



CONSERVATIVE BATTLELINE ONLINE

The "Bold Colors" Conservative Voice in Washington

September 26 , 2007

[Middle Way Iraq Victory](#)

From the Battle Line

[Middle Way Iraq Victory](#)

by Donald Devine

[Rock Stars Die Young](#)

by S.T. Karnick

[Real War on Poverty](#)

by Joseph Morris

Media Pass in Review

[3:10 From Yuma](#)

by Spencer Warren

[Teresa in Dark and Light](#)

by Lisa Fabrizio

[Sorry Science Reporting](#)

by Alan Caruba

Government Maneuvers

[Miss Marple Health Care](#)

by John Goodman

[Ethanol Obsession](#)

by David Keene

[Private Property Machinations](#)

by Bob Barr

Culture Wars

[Ban Islam?](#)

by Daniel Pipes

[Poor Romania](#)

by Paul Driessen

[Organic Danger](#)

by Dennis Avery

Political Front

[Electoral College Threat](#)

by Paul Weyrich

[Feminine Appeal?](#)

by Lisa De Pasquale

[Disillusion on the Right](#)

Reader Backfire

[Soldier Free Speech](#)

by Larry Gill

[D.James Kennedy RIP](#)

by Robert Meyer

[Reader Comments](#)

Middle Way Iraq Victory

by Donald Devine

You would never know it from all the heated rhetoric but there is remarkable agreement on what to do about Iraq. President George W. Bush is closer to achieving the consensus he seeks than anyone on either side will admit.

In the wake of Gen. David Petraeus' long-awaited testimony before Congress, Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and the president and his administration have all used almost the exact language of the Baker-Hamilton Iraq Study Group that the long-term strategy is to withdraw U.S. forces to defensible fortresses, away from policing insurgency, and concentrate on counter-terrorism, training and border control.



There is great disagreement on current troop levels, of course, but the consensus on the long run represents a remarkable shift by all sides in the debate. Any sane person recognizes the surge has contributed to reducing violence in Iraq, although the decline has been from its high in Fall 2006, with violence still higher than from 2004 to early 2006. On the other side, it is obvious the sectarian divisions remain deep, the militias control much of the ground outside the surge zones as well as the police and even much of the army, and the government of Nouri al-Maliki has not delivered on any of the political "benchmarks" they agreed to meet. Testifying with the general, Ambassador Ryan Crocker would only say that "The seeds of reconciliation are being planted."

The facts on the ground are clear. The Kurd north has been autonomous in all but name for 15 years. Its recent deal with Dallas' Hunt Oil to handle its energy resources means the rest of the world and business are betting it will remain so. The Anbar west has been the great success of the surge period--one that none can ignore given the Sunni sheik alliance against al Qaeda with the U.S. But that very success—which reaches into Diyala, Salahuddin and surrounding areas also—is at the cost of more Sunni autonomy, so much so that the first planned U.S. troop withdrawals will be there, letting the Sunnis increasingly alone to take the lead in doing their own policing.



What about the majority of the country to the south, largely occupied by the 60 percent Shiite majority? Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, leader of the largest political party the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (closely related to Iran) and its militia formerly known as the Badr Brigade, is the one who demanded the provision in the Constitution allowing autonomous regions, which he believes will make him the effective Shiite leader of the south. His major opponent, Moqtada al Sadr, the leader of the Mahdi Army and the second largest Shiite party has his forces split between the south and Baghdad and therefore opposes autonomy, hoping to win the entire country, or at least Baghdad-south. Militia forces representing the two and Maliki's Dawah party have been fighting to see who prevails.

The British movement of troops from southern capital Basra to their nearby fortified airfield will allow the Shiite factions to decide the matter. Critically, Gen. Petraeus testified that other than a small number of special forces operations, he will not deploy U.S. troops to occupy the south. A top American military official told the Washington Post "there is no disagreement on the overall strategy in the south, with both the British and the Americans believing that they should not interfere with the fighting among the three Shiite groups in the south, and that they should instead simply let a victor emerge." This represents a radical change from stay-the-course.

The president was clear in his address about this “transition in our mission.” While he emphasized the immediate reduction in U.S. forces (and his promise to reduce troops only as circumstances allow), the troop dispositions were not the most important or new part of his speech. As matters improve, “our mission will evolve,” he declared. “Over time our troops will shift from leading operations to partnering with Iraqi forces and eventually to overwatching those forces. As this transition in our mission takes place our troops will focus on a more limited set of tasks, including counter-terrorism operations and training, equipping and supporting Iraqi forces.” Obama’s policy paper issued just before the president’s used much of the same language about long term objectives.

The extremists in both Iraq and the U.S. will continue to emphasize immediate withdrawal or greater force as the only alternatives. Obama still did and so did Richard Lowry, editor of National Review, who insisted it is either “continue fighting to stabilize the country and route al Qaeda or withdraw and admit these goals aren’t achievable. A middle way as [Sen.] Dick Lugar has unintentionally demonstrated, is make believe and suitable only for Senate speeches and TV interviews.” In fact, al Qaeda is rapidly being isolated and from Gen. Petraeus on down everyone recognizes stability cannot come from military force but can only allow room for a political solution. In fact, President Bush presented the surge as a middle way to staying- the-course or withdrawing. Before his address to the nation, White House aides again used “middle ground” to the media to describe his new policy.



Sen. Barack Obama

Ever since your editor’s visit to Iraq in November 2003, it has been clear that regional autonomy is the only rational outcome over dismemberment or dictatorship (<http://acuf.org/issues/031204news.asp>). Back in 2003, the generals were forthright that the goal was to increasingly withdraw to fortified positions and leave policing to the Iraqis, with infrequent military incursions in threatening situations mostly relating to al Qaeda and border issues. Dreams of creating democracy frustrated the commanders’ plans for a few years but the British military move has forced the matter. The Kurd and Sunni successes go in the same direction. It was the fact that al Qaeda fighters began forcing the Sunni chiefs to allow them to marry their daughters (without even the traditional dowry) and disrupting their smuggling that led the Anbar insurgents to convince the U.S. to come to a political settlement. Deciding to let the factions fight it out in the south—perhaps for three autonomous provinces—is the final logical political step.



It will be neither more U.S. troops nor immediate withdrawal. It will be a middle way, no matter what the extremists want. It will be a year or so draw-down and movement of U.S. forces into defensive positions. While neither President Bush nor his opponents will ever admit directly that the U.S. will step back and let the forces on the ground work out the details of the regionalization of Iraq, that is what his military leaders wanted from the beginning and is in fact what is taking place. The political rhetoric will remain simplistic and heated but the middle way to victory is already set.

Donald Devine, the editor of Conservative Battleline Online, was the director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management from 1981 to 1985 and is the director of the [Federalist Leadership Center](#) at Bellevue University.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Rock Stars Die Young

by S.T. Karnick

It's a truism that the lyrics, manners, styles, and rhythms of rock musicians' offerings tend to express the joys of a rather devil-may-care, hedonistic lifestyle. Now a scientific study has confirmed what our mothers told us: you won't last long that way.

Reuters reports that rock stars do indeed die younger than the rest of us, on average: A study of more than 1,000 mainly British and North American artists, spanning the era from Elvis Presley to rapper Eminem, found they were two to three times more likely to suffer a premature death than the general population.

Between 1956 and 2005 there were 100 deaths among the 1,064 musicians examined by researchers at the Centre for Public Health at Liverpool John Moores University.

Significant culprits in the early deaths were drugs and alcohol abuse, not surprisingly:

More than a quarter of all the deaths were related to drugs or alcohol abuse, said the study in the *Journal of Epidemiol Community Health*.

"The paper clearly describes a population of rock and pop stars who are at a disproportionate risk of alcohol and drug related deaths," said Mark Bellis, lead author of the study.

But I notice that they only account for about one quarter of the deaths. That clearly means that a more general degenerative lifestyle is responsible for the premature deterioration of these people's bodies.

The number of very early deaths brings the overall average life expectancy down significantly, but the risks remain in place for at least a quarter-century: "[The study] found that musicians were most at risk in the first five years after achieving fame, with death rates more than three times higher than normal."

Hendrix, Bon Scott of AC/DC and punk rocker Sid Vicious all died within five years of hitting the big time, said Bellis.

Among British artists the risk of dying remains high until around 25 years after their first success, when they return to near normal life expectancy.

That's in Britain. In the United States the risks remain high even after two and a half decades:

But this trend was not found in North America, where ageing rockers remain almost twice as likely to suffer a premature demise, particularly from heart attack or stroke.

Of course, we do see some very spry elderly rockers wiggling about behind their walkers, artificial hips and knees working like a charm. I recently saw Ringo Starr interviewed on *Nightline*, and the 68-year-old former Beatle was as full of energy and good humor as ever. And Paul Macco is still producing good music and getting in trouble with the ladies. But John and George are dead, of course, proving the rule. And it's very telling that the two most ordinary and bourgeois members of the group are the ones that survive.



The same is true of the Who, with the likeable Roger Daltrey and thoughtful Pete Townshend still alive while party maniacs Keith Moon and John Entwistle are dead. Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones died in the group's first years of fame. And in the United States, polo-shirt-wearing Bob Weir of the Grateful Dead is still going strong, while proto-hippie Jerry Garcia has left us.

Of course, there are exceptions to any trend involving human beings—wholesome Buddy Holly was killed in a plane crash, and Keith Richards is still toddling about onstage, for example (and I suspect that Keef lives a lot more ordinarily than journalists and the band's publicists lead us to believe)—but in the main, the study brings the reality home. The quality and length of your life depend greatly on how you live it. As if there should ever be any doubt of that!



The moral of the story? By all means, go ahead and let yourself "hear some of that rock and roll music, any old time you choose it"—but listen critically, for goodness' sake.

And listen to your mom! She knows what she's talking about.

S. T. Karnick is an Associate Fellow of the Sagamore Institute for Policy Research.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Real War on Poverty

by Joseph Morris

More than 43 years ago -- on January 8, 1964 -- President Lyndon B. Johnson declared "War on Poverty". Perhaps it's time to declare victory and go home.

The era of "Great Society" programs, with the stated aim of eliminating poverty, was launched by President Johnson at the outset of his 1964 Presidential election campaign. Gary Bauer makes the point that "decades and billions of dollars later, politicians today still make headlines campaigning on the theme that massive poverty in America demands more big government solutions."



Lyndon Johnson

One might think that, nearly half a century on, either we would have licked the problem of poverty or we'd have the intellectual honesty to concede that big government, Great Society-style, is a failure. Maybe there is some truth to both propositions.

Robert Rector, a senior fellow at the Heritage Foundation, has been examining the latest census data on "America's "poor", and this week he published his report.* Here's what he found:

"Overall, the typical American defined as poor by the government has a car (31% of 'poor' households own two cars), air conditioning, a refrigerator, a stove, a clothes washer and dryer, and a microwave. He has two color televisions, cable or satellite TV reception, a VCR, or DVD player, and a stereo. He is able to obtain medical care. His home is in good repair and is not overcrowded. By his own report, his family is not hungry, and he had sufficient funds in the past year to meet his family's essential needs. ...A third of 'poor' households have both cell and land-line telephones. A third also [have] telephone answering machines."

A major reason, according to Rector, for children living in poverty is the breakdown of families. Rector notes, "If work in each family were raised to 2,000 hours per year -- the equivalent of one adult working 40 hours per week ... -- nearly 75 percent of poor children would be lifted out of official poverty. ... If poor mothers married the fathers of their children, nearly three quarters of the nation's impoverished youth would immediately be lifted out of poverty."

Powerful as it is, government can never substitute for the family.

Rector does offer one explanation why, more than four decades after the Great Society was launched, it seems that the poor are with us yet: Illegal immigration.

"A quarter of legal immigrants and fifty to sixty percent of illegals are high-school dropouts. By contrast, only nine percent of non-immigrant Americans lack a high school degree. As long as the present steady flow of poverty-prone persons ... continues, efforts to reduce the total number of poor in the U.S. will be far more difficult. A sound anti-poverty strategy must not only seek to increase work and marriage among native born Americans, it must also end illegal immigration, and dramatically increase the skill level of ... legal immigrants."

President Johnson sold his program as a "War on Poverty" *in America*. The collapse of American borders means that Great Society programs will receive an endless stream of new beneficiaries to the point where they must implode of their own weight.

