

Rashid Khalidi reminded the audience of the general vastness of the subject, which is hardly touched by examination of more discrete matters such as the lobby's role in spurring high levels of aid to Israel or sparking the decision to attack Saddam. America's entire Mideast conversation is tilted in one direction, shaping what legislation is written, how it is interpreted, how experts are credentialed or marginalized, how candidates run their campaigns. On any other political question—abortion, guns, health care—it is understood that there are two sides, but in the United States (and only in the United States), where Israel is concerned there is only one position. One need only note last summer's 410-8 House vote in support of Israel's campaign against Lebanon to realize that Khalidi is correct. Judt put a point on the argument: the "dual loyalty" charge is essentially meaningless in that many Americans—not just Jews, of course—so thoroughly identify Israel's interests with America's that there is really a single loyalty at work, so that skepticism about Israel's policies is thus largely conceived of as un-American and explicable only by reference to dark impulses.

Shortly after the debate, I read that Walt and Mearsheimer have contracted to do a book expanding on the subject with Farrar, Straus and Giroux, a top publisher. This is welcome and surprising news. Last May, a friend well placed in the book industry told me he thought it extremely unlikely that a mainstream house would "take the risk" of signing a Walt-Mearsheimer book; their subject was simply too dangerous.

Of course, the lobby is still trying to suppress discussion. Several days after the debate, Tony Judt was scheduled to talk to a group called Network 20/20, which regularly meets at the Polish consulate in New York. Abe Foxman of the

ADL got on the phone to the consulate, reminded the Poles how much damage he could do to them if he and his friends were to brandish the "anti-Semitism" club against Poland, and "poof" (to quote Marty Peretz again), the consulate called off Judt's event.

There will surely be more of this in the months and years to come. But the cat is now out of the bag, and despite the lobby's best effort to suppress it, there will be a more freewheeling debate about whether America's Mideast policy should be so completely Israel-centric. The subject has simply become too important to ignore. During the Cold War, hawks like myself usually deferred to the Norman Podhoretzes on the Mideast—they obviously cared so much about it—and doves mostly limited their own cam-

paigns to Central America and nuclear weapons. It was always easier to suppress doubts, if one had them, about Israel's brutal treatment of the Palestinians since nothing good for one's career or ability to influence any other cause could come from being labeled "anti-Israel."

But with the Mideast now on the front burner, as even Bush administration officials acknowledge, America will have no allies whatsoever in the war against terrorists unless progress is made towards a fair settlement of the Palestine question; it is shameful to remain silent. Walt and Mearsheimer have opened the door, and others of great eminence have joined them. The Iraq War highlights the price of continued indifference or silence, and the price can only grow steeper. ■

Trouble in the Heartland

In the midterm congressional elections, are Indiana's conservative white men trending Democratic?

By Stewart Nushaumer

BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA—The American heartland begins in Indiana, where the land shrinks and the sky swells and the tempo and temper of the people mellow, foreshadowing the wide-open placid plains. But Indiana is more than an easygoing, conservative doorstep to grassy desolation. In the north are heavy deposits of the Rust Belt, ugly graveyards of the American Dream. In the south are rolling hills with thick vegetation and backwoods poverty. In the center is the sprawling, bustling metropolis Indianapolis. Everywhere is farmland. Indiana is a lot of things, and now something more.

Regardless of the world's finest gerrymandering for political self-perpetuation, seven Republican congressional seats in the Midwest are in imminent danger of falling to Democrats. Nearly half are in Indiana, where Democrats probably have their best chance of sweeping three GOP-held seats in a single state. Since Democrats need only 15 additional seats to recapture the House of Representatives, Indiana voters may play a crucial role in slapping congressional shackles on President Bush.

Only two years ago, these same voters embraced Republicans and stomped Democrats mercilessly—Bush

gobbled 88 counties while John Kerry scrounged a measly 4. Not since Lyndon Johnson in the 1960s has Indiana gone for a Democratic presidential candidate. Now three Republicans are in the election frying pan.

