

ration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson asserts the universal right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. He does not add, "At least that is how many of us feel about it here."

To be sure, the idea of "moral truth"—to say nothing of self-evident moral truth—is controversial, indeed. The theoretical debate over the ultimate status of moral judgments goes back to the very beginnings of philosophy in ancient Greece, when Plato (a moral absolutist) first challenged the Sophists (the upstart relativists). However fascinating and contentious the philosophical debate may be, we do not have the luxury of waiting to see which side finally prevails before we teach our children about right and wrong and good and evil.

It is no great achievement for a teacher or textbook publisher to induce skepticism in American students about the truth or legitimacy of Jefferson's assertions. What they badly need to understand is how fortunate they are that the nation's founders had such unusual ideas about personal liberty and individual rights, and how blessed we are to live in a society that takes them as self-evident and incorporates them into its Constitution and strives to live by them.

Nobel Laureate author V.S. Naipaul is struck by the originality, power, and sheer beauty of America's founding ideals:

The pursuit of happiness is ... an elastic idea; it fits all men. ... So much is contained in it: the idea of the individual, responsibility, choice, the life of the intellect, the idea of vocation and perfectibility and achievement. It is an immense human idea. It cannot be reduced to a fixed system. It cannot generate fanaticism. But it is known to exist; and because of that, other more rigid systems in the end blow away.

Such confidence assumes a lot. In particular, it assumes that children today

Pentagon protégé Ahmad Chalabi, who lied about WMD and leaked U.S. intelligence to Iran, is back on top

and has been congratulated by Condoleezza Rice over his appointment as Iraq's deputy prime minister and acting oil minister. Chalabi has brought his friends along with him. Arras Habib Karim, his chief of intelligence, who had fled to Tehran after an Iraqi judge issued an arrest warrant for him, has returned to Baghdad. The Iraqi Justice Ministry's file on Arras has mysteriously disappeared, and there is no longer any danger of him being arrested. Arras orchestrated the alleged Iraqi defectors to European and American intelligence services prior to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein. The "defectors" routinely fabricated information about weapons of mass destruction programs. The U.S. intelligence community also believes that Arras is an Iranian intelligence agent working for the Iranian Ministry of Information and Security. He was the conduit for a number of classified U.S. government reports passed to Iranian intelligence, many of which were originally given to Chalabi by Pentagon officials without authorization.



The Chalabi connection is also a major element in the FBI investigation of AIPAC, which led to the recent indictment of Department of Defense analyst Larry Franklin.

The bureau has determined that the recently disbanded Office of Special Plans, headed by Doug Feith, was the source for the leaks both to Israel and Iran. Several of Feith's dozen handpicked employees have reportedly been polygraphed in an attempt to trace the document trail. An FBI source also notes that a number of the staff working most closely with Feith do so without security clearances that have been issued in the normal fashion, i.e., after a background investigation and a vetting process. They have reportedly received godfathered clearances in which senior Defense Department officials intervene in the process to overrule FBI objections. Feith himself should never have received a clearance after having been fired from the National Security Council in 1982 over allegations that he passed classified material to Israel, but he was reportedly godfathered by Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz.



Recent Department of Defense assessments suggest that North Korea has mastered the technology of miniaturization and now has the theoretical capability to mount nuclear devices on its two- and three-stage missile systems.

A three-stage missile with a nuclear device could hypothetically cover most of the continental U.S., while a two-stage missile would threaten the West Coast. The capability was revealed when DIA head Vice Admiral Lowell Jacoby answered a question from Hillary Clinton at a meeting of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Senator Clinton's question was planted by a U.S. government source that opposes the Bush administration's policy towards North Korea and wanted to call attention to the fact that the policy has been a failure. The independent nonpartisan International Crisis Group confirms that North Korea may have 10 nuclear weapons and is making technological advances both in the area of nuclear miniaturization and in advanced missile technology.

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are being educated to take pride in their country's way of life. But it ignores the effects of therapsim.

As long as misguided sensitivities are allowed to constrain how and what our children are taught, civic education in America will fall short of its mission. For too many young people, the fear of being judgmental, categorical, and insensitive is paralyzing and quite literally demoralizing.

After several decades of therapeutic relativism, many of our young people are unable to speak in support of the moral ideals that have made their way of life possible. Too many have been rendered incapable of standing up for the ideals that ground our constitutional democracy. Liberty? What of it? Some may not be sure whether our way of life is especially worth defending.

There are many who believe that therapsim in the schools is a benign, constructive influence that comforts children, calming their fears and enhancing their feelings of self-acceptance. The evidence, however, does not bear this out. On the contrary, the therapeutic regime pathologizes healthy young people. It encourages remedial measures for non-existent vulnerabilities, wastes students' time and impedes their academic and moral development. American students are, with few exceptions, mentally and emotionally sound. They are resilient. They can cope with dodgeball. ■

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PR Problems

Proportional representation corrupts democracy.

By Jon Basil Utley

MOST DEMOCRACIES in the Third World have not brought about great prosperity. Many are corrupt, dysfunctional, and in disarray, unable to control crime or perform the most basic functions of civil society.

As Washington promotes a constitution for Iraq and Arab rulers are pressed to reform, we would do well to analyze why some democracies work so much better than others.

The rules for economic development and effective government are proven and well known; what's less understood is why many societies are unable to adopt them. The failure is often blamed on their cultures or on corruption, but a common affliction is their political structures: nearly all have proportional representation (PR).

To understand PR, imagine if our Congress were composed of four parties, Democrats, Republicans, a traditionalist Old Right Party, and Greens, each of the last two with 5 percent of the seats. Also imagine that each party is run by the old men who had been around the longest, perhaps a Senator Byrd for one and Bob Dole for another. There would be little new thinking and close political disputes would often be decided by the swing votes—the Old Right and Greens. That system of government, with even more parties, afflicts most of Eastern Europe and Latin America. Any political party that can garner at least 5 percent of the vote would obtain representation in Congress.

It gets worse. Each party runs nationwide, and its candidates are determined

by lists controlled by each party's machinery—usually old-timers who are owed favors and remember grudges. The old men name themselves to the top of the list while the younger start at the bottom, if the bosses approve of them. If the party then wins 40 seats in Congress, the first 40 names on the list get selected. Old politicians like this system: they rarely lose office. Also, reformers—often seen as troublemakers—can be eliminated by simply keeping them off, or at the bottom, of the lists. Corruption is endemic and protected as voters can't throw out an individual representative. As long as their party gets at least 5 percent of the vote, the old-timers at the top of the list will always have seats in Congress and decide who else gets on the lists. In parliamentary governments, the winning alliance then votes for one of their old leaders to become prime minister.

In the American and English systems, each legislator represents a distinct geographical region. He can be voted out in the next election and new candidates can challenge a powerful incumbent. With proportional representation, those who represent the whole nation or large parts of it represent everybody and nobody. They can speak in generalities and are rarely called to account for specific votes, policies, or consequences.

Venezuela is a perfect example, all too typical of Latin America. From the '70s to the '90s, two old men, Carlos Andres Perez and Rafael Caldera, each won the presidency twice as voters had no other choice: in rejecting one, they got the other. In their desperation to get rid of