Ending poverty everywhere in the world is a wonderful idea. But neither importing the world's poor to America to process them through the Great Society system here, nor exporting the Great Society system to the world to process the poor in their native lands, seems like a workable plan.

A real assault on poverty throughout the globe would begin with these prescriptions: (1) Establishment of the rule of law and of transparency in government, and eradication of systemic governmental corruption. (2) Legal protection of private property and of contract rights. (3) Removal of impediments to free markets. (4) Elimination of high taxes, including high tariffs, and of artificial barriers to entry to markets, industries, and professions, so as to foster entrepreneurship and competition.

Many who hold governmental power -- and not just in banana republics -- would find the implementation of those precepts decidedly unpalatable. But adopt them and, in no time at all, you'll have a great society.

Joseph A. Morris is president of the Lincoln Legal Foundation in Chicago.

**Robert Rector, "How Poor Are America's Poor? Examining the 'Plague' of Poverty in America," Heritage Backgrounder No. 2064 (Washington, D.C.: Heritage Foundation, Aug. 27, 2007). See: <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Welfare/bg2064.cfm>*

**E-mail the
Editor**

3:10 to Yuma

by Spencer Warren

Westerns, until the 1960s the most popular movie genre, are rare birds nowadays, but I regret to report that the new version of *3:10 to Yuma* is one of the three worst Westerns I have ever seen. Comparison with the original 1957 classic tells one much of what is wrong with our 21st century culture and society, as well as what distinguishes a superb adult director (Delmer Daves in 1957) from a juvenile hack (James Mangold in 2007).



The classic Western – before the 1960s - was a moral fable about the noble knight on horseback standing up for the right and true, fearless in his defense of civilization and womanhood which were settling the savage wilderness. At its peak in the 1950s, the adult Western often dramatized one man's struggle with a momentous moral choice. In classics like *Shane* (1953), *High Noon* (1952), *The Naked Spur* (1953), and *Seven Men from Now* (1956), heroic, charismatic stars like Gary Cooper, James Stewart and Randolph Scott wrestled with and stoically pursued timeless moral choices of right and wrong in epic dramas whose impact often was magnified by grand landscapes seen in the new widescreen processes of the fifties. (See my article, "Rediscovering the Classic Western www.americanoutlook.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=article_detail&id=3019.)

John Ford is esteemed as the greatest Westerns director (see my "John Wayne's First 100 Years" <http://acuf.org/issues/issue87/070707med.asp>). Not far behind from the 1950's are Anthony Mann, who directed James Stewart in *The Naked Spur* and five other Westerns (e.g., *The Far Country* (1954) and *The Man from Laramie* (1955)), Budd Boetticher, who directed Randolph Scott in *Seven Men from Now* and six other Westerns (e.g., *The Tall T* (1957), *Ride Lonesome* (1959) and *Comanche Station* (1960)) and Delmer Daves.

Daves directed the original 1957 version of *3:10 to Yuma*, one of seven Westerns he made from 1954 to 1959, three starring Glenn Ford: *Jubal* (1956) and *Cowboy* (1958) in addition to *Yuma*. Based on a short story by the still active author Elmore Leonard, it is a modest tale of a poor homesteader, Dan Evans (Van Heflin), who agrees to take a captured outlaw, Ben Wade (Ford) from the Arizona town of Bisbee all the way to Yuma, and place him aboard the 3:10 train with its jail car bound for Yuma prison. Dan accompanies Wade alone, with the help of the town drunk, as part of a ruse whereby the sheriff and the rest of the posse try to divert Wade's gang in the opposite direction. Despite having a wife and small son, Dan decides to risk his life at the hands of the notorious Wade gang because he is broke and desperately needs the \$200 offered him by the stagecoach line, which has just lost its driver and valuable cargo to a hold-up by Wade's gang.

The central scene in the film is the psychological confrontation between Dan and Wade in the hotel room in Contention, as the clock ticks on toward 3:10. Dan has smuggled Wade here and is guarding him in hiding with his rifle until the train arrives. Wade is the outlaw with the charm, who tempts Dan, if he will release him, with far more money – thousands of dollars -- than the \$200 he will collect for delivering Wade to the train. The temptation becomes much stronger when Wade's gang, having discovered the ruse, shows up in town and the others in the posse, including even the stageline owner, decide discretion is the better part of valor and run away. Other than his family, Dan doesn't have much in life – except his honor and self-respect. He is fearful, he struggles with the choice staring at him in the person of Wade's smiling Mephistopheles (chained to the bedpost), and he knows he probably will be killed. But he decides he has to keep his word; he cannot live on the bribe of a killer. This sad man also figures his family would be better off even if he is dead, because they would receive the \$200 fee promised him.

This *3:10 to Yuma* is known as the "poor man's *High Noon*" because in both films the protagonist faces a stark moral choice (Marshal Will Kane [Gary Cooper], just married, has also just retired, but

decides he has to stay and fight Miller and his gang, who are coming after him).

Further, in both films the action builds up remorselessly to a train arrival, the noon train bringing Miller to Hadleyville, the 3:10 arriving in Contention and bound for Yuma. Some critics, myself included, prefer the lesser known Daves film because Daves is a more spontaneous, organic director, in contrast with Fred Zinnemann's typically studied, rather obvious manner with *High Noon*.

From its peak in the 1950s, the Western succumbed to the revisionist deconstruction of the 1960s, led by Sergio Leone's three Italian Westerns starring the second banana from TV's *Rawhide*, Clint Eastwood. A European sensibility turned the moral strength of the classic Western inside out, as summed up in the title, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966). In place of the polar shoot-out in the deserted street between good and evil (as in *High Noon*), we have a three-way duel in a cemetery between three useless characters. The Western has never been the same.

Naturally, an art form has to evolve, but that does not mean it gets better. In the late 1960s and 1970s the Western often became a vehicle for anti-American leftist radicals like Robert Altman (*McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (1971)) and Arthur Penn (*Little Big Man* (1970)); or a joke for a generation that was too "grown-up" to take moral truth seriously (*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969)); or an orgiastic descent into buckets of bloodshed for the highly talented but degenerate Sam Peckinpah (*The Wild Bunch* (1969)). Its numbers declined through the 1970s, until the vastly over-rated Clint Eastwood was all that was left, and he found himself wallowing in mindless, nihilistic (and poorly directed) despair in the anti-Western *Unforgiven* (1992). The Cultural Marxists who now run Hollywood and dominate culture of course embraced Eastwood now that he had become one of them, and bestowed on him the Best Picture Oscar. His film joined the equally nihilistic, poorly directed *Dances with Wolves* (1990) as the only Western ever to win this award, along with *Cimarron* way back in 1931.

Despite a modest increase in their numbers after *Unforgiven*, (e.g., *Geronimo: An American Legend* (1993), *Wyatt Earp*(1994) and *Tombstone*(1993)), Westerns have now become few and far between – perhaps one every few years. The last one of note was the utterly unprofessional *Open Range* (2003), in which Kevin Costner's poor directorial talent as displayed in *Dances with Wolves* somehow managed to drop even further – endless, hackneyed, meaningless shots of open Western space, with none of the passion of the fifties Westerns.

This brings us to the new edition of *3:10 to Yuma*. Like *Open Range* and Eastwood's Westerns, it takes a staple theme of the classic Western – and doesn't know what to do with it. As with *Open Range*, there is no moral commitment like that invested by the filmmakers of yore; only a desire to make a movie – and a buck.

Let us review some of the changes in 2007 from half a century earlier. First, the level of violence. In 1957, the Wade gang holds up the stagecoach and tries to avoid bloodshed, but kills the driver when he pulls out his rifle. This is the only violence in the movie until they reach Contention. The 2007 version turns the stagecoach into a 19th century version of a German Panzer tank (with a gatling gun). This permits lots of killing and mayhem, including a cold-blooded murder in graphic red by the psycho in a gang of psychos, Wade's number 2, Charlie Prince (Ben Foster). For kicks, he just wounds the Pinkerton (Peter Fonda) with a shot in his stomach, hoping to leave him to bleed to death out alone in the wild. Actually, this is the second violent scene. The film begins with the burning of Dan Evans's (Christian Bale) barn by the big landowner in the area.

Judging by this film, the writers and the director, one James Mangold, are sadists.

Mangold treats those not averting their eyes to a big close-up of the Pinkerton's open stomach wound as the town veterinarian removes the bullet. Later, the sheriff tortures Ben Wade (Russell Crowe). Wade murders a couple of his captors on the way to Contention. Prince brags how they once blew up a train filled with miners, he guns down in cold blood the Contention sheriff and his deputies, shoots up Contention, killing many in the street, and he gleefully burns alive another of his

victims. Prince is violent enough for Al Qaeda, except he might scare off even that lunatic band of cutthroats. It seems the "filmmakers" first decided how much violence they could cram into the simple, modest 1957 story, and then added padding afterward. If the ratings system had any meaning, children and teenagers would not be allowed in, even with their parents. But the film is rated R.

The second change features the heavy hand of Political Correctness (more accurately termed Cultural, or neo-, Marxism). As noted above, Mangold adds a ruthless landowner whose henchmen burn Dan's farm. The simple stageline owner of 1957, Butterfield, is now the railroad manager, who joins the ruthless landowner as another fire-breathing capitalist exploiter. And they are joined by – horrors – a Pinkerton! Worse, he also is a bounty hunter. The Pinkerton, we learn from Wade, once murdered three-year-old Apache children during an operation to safeguard white settlers. You see, dear readers, no one is better than anyone else. We must never be judgmental and it is discrimination to uphold moral standards, as the left never ceases to insist. (Remember Monica? Homosexual "marriage"?)

The third change is the addition of an older son for Dan, a 14-year-old who not only is openly disrespectful, but contemptuous, of his father. When Wade turns up a prisoner at their cabin, the wise-guy kid now has someone to admire. (Mangold's reaction shots to show the boy's admiration are beyond triteness, they are so obvious.) At the end the son learns better, but like everything in this film, his character is devoid of subtlety.

Now let us compare two scenes from the two films; they serve to illustrate what makes a good director as opposed to a hack. In the first, Wade makes a one night conquest of the female barmaid in Bisbee, where his gang has stopped after the robbery; this dalliance leads to his capture. In 2007, Wade has his hands on the girl's neck within 60 seconds, then we see them in her room the morning after. By contrast, the seduction scene in 1957 is a little gem, one of so many from that period that illustrate true eroticism comes from restraint and allusion: less is more. There is extended, suggestive banter between Wade and the girl (Felicia Farr, the future Mrs. Jack Lemmon); we learn how lonely and desolate her life is, trapped in the middle of nowhere. Finally, they disappear behind a curtain to the back room, and the scene ends. Later, when Wade is removed by the posse in a stagecoach, the girl looks up at him forlornly; she has only two scenes, but we know her as a fully formed, sad character.

In the second scene, Wade has secretly been removed from the stagecoach and brought to Dan's farm. Handcuffed, he joins the family at dinner. Mangold does nothing with this scene, save the above mentioned trite reaction close-ups of Dan's older boy to show his admiration of Wade. Daves, however, uses this scene to set the context of Dan's life, so we can understand why he agrees to escort Wade to the train. We see the toll Dan's problems have taken on his loving wife (Leora Dana), and come to understand why Dan feels, in his depressed state, she might be better off with him dead and the \$200 in her hands.

In the 2007 version, we don't know much about the characters and feel even less about them because they are often disembodied heads in extreme close-up. Mangold relies so much on this contemporary manner of direction (perhaps derived from TV) that he gives no exposition. Evidently, he does not know how to stage a scene setting the characters in context, in full figures interacting in time and space. He is so lacking in subtlety that he relies on these close-ups to convey character, rather than dialogue, movement or acting. At times one feels the actors (their heads at least) are sitting in one's lap. These pointless shots and the explosive sound effects of the frequent gunfire make this film a typical contemporary assault on the senses of the audience. (Other trite, pointless shots are Mangold's frequent close-ups of horses' hooves to begin a riding sequence; one never sees this with the master directors noted above.)

