberty Bond rally was taking place in the square below and the proceedings had hardly begun when a band outside the window struck up "The Star-Spangled Banner." *The Masses*' business manager, Merrill Rogers, stood at rigid attention in a solemn and somewhat disingenuous display of patriotism. Judge Hand, realizing he had no choice, reluctantly rose to his feet, whereupon the entire courtroom, including the seditious defendants, reverently followed suit. Twenty minutes later, as the prosecution was explaining its indictment to the jury, the band once more struck up the national anthem, Rogers once more shot to his feet and once more Judge Hand and the courtroom followed his lead. When it happened a third time, Judge Hand, while joining Rogers in pious ritual, stared down at the patriot with something close to exasperation. And when it happened a fourth time, and nearly everyone in the courtroom strained to hold back their laughter, Judge Hand announced rather testily, "I think we shall have to dispense with this ceremony from now on."
>
> Max [Eastman, editor of *The Masses*], to whom Merrill's canny charade was erroneously attributed in later years, regarded it as a disaster. By rising to his feet he was submitting to the "religion of patriotism" he had so vehemently denounced, abandoning the very position for which he was on trial. But by refusing to stand he would have offered the jury the spectacle of one stubbornly seated figure in a

courtroom of standing patriots — he might as well have thrust out his arms and accepted the handcuffs. "I did get up, of course — reluctantly, and no doubt with a very solemn expression," he recalled, "for my thoughts were concerned with the relative merits of different ways of murdering Merrill Rogers."

When Wetzsteon writes like this it does more than entertain and give good insight into the character of radical culture — it makes you wish for a brass band outside every courtroom.

But after about a hundred usually thrilling pages of stuff like this, the Village's reputation grows, every cultural figure from Djuna Barnes to Philip Rahv to Willem de Koonig appears, and Wetzsteon spends the rest of the book looking for a good way to sort the resultant material. He doesn't find it. Instead he rehashes biographic material that has been done more thoroughly elsewhere. When he's talking about reasonably obscure figures like Max Eastman, this is all right — a four-page synopsis is probably about what Eastman's life warrants. But when he shifts over to Delmore Schwartz, and Dylan Thomas, and Jackson Pollock — we've read those biographies, and Mr. Wetzsteon's Cliff Notes version grows frustratingly inadequate.

ALL OF THIS is a shame, because there's compelling material here. It's easy to write Greenwich Village off as a fetish, a place that considered the most slight, trite, and rambunctious behavior to be existentially significant. Mr. Wetzsteon nearly gets there himself: His essays on the Village's assorted brilliants tend to mock them for their various indulgences and releases (whether Theodore Dreiser's needy sexual profligacy or Edna St. Vincent Millay's needy sexual profligacy or Jackson Pollock's booze-fueled, needy sexual profligacy) — and he gets a lot of comic mileage out of poking fun at how adolescent all of this seems.

But geniuses don't flock in such number just for a good time. There's something more to Greenwich Village than that, and more too than the ripe bohemianism that Mr. Wetzsteon celebrates with an alternately indulgent and prudish descriptive eye, like an excited librarian peeking into a bordello. What's spurred the artists and writers who've lived in Greenwich Village has not been the abandonment of existent social rules or norms — all that did was change the hours which they spent in bed and the terms of what they did there. What's significant about Greenwich Village is the mythic centrality that it inhabits in America, the sense that living there (or in a place like it) is an essential experience for anyone who wants to be an artist or a writer — for anyone, that is, who pretends to have a deep sense of what life is really about. The idea of Greenwich Village came to stand in not just for sexual liberation or general artistic giddiness but as the American place where lives are most deeply lived and complex artistic conceptions of the world are formed. The real story of Greenwich Village involves the corruptions, inspirations, and shifts which that giddy sense of artistic centrality inspires.

Mr. Wetzsteon's book has a whiff of this, and sometimes a little more. But it's hard to take too seriously a text

which measures all the most complex permutations of genius and madness, happiness and artistic productivity, in the raw numerical data of sexual partners and booze consumed.

