

## POWER POLITICS

Eamonn Fingleton's "The Sun & the Dragon" (Aug. 2) is the type of article opinion magazines promise but rarely deliver. It provides a litany of data that the reader hasn't seen elsewhere, data that challenge old and mostly unexamined concepts. And it provides a contrarian scenario that makes sense out of all this startling new information.

Having said that, I found his arguments provocative but not yet convincing. The largest reservation I have is that he didn't even mention the competition between Japan and China for something they both desperately need: oil and energy supplies. That shared desperation offers the biggest potential for economic friction between the two nations, and promises to grow in importance. For Mr. Fingleton to avoid any mention of it leads me to wonder if he was silent because it doesn't fit his thesis.

DAVID FRANKE  
*Manassas, Va.*

### ***Eamonn Fingleton replies:***

I predict that China's energy consumption in 2020 may exceed that of the entire world today. But competition for oil is not a hindrance to closer Sino-Japanese relations. Rather the reverse. The specter of a global energy crisis is just another reason Tokyo is seeking to establish deep and mutually trusting relations with the coming superpower.

From Japan's point of view, China's rise is inevitable. If Japan were to try to hinder that rise, it might delay the ultimate outcome by perhaps ten years. But the cost in terms of permanently alienating the Beijing leadership would be massive—hardly a great trade-off for an ancient nation that famously is much more concerned with the long term than the short term.

In typical jujitsu fashion, Japan is planning to turn the next energy crisis into an opportunity. Not only is it a leader in energy-saving technologies but it has for decades been quietly spearheading the quest for alternative energy sources.

It is the U.S., far more than Japan, that has to worry about China's increasing energy needs. Not only are American consumers and businesses notoriously inefficient energy users, but American manufacturers long ago dropped out of the race to develop major alternative energy sources.

## LOCKDOWN DEMOCRACY

Interesting that the United Jewish Federation of Metrowest N.J. would write *The American Conservative* a letter condemning Ralph Nader's view of the White House as "puppets to Israeli interests" (Aug. 2). The UJF believes this sort of loose talk will "promote anti-Semitic stereotypes." I happen to be a practicing Jew, and I also happen to agree heartily with Mr. Nader's statements. Perhaps the UJF should reconsider its assessment of Israel as "the only true democracy in an unstable Middle East region." Israel happens to hold a rather large Arab population (the Palestinians) in virtual lockdown—a decidedly undemocratic act and one that foments much of the anti-Semitism currently threatening Jews worldwide.

STEVEN CAPOZZOLA  
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## A SON'S SALUTE

John O'Sullivan's review of *Who Are We?* (July 19) is by far the most insightful analysis of Samuel Huntington's book in both theory and application.

O'Sullivan is at his best when skewering Huntington's critics, whose response is typically to attack the good professor without reference to his actual words. Amazon.com is emblematic: it features three editorial reviews, all indicting Huntington without directly confronting what he has written; reader reviews (excepting the two who denounced the book while admitting they refused to read it) are overwhelmingly positive, indicating Huntington has not only touched a nerve but that readers are interested and actively engaged.

My father was second-generation Irish and fought along with his brothers

in World War II, my brother is a Vietnam veteran, and I have recently concluded a 22-year military career. I am married to a black woman whose family long predates my family's arrival on these shores. Both families are fully assimilated but exhibit patriotism differently: my wife's family's patriotism is firmly rooted in the 1960s civil-rights movement while my father imparted to me the notion of a clan, though Catholic, more rooted in European/American Protestant ethics than the National Council of Catholic Bishops would like.

Happily, my nine-year-old son cannot pass an American flag without hand saluting it. The question for our future hinges upon how many little Mexican boys delight in similar action.

MATTHEW M. O'CONNELL  
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## FRIEND OR FOE?

No wonder we're losing! Can John O'Sullivan really believe that establishment conservatives are merely "unwitting accomplices" who are simply being "misled" on the issue of immigration?

These days the primary loyalty of your typical "conservative" is to the Republican Party, and the Republican Party pledges fealty to corporate America. And as we know, corporate America is determined to keep an endless amount of cheap labor coming across our border.

Neoconservatives, making up as they do the high priesthood of the "universal nation" cult, are certain to remain the most vicious critics of anyone proposing to restrict the deluge of Third World immigration. If you are unable to distinguish friend from foe, victory must always remain elusive.

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*The American Conservative* welcomes letters to the editor. Submit by e-mail to [letters@amconmag.com](mailto:letters@amconmag.com), by fax to 703-875-3350, or by mail to 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA 22209. Please include your name, address, and phone number. We reserve the right to edit all correspondence for space and clarity.