As a result of Mangold's literal in-our face direction, the viewer cannot relate to the barmaid or to Alice Evans. Russell Crowe is a superb actor, but due to the clipped script and lack of scenic development he is not effective as Wade, except perhaps at the end. He also is bereft of the charm Glenn Ford brings to the part, which makes the grudging personal interaction between Wade and

Evans credible; it is not credible in the 2007 film. As Dan Evans, Christian Bales is hard to see much of the time under his broad-brimmed hat and heavy stubble. Van Heflin, one of the great actors of Hollywood's Golden Age, doesn't need the contrived gimpy leg sported by Bales to convey Dan's defeats in life. He uses his bearing, his voice and manner of speaking – acted out in fully formed scenes, not Mangold's clipped close-ups. (To show what a wonderful actor Heflin was, the next year he played a manly, swaggering cattle baron in one of the Western's great performances, as Lee Hackett in *Gunman's Walk*, which ends with one of the genre's most overpowering cathartic moral climaxes.) Heflin had something that Crowe has, but which Bales lacks: screen presence.

Roger Ebert, in his laudatory review (he thinks this film follows in the tradition of the classic Westerns), wrote that the 2007 stars are superior to Heflin and Ford. He may have in mind that in films today actors show more id. But in 1957 actors had to use more subtlety because at that time American society was still ruled not by "freedom," but by public decency in the form of self-restraint, right and wrong, and moral limits. The focus was on dramatizing a moral story, not grossing out an immature audience with vivid depictions of evil, violent men. Mangold's sadism swamps the moral heart of the story, in which he evidently has little interest – it clearly is not what attracted him to the subject.

A final difference between the two versions is that the 2007 film makes no use of landscape and the photography is purely functional. Illustrating again the subtlety and intelligence of older movies, the 1957's black and white photography has an unusual bleak quality, as if bleached, to help convey the disappointing, hard, drought-stricken life led by Dan Evans. This visual style is complemented by the understated musical score of the accomplished George Duning. The 2007 film's music track sounds like it was lifted from a TV show.

The one part where the new version might do better is the ending, which arguably is the one weak part of the 1957 film. But the new version of *3:10 to Yuma* has no organic life of its own because Mangold and company have no belief in the tale. All they seem to know is the excess, crudeness, and exploitation that are so often characteristic of much of our ever declining, nihilistic culture. Their film is one of the three worst Westerns I have ever seen (along with *Open Range* and *Wyatt Earp*, both starring the hapless Kevin Costner).

Let me end, however, on a positive note. Readers have all the wonderful Delmer Daves Westerns to discover. *Jubal* is a variation on Shakespeare's *Othello*, as Ernest Borgnine's good-hearted rancher is turned against his loyal foreman, Glenn Ford, by his treacherous wife. In an inspiring scene so typical of pre-sixties movies, Ford, wounded and the target of a lynch mob on horseback, has been taken in by a wagon train of religious settlers whom he had earlier rescued from danger. One settler demands of the elder that they send Ford away, because they want "peace." To which the elder (a tall, distinguished actor and one-time opera star often cast by Daves, Basil Ruysdael) replies: "There are two kinds of peace. The head in the sand kind of peace. Or the peace that comes from loving thy neighbor, and doing unto others as you would have them do unto you." Hearing this, most of the others call out they want to give refuge to Ford. This scene of moral resolution, filmed in a huge Western meadow, is given more magnitude by being framed against a vast blue sky and imposing mountains, in glorious wide-screen CinemaScope. This is the '50s Western at its best.

Cowboy (1958) is Jack Lemmon's only Western. Based on the real-life memoir by one Frank Harris, Lemmon plays a dude Chicago hotel clerk who joins Glenn Ford's cattle drive in search of his Mexican girlfriend. Along the way, he observes the hard-bitten life of the real cowboy and himself learns to be a man. Another evocative musical score by George Duning.

Daves, a well-educated man (a Stanford Law graduate, believe it or not) who also wrote most of his scripts, grappled in several of his films with the Indian question. But unlike the anti-American ideologues Altman and Penn, noted earlier, he presents a nuanced, understanding picture. In 1950 he directed one of the first Westerns that showed whites in the wrong vis-à-vis Indians, *Broken Arrow*, with James Stewart. By the mid-fifties, when he had perfected his own distinctive, exciting visual style (he excelled at building up thrilling climaxes, as in *Jubal* and *The Hanging Tree* (1959)),

he returned to the subject in *Drum Beat* (1954) and *The Last Wagon* (1956).

Drum Beat dramatizes the Modoc War in Oregon, 1872-3, with Alan Ladd as a scout trying to mediate the conflict with the Indian leader played by the young Charles Bronson. In *The Last Wagon*, Richard Widmark is a suspected "half-breed" who leads Felicia Farr and the other survivors of an Indian massacre to safety through Indian country. In both films Daves portrays the complex inter-action of Indian savagery and white prejudice.

Daves's masterpiece is his last Western, and one of Gary Cooper's last, *The Hanging Tree* (1959). Cooper is Doc Frail, an aloof, feared doctor in a mining community, whose troublemaker is George C. Scott (in his film debut). Frail heals a girl blinded in a stagecoach hold-up (Maria Schell), but turns his back on her gratitude. Always dressed in black, we learn he is a silent penitent. We learn the reason why in a vintage Daves moral, cathartic climax, built like a great orchestra crescendo, as Frail is dragged by Scott's howling mob to the hanging tree, where only the girl whose love he spurned can save his life.

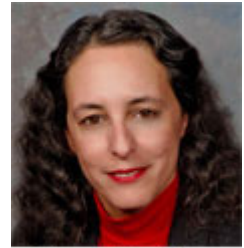
Needless to say, one can hardly write about contemporary films in such terms. So the one value of the new version of *3:10 to Yuma* is that it can raise appreciation of the great Delmer Daves and other filmmakers like him, from a bygone era, when America was a much more conservative country than today.

Spencer Warren is ConservativeBattleline's movie critic

**E-mail the
Editor**

Teresa in Dark and Light

by Lisa Fabrizio



Lisa Fabrizio

Much-loved by most of the world--and nearly all of it prior to her famed condemnation of abortion in her 1979 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech-- Blessed Teresa of Calcutta has once again taken center stage in world opinion. The upcoming publication of *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light* by Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk details private letters from Mother Teresa to her various spiritual advisors, confessors and to God himself, over the span of 50 years in which she is reported to have suffered what is known as the "dark night of the soul."

In one plaintive missive to Jesus, she asks, " Lord, my God, who am I that You should forsake me?" [Time](#) magazine's David Van Biema gives a somewhat fair and balanced presentation of the matter, but appears concerned that the revelation will be misunderstood by many. He details how priests explained that in her 50 years of dryness:

[Mother] Teresa's inability to perceive Christ in her life did not mean he wasn't there. In fact, they see his absence as part of the divine gift that enabled her to do great work. But to the U.S.'s increasingly assertive cadre of atheists, that argument will seem absurd. They will see the book's Teresa more like the woman in the archetypal country-and-western song who holds a torch for her husband 30 years after he left to buy a pack of cigarettes and never returned.

This is typical of some secular opinion on the subject of Mother Teresa's dark night and her Catholic faith. While this information is not new--much of it was revealed in [2003](#) during the investigation for her Beatification, when many of her letters were made public--it is the first real notice of it in periodicals like *Time*.

Fascinated by the fact that the deeply religious can sometimes experience long stretches of spiritual dryness, Van Biema's piece then morphs into a psychoanalysis of Mother herself. He also includes the obligatory quote from Christopher Hitchens--whose disdain for Mother Teresa is so obsessive that it may be he who is in need of the couch--which, for the benefit of all, I will exclude here. Van Biema seems mystified by a comforting 1953 letter from an early confessor in answer to her misgivings:

[Archbishop] P erier may have missed the note of desperation. "God guides you, dear Mother. You are not so much in the dark as you think. You have exterior facts enough to see that God blesses your work. Feelings are not required and often may be misleading." And yet feelings--or rather, their lack--became her life's secret torment. How can you assume the lover's ardor when he no longer grants you his voice, his touch, his very presence?

Faith is not a 'feeling', it is a gift of divine grace. One need not 'feel' God's love so much as believe in it, trust in it and return it. This kind of love, which is more a product of the will than of the heart, is not the same as 'like', which is something over which you have no control, as in a preference for the taste of broccoli. And in the case of the divine Lover, the Christian recalls his ardor constantly when he sees the Cross, and his presence is demonstrated every day to Catholics in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. As the good bishop pointed out above, apparently these and other exterior facts were enough to see Mother through to the end of her race.

But God was always present to her, as she lived her life according to his commands. If you are ever blessed as I was last year, to go on a pilgrimage to Calcutta to work with her Missionaries of Charity and worship with them at their Mother House where Blessed Teresa is interred, you will see on the immaculately white walls there, the words of Christ himself: YOU DID IT TO ME and I THIRST. Her exhortation to her sisters:

I Thirst and You Did it to Me: Remember always to connect the two, the means with the aim. What God has joined together let no one split apart...Our Charism is to satiate the thirst of Jesus for love and souls--by working at the salvation and sanctification of the poorest of the poor.

As Papal preacher, Father Raniero Cantalamessa [explained](#) in a homily: "You-did-it-to-me": Mother Teresa pronounced these words distinctly on the fingers of one hand and said it was "the Gospel of the five fingers." For Mother Teresa, Jesus who is present in the Eucharist, is present in a different way but equally real, "in the distressing disguise of the poor."



Mother Teresa had been blessed early in her vocation with the gift of mysticism--visions of Christ--what Time's Van Biema calls "her spiritual topper." Even though a thousand years is like a day with God, to Mother, those 50 years without intimacy with him must have been a great cross to bear, a dark night indeed. But in that she was able to see him in the eyes of the poor and receive his grace daily in the Eucharist, she was never really bereft of his presence; she simply couldn't have carried out her mission were it otherwise.

Although it can sometimes be a great blessing, no one desires the dark night; indeed, in the last line of the Lord's Prayer we plead every day that it not be visited upon us. But as is often pointed out, Jesus Christ had his own dark night on the Cross, where he cried out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" This of course, is his quotation of the opening line of Psalm 22, written by his human ancestor David, a man to whom the dark night was no stranger. But to cry out to God, as did David and Mother Teresa, is to acknowledge his saving power, in the manner of the Psalm's conclusion:

And I will live for the Lord; my descendants will serve you. The generation to come will be told of the Lord, that they may proclaim to a people yet unborn the deliverance you have brought.

[Lisa Fabrizio](#) is a columnist who hails from Connecticut.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Sorry Science Reporting

by Alan Caruba

New technology drives out old technology. As often as not, its impact is not known until many years after its introduction. Meanwhile, we live our lives day to day.

This is what is happening to the business of publishing newspapers and magazines, places where, traditionally, writers have earned a living. In an article in the summer edition of the newsletter of The National Association of Science Writers, the headline read "Reporting withers while information explodes." The author, Stuart F. Brown, like easily 85% or more of the NASW membership, myself included, is a freelance writer.



Alan Caruba

"As the number of readers who turn to the Internet for their news has boomed, the business equation in publishing has pretty much collapsed," said Brown. "So we find ourselves in the curious situation of living in a society that increasingly runs on technology and information—while witnessing the withering of the original reporting that tells us what's going on."

It's worse than a "curious situation." A society dependent on technology and science really needs to understand it in some fashion and most Americans haven't a clue. This leaves them vulnerable to a lot of bad or "junk" science news. In the past, there were fulltime science writers on the staffs of the nation's newspapers who made the phone calls, did the interviews, collected the data, and explained it to us.

In the same issue of the NASW newsletter, Charles Petit, a former NASW president, wrote "The Science Beat: Uh Oh, Another One Bites the Dust." After a 35-year career on the science beat for various media, Petit took a buyout from U.S. News & World Report in 2004 when it scrapped its science unit, but retained health and medicine writers. "Full-time, traditional-media science reporters covering breaking news are growing scarcer."

Among those traditional media retaining science reporters, Petit cited Reuters, the international newswire. That caught my eye because, along with the Associated Press, both of these dominant news services have served up a full plate of skewed science reporting. This has been particularly true in the way "global warming" has been reported.