# Orwell's Example

## By Cheryl Miller

Christopher Hitchens. *Why Orwell Matters*. Basic Books. 208 pages. $24.00

Christopher Hitchens is always contrary about something, so it is with no great surprise that we find him attacking his reviewers. "There's always an early paragraph," he moans, "usually written in a standard form of borrowed words that says, 'Hitchens, whose previous targets have even included Mother Teresa and Princess Diana as well as Bill Clinton, now turns to . . .'" So there it is.

Hitchens's concern over the beleaguered state of modern letters was also of more than passing notice to another contrarian type, George Orwell. Orwell was perhaps even less kind to the press than Hitchens; when he was not censuring their mangling of proper English (he was once "upset for days" when the *Tribune* printed "verbiosity" in one of its articles), he was abusing them as "professional liars" and "halfwits." "Early in life," he wrote, "I had noticed that no event is ever correctly reported in a newspaper."

Hitchens has long taken Orwell to be a kind of intellectual father, and so like father, like son. The similarities between the two men are numerous: To name just the most obvious, they are both English liberals with socialist sympathies, who nonetheless depart from liberal orthodoxy on key subjects. But most importantly, both have long wrestled with questions regarding the relationship between politics and language, between the political life and the literary life. In Hitchens's past writings, the figure of Orwell remained in the background of this larger discussion — the source of a quotation or two — but now in his latest offering, *Why Orwell Matters*, Hitchens's mentor has become both the work's subject and its pervading spirit.

In his discussion of Orwell, Hitchens again plays the advocate, but unlike his other works (*The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice*), this time he is squarely on the side of his subject. His treatment of Orwell can be most properly described as an appreciation, though he avoids the extremes of the cult of "St. George" — fans of Orwell who, in Hitchens's words, turned his prickly hero into the "object of sickly veneration and sentimental overpraise." Hitchens does manage to register some minor arguments with Orwell — he was often anti-Semitic and homophobic; he was too prone to pessimism — but the whole of his argument is

---

*Cheryl Miller is a policy fellow at the Project for the New American Century.*

mainly devoted to demonstrating Orwell's superlative qualities: his integrity, his intellectual independence, and his honesty.

And indeed, there is much to admire about the man. He fought bravely in the Spanish Civil War and was wounded in the throat. He stuck by his convictions even when they kept him unpublished and in the poorhouse. And even at the end of his life, dying of tuberculosis, Orwell's courage and tenacity never deserted him. In the hospital, when his right arm was impaired, he learned to write with his left hand. Still, there is something about Hitchens's treatment that suggests the bubbly enthusiasm of a student for his mentor. This is, after all, a study of Orwell which begins with a quotation about genius by Proust.

*There is something about Hitchens's treatment that suggests the bubbly enthusiasm of a student for his mentor. This is, after all, a study of Orwell which begins with a quotation about genius by Proust.*

Yet Hitchens has not gone all warm and fuzzy on us. The angry young man is still in rare form — though his exasperation is most often directed at Orwell's critics. There is a particularly delightful chapter titled "Orwell and the Postmodernists," in which Hitchens castigates those *doublethinking* deconstructionists in a fit of fury worthy of Orwell himself. Hitchens, though, is as always an equal-opportunity offender. Everyone — left and right, progressive and traditionalist, warmonger and pacifist — is at one time or another the object of his pointed wit. His topics are as wide-ranging as his subject; in a little over 200 pages, he touches on Nazism, feminism, Soviet apologists, imperialism, boys' weeklies, poetry, the proper way to make English tea, and the metric system. It seems at times there is no subject upon which Hitchens (or Orwell) has not opined.