# Contents

August 30, 2004 / Vol. 3, No. 16



[COVER]

## Runaway Childhood

BY MARIAN KESTER COOMBS America's overscheduled kids need a time-out—and so do their parents. **Page 7**

[CULTURE]

## Wal-Mart Cometh

BY BILL KAUFFMAN A small community faces Sam Walton's giant and loses. **Page 12**

[ALLIES]

## Coalition of the Coerced

BY ERIC S. MARGOLIS World leaders discover that following George W. Bush is a good way to lose power. **Page 17**

[POLITICS]

## Paint the Town Blue?

BY W. JAMES ANTLE III At least the Republicans will hold the Senate, won't they? **Page 19**

### COLUMNS

**6 Patrick J. Buchanan:** Morning in Which America?

**27 Fred Reed:** The church where Deacon is a dog

**35 Taki:** The Riviera I remember

### NEWS & VIEWS

**4 Fourteen Days:** Iraqi Take-Out; The Naked Truth; Stupid, Dirty White Girl

**25 Deep Background:** Scapegoating the CIA; Neconning the VOA

### ARTICLES

**10 Charles Glass:** Sharon's fence turns West Bank villages into prisons.

**21 Peter Wood:** Boston's politically correct statuary is for the birds.

**23 Andrew J. Bacevich:** It's time for the generals to tell Washington the truth.

**24 Paul Cella:** Bush & Kerry—Immigration Radicals

### ARTS & LETTERS

**28 Steve Sailer:** Spike Lee's "She Hate Me"

**29 Scott McConnell:** *America Alone* by Stefan Halper and Jonathan Clarke

**30 Dana Vachon:** *Bergdorf Blondes* by Plum Sykes

**32 Clark Stooksbury:** *Eugene McCarthy* by Dominic Sandbrook

COVER ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS HIRS

[STRATEGY]

## THIRD ACT

We expected the neocons to hush plans for a new war until after the election—though the *Weekly Standard* did two months ago let it slip that the vote would determine whether there would be a desired “third act” to the War on Terror. But the Bushies, apparently deciding that war talk is good electoral politics, have begun to ratchet up the rhetoric against Iran. The president is “looking at” possible ties between Iran and 9/11. (None were mentioned when Iraq was the designated enemy.) A White House official promises more “intervention” in Iran if Bush wins a second term.

Some see this tough talk as a prelude to negotiations with the mullahs. But we take the neocons at their word. In the aftermath of 9/11, they had a target list of six or seven countries, and Israel has let it be known that it considers Iran a greater threat than Iraq was. So, yes, the prospect of another war—perhaps started by an Israeli air strike on Iran’s nuclear reactors—now seems real enough.

[POSTWAR]

## EXIT STRATEGY

The *New York Times* reports, “There is one thing the sovereign state of Iraq can offer its citizens today, and Iraqis are banging down the doors to get their hands on it: a passport out of the country.”

We hope Iraqi cuisine is tasty because there will no doubt be many Iraqis opening restaurants in America within a few years. Of course, there’s no better way to get immigrants to assimilate happily than to blow up their cousins back home. The French tried this during the Algerian War—torturing insurgents in Algiers and, simultaneously, increasing their intake of Algerian guest workers to do the jobs that French boys couldn’t do because they were busy torturing the new cooks’ cousins—and we all know that worked out just fine!



Unfortunately, Iraqis’ strong extended-family loyalties are useful not only in the restaurant business, but also the crime-family business. Moreover, there’s nothing like participating in an insurgency for building the kind of ties useful in organized crime. Not that many years from now, don’t be surprised if you hear about the “Iraqi Mafia” at work in your community.

[ELECTION]

## ROCK THE VOTE

Though he admitted to having no intelligence about any specific plot, Homeland Security chief Tom Ridge recently announced that al-Qaeda could be planning a major terrorist action somewhere, against something, “in an effort to disrupt the democratic process.” And he’s taking steps to ensure that any attack has just that result.

Coming on the heels of his half-cooked warning, *Newsweek* reported that Ridge has asked the Justice Department how the November election might legally be postponed should al-Qaeda strike. “Now, based on the attack in Madrid ... we know they have the capability to succeed,” Ridge said. Only they didn’t. The Spanish elections went on as scheduled, with turnout far exceeding expectations. Nothing was “disrupted”—save the ruling status of the party that supported the Iraq War.

If the terrorists indeed “hate us for our freedoms”—the Bush administration’s logic, not ours—it should follow

that suspending the first of democratic liberties by halting a constitutionally mandated election would play perfectly into their hands. Absent some apocalyptic ability simultaneously to level major American cities on election eve, al-Qaeda cannot halt the democratic process—unless we do that dirty work ourselves.

[PROTEST]

## PYRAMID SCHEME

Some of us recall antiwar street theater from the Sixties without particular affection. But occasional efforts to satirize the invasion of Iraq make us think that dissent may be one of the things that has genuinely improved in the past 40 years. Noteworthy was this account of protesters at a recent Bush campaign event in Pennsylvania, quoted in Justin Raimondo’s *Antiwar.com* column:

The action got started off right when we arrived on the scene, and seven or eight teenage guys decided to ‘re-enact’ the prison abuse scandals in Iraq by stripping down to thongs and making a human pyramid, while donning black hoods. The police officers on the scene immediately tackled them and led them out in handcuffs.

It’s the kind of thing one wishes had been captured by TV news, and the sort of evisceration of the president’s policies that, it seems, could easily catch on.