Writing for the American Thinker.com on August 10, James Lewis provided an article, "Twisting Science to Fit the Global Warming Template", in which he meticulously dissected the way a Reuters story reversed the actual message of an article in Science magazine that "contained devastating information of flaws in the doomsters methodology and warned that the disaster (global warming) had been postponed." Lewis noted, "the Science article itself is an artful retreat from previous, over-confident global warming predictions." The article noted that "natural variations" in the planet's climate have been ignored for decades by the model-makers.

The public is only now beginning to understand that virtually all of the computer models used by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and other sources for predictions about global warming have been seriously in error, often by deliberate design and intention. Some of the models ignored the mini-Ice Age of 1300 to 1800. Others declared 1998 as the hottest year of the last century when it was actually 1934, during a time famed for its droughts and dustbowls.

Joining in this massive hoax have been the broad contingent of mainstream media that has breathlessly reported that virtually every natural climate event has been the result of global warming and that we are all doomed.

The most recent and egregious example was Newsweek magazine that attacked what it called global warming "deniers" in a cover story replete with errors. It was so bad that, a week later, one of its

own editors, Robert J. Samuelson, took the magazine to task for claiming that a "well-coordinated, well-funded campaign by contrarian scientists, free-market think tanks and industry has created a paralyzing fog of doubt around climate change." Samuelson called it "a peripheral and highly contrived story."

Petit says that, "the fabric of mainstream reporting of breaking science news is frayed, not shredded."

From my point of view, however, after a steady diet of so-called science news telling us that everything we eat, drink and breath is going to kill us and, if that doesn't do it, the melting of the North and South Poles, the rise of oceans, the spread of deserts, and the death of just about every known species of animal, the credibility of science reporting in the mainstream media has suffered some serious body blows.

For our skepticism, those of us who have disputed the endless lies about global warming have been labeled "deniers" in much the same way as those who dispute the Holocaust. This is not by accident. The use of the word "deniers" has opened the door for Robert Kennedy, Jr. to accuse us of being "traitors" and for the Weather Channel's ordained expert on global warming to suggest that any meteorologist who disagrees should have their certification taken away. This is the stuff of despotism.

"What most people don't know is that real science is a giant debating society, filled with skeptics," says Lewis. "It is only mature science that is stable and agreed-upon. But mature science comes only after centuries of cumulative evidence, and constant, heated debate."

Declaring that a "consensus" exists among all the scientists of the world that global warming is occurring is a lie. Twisting the results of a Science magazine report to reflect the opposite of its findings is a lie. Producing a "documentary" called "An Inconvenient Truth" filled with distortions and lies deserves censure, not mandatory showings in all the schools of the nation.

The federal government has spent billions to determine if global warming exists. So far it has not found any credible evidence for this dubious theory. Worse yet is the writing of laws in Congress that are based on this flawed and false "science of global warming" that will drive up the cost of everything on which our economy depends. That is a criminal misuse of the powers allocated to elected representatives.

As for the "science" you read about in the mainstream media these days, the rule of thumb is caveat emptor, buyer beware.

Alan Caruba writes a weekly column, "Warning Signs", posted on the Internet site of The National Anxiety Center, www.anxietycenter.com. His latest book is "Right Answers: Separating Fact from Fantasy", published by Merril Press.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Miss Marple Health Care

by John C. Goodman

Harvard Business School Professor Regina Herzlinger has written a must-read book, "Who Killed Health Care?". It is written in the style of a murder mystery. The puzzle to be solved: Who killed Jack Morgan, (a patient who dies while awaiting a kidney transplant)? Like Murder on the Orient Express, there is not one killer here but many: health insurance companies, hospitals, employers, the federal government and even academics.

Jack Morgan is a composite figure, based on the experience of 112 people who needlessly died while waiting for a kidney transplant. They were all insured by California-based Kaiser Permanente. Of those who died while waiting, 25 had a perfect match.



John Goodman

So the mystery begins, appropriately enough, by asking; what's wrong with Kaiser? "The original idea behind Kaiser was not all bad," writes Herzlinger. The company was formed by caring doctors who wanted to practice high quality medicine. Things went wrong when managed care became commercialized and insurers started telling doctors what to do so they could save a buck.

Herzlinger is not against managed care in principle, but she argues health insurers are the last people who should be doing it. Geico may be a great auto insurance company, but who would go to Geico for auto repairs? The same principle applies to health care.

Hospitals come next on the list of suspects and the bill of indictment is lengthy. These are stodgy, bureaucratic institutions that provide fragmented care rather than integrated team care and do so with highly uneven quality. Patients almost never learn what the cost is going to be prior to their surgery, and at the time of their release uninsured patients are charged the highest prices of all!

It doesn't have to be that way, she says. In India you can get a package price in advance for all major forms of surgery. That price, by the way, will be as little as one-fifth of what you would be billed in this country; and the surgery is performed by US-board certified physicians with comparable standards of care. In a real market, patients would find it easy to get price and quality data - just like they can for automobiles. To help that along, Herzlinger calls for an SEC-type body that would ensure patients get accurate data.

Employers come next. Good as they are at many things, they are lousy at choosing health care plans. So why should they - rather than the employees themselves - make these choices? It's all due to an accidental quirk in the tax law, says Herzlinger. To remedy the problems, individuals should be given the same tax break when they buy their own insurance, with higher subsidies for lower-income families.

Then there is government. Virtually everything wrong with our health care system stems from bad government policies. Herzlinger goes to great length to show how the federal government has botched kidney care, but I wish she had done more. Indeed, if there is a fault in this book it is the failure to more fully explore all the many ways in which government has undermined normal market forces in health care.

Finally there are Herzlinger's colleagues - in the academic and think tank world. She pulls no punches - and that's unusual. (Academics tend to be kind to one another; after all, we're all in the same game, so to speak.) Their sins? Over the years they have apologized for and defended managed care, bureaucratic care, perversely regulated care - indeed almost any kind of care other than the low-cost, high-quality care you would expect free markets to produce.

Herzlinger calls her ideal approach "consumer-driven health care." But the real issue is much deeper than putting patients in the driver's seat. We are suffering today because we systematically suppressed the market in every aspect of medical care for more than 100 years. The solution is long overdue: bring the market back to life.

John Goodman is president of the National Center for Policy Analysis - All rights reserved

[Link to \(the Manhattan Institute book\) "Who Killed Health Care" McGraw-Hill, 2007.](#)

**E-mail the
Editor**

Ethanol Obsession

by David Keene

We are told almost daily that ethanol made now from corn and hopefully one day from switch grass will free us from our dependence on imported oil and usher in an era of renewable energy that will allow us to live well forever.

To hasten that day, the government subsidizes its production, mandates its use and prods everyone in sight to make and use more of the stuff.

The price of this government-driven obsession with ethanol is beginning to dawn on at least a few people who perhaps didn't realize until recently that every choice we make entails costs as well as benefits.



David Keene

First, of course, there's the fact that it takes energy to produce ethanol. Some claim it takes almost as much to make the stuff as it produces. Ethanol's many promoters claim this simply isn't true. Maybe they're right, but when you combine the amount of energy needed to grow the corn, turn it into ethanol, blend it with gasoline and truck it to our local gas stations with the fact that a gallon of ethanol produces less energy than a gallon of gas, one has to wonder.

I have no idea how much the increased cost of driving and living today is directly or indirectly attributable to our ethanol obsession, but consider a few of the costs. It has been reliably estimated that 50 cents of last year's increase in the per-gallon cost of gasoline at the pump was attributable to the ethanol mandate that went into effect at the same time oil prices were soaring. Exxon and the Arabs got the blame, but a lot of the money we all paid out went to Midwestern farmers and ethanol producers.

A few years ago, ethanol boosters were claiming that diverting corn to energy production would have a negligible impact on the price of corn; one analyst predicted an increase in corn prices by maybe a dime a bushel. In fact, it's driven up corn prices so much that milk and beef prices have skyrocketed and there have been protests in Mexico at the increases in the cost of corn itself.

These increases amount to a hidden tax that already far exceeds the subsidies being paid directly to ethanol producers. As production increases, this tax will go up even more and will be reflected in the prices we pay not just for gas at the pump, but also for milk, beef and many, many other products at the grocery checkout counter.

All of this makes the nation's corn growers happy, but makes other farmers and purchasers of corn very unhappy. Corn prices have gone up from just over \$2 a bushel to as much as \$4, and farmers want to plant the stuff on every square inch of land they can get their hands on. As a result, dairy farmers, cattle and hog producers and even chicken farmers are being forced to pay twice as much as in the past to feed their animals and are finding it more and more difficult to lease land on which to raise them.

And things are going to get worse. There are about 120 ethanol plants in production today, but that number could double within the next couple of years driving corn prices even higher. This will, in turn, convince more and more farmers to abandon less profitable crops to devote more of their land to corn production, which will drive up the prices of those crops to America's consumers.

As if all this isn't enough, it is now becoming fairly clear that all this new emphasis on ethanol is going to have a significant impact on our environment. Last week, for example, The Washington Post reported that farmers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed are expected to plant as much as a million more acres of corn over the next five years. Since corn production creates more pollutants than most other crops, Bay watchers fear the fish and crabs of the Bay may fall victim to our ethanol obsession.

Land based animals and birds as well as the sportsmen who pursue them are also likely to suffer. To achieve the sevenfold increase in ethanol use that President Bush is seeking, farmers are likely to plow up land currently committed to the Conservation Reserve Program or CRP. This is the land today called home by pheasants and just about every other animal one can name.

So, there are going to be winners and losers as we move toward increased ethanol use. It's just a shame we can't all become corn growers, because the rest of us are going to pay and pay and pay.

David Keene is the chairman of the American Conservative Union.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Private Property Machinations

by Bob Barr

If your state does not share a border with Canada, that's a good thing-- because states adjacent to Canada are subject to the machinations of an agency called the International Boundary Commission and that, friends, is something no property owner wants.

The commission is small by Washington standards — a \$1.5 million budget and a six-person staff. Its very existence is known to no more than a handful of diehard bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., and Ottawa. That is, until recently.



Bob Barr

Now, thanks to a dispute pitting the former U.S. commissioner — Dennis Schornack — against a middle-aged couple living alongside the U.S.-Canadian border in the small town of Blaine, in Washington state, the IBC is receiving more national scrutiny than it probably had received in its entire 99-year existence.

The landowners — Herbert and Shirley Leu — moved to the town in the state's northwestern corner two years ago from Hawaii. Their modest home sits just outside a 10-foot buffer on each side of the 5,525-mile-long border that separates the United States from Canada. This 20-foot-wide buffer is relevant because a 1925 treaty conferred on the IBC the responsibility of maintaining and demarcating the lengthy and largely unprotected border. The commission's work is further described as "keeping the vista cleared" along the border. A 1960 law further defined this responsibility to include regulation of construction within that 10-foot buffer zone on each side of the border line. And therein lies the problem.

In an effort to control erosion in their backyard, which slopes downward toward a ditch running along the border, the Leus decided several months ago to build a 4-foot-high concrete retaining wall around their backyard. To ensure they did not run afoul of the government, the Leus dutifully confirmed they were in accord with all local and state ordinances before they built the approximately 85-foot-long retaining wall. They made sure, for example, that the wall would lie completely inside their property line, some eight feet from the actual border.

After they constructed the wall and just as they were about to landscape their yard now that the erosion problem was solved, in steps the imperious IBC commissioner, Schornack. First by letter, and then by personal visit, the American IBC commissioner ordered the Leus to tear down their retaining wall, or else he would have it taken down and the costs billed to the homeowners.

What so irritated Schornack that he concluded it necessary to draw a line in the sand so to speak, and risk his job — which he eventually lost — over this slab of concrete traversing but 85 feet of a border more than 5,500 miles long?

The commissioner, since fired by the same president who hired him, apparently was greatly offended that two residents of the United States — one Canadian, the other American — had the audacity to take reasonable steps to protect their investment in a home without seeking and obtaining his permission. He decided they must be taught a lesson.

Drawing on language from the earlier treaties, Schornack told the Leus that their retaining wall was an "obstruction" prohibited by the 1908 treaty and that it marred the "vista" to be protected along the 20-foot-wide buffer between the countries. Undeterred by the facts that the retaining wall "obstructed" nothing, and that its 4-foot height didn't mar any "vista," the former commissioner threatened to sue to force the Leus to do his bidding. To Schornack's consternation, however, the U.S. Justice Department sided with the landowners.