Hitchens presents Orwell as a "profane and humorous writer," who was constantly at odds with the orthodoxies of his day. A freethinker, he eschewed religion; politically, he was something of a maverick. An anti-Soviet when everyone else was hand-shaking with Uncle Joe, Orwell nonetheless sympathized with the socialists. All his life, he was to claim "democratic socialism" as his watchword. What the content of that credo was, though, is still something of a mystery. Orwell perhaps more accurately described himself when he only half-jokingly offered up the label "Tory anarchist." He always had about him something of the curmudgeon (as a child, his first recorded word is said to have been "beastly"), yet he is also known for his generosity and his compassion toward his fellow men. A contradiction in terms, Orwell was (as Hitchens has elsewhere written) "the lonely dissident who set his whole grit and fiber against the 'smelly little orthodoxies' that are the pox of the

twentieth century" — that is, a proto-Christopher Hitchens. Orwell once noted that writers often "tell you a great deal about [themselves] while talking about someone else." And indeed, one often gets the impression that Hitchens is speaking not so much about Orwell as about himself. Yet Hitchens's subject is also larger than both himself and Orwell; at the center of the book is Hitchens's discussion of his intellectual vocation as the eternal drag, the naysayer, the critic — in short, the contrarian. *Why Orwell Matters* is something of a *Letters to a Young Contrarian,* Part Two — a guide to what it means to be a permanent dissenter as seen through the prism of George Orwell's life.

*Why Orwell Matters* deals with mentorship, and like Hitchens's earlier *Letters to a Young Contrarian* (Basic Books, 2001), it ends with a call to its readers to throw off the shackles of common opinion. Summing up Orwell's life, Hitchens states what he believes to have been the core principle behind Orwell's writing:

> [W]hat [Orwell] illustrates, by his commitment to language as the partner of truth, is that "views" do not really count; that it matters not what you think, but *how* you think; and that politics are relatively unimportant, while principles have a way of enduring, as do the few irreducible individuals who maintain allegiance to them.

The gist of this is obvious: The "few irreducible individuals," like Orwell and Hitchens, are the outsiders, the nonbelievers in relation to all the "smelly little orthodoxies." Indeed, the language describing Orwell here is almost verbatim Hitchens's definition of the contrarian: "[W]hat really matters about any individual," he writes in *Letters*, "is not what he thinks, but how he thinks."

STILL, THERE IS something hollow in Hitchens's image of the intellectual as contrarian

*Orwell once noted that writers often "tell you a great deal about [themselves] while talking about someone else." And indeed, one often gets the impression that Hitchens is speaking not so much about Orwell as about himself.*

— and his image of George Orwell. The contrarian thinker as Hitchens envisions him becomes a kind of poseur; it is enough for him simply to adapt a certain air of worldliness and skepticism. As Orwell said of Dickens in a slightly different context, one must describe him by the things that he is not. The contrarian is all form and no content: Above all, he is anti-authority and nonconformist, but behind his mask of unconventionality there is little in the way of substance.

Hitchens states that Orwell made

language a partner of truth, but in asserting that "what an individual thinks" does not matter so much as "how he thinks," he effectively empties truth of all meaning. While the attitudes (the "how") that Hitchens prescribes to his young contrarians — honesty, independence, and skepticism — are valuable, they alone are not enough. One must do more than think with honestly or with integrity, one must also apply that "principled" mindset to defending the truth, the "what" of one's views. As an example of Orwell's independent thinking, Hitchens explains that after learning Stalin had not fled German attack, Orwell changed his manuscript of *Animal Farm* from having Napoleon the pig throw himself on the ground during an attack to having him stand proudly. Orwell, as Hitchens sees it, could do this only because he was not a slave to orthodoxy. Even when writing about a man he knew to be the worst of tyrants, he could still acknowledge when that man acted honorably.

*In his revulsion for orthodoxy, Hitchens goes too far; the contrarian view almost becomes an orthodoxy itself. Orwell saw the error of this clearly. One should only be contrary when the other side is wrong.*

But Orwell didn't change his manuscript simply out of a commitment to thinking independently; Orwell was motivated by his attachment to the truth. After the Spanish Civil War, Orwell was horrified by the number of lies about the fighting he had read in English newspapers: "This kind of thing is frightening to me because it gives me the feeling that the very concept of objective truth is fading out of the world. Lies will pass into history." His scrupulousness in presenting an accurate history of Stalin's USSR was as much motivated by his belief in objective truth as by his independence of thought.