Indiana University political science professor Russ Hanson clarifies, "Although Indiana is a solidly red state when it comes to presidential voting, below that level it's competitive. The current lopsided split in Indiana's Congressional delegation—7 Republicans and 2 Democrats—is atypical. Not long ago it was evenly divided 4-4. But all three Republican seats in play the same year," the professor hesitates, "may reflect the national momentum toward Democrats."

At the Bloomington farmers' market, amongst a strolling crowd under a warm afternoon sun, a t-shirt catches my eye:

"I'm an Illegal Alien, I Demand Your Rights." "Illegals are all over Bloomington," Gary McKee growls. "They don't even bother to learn English." After he lashes out at a list of liberal Democrats—Kerry, Gore, Clinton, Carter—I ask him about George W. Bush. "He hasn't done anything," the retiree concedes, adding, "I'm about through with voting."

Concerned that angry conservatives are "about through with voting"—or worse, are about to vote for Democrats—Republican state Chairman Murray Clark is hustling. "Don't forget that a vote for the Democrats is a vote to give San Francisco more power," the GOP chairman thunders. If the fear of liberal Nancy Pelosi becoming Speaker of the House does not whip conservatives in line, nothing will.

This is red meat for the party's largest and most loyal constituency, conservative white males, without whom Republicans are utterly doomed. In the early 1960s, more than 50 percent of white men supported Democrats; in the following decades their support plunged to 40, 30, even 20-some percent. In 1978, the *Washington Post* reported that 78 percent of white males felt alienated from the Democratic Party. A few years later many became Reagan Democrats. In the 1990s, conservative males were crucial to the Republican takeover of both the House and Senate.

The gender gap is not merely about women voters, who to a greater degree than men are swing voters, but also white men—especially conservative white men, who for the last four decades have been the foundation for Republican victories.

The fear that is gripping Gary McKee is closer to home than Nancy Pelosi. "Where is the RCA factory in Bloomington?" he fumes. "Where is the Westinghouse factory in Bloomington? Otis Elevator? In department stores I can't buy a

shirt made in America. The politicians are selling us out."

A few blocks away in Court House Square, sitting on a bench near the Civil War monument is Russell, "a conservative good ole boy from Martin County." Lighting a cigarette, he explains Indiana is really two states, divided into north and south. He resides in the south.

"There are three priorities for people where I come from," the 59 year-old says slowly. "The meth [methamphetamine] problem—3 out of 4 my stepchildren are on it."

"What?" I try not to shout.

"Yeah, they're grown up," he shrugs his shoulders.

"Second, I would say immigration. I don't think any of them politicians understand how important this is. They think we're all a bunch of hog farmers with air between our ears." His easy grin fades.

"Probably jobs are our number one priority. I worked for GE for 15 years, two years before retirement they send my job to Mexico." He looks into my eyes, studying me. "We worked for years to clean the environment up and get salaries up and now we have to compete with people who s—t in the street and live in cardboard boxes." His grin returns.

The *Herald-Times*, Bloomington's newspaper, writes "economic uncertainty" may affect the outcome of the midterm election. But neither Gary nor Russell sees any "uncertainty" in the economy, and both know the economy will affect the outcome of this election.

"People are getting real tired," Russell stops, "the more folks look at Iraq, the more they see Vietnam. Our National Guard over there really shakes people up. I belong to the American Legion and VFW. It's rare anyone supports this war, but we all support our soldiers."

"How are you voting?" I ask.

"Well, Hoosiers keep that pretty close to their chest," he smiles.

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Thirty minutes south of Bloomington the hills roll higher and the farms grow smaller as the dual highway narrows into a windy single lane. There are house trailers ringed by junked cars and dilapidated sheds. I turn on the radio, AM for some local flavor: *Farm market update...corn...livestock....* Another station: *What is wrong with elites that they don't want the young to learn, the*

Dressed in baggy dark blue pants and shirt, the brim of his baseball cap barely above his eyes, Brian served two tours in Iraq for a total of 19 months. Over coffee our discussion wanders—anger about toll roads, the drug problem—but not for long. “Worst thing that ever happened in this country was when Congress gave the president power to go to war in Iraq.”