The Justice Department lawyers, unlike Schornack, understood that they are bound by the law and that under our country's Constitution, such things as notice, due process and property rights still have some relevance. The department essentially told Schornack (who previously worked for former Michigan Gov. John Engler in a similar capacity) to take a hike. When the obstinate former commissioner continued his attack on the Leus, his boss — George W. Bush — fired him.

Schornack sued, maintaining that his hallowed position as a commissioner on the IBC insulated him from being fired or removed from office for any reason, and that decisions such as he attempted to take against the Leus were not reviewable by anyone. Hopefully the court to which his lawsuit has been assigned will give his specious arguments more due process than he gave the Leus; and then throw the case out of court.

Former congressman and U.S. attorney [Bob Barr](#) practices law in Atlanta.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Ban Islam?

by Daniel Pipes

Non-Muslims occasionally raise the idea of banning the Koran, Islam, and Muslims. Examples this month include calls by a political leader in the Netherlands, [Geert Wilders](#), to ban the Koran — which he compares to Hitler's Mein Kampf — and two Australian politicians, [Pauline Hanson](#) and [Paul Green](#), demanding a moratorium on Muslim immigration.

What is one to make of these initiatives? First, some history. Precedents exist from an earlier era, when intolerant Christian governments forced Muslims to convert, notably in 16th-century [Spain](#), and others strongly encouraged conversions, especially of the elite, as in 16th- and 17th-century Russia. In modern times, however, with freedom of expression and religion established as basic human rights, efforts to protect against intolerance by banning the Koran, Islam, or Muslims have failed.



In perhaps the most serious contemporary attempt to ban the Koran, a Hindu group argued in 1984–85 that the [Islamic scriptures](#) contain "numerous sayings, repeated in the book over and over again, which on grounds of religion promote disharmony, feeling of enmity, hatred and ill-will between different religious communities and incite people to commit violence and disturb public tranquility."

The taking of this demand, known as "[The Calcutta Quran Petition](#)," to court prompted riots and deaths in Bangladesh. The case so alarmed New Delhi that the attorney general of India himself took part in the proceedings to oppose the petition, which, not surprisingly, was dismissed.

This early petition set the standard in terms of collecting objectionable Koranic verses. Other efforts have been more rhetorical and less operational. The most consequential was by [Pim Fortuyn](#) in the Netherlands to end Muslim emigration. Had he not been assassinated in 2002, he might have ridden his issue to the prime ministry.

The coordinator of Italy's [Northern League](#), Roberto Calderoli, wrote in 2005: "Islam has to be declared illegal until Islamists are prepared to renounce those parts of their pseudo political and religious doctrine glorifying violence and the oppression of other cultures and religions."

A British member of Parliament, [Boris Johnson](#), pointed out in 2005 that passing a Racial and Religious Hatred Bill "must mean banning the reading — in public or private — of a great many passages of the Koran itself." His observation prompted a Muslim delegation to seek assurances, which it received, from the Home Office that no such ban would occur. [Patrick Sookhdeo](#) of the Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity in 2006 called for prohibiting one translation of the Koran, *The Noble Koran: A New Rendering of its Meaning in English*, because "it sets out a strategy for killing the infidels and for warfare against them."

Other Western countries witnessed lesser efforts: Norway's [Kristiansand Progress Party](#) sought to ban Islam in 2004 and Germany's [Bundesverband der Bürgerbewegungen](#) sought to prohibit the Koran in 2006, arguing for its incompatibility with the German constitution. "[Stop the Islamification of Denmark](#)" demanded in early 2007 the prohibition of parts of the Koran and all mosques, calling them unconstitutional. Australia's [Catch the Fire Ministries](#) argued in 2004 that because "The Koran contradicts Christian doctrine in a number of places and, under the blasphemy law, [it] is therefore illegal."

Elsewhere, writers have made the same demands. Switzerland's [Alain Jean-Mairet](#) is the strategist of a two-part plan, popular and juridical, with the goal that "all the Islamic projects in Switzerland will prove impossible to fulfill." In France, an anonymous writer at the [Liberty Vox](#) Web site wishes to ban Islam, as does [Warner Todd Huston](#) in the *United States*.

The 2006 movie [V for Vendetta](#) portrays a future Britain in which the Koran is banned.

My take? I understand the security-based urge to exclude the Koran, Islam, and Muslims, but these efforts are too broad, sweeping up inspirational passages with objectionable ones, reformers with extremists, friends with foes. Also, they ignore the possibility of positive change.

More practical and focused would be to reduce the threats of jihad and Shariah by banning Islamist interpretations of the Koran, as well as Islamism and Islamists. Precedents exist. A Saudi-sponsored Koran was pulled from school libraries. Preachers have gone to jail for their [interpretation of the Koran](#). [Extreme versions of Islam](#) are criminally prosecuted. [Organizations](#) are outlawed. Politicians have called for [Islamists to leave their countries](#).

Islam is not the enemy, but Islamism is. Tolerate [moderate Islam](#), but eradicate its radical variants.

Mr. Pipes ([DanielPipes.org](#)) is director of the Middle East Forum.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Poor Romania

by Paul Driessen

For decades, Nazi and Communist regimes ruled Romania, kept her people impoverished and exploited her resources – tearing vast mineral wealth from her mountains, with little regard for worker safety, people’s health or the environment. When the Soviet Empire collapsed, Romania eagerly embraced a more hopeful future and embarked on a course to join the European Union.

Life has improved for many, especially in cities like Bucharest. But Romania remains one of the EU’s poorest nations, and valleys that once echoed with the shouts of workers and roar of heavy equipment are now silent. Over 300,000 miners are jobless. Their villages have descended into squalor, misery and despondency that have no historic parallel.



Paul Driessen

Rosia Montana is one such place. This Transylvanian town hosts a massive open-pit mine, enormous waste dumps and, beneath them, hundreds of tunnels. The legacy of 2000 years of mining – the most damaging of which occurred under Ceaucescu – they leach toxic chemicals into local streams that now are red-orange from cadmium and contain 110 times the EU’s legal limit of zinc, 64 times its iron limit, and three times the limit for arsenic, the most dangerous chemical on the US government’s toxic substances list.

Homes and buildings are crumbling, two-thirds of them lack indoor toilets and running water, and 70% of the workers are unemployed. Families survive on wild berries, subsistence farming in rocky, acidic soil, welfare, and often less than US\$2 a day. Few own a car. Frigid winters are warmed only by wood stoves. Malnutrition and ill health are constant problems. The dentist serves as the area’s only doctor.

Unlike most former mining towns, however, Rosia has one last chance. Gabriel Resources wants to reopen the mine, to tease out nearly 2,000 tons of gold and silver that the antiquated methods of bygone eras could not extract.

In the process, the Canadian company would spend millions to erase the horrific environmental legacy, restore the land to forests, pastures and grasslands, and leave the alpine waters sparkling. All at no cost to the Romanian government, which cannot afford to clean up the mess itself.

Gabriel would also create high-paying jobs, revitalize the community, protect and restore Rosia’s most valuable churches and buildings in a special historic zone, build a modern village with homes in traditional Romanian styles, save Roman and other archeological treasures in a museum – and provide precious metals for jewelry, computers and other marvels. (The company has already spent over US\$200 million; its US\$10-million expenditure thus far on archeology is 40 times the Romanian Culture Ministry’s annual budget between 1990 and 2003.)

Over a 29-year period, the project would create 1,200 construction jobs, more than 600 mining jobs, and 6,000 indirect jobs in service sectors. It would inject US\$2.5 billion into the local and Romanian economy, and leave Rosia Montana with a modern infrastructure: roads, electricity, internet, safe running water, a new school and clinic, and dozens of new businesses that will sustain a strong economy long after the mine is gone. Of course, other ore bodies might be discovered, prolonging the area’s mining economy for decades.

The museum, clean environment, and new hotels and restaurants will attract tourists who have never before had a reason to visit this cold, polluted, inhospitable region.

No wonder the mayor strongly supports the new mine and was re-elected with over 80% of the vote. If the project moves forward, miracles will happen. If it dies, the land and water will remain polluted,

because Romania cannot afford to clean it up. More young people will leave, the elderly will be abandoned, and investors will think twice about coming to Romania.

But none of this matters to the international anti-mining movement. Almost the moment the plan was announced, foreign NGOs (non-governmental organizations) launched a local opposition group (Alburnus Maior) and well-financed campaign to stop the project – using techniques they had refined in countless actions across North and South America, Asia and Africa.

The region is idyllic, they say – perfect for farming and tourism. The people love their quaint homes and prefer horse-drawn carts over automobiles. Gabriel would uproot families, destroy Rosia's churches and landmarks, and pollute the pristine environment. The people don't want these temporary jobs. They'd rather pick mushrooms and carve wood figurines.

These and other absurd lies are chronicled in the documentary film "Mine Your Own Business." Residents can hardly imagine anyone would believe them. But websites, awards from celebrities and like-minded pressure groups, and a constant flow of spurious allegations have generated opposition all over Europe. A recent PBS television pseudo-documentary (funded by Greenpeace) is carrying their anti-mining battle to US audiences.

The latest fabrication attacks the proposed use of cyanide to recover the precious metals. The NGOs claim the method is dangerous and used only in destitute Third World countries. They have persuaded Romanian legislators to introduce laws banning the chemical – and thus scuttling the project and future mining prospects.

Actually, cyanide is produced by bacteria and fungi, and found in almonds, coffee and other foods. Over 400 modern mines in the US, EU, Canada, Australia and many other nations use it to extract gold and silver. Because it degrades quickly and naturally, and does not involve acids or heavy metals, it is safer for workers and the environment than alternative methods. Indeed, it is far less toxic than automobile exhaust or the arsenic and other chemicals that now foul Rosia Montana's water.

Gabriel Resources – the only EU-licensed company to sign the International Cyanide Management Code – plans to use it in a state-of-the-art system that will safely recycle the chemical repeatedly and send nearly cyanide-free water into a lined waste facility. The system is designed so that even major storms will not release dangerous chemicals into the environment – a huge difference from the risky, antiquated system that caused the Baia Mare overflow.

The radical NGOs simply hate mining, don't live in the village, have no compassion for these families, and are under no legal obligation to be honest, transparent or accountable for the consequences of their actions. As one foreign activist said in an email:

"Why should any NGO come forward with alternative projects? That is not the job of civil society. We are not a humanitarian organization, but a militant environmental NGO. If the whole community is in favor of the project, we simply put it on the list of our enemies."

They will spend millions to stop development, but not one cent on poor people or the environment. They destroy thousands of jobs, but create no new ones. When someone asked the Alburnus Maior president where his money comes from, he said "It's not your business!"

George Soros and his Soros Foundation Romania appear to be the principal money behind this campaign. Not only is this support anti-poor, anti-environment and anti-Romania. It's also hypocritical, because Soros has made millions from mining operations that use cyanide – and a silver mine that relocated an entire village. But stopping Gabriel and other Western corporations could certainly benefit his political agenda and provide opportunities to profit from fluctuations in

metals prices caused by restrictions on mining in the face of surging demand to meet the needs of new technologies and developing economies.

It also promotes Hungary's desire to assert influence over lands that once were part of its empire, or at least prevent those regions from becoming economic competitors. That desire may explain why its government issued a press release condemning the project, almost immediately after it had submitted 122 questions about the project, but before it had received a single answer.

Twenty-one Romanian NGOs visited Rosia Montana and met with the people and company. Eighteen of them changed their minds and now support the project. The radical activists refuse to have any dialogue.

Draped in gold, actress Vanessa Redgrave used a Cluj-Napoca film festival to proclaim her opposition to the mine. When the people of Rosia Montana wrote her a letter – asking “Where will we go? How will we live?” – she responded with stony, callous silence.

Wealthy San Francisco insurance magnate Richard Goldman gave Swiss-British Stephanie Roth US\$125,000 for leading the project's opposition. He has also given nearly US\$1-million to radical anti-insecticide groups that help perpetuate malaria, misery and childhood death in Africa.

But what possible reason can the Royal Society, Catholic Church, news media and Royal Family of Romania have for opposing this project? Why do they want to ensure that thousands of their own people remain unemployed, living in squalid homes and sentenced to suffer in one of Romania's most polluted areas? Why do they want to give George Soros and Hungary veto power over Romania's mining industry and thousands of jobs and families?