Hitchens's emphasis on Orwell's contrarian attitude is misleading, moreover, because it is clear that Hitchens admires Orwell precisely because he was *right* about so many things. Orwell was anti-imperialist, anti-Soviet, anti-fascist, and also pro-socialist, pro-democracy, pro-equality — all views of which Hitchens himself heartily approves. Indeed, Hitchens is gleefully triumphant when he shows that Orwell's critics' views often come up short in comparison to Orwell's. On the French postmodernist Claude Simon, who fought on the side of Stalin during the Spanish Civil War, Hitchens writes, "M. Simon . . . must at some point have believed that 'History' . . . was indeed on his side. Subsequently lapsing in that belief — though not in his attachment to the USSR — he opted for indiscriminate relativist promiscuity, where nothing can be taken as certain except the bad faith of those with whom he disagrees."

Hitchens's aside here is revealing, for

what Hitchens hates about Simon — and all the other Orwell critics — is not their beliefs so much as their fanaticism. As Hitchens sees it, the catalyst behind all the horrors that Orwell had to face was dogmatism. There is a great deal of truth in this. When we look at the history of the USSR or even the "smelly little orthodoxies" contending for Orwell's soul in Hitchens's book, there is something in us that wants to chuck the entire lot of them out the window.

Yet in his revulsion for orthodoxy, Hitchens goes too far; the contrarian view almost becomes an orthodoxy itself. Orwell saw the error of this clearly. One cannot simply be contrary for the sake of being contrary; one should only be contrary when the other side is wrong. The independent freethinker, Orwell knew, could be as dangerous as the most obstinate stickler if he was not first schooled in the hard lessons of real life. About the radical leftists of his day, he wrote, "So much of left-wing thought is a kind of playing with fire by people who don't even know fire is hot." Orwell's writing was a warning to his contemporaries to look around them and see the dangers in playing with fire. It is why he, like Hitchens, made himself a mentor to his readers through his writing. But he did not teach them to be contrarians, he taught them to be truth-seekers.

# LETTERS

## *Robert Kagan's Transatlantic*

SIR, — I am flattered though slightly disconcerted that Robert Kagan ("Power and Weakness," June/July 2002) bases his argument in part on my book *American Visions of Europe*. I think his article is a thought-provoking and valuable contribution to the debate on transatlantic relations, but I question the basic argument that Europe has opted out of the world of power politics.

It is interesting that while Kagan says the Europeans "see the world through the eyes of weaker powers," and behave as weaker powers, nowhere does he say they are weak. This is because they are not. One need only look at their combined GDP. France and Britain have serious armed forces and their military traditions are alive and well. Germany had a very good army during the Cold War and would again if necessity required it. In the wake of the common currency (and of their Kosovo humiliation) the Europeans are setting up a Rapid Reaction Force which will sooner or later be put to the test. There are projects underway to build a European fighter and transport aircraft. The EU recently approved funding to build a satellite-based global positioning system. (This was opposed by the Pentagon.) It is true that European defense spending is nowhere near U.S. levels, but are current American levels a reasonable benchmark? Mixed with tsk-tsking about European weakness and lack of capabilities I detect American irritation (and a certain anxiety) at the fact that Europe is not prepared to concede a monopoly of power and diplomatic initiative to the United States.

My book argues that along with Roosevelt's impulse to "retire" Europe from world politics and Acheson's to embrace and control it in a U.S.-led alliance (both mentioned by Kagan), there is a third American approach. I associate it mainly with George F. Kennan, but Eisenhower summed it up best when he said that the United States should not oppose but encourage the emergence of "a third great power bloc."

Eisenhower did not prefer or think sustainable over the long run (nor to his credit does Kagan) a situation in which the U.S. remained Europe's "pacifier" and protector but in so doing provided a permanent alibi for the Europeans to do less. He foresaw that with U.S. power taxed by global commitments, Europe would have to assume the main responsibility for the security of the continent (at a minimum). The next 10-15 years may prove him right.

JOHN L. HARPER
The Bologna Center
of the Johns Hopkins University
School of Advanced International
Studies
*Bologna, Italy*

SIR, — Robert Kagan's article on the divide between Europe and the United States is a serious and challenging contribution to the debate on this important matter. I applaud his conclusions, particularly about shared values and the need for honest discussion of differences. I also appreciate his description of European policy formation as "postmodern."