BRIAN SERVED TWO TOURS IN IRAQ FOR A TOTAL OF 19 MONTHS. OVER COFFEE OUR DISCUSSION WANDERS—ANGER ABOUT TOLL ROADS, THE DRUG PROBLEM—BUT NOT FOR LONG. “WORST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED IN THIS COUNTRY WAS WHEN CONGRESS GAVE THE PRESIDENT POWER TO GO TO WAR IN IRAQ.”

voice of Rush Limbaugh. Next station: *Is God in your life?* Next station, *Democrats are whining like little children*, Limbaugh again. A bumper sticker on a SUV reads, “Elect Jesus, King of Your Life.” In both terrain and character this is genuine Appalachia, sharing little in common with Indiana’s north.

In the two massive congressional districts sprawling across southern Indiana, bordering Kentucky, both Republican incumbents are on the block. Few people seem to be talking about the election—“interest is just beginning,” I’m told—but the local media is fully interested. In the Bloody Eighth, one of the classic swing districts in the country, the front page of the *Evansville Courier & Press* discusses a poll that has the Democratic challenger ahead; section B has an article on House Speaker Dennis Hastert praising incumbent Congressman John Hostettler on immigration, pointing out that Democratic challenger Brad Ellsworth likewise supports border security and opposes a guest-worker program. As the professor in Bloomington said, Democratic candidates are conservative here if they want to win.

“What does that mean for the midterm elections?” I ask.

“My mom is a die-hard Republican. She has switched and will vote Democrat—Dad too. You know, I got a buddy in Walter Reed Hospital. His left arm and right leg were amputated.”

At Susie’s Bar in the tiny town of Dale, Mark the bartender tells me his son recently returned from Iraq but may have to go back next year. “I now think this war was a bad idea,” Mark says pensively. On the other side of the bar sits Bob, without a son in the military, without any connection to the military. “This war is absolutely necessary,” he roars. Mark informs me quietly that Bob avoided Vietnam by fleeing to Canada; Bob booms that Saddam Hussein had to go.

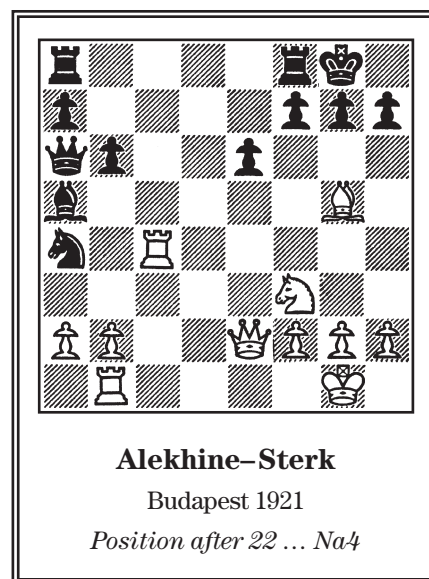
At the farmers’ market in Bloomington, Gary looked demoralized and drained, watching his community disappear. Globalism was fine for Russell until globalism snatched his job. No John Wayne talk from young Brian; combat killed that fantasy. Saving the world sounded necessary to Mark until his son had to do the saving. The effects

of our national hubris are filtering down, and the pain is spreading.

Yuggies Bar in downtown Jasper has a cozy 1950s decor, great for nursing a Blue Moon with slice of lemon, which is how they drink their beer here, and great for a relaxing afternoon chat. But Fred, a local sitting next to me at the bar, is anything but relaxed. “Can you believe we’re now discussing how we can torture people?” His eyes are sharp and fiery. “What happened to this country? I’m a Republican, but I’m voting Democrat!”