Would Princess Margareta or any of the journalists, Church leaders or Society elites want to live even one winter in this “paradise” they want to “save”? Do they hate mining with enough passion to give up its benefits: their fine homes, jewelry, computers, cars and jet travel – none of which are possible without mining? Will Redgrave, Roth, Soros, Goldman and other project opponents do likewise? Will the anti-cyanide legislators?

Rather than aligning with the foreign militants, Romanian legislators, journalists, celebrities and citizens should visit the village, strip mines, streams and waste heaps, and speak with the people of Rosia Montana and Gabriel Resources. If there is a need for legislation, it is for laws that compel anti-development NGOs – and those that bankroll them – to abide by basic rules for honesty, transparency and accountability that every decent organization should be happy to follow.

Most important, they should let the people of Rosia Montana decide their own future – without lies and pressure from foreign activists. If that future includes this mining project, it will give Rosia and the entire nation an opportunity to rehabilitate this ecological disaster, preserve the best of their cultural heritage, and become healthy, modern and prosperous.

Together, these actions would help ensure that a half-century of oppression by totalitarians is not followed by oppression at the hands of unaccountable eco-imperialists.

Paul Driessen is author of Eco-Imperialism: Green power - Black death (www.Eco-Imperialism.com) and “Responsible Progress in the Andes,” a report on anti-mining campaigns in Peru and other countries. He serves as senior policy advisor for the Congress of Racial Equality and Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise, whose new book (Freezing in the Dark) reveals how radical pressure groups raise money and promote policies that restrict energy and economic development, and hurt poor families.

Organic Danger

by Dennis Avery

A new danger has beset the nation's struggling organic farms--too much rain. Hundreds of organic farms in southwestern Wisconsin and southeast Minnesota were drenched by a foot of rain in late August. The heavy downpour washed out plantings, eroded soil, and damaged fences and buildings. The owner of Wisconsin's Harmony Valley Farm estimated his damages at \$300,000.

"We have a lot of steep, hilly county and we've had a lot of mudslides," said Tom Van Der Linden, a nearby agent for the Minnesota Extension Service.



Dennis T. Avery

Now let me get this straight. Organic farms in Wisconsin and Minnesota have concentrated themselves on steep, hilly land that is prone to mudslides? That's a bad idea, given that organic farms already refuse to use the low-till farming systems that protect soil most effectively. The low-till systems depend on herbicides to control choking weeds, but the organic farmers won't use "synthetic" pesticides. They choose, instead, to use the old bare-earth farming systems, with plows and mechanical cultivators that invite erosion.

It sounds to me as though the organic farmers have chosen the wrong land. Disasters like this won't happen often, but mudslides even one year out of 50 is too much for good soil health. Perhaps we need a code of conduct for organic farmers that would bar organic plantings on steep slopes likely to produce mudslides after heavy rains. The county extension agents should readily be able to identify the classes of land suitable for the increased risks of organic production.

Otherwise, the public is being set up to make all kinds of "emergency" payments to organic farmers who had been preparing to sell their produce for "organic premiums" on the high-priced shelves of Whole Foods Markets. The public shouldn't be on the hook for such risky premium-seeking. After all, the organic growers keep bragging that their farming system is more sustainable and more "earth friendly" than conventional farming.

Europe is already caught up in this nonsense. The Cooperative Wholesale Association testified to the British House of Lords in 1999 that weeds were a special problem for organic farmers. Indeed, too often the weeds took over the fields, choking out the crops. The farmer then had to plow down his crop to prevent the weeds from going to seed and ruining the next year's crop as well. The Association said this was "no problem for the farmer, because the EU government compensates the farmers for their weed losses."

We need to remember that the world is short of good cropland. We're already farming 37 percent of the earth's land area, and most of the high-quality land is already cropped. By 2050, we'll need twice as much farm output for more than 8 billion affluent people demanding meat, milk and pet food. The organic farms already lose about half of their crop potential because they refuse to use nitrogen fertilizer and the more effective synthetic pesticides. They're already suing conventional farmers for "pollen pollution," from biotech seeds. Now they're starting to campaign for "disaster payments" on mudslides and weeds.

With the higher yields of conventional farms, we can leave the steep hillsides for wildlife habitat. Shouldn't that be our environmental goal?

Dennis T. Avery is a senior fellow for Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C. and is the Director for [Center for Global Food Issues](#).

Electoral College Threat

by Paul M. Weyrich

A movement is underway across the nation to change the way we elect the President. Since the bitterly contested election of 2000, in which Vice President Albert A. Gore, Jr. won the popular vote but lost the election to President George W. Bush, Democrats have been anxious to modify the way in which the President is elected. For many the goal is either to eradicate the Electoral College or make its votes insignificant to the outcome of the election.

Recently, Republicans and Democrats in California have proposed two separate ballot initiatives for the 2008 election that would alter the way California's electoral votes are distributed in the Electoral College. The Republican proposal would replace the winner-take-all system with one in which the electoral votes would be awarded by how Congressional districts vote.

Meanwhile, Democrats have introduced "The National Popular Vote for President Act." This initiative would require States to award their electoral votes to whichever candidate wins the most actual votes (i.e., popular votes) nationally. It would take effect only if States representing a majority of the Electoral College votes agreed to the change. Because of California's population and influence, there is a concentrated effort to push this initiative through next year.

A Democratic consultant told the LOS ANGELES TIMES that "a lot of people who lived through the 2000 election ...feel pretty strongly that we ought to have a national popular vote. The Electoral College is a vestige of another time period." The presumption behind this statement is that if history conflicts with one's desire for power, abolish history and retain power at all costs.

But the Founders created the Electoral College because they believed it to be most prudent to protect the interests of a diverse nation. They were wary of a central government with too much power, so they established a federal system of government that limited the responsibilities of the national government and left all others to the States.

If this initiative in California and others like it across the country were to succeed our electoral system would change in two ways.

First, it would give undue influence to large urban areas at the expense of rural voters. Cities like New York City, San Francisco, Chicago and Los Angeles would have far more importance in a popular vote than they do in the Electoral College. Campaigning in Iowa and South Carolina, which currently attracts much attention, would cease because voters in those States would be of little significance to the Presidential election. Instead of representing a diverse group of Americans from across the nation, the President would represent those in large cities.

Second, it would have the potential to contradict the votes of those within the State itself. If a candidate were to win the popular vote nationwide but Californians had voted for another candidate, the votes of Californians would not go to the one for whom they had voted but to the one for whom citizens of other States had voted. So it would be possible for the voters of populous states like New York, Illinois, Texas and Florida to decide which candidate would receive California's electoral votes.

While it theoretically is possible in the Electoral College to win the Presidential election by winning the eleven most populous states [California (55 votes), Texas (34), New York (31), Florida (27) Illinois (21), Pennsylvania (21), Ohio (20), Michigan (17), Georgia (15), New Jersey (15), and North Carolina (15)] and disregard the rest of the country, no President has ever come close to achieving such a feat. The States themselves, though populous, are too diverse. Instead, candidates must campaign across the country, maintaining the Founders' original intent that Presidential candidates seek popular support over a geographical majority of the country, not in isolated urban areas.



Paul M. Weyrich

The Founding Fathers were highly suspicious of unregulated majorities. Hence, they deliberately created the Electoral College to constrain the will of the majority and to ensure that the votes of those in less populous States were heeded. Californians should be wary of this latest attempt to enfeeble the Electoral College. Power is seductive.

James Madison perceptively warned against unrestrained majority rule in Federalist # 10.

“When a majority is included in a faction, the form of popular government enables it to sacrifice to its ruling passion or interest both the public good and the rights of other citizens,” he wrote. “Either the existence of the same passion or interest in a majority at the same time must be prevented, or the majority, having such coexistent passion or interest, must be rendered, by their number and local situation, unable to concert and carry into effect schemes of oppression....”

This is great wisdom that, in spite of its age, is applicable today.

Paul M. Weyrich is Chairman and CEO of the Free Congress Foundation

**E-mail the
Editor**

Feminine Appeal?

by Lisa De Pasquale

It was no surprise when GreenStone Media announced the end of its all women, all whining, all the time radio network. In the year since its inception, GreenStone only had 11 stations that carried its programming. The mainstream media was positively orgasmic when GreenStone launched in late 2006. The network was backed by investors like Gloria Steinem, Rosie O'Donnell, Billie Jean King and Jane Fonda who all ponied up \$3.1 million. Carrie Lukas of Independent Women's Forum wrote, "To thunderous acclaim from the liberal intelligentsia, a team of feminist icons -- including Gloria Steinem and Jane Fonda -- last year launched a women-run radio network. The mainstream media dutifully parroted press releases describing the launch as a 'breakthrough' for women in the male-dominated world of talk radio."



The media insisted that GreenStone was finally giving women a voice and the content they've been craving. Women already control content on TV, magazines and books, so I suppose it's only natural that they try to fit talk radio in their overstuffed handbag. The notion that women don't have a voice in today's media is totally bizarre. I can't even watch a NFL game without seeing a feature story about a linebacker that reads Goodnight, Moon to preschoolers in his spare time. Yet, the media went on and on about GreenStone breaking the barrier of talk radio and bringing a new concept to talk radio.

Todd Fisher, who helped launch a small women's station in Minneapolis, told The Houston Chronicle, "Going in, we knew the girlfriend approach, the communicating in a very real and honest way, was how we were going to gain traction." Like many women, I'm not looking for a bosom buddy, I'm looking for entertainment to pass the time during a commute. Fisher smartly cautioned GreenStone that they should focus on content, not on advocating an agenda that would fragment their listeners. And they say men are bad listeners. GreenStone quickly fell into the predictable pattern of celebrity over substance, turning to men like Ralph Nader and Alec Baldwin to rescue them. As Air America did before them, GreenStone quickly fell into a caricature of itself.

Meanwhile, achievements by conservative women in talk radio were completely ignored in the hype over GreenStone. It's disingenuous to say that women haven't succeeded in this "men's market." In addition to their radio programs, hosts including Dr. Laura Schlessinger, Monica Crowley, Laura Ingraham, Melanie Morgan, Martha Zoller and Tammy Bruce have also found success as authors and TV pundits. Yet, GreenStone CEO and former Federal Communications Commissioner Susan Hess insisted that there was "a huge hole in the market." After GreenStone sunk, the question isn't why do women fail in talk radio, but why do liberals continue to fail in talk radio?

The Left and their cohorts in the media are obsessed with identity entertainment and identity politics. They assumed women would flock to their W-PMS experiment the same way they expect women to flock to the polls for Hillary Clinton. To the contrary, recent polling shows that Hillary isn't gaining the expected support from women, particularly those most like her -- white, college educated and upper middle class. Polling shows that it's mostly blue-collar, "women with needs" that will vote for Clinton in 2008. In other words, women who believe her promises of free health care, free daycare and free tours of the Lincoln Bedroom. Actually, that last one is Bill's campaign promise.

In a recent poll commissioned by the Susan B. Anthony List and the polling company TM only 40% of women said they could conceivably vote for Hillary Clinton. Lest the media characterize the remainder as victims of the patriarchy, an additional 46% said they would vote for a woman (just not that woman) in 2008 or in a future presidential election. Marjorie Dannenfelser, President of the Susan B. Anthony List, said, "Considering how miserably Clinton does among male voters, she should be concerned that the 'sisterhood' is not rallying to her side either."

At least the Clinton campaign did receive some good news recently – they've got the Cuban dictator voted locked!

Absent of substance and an agenda that appeals to all kinds of Americans, the Left consistently appeals to one's race or gender for cheap and easy votes and listeners. It didn't work for GreenStone Media and it's not working for Hillary Clinton. As Myrna Blyth wrote in Spin Sisters, "Remember, more women listen to [Dr. Laura] each night than have seen all of the performances of Eve Ensler's The Vagina Monologues everywhere in the world." Now that's broad appeal.

Miss De Pasquale is CPAC director at the American Conservative Union in Alexandria, Va.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Disillusion on the Right:

A Letter to my Uncle

A thought about our conversation tonight: You made a reference to "you Republicans."

Some time ago I came to the conclusion that the difference between the two major parties is that the Democrats want to drive us off the cliff at 100 m.p.h., the Republicans want to do it at 55.