Even so, I find myself disagreeing with Kagan on many areas of detail. Above all, I question the extent to which differences in foreign policy can be ascribed to Europe's relative weakness and America's relative strength.

Back in the days of the Cold War, European governments certainly tended to be less confrontationalist than Washington in their approach to the Soviet Union. But did this reflect perceived weakness? I must say that, having lived in the then West Germany during the Brandt/Schmidt era, I formed the contrary impression. I recall the Ostpolitik of those years as a brave experiment on the part of an increasingly self-confident democracy and not as a quivering response to Soviet might.

I think it's fair to say that, during the Cold War, American administrations were worried about Soviet communism while Europeans were worried about Russia. European governments may have feared their mighty and tyrannically-ruled eastern neighbor but they also understood her and recognized that she too suffered from the traumas of a terrible past. It wasn't primarily a question of relative strength (although this could obviously not be ruled out of the equation) but of whether you saw your opponent in abstract or concrete terms. Americans, true children of the Enlightenment, tend to prefer the abstract. Europeans tend to know, from often bitter experience, that they're always dealing with the concrete.

Moreover, both the British and the French have been more than willing over the past few decades to use armed force in pursuit both of their own interests and of broader humanitarian goals. The Falklands campaign was, surely, just the kind of successful, long distance projection of force of which Donald Rumsfeld talks (albeit conducted with 1980s technology), while Britain's recent involvement in Sierra Leone may have set the standard for armed altruism for some time to come. If such campaigns do not loom large for Robert Kagan, could this simply be because the interests of the United States were not directly involved?

Having said which, Americans taken in the round do these days seem to have a more bellicose approach to international affairs than do Europeans and are more prone to think in terms of quick and violent fixes. According to Kagan, this reflects the greater American capacity for resolving problems, as a result of its huge preponderance of weaponry.

But the most powerful military machine that has ever existed did not prevent the atrocities of 9/11. Moreover, although high-tech warfare certainly played a key role in dislodging the Taliban from power in Kabul, it is proving of only limited use in flushing al Qaeda out of its remaining foxholes. Similarly, 30 years ago, the best military technology in the world failed to tame Indo-China. And, as Israel is discovering, its own regional military preponderance offers little protection against the suicide bomber. In fact, a

characteristic of most (though not all) recent international crises is that they are simply not amenable to straightforward military solutions.

Almost certainly, the United States could overthrow Saddam Hussein. But could it provide Iraq with a post-Saddam settlement that would stick? Could it, moreover, guarantee that the main beneficiaries of Saddam's defeat would not be pro-Iranian militant Shiites? And what about the Kurds? Would they not make yet another bid for independence? If so, how would Turkey react and what consequences would its reaction have for NATO's South-Eastern flank? How would the "Arab street" respond? Would the throne of the Hashemites stand the strain? Would the Mubarak regime go the way of all flesh? Would the House of Saud survive? Above all, would Saddam decide to go down guns blazing, loosing chemical and biological terror on Israel? It is not weakness to ponder these questions. It is wisdom.

As dealers in the concrete, Europeans are conscious of these conundrums. They do not understand why the current United States administration seems to ignore them. Nor, as dealers in the concrete, do Europeans understand why a humane people such as the Americans seems so unaware of the misery its policies threaten to impose on the innocent.

To claim, as the United States does, that the current sufferings of Iraqi civilians are the fault of Saddam Hussein is to take refuge in an abstraction. It would be similarly abstract to dismiss as collateral damage the mountain of corpses which would inevitably attend Saddam's overthrow.

For many Americans (the shades of Vietnam now apparently laid to rest), war seems to have become a regrettable but rational continuation of policy by other means, particularly if the main American commitment consists of massive aerial bombardment from safe altitudes. But for Europeans, and not least for Clausewitz's own compatriots, war still means ruined cities, the stench of rotting corpses, destroyed infra-structures, lost loved ones and starving children shivering in the rubble.