A similar anger ripped through America several decades ago when conservative and moderate men of limited education and means felt neglected by Democratic elites who, they said, did not address their needs, did not even listen to them. So they ditched the Democrats. Are conservative white males now about to ditch the Republicans? Maybe, maybe not. Their rage may only be bluster. We’ll find out next month. ■

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Halt, Christian Soldiers

Evangelicals' militant tendencies aren't grounded in church history or Scripture.

By Bill Barnwell

ON OCT. 3, 2002, President Bush received an open letter from some of the country's most prominent evangelical leaders, including the Southern Baptist Convention's Richard Land, Chuck Colson, Campus Crusade's Bill Bright, and James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Ministries. They argued that a pre-emptive invasion of Iraq satisfied traditional Just War theory and offered their theological support. Their flock followed: in the run-up to war, polls found that 69 percent of evangelical Christians supported the action—10 percentage points higher than the general population.

Because the evangelical caucus provided Bush's foreign policy with perhaps its most consistent support, many in the media and even Christian circles concluded that conservative Protestantism is thoroughly pro-war. But church history reveals a diverse range of opinion over the centuries, and today a sizable number of conservative Christians are opposed to or are at least skeptical of militarism for both theological and political reasons.

There is scant evidence of early Christians participating in the Roman army before the time when church and state relations were wed. One study examining tombstone inscriptions found that only seven graves out of 4,700 examined belonged to Christian soldiers. And church history recalls that these Christian soldiers struggled: in 298, a centurion by the name of Marcellus, a Christian convert, stood before his men, discarded the insignia of his rank, and declared that he was a soldier of Jesus Christ, the Eternal King. He was beheaded for his blasphemy against the emperor.

Prominent evangelical scholar Ben Witherington III, professor of New Testament at Asbury Seminary, said in an interview for this article that while there was probably never a monolithic view on the subject, early Christians were mostly skeptical of militarism as a whole. "What we can say is that before Constantine, Christians really had problems with being involved in the military not least because it required participation in pagan worship with one's legion," said Witherington. He continued, "There is as well evidence that many Christians in the early church were pretty theocratic, believing that issues of justice should be left in God's hands, and that the Sermon on the Mount ruled out Christians being involved in violence of any kind, never mind war." The general consensus amongst Christian scholars, even from non-peace traditions, is that there were indeed some early Christians who served in the imperial army but that their numbers were small, their service was generally peaceful, and that the general attitude of the early believing community was to promote peace over war.

A shift in thinking occurred on many levels when Constantine made Christianity the official state religion. Christians were no longer being persecuted for their faith and the government promoted the use of public funds for the construction of church facilities. Christian teaching was receiving tolerance, if not actual blessing from the state. As time passed, more and more Christians began to serve in the military.

Some time afterward, Augustine began to develop a Christian version of the Just

War theory. It has seen some revision in subsequent ages—most prominently by Thomas Aquinas—but the essence of the teaching remains. According to this doctrine, a number of conditions have to be met before a war is considered just: (1) only legitimate public authorities are allowed to declare war; (2) war can only be waged for a "just" cause (though this was vaguely defined); (3) the right intention must be involved (such as advancing good and avoiding evil); (4) war can only be launched in response to an aggressor, and the action of aggression must be significant; (5) war must be a last resort; (6) there must be a good chance of success; and (7) the war must not produce greater evils and chaos than the evil and chaos being fought against.

As is well known, throughout church history many wars were launched that did not fall within these confines. The Crusades and Inquisitions continue to be a black eye on the history of Christianity, though there was certainly blame to go around for all parties involved. Just War theory was just that—a theory. It did not always manifest itself in real life, and certainly many popes and Christians had little use for it in their political and theological disputes. Indeed, some modern Christian pacifist thinkers have raised the question of whether a just war is even possible given the realities of modern war and its consequences.

At the time of the Protestant Reformation, the Magisterial Reformers—Luther, Calvin, most initial Reformers—were not opposed to using force. In fact, many of them advocated using means of