The Republican Party is not the same party that I have known and been a part of for most of my adult life. Actually, that's not quite accurate. It began before that. When I was 11 years old (the fall of 1960) I got a cardboard box and my mother looped a few yards of twine through it to hold it around my neck and she drove me to the GOP headquarters where I asked for a supply of brochures I could pass out on a downtown streetcorner. I did that every Saturday for several weeks before the election. This was entirely my idea.

But the Republican Party then bears little resemblance to the group calling itself the Republican Party today. Don't take my word for it. Read the GOP Platform of 1964: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showplatforms.php?platindex=R1964>.

Compare it to the platform of 2004: <http://www.gop.com/media/2004platform.pdf>

The GOP has been captured by the neoconservatives, who aren't conservative in any way, shape or form. A typical example is Michael Gerson, until recently George W. Bush's chief speechwriter. He says he's a "big government conservative." That's like saying you are a nurturing child molester.



And that's the guy Bush trusted to craft his speeches.

Alison and I have given the maximum contribution to Ron Paul. He believes in free markets and no foreign entanglements. I don't have any illusions he can get the nomination, much less win, except by God's grace, but he's influencing millions of people (he's won every poll after every GOP debate -- he won 33% of the audience last night, vs. 15% for Giuliani). That's base-building for the next Ron Paul.

BTW, the media puts his consistent poll winnings down by claiming his supporters skew the polls. Last night Hannity parroted the same line, seeking to bury the poll results: "Looks like Ron Paul's people are furiously dialing in again, ha-ha-ha." But think about that -- is he and others saying that Ron Paul is organized so much better than the other candidates? That the other candidates' organizations somehow forgot to try to influence the polls?

As a maximum contributor to Ron Paul, I can tell you that I have received no e-mailings, phone calls or anything else about doing anything to influence the debate results. I get e-mails from the campaign almost daily, but they haven't even asked me to vote for him in the debate polls -- truth be told, they didn't even send out an e-mailing about the debate!

I think the current president is the worst president in my lifetime. I now reluctantly (and you have no idea how it sickens me to say this) think it would have been better for America if Gore or even Kerry had won. Don't get me wrong: I detest both of them. But I now believe they would not have done nearly as much long-term damage to our country as Bush. Bush's domestic policies have severely weakened our civil liberties, in all likelihood permanently. His foreign policies have inflamed the Islamic terrorists' desire to attack us (those who disagree with that need to read the Koran). And

the fact that Bush is a Republican makes conservatives eunuchs. (A fact I learned when Nixon was elected; the best way to neutralize conservatives is to elect a "moderate" Republican president.)

Carter and Clinton were weak and ineffectual, but I'll take weak and ineffectual any day over Bush, who has spent more than any president in history, thinks the mission of the U.S. is to force "democracy" on every country in the world (except those he's too afraid to confront), invades Iraq, which posed no threat whatever to the U.S. (and he gave, what, 10 different reasons at various times to justify the invasion, all of them proven to be spurious) and pushes through the most tyrannical assault on civil liberties (the "Patriot Act") ever seen in this nation.

And in case you think I have come to these conclusions recently, I always opposed the invasion of Iraq, from day one. Virtually all my Republican friends opposed me, sometimes bitterly. That's when I realized that I had not left the Republican Party, but it had left me.

A few weeks after we invaded Iraq, Alison and I had dinner in Washington with an old friend, a veteran Republican operative. I will never forget the conversation. He said, "I think George W. Bush will be remembered in history as the next Ronald Reagan." I replied, "I disagree. I do think he will be compared to a president, but not Reagan. It's LBJ." The guy was stunned. I remember the expression on his face even now. His jaw dropped. I explained that I believed Iraq will be Bush's Vietnam.



I knew that because of many reasons, including the fact that you cannot wage war against an idea ("terrorism"), you need a concrete opponent, and there was and is no evidence that Saddam was it. Another reason is the fact that the current TV and computer game-addicted generation of Americans have an attention span for war lasting a few months, maybe a year or so at best. After that they will get bored, then angry and want to end it.

What I didn't know then was that W. would be the biggest spender in history -- making his comparison with LBJ all the more accurate.

The Iraq War violates the traditional American policy of nonintervention that characterized our nation through most of the first 125 years of its existence. In the words of President John Quincy Adams, "America does not go abroad in search of monsters to destroy."

It doesn't matter what you or I believe -- whether you believe we should do it or not, the reality is that the United States taxpayers cannot come close to paying for us to be the world's policeman -- much less the world's dictator of democracy, as Bush wants us to be.

The U.S. has over 320,000 troops in no less than 150 countries and territories. The United States is also the world's biggest arms exporter, accounting for about half of all global arms exports.

We make the Roman Empire look like the Keystone Cops.

"The suicidal assassins of September 11, 2001, did not 'attack America,' as political leaders and news media in the United States have tried to maintain; they attacked American foreign policy." —U. of California Prof. Chalmers Johnson, author of the book *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*.

If you read history, you know that between the Battle of Vienna in 1683 and the late 1940s Islam was not a threat to anybody. After 1683 it faded everywhere, even in the Middle East, and did not have a resurgence until our increasingly interventionist foreign policy following WW II, horribly accelerated by the neocon policies of George W. Bush.

The 9/11 attacks were the beginning of a worldwide revolt against this policy to establish and maintain a U.S. global empire. Only a return to our traditional Jeffersonian foreign policy of peace, commerce, friendship and no entangling alliances can turn this around.

After a GOP debate, Rudy Giuliani said that the terrorists hate us for our "freedom and values," our "freedom of religion" and "freedom for women." I would love to ask him, "So why haven't they attacked Switzerland? They have all those freedoms. Could it be because Switzerland doesn't try to be the world's policeman, going abroad in search of monsters to destroy?"

**E-mail the
Editor**

Soldier Free Speech

by Larry Gill

I recently read an article posted on the internet (MSN.com), discussing a soldier's right to free speech, as well as freedom to write (blog) certain opinions. My immediate response to this article was that, "Nothing is free!" By that I mean, if it were not for soldiers, airmen, sailors, marines, and coast guardsmen, et al, fighting to keep our democratic values intact, then none of us would be guaranteed the right to free speech or anything else!

I will tell you though, as a Staff Non-Commissioned Officer (SNCO), I was always concerned with operational security (OPSEC), and the old adage of "Loose lips sinks ships!" However, through the application of solid leadership and actually caring for the men (and women) under my charge (this was key), I never worried about them "sounding off!" They always came to me and their concerns were dealt with, and if need be, corrected.



Larry Gill

With today's biased media, there are too many negative images and stories from the war on terror making their way into America's homes each evening, and this negativity is eating away at the backbone and determination of each and every American. It is proving to be poison for our souls and is eroding our will to fight and win! One thing is for sure, the article adds fuel to the fire and present-day debate where as soldiers who are sounding-off about various issues, are being labeled as whistle blowers, non-conformist, cry-babies, and even traitors! However, not only was I always concerned about OPSEC, but I also believe in the old saying, "where there's smoke, there's fire!" So, are these soldiers just sounding off because of personal grievances about perceived inefficiencies in today's military environs, or are they actually making a good argument?

Depending on who is asked, and what their respective platform may be, one might say that a good argument appeals only to reason and never to one's emotions, and to interject ones emotions makes one's argument irrelevant and illegitimate. Trust me when I tell you: "Once you have faced with the working end of a Soviet or Chinese made AK-47, or been the un-wanting recipient of hot, jagged shrapnel, you will, as do I, invoke emotions into every argument you will engage in for the remainder of your life. Why? Because you have fought for, and risked your life, earning the right to free speech!" However, these soldiers, marines, et al, who feel compelled to "sound off," must remember that, "Discretion is the better part of valor," and you can only buck the system as far as your chain of command is willing to support you. So when it comes to exercising your rights to free speech (or writing), keep in mind that a little satire goes a long way, and a lot of satire goes longer! Political cartoonists have used satire for centuries, and so have our military men and women.

For example, in 1999, I found myself in the jungles of Honduras on a six-month tour of duty with the Army National Guard. After two months of hot, humid weather, no liberty (no alcoholic beverages!) and a Base Camp Executive Officer (XO) who was determined to court marshal anyone for anything; the morale of the troops could not have been lower! That is of course, until an anonymous soldier began publishing an underground newsletter called, "Closer to the Truth." This newsletter made fun of the chain of command, the situation we had found ourselves in, and yes, the XO, who was referred to as the "Big Bad Wolf" (but we knew whom it was talking about!). There was also a section called "Mail Bag," where the readers could write to the anonymous editor, who was affectionately known as "Elvis!" These newsletters (13 editions) would mysteriously appear in tents, offices, latrines, mess tents, and bulletin boards all over the base camp! The newsletter was so popular among the troops (and some of the officers), that once printed and dispensed, they would disappear as fast as the readers could get their hands on them! It was a harmful way to poke fun at, and speak out about the harshness of the XO and his "no nonsense" base camp, and to regenerate the morale of the troops, at the same time! It was not much longer during the course of this tour of duty that we were allowed some liberty, and a "beer tent" was erected to serve us cold beer! The XO

was eventually transferred to Saudi Arabia, and morale was practically improved over night! However, if the satire and quiet methods such as this don't help, then there are other alternatives.

Having said, when a combat-wounded soldier or any soldier for that matter, has properly utilized his chain of command in seeking relief from an injustice, only to have the complaint ignored by his Commanders and his/her elected officials, then it is certainly within his/her rights to go outside the military and notify whomever they desire. Be it the Washington Post or any other media source! Bear in mind though, the military is not a democratic run organization. It is a dictatorship and there is always the chance of reprisal towards those that speak out, simply because others may not perceive the same problems that prompted complaints (like poor living standards and frequent administrative mishaps). Recently, those military personnel who went outside their respective chains of commands to report these type incidents at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, to the media, did so to shed some public light on the operational inefficiencies within our military and Veteran's Administration's hospitals. Because these complaints were revealed to the general public, the formation of a government commission was ordered to review the questionable operating procedures. There have now been recommendations made calling for mandated revisions and new legislation to update these operations and to help prevent the same problems from happening in the future.

The question still remains as to whether these changes will happen. Once the media frenzy cools down, will the urgency to correct these inefficiencies cool down as well? Only time will tell! Until then, I would recommend to any soldier who feels the need to "speak out" to go see his SNCO. Remember, you must think and you must follow the rules and regulations to prevent reprisal. Above all, remember your OPSEC! If you do go around the system, do not divulge any information about personnel, unit capabilities, movements, etc., because there are punitive articles for violating written orders, so be smart! Reporters have been forced to reveal sources, more so in recent years. After all, if you are a military veteran you have, more than others, earned your right to smart "Free Speech!"

Larry Gill is a veteran with 22 years of service and a two-time recipient of the Purple Heart Medal for wounds received in action. He is the founder of First Person, Inc., a speaking group consisting of veterans injured during the Global War on Terror, and may be contacted at: www.FirstPerson-WaronTerror.com.)

**E-mail the
Editor**

D. James Kennedy RIP

by Robert E. Meyer

I recently received a letter from Brian Fisher, the executive vice-president of Coral Ridge Ministries. The letter stated that Dr. D. James Kennedy, one of the Christian stalwarts of our times, had retired from his pastorate at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Dr. Kennedy had a heart attack last December, and complications from that condition have diminished his mental and physical faculties to the point where he would not be able to resume his duties.

Now as I write this piece, I have just received word that Dr. Kennedy has passed away. It is with a heavy heart and a bit of shock that I continue this piece, but I began this venture with the intention of honoring Dr. Kennedy--and so I shall.

We knew for some time that Dr. Kennedy was in a seriously debilitated condition, so we had some time to absorb this shock, yet time alone is never enough.

Rather than give a biography of Dr. Kennedy, I would rather discuss his accomplishments, and how his ministry has impacted my own life.

I'm not sure when I first heard of Dr. Kennedy, but I do vividly remember that I first saw his T.V. program early in 1999. At that time he was urging those in his audience to be vigilant about the Y2K phenomenon, that they should regard it as more than just another periodic scare. Before his name became familiar to me, I referred to him as the Y2K guy when discussing his broadcast with my wife. Before long, it became the favorite religious program of the several we watched on a regular basis.