This does not necessarily make all Europeans doctrinaire pacifists. But to live responsibly in the world of concrete reality is to accept that only the most extreme circumstances can justify the carnage inherent in modern warfare. Do we face such extreme circumstances today? I suspect that most Europeans, and most non-American westerners, think otherwise.

IAN MORRISON
*Auckland, New Zealand*

SIR, — I like Robert Kagan's article "Power and Weakness," but I believe it is weak on two points. The first is the idea that Europeans are relegated to "doing the dishes" in peacekeeping missions. A better view is that there is a division of labor between the Americans and the Europeans in peacekeeping missions, with each having roles peculiarly suited to its skills. The second deficiency is a misperception of the role of U.S. military power within European politics, stemming, oddly, from an inadequate use of Hobbes's analysis of the foundation of a polity.

In regard to peacekeeping missions, they are usually divided into two phases. The first phase involves terminating the hostilities and stabilizing the situa-

tion; the second phase is the more delicate matter of establishing a stable political situation so that hostilities will not resume. Stabilization requires the ability and willingness to use force and the willingness to escalate the amount of force beyond the capabilities of any of the combatants. More important, the perception that one is willing to escalate the amount of force beyond the capabilities of any of the combatants. Clearly, the U.S. is uniquely poised to perform this service. Within the metaphor of preparing a meal, this is the step of butchering the cow — the technical skill of applying enormous force to a difficult but fundamentally straightforward problem.

The second phase of peacekeeping, reconstructing the polity, nation-building, is a more complex operation that requires entirely different skills. And who is better positioned to do this than the nations of the EU? What other polity of former adversaries has been assembled over such a short period without imperial conquest?

Who, for instance, is better positioned to teach the Balkan nations how to set aside a thousand years of wars than a sophisticated group of countries who have themselves set aside a thousand years of wars? Within the metaphor, we can compare nation-building to cooking the meal, in that it requires a delicate judgment in handling many complex, interacting factors.

In regard to Europe's military situation, Kagan likens it to Kant's "Perpetual Peace." But I would prefer to look at it as a commonwealth, in Hobbes's term. In this regard, the EU can be seen as a sovereign, which is hardly a radical concept. But where is the sovereign's military capability, with which he keeps the peace among his subjects? How does the sovereign ensure that his subjects obey his rules? In short, if France and Germany take a trade dispute to the point of military conflict, what suppresses the conflict?

When said in that way, the answer is simple — the United States. The U.S. has already done it twice, after all. This leaves a situation where the enforcement of the peace is left to a force that isn't under control of the sovereign of the polity. However, this is not uncommon — in any modern state, physical violence is prevented within a million organizations not by the organization, but rather by the state's police force. The EU has decided that it is adequate to leave the heavy police work between the members (and between the members and the outside world) to the United States.

In this regard, the EU seems to have decided that the interests of the U.S. are close enough to that of the EU that they can trust the U.S. to handle the job. Or at least, that the savings in military expenditure will make up for any inadequacies. And in this regard, the EU seems to be correct — despite the U.S. being a "hyperpower," its ability to use its hegemony to dominate other industrialized countries seems to be quite poor. For instance, the banana tariff mess looks like it will be settled by the WTO, not by gunboats. Similarly, the United States could crush Canada militarily in a day, but due to economics and international politics, is constrained to deal with Canada as an equal. Hegemony ain't what it used to be.

DALE WORLEY
*Waltham, Massachusetts*

SIR, — Robert Kagan's article provides a neat summary of the differences in mindset between Europe and the U.S. in the matter of international relations; nevertheless, it appears to rest on certain somewhat simplistic presuppositions. First, the notion that power alone is the defining factor in the approach taken to international relations. This seems far-fetched. Kagan argues that weak nations, mostly for the lack of alternatives, choose a "Kantian" approach (establishment of an international-legal regime to supervene national sovereignty) while strong nations, because they can push their weight around, choose a "Hobbesian" approach (in which nations act without regard to the law). While there is undeniable truth to this statement, it is certainly not the whole story. Kagan implies that there is no other choice; that we must either be "Kantian" or "Hobbesians" in this regard; but there is another choice, in fact the baseline approach to international law since the sixteenth century. We might label this the "Vitorian" approach in remembrance of the "founder" of international law, Francisco de Vitoria. Here there is most certainly a universal law, the so-called *jus gentium*, which postulates nations as the bearers of sovereignty, upholding an international law the essence of which is the right of communication — trade, travel, church missions. It is a law which binds the nations but which also depends on nations for enforcement. And to my mind, the U.S. from its inception has been "Vitorian," even in the postwar world in which it has been the superpower.

Kagan quotes Briton Robert Cooper, who argues that outside of the Europe of today, other standards apply than apply within Europe. There, "we need to revert to the rougher methods of an earlier era — force, preemptive attack, deception, whatever is necessary." But the notion, as I say, is based on a bifurcation, law *sans* force or force *sans* law.

It should be a simple matter to realize that law needs to be enforced, and it needs to be enforced by force if necessary. Underlying Cooper's notion of a "double standard" is the belief that force is somehow backwards, a lower stage on man's evolutionary ascent to a forceless world where conscience rules. The same notion underlies the view that the abolition of spanking would signal mankind's ascent to a higher level of civilization; here, the Swedes serve as a shining example to us all.

But the most glaring fault in this fine article, to my mind, is Kagan's view that Europe in its postwar phase has chosen to eschew power. He argues that the formation of the European Union is not about power but about restraining power. My own experience has led to the exact opposite conclusion. The European Union is *all* about power, not military power per se but economic power, diplomatic power, the power to dominate the world of international organizations and institutions, with the ultimate goal of establishing "universal jurisdiction," bypassing national sovereignty altogether (and thus pesky U.S. obstruction as well). It will require power and plenty of it to erect such a global jurisdiction, and the Europeans are game for it. And they recognize in the U.S. the biggest obstruction to their world.

This is nothing new. Since the nineteenth century, power in Europe has been pursued by scapegoating capital-

ism, and, by extension, the Anglo-Saxons and their ilk, they being the chief proponents of said capitalism. This scapegoating has been part and parcel of the European self-image, especially in Germany with its contrast between German *Kultur* and British *Zivilisation*. Two times now the forces of Anglo-Saxonism have triumphed on continental Europe, but the underlying opposition to *Zivilisation*, far from disappearing, has simply taken on a new guise. For this reason I view Kagan's sanguinity about the European Union with general alarm. For behind the ideological divide separating Europe and the U.S. is a fundamental conflict in worldview and a fundamentally opposed approach to international order. The conflict between these two approaches, I am convinced, will determine the shape of the future world order.

RUBEN ALVARADO
*Aalten, Netherlands*

SIR, — Sitting "down under" one gets somewhat worried at some of the actions and lack of action in the northern corridors of power, and angry at the inconsistencies (apparent or otherwise) of (especially) American international policy.

I think that you've explained this, and in such a way that both understanding of and sympathy for the Americans is enhanced, even though a reasonable inference is that "the end justifies the means" — which perhaps it does in the case of our good friend, the Iraqi president.

However, given one's acceptance of your thesis, it would be good to see the U.S. be more overt in explaining its policy and strategy to the rest of us. My assumption here is that the U.S. (with the rest of the "West" and a fair amount of the rest) believes that democracy is the best form of governance so far devised, and that the values underpinning this are at least reasonably universal (e.g. freedom of association, religion, safety etc), therefore this should be actively pursued and encouraged.

Given this, applying the existing double standard with people like the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, should be accompanied by a friendly message to the effect that "we appreciate your support, pal, but our longer-term goal includes a democratic state in Malaysia." Or wherever.

In addition, we who believe in democracy (preferably of a secular kind) should be doing whatever we can to help people at the community level in the poorer and/or fundamentalist countries to raise themselves to an economic and educational level where the niceties of our system can be appreciated.

IAN BURNS
*Melbourne, Australia*

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*Policy Review* welcomes letters to the editor. Write to: *Policy Review*, 818 CONNECTICUT AVE., SUITE 601, WASHINGTON DC 20006. You may also send correspondence via e-mail to polrev@hoover.stanford.edu. Please include your name, the city from which you write, and phone number. Letters will be edited for space, clarity, and civility as required.