My wife and I had attended a reformed church, and the thing I liked right off the bat about Kennedy, was that his sermons were relevant in addressing the current cultural issues. He exemplified the reformed tradition, that Christ is Lord over all of life. Besides the elaborate and beautiful arrangements of traditional hymns, and his timely motivating sermons, the program always made an evangelical appeal to the lost, and presented a documentary about some vital cultural issue.

Dr. Kennedy often received letters from his viewing audience, containing personal testimonials and notes thanking him for his tireless efforts for the kingdom of God. I never wrote Dr. Kennedy personally, and now wish I had. But, I still want to share how he impacted my life.

After one sermon shortly after I began watching his show, Dr. Kennedy said to his viewing audience: "Some of you need to run for public office; some of you need to write letters to the editor." It was as if Kennedy was speaking to me personally. I certainly took him that way. I decided I would try both. I have to admit the political angle didn't turn out as expected, but the writing aspect did bloom into a passion. In fact Dr. Kennedy had a large hand in the fact that you are reading this piece about him today. In my late teens I had a burning desire to move ahead with the things of God, but over time I lost this youthful zeal. I spent most of my 20's and 30's sitting on my hands, but Kennedy helped renew my life with that conviction and zeal.

Kennedy's influences extended well beyond his own sermons and the auxiliary ministries that grew out of his initial calling. Kennedy introduced us to so many other influential Christians through the books and audio/visual materials he endorsed. His documentary segments inspired us to look into certain issues more closely.

What I liked best about Dr. Kennedy was his strong emphasis on the cultural mandate, and the need for the Christian worldview to be a bridge spanning our entire social milieu. While many today bemoan Christian involvement in the public square, Kennedy taught that social and political activism are the Christian's inherent duty.



Dr. D. James Kennedy

Too many influential personalities today, are urging people to compartmentalize between their spiritual and social lives. All that has brought about a culture increasingly hostile to Christianity and apathetic toward the very things bringing great harm to society. Kennedy was a watchman on the wall, ever vigilant, sounding the clarion call, warning us against these dangerous trends.

It is reasonable for us to ponder the question of who will (or can) replace the small handful of committed visionaries, that by God's grace, are given to us sparingly in each generation. Over the past five years we have lost such Christian luminaries as Henry Morris, Carl Henry, Adrian Rogers, Jerry Falwell and Billy Bright. Add to that list an ailing Billy Graham, other aging evangelicals, and now Dr. Kennedy. It is easy for the evangelical community to ask who will lead us now, who will replace these fallen stalwarts?

Remember what Jesus said to the religious self-righteous of his day, when they complained about the people who praised and worshiped him. He said that God could raise up the very stones and cause them to worship. God will call new believers to meet the growing challenges of the day. As for Dr. Kennedy, he already had appointed faithful believers to carry on with his vision.

I will miss Dr. Kennedy dearly, yet I will continue to be inspired by his fine example and strong convictions.

Robert E. Meyer is a staff writer for the New Media Alliance, Inc. (www.thenma.org). The New Media Alliance is a non-profit (501c3) national coalition of writers, journalists and grass-roots media outlets.

**E-mail the
Editor**

Reader Comments

Editor: In regard to your ""Food and Drug Warning" article, Vitamin E will work just as well as Warfarin and is much safer. On the warning label for Warfarin it tells a patient not to take Vitamin E while taking the drug. That's because it has the same action! Shirley Bauman [*Editor replies: It is well to remember that the editorial's message was: "Let the buyer beware."*]

Editor: Excellent article by Sarah Berk regarding Mr. Moore and his movie "Sicko." I am curious if you ever heard anything from him regarding money owed. Even a denial? Charles [*Editor replies: No.*]

Editor: Regarding Sarah Berk's article, "Sicko Loses Bet," did you see the interview Michael Moore did with Dr Sanjay Gupta on CNN? The main thing of interest (to me) was Dr Sanjay telling Michael Moore "Just because you say something many times, that does not make it true" Something like that, I am sure that is not the exact quote. Keep up the good work! Charles Symicek.

Editor: Excellent review of the movie "Sicko" by Sarah Berk. My 20-year-old son came home SO excited after seeing "Sicko" and said we should move to Canada! I didn't get a chance to see the movie, so thanks for straightening this out. I hope some American collects the \$10,000!!! Patty Smith, Bowling Green, KY

Editor: Sarah Berk's article "Sicko Loses Bet", says: "Canadians, however, have such long backlogs for care in so many places that the Canadian government benefit program can't afford to let people simply leave Canada to access care elsewhere." So would they travel to the US to receive better health care? Maybe. Not to be a wacko, but the Canadian government would have to pay much higher costs if they covered bills in the country where I'd imagine most Canadians vacation, outside of Canada. The U.S. Our doctors and health practitioners are paid much better here, partially the reason for yielding our better results. J. Tyler, Philadelphia

Editor: Thank you, thank you Sarah Berk for outlining the rudiments of European Health Care. You covered the COSTS in your summary. What about QUALITY and AVAILABILITY? Judging from the Cato Inst. figures on QUALITY of care in European countries and Canada on cancer alone, it is obvious that the care given to Europeans is not comparable even with that given to Canadians - let alone Americans ! As an example, in the UK, breast cancer victims diagnosed as "treatable", wait so long for treatment that by the time they receive it, about 20% are incurable. In France and Germany, nearly 50% of the men afflicted with prostate cancer will die of it, in America - 20%., in Canada - 25%. Colon cancer: in France 58% of victims die from it, in Germany 57%, in the UK - a shocking 74%, in America - 30%, Canada - again, the lower figure of 36% . (partially accounted for by the availability of treatment in the USA). It is doubly shocking therefore that the American Cancer Society is urging a government takeover of the U.S. health-care system, thereby condemning us to

waiting lists and European-style mortality rates. Cordially, Geraldine Nelson
(source for above figures - NY post 9/10/07, pg. 37)

Editor: Having read Sarah Berk's article, "Sicko Loses Bet", I find myself better informed and am satisfied to let those who have contact with the facts make the judgments since I do not watch Mr. Moore's duplicitous works. Now that H. R. Clinton is back on the health care attack again it is all very scary. Ellen

Editor: Why is Sarah Berk giving Michael Moore the benefit of the doubt when it comes to Moore's penchant for lying? Every one of Moore's so called documentaries is geared at one thing and one thing only: disinformation. This is done with the clear and obvious objective of swaying the opinion of the uneducated and the uninformed. Moore is not the uninformed, he preys on the uninformed. And, furthermore, he does so to fulfill his own political agenda. Thank you. Rafael Hernandez

Editor: Good point about the Potter "plots" of good - evil dichotomy and Harry's heroic struggle in Spencer Warren's review. However I feel you stop short of making the point. "White and black magic" still come from the same source and that is the devil, it is not of God. Anything that comes for Satan is not good...period. Many Blessings, Gloria P. Kindon

Editor: Regarding Spencer Warren's "Harry Potter—Morality or Decline," Personally, I think we have taken everything regarding movies, books, etc-a bit too far in our trying to 'reason it out', explain it, or find some purpose 'behind' the story. Give it a rest! The majority of children see these things (Harry Potter) much as we saw The Wizard of Oz. It's a wonderful story with amazing characters; it's tremendous fun and adventure; but in the end-that's all we ever saw!!! I do not recall having sat down with my friends or classmates and debating exactly 'what' The Wizard of Oz was all about! We didn't care! All we cared about was that it was a good movie and we loved it! Now see-if you really wanted to, you could pick it apart as well. There was the good witch and the bad witch; a wizard; Dorothy, Toto, Auntie Em, and the others-well, you can see where this is going. Good against evil-yet again. Good against evil--let's see. apparently, no one is for it in any context (books, movies, cartoons) unless it has a religious overtone???? WHY??? YES, I am a very spiritual person. No, I do not claim affiliation with any particular sect; I simply believe in God, Jesus, heaven. .well, you get the picture. My daughter is 12 years old now and is a bit above average student, but do you think she ever stops to analyze Harry Potter books or movies? No way!!! She has watched the movies and read the books since they first hit and not once has she ever mentioned anything Satanic or Christian or otherwise relating to religion. All she sees is that these are wonderful interesting characters who have grown up-as she is doing-and that they depend on each other and trust each other and they all fight for good. She knows their magic isn't real and mentions that from time to time as she laughs and comments: "I wish we really could do that! It would be cool." But she knows we can't--it isn't real. Did I forget to mention how much she loves all the creatures? She's an animal lover as well. And once again, she knows they are not real; though she wishes they were. (Heaven help me if they were!!! The house would be overrun!!! My point is: we weren't all stupid forty years ago so, WHY is it that now-in the 2000's do we have to analyze every little thing to death??? Why do we have to bring religion into everything??? Why do we blame television and movies and games for all the crime that is committed everyday??? (There again.I grew up with westerns and detective shows. Did I go out and shoot people? NO!!! None of us did.) think it all boils down to boredom. Analysts, psychiatrists, psychologists, etc need something to occupy their time and keep us stressed. It's working. As for religion? I think they worry too much and sometimes-meddle too much. Well, that's my two cents worth. Thanks for letting me spend it! Jane Wheeler

Editor: The occult sign on his head was enough for me. I have 22 grandkids and they all know what I think of Harry Potter. A concerned Grama,

Editor: In our 60's, my husband and I have read and own every "Harry Potter" book, and my husband has been known to buy tapes for his truck. As Catholics we haven't invested in soul loss, by reading to each other at nights. Lets see, our choices are reading or watching the TV of religious beliefs that were offered each night. We just do not see the fear of evil, and Satanism that many of our Christian/Catholic friends adhere to, although they have NOT READ THE book/s. We see evil and Satanism just by turning on the TV. Commercials have hidden messages too. Let's see, no bad words, no sensual butts, breasts, and disgusting lifestyles such as "Entertainment Tonight" tells us are so cool, are in Harry Potter. Parents are interesting, conservative battlers. Even the muggles. There is never a reference to anyone being a God in Harry Potter, and Voldermort (he who is not to be named, is anything that takes us away from being GOOD, JUST, MORAL, KIND that wants to reduce us down to being BAD, and without a fight to be controlled by FEAR and allow others the power to reduce us to subserviency under ONE POWER). The three characters are really good friends, using their education to help one another go through 4 years of school. And lets see, no condoms and class on Sex education has been part of Hogswarts. Oh yes, they drink "butter beer" sounds pretty good to me! One thing is the sorting hat that sends you to "Slytherine", instead of Hufflepuffs etc... Gee that could be a teacher that influences youth by sending them to a university that twists young minds, couldn't It? There are many Hogwarts schools with liberal teachers ready to teach our kids that America and Americans are powerless, we should FEAR. there is no God but government and that healthy minds must be changed so that everyone is the "same". I really think the author is pointing out defects in our schools, COUNTRIES, without really pointing a finger, but she uses another vehicle to do it by getting us to think, while being entertained. Spencer Warren's article was well written. Thanks. Joann Hayman

Editor: I could not agree more with Scott Rasmussen's "What Matters For the GOP" that the general public is not interested in the presidential races until the top 2 or 3 are finally sorted out. The "so-called" debates with 8 or 9 candidates does nothing but gum up the works. The 24-hour TV news also gets credit for dumbing down the race due to their less fair or honest coverage of the candidates. What the media tries to instill into the race are issues and talking points they are interested in and not what the general public feels are important. Of course, with today's ill-informed electorate that is pretty easy to do. Last, and really important is just the constant barrage of politics. Many of us think the early coverage is just that "to early" and inconsequential. We just finished the mid-term elections and the 2008 presidential campaign started the very next day. Most of us need a little breathing room before the next election surge is upon us. J. Bilodeau, Denver, CO

Editor: Scott Rasmussen, I will tell you that as a conservative and a Republican voter I feel I have been betrayed by the party and the President. On illegal immigration, spending, my constitutional rights, the failure of FEMA at Katrina, Passport delays, the creation of TSA, bla, bla, bla. I am finding myself in with Democrats and even some radicals. If the Party is counting on my vote because I have nowhere else to go, they are badly misinformed. I am talking to many other conservatives, over 55, and we all vote for someone. They feel like I do. 2008 will be a disaster for Republicans that even they cannot imagine. Bill Riley, Moses Lake, WA

**E-mail the
Editor**