

[MEMORIAM]

A SON'S SACRIFICE

Every death in Iraq is tragic. But the May 13 loss of 1st Lt. Andrew J. Bacevich, 27, killed by a suicide bomber in Samarra, shook us deeply. It's a name we know well: his father, whose latest essay appears in this issue, has been one of the most thoughtful conservative critics of the Iraq War and a generous friend of this magazine since its infant days.

With signature grace, Andy never advertised his son's service, never traded on his sacrifice. But neither did the elder Bacevich, himself a former Army colonel, shy from using his substantial gifts to oppose a war he considers "not only wrong, but also stupid."

We have never felt its futility more and send our deepest condolences to the Bacevich family.

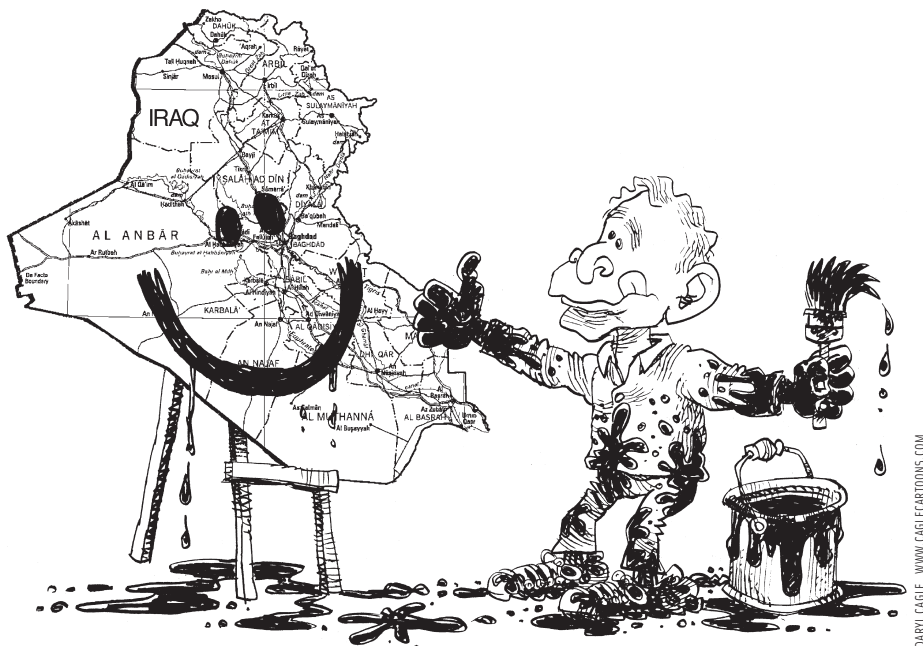
[ELECTION]

WAR AGAINST ALL

A telling moment in both televised GOP presidential debates came when Mitt Romney put on an amazing display of geopolitical gibberish—and none of his rivals saw fit to call him on it. Romney argued that the United States is not just at war with al-Qaeda but with a large slice of the world's Muslims—"This is about Shi'a and Sunni. This is about Hezbollah, and Hamas, and ... the Muslim Brotherhood" who want to replace all moderate governments with "a caliphate."

There are some pretty vital distinctions glossed over here. The Muslim Brotherhood is a civil-society organization that eschews terrorism and has no wish to attack the United States. Hezbollah, a Shia organization in Lebanon, and Hamas on the West Bank are enemies of Israel but have no wish or reason to be enemies of ours. None of these groups would comfortably fit into any caliphate with the others.

The United States won the Cold War in great part by making distinctions



between communists and socialists and between Yugoslav and Chinese and Soviet communism and exploiting these splits to its advantage. Romney instead wants to conflate all conceivable Islamic movements, add Israel's foes to our own list, and unite them all under some made-up term—Islamofascism—so America can be forever at war with all of the Muslim world.

George W. Bush made the same kind of error by falsely linking Saddam Hussein to al-Qaeda and plunging America into a war against a country that had nothing to do with 9/11. Instead of learning from the mistake, Romney has now twice demonstrated that he wants to repeat it—with interest. Sad to say, the leading GOP contenders seem ready to follow suit.

[BELTWAY]

SHUT UP & STAND DOWN

While the president sings hosannas to democracy abroad, members of his party fear a little democracy at home. Eleven Republican congressmen recently staged an intervention of their own at the White House. In what Rep. Ray LaHood called "a no-holds-barred meeting," the lawmakers told the president that he has so little credibility that

General Petraeus must speak on Iraq War policy, not the commander in chief. And these GOP dissenters aren't the only ones. Sen. Chuck Hagel told "Face the Nation," "[they] speak for more than just 11 House Republicans. That's just the tip of the iceberg."

In best don't-believe-your-eyes style, Tony Snow countered, "This is not one of those great cresting moments when party discontents are coming in to read the president the riot act." He doth protest too much. During the meeting, Rep. Tom Davis related that the president's approval rating was at 5 percent in one section of his northern Virginia district.

Dick Cheney, always intransigent, declared, "We didn't get elected to be popular." But single-digit support and jittery congressman should be a sign that the people see what the administration refuses to acknowledge: Small adjustments in policy are not enough. We must bring our involvement in Iraq to an end.

[IRAQ]

DESERT WANDERING

The cakewalk caucus was so preoccupied with the ideological dimensions of its grand design for Iraq that it didn't count the human cost. Apparently mil-

lions of Iraqis were supposed to wait patiently—jobless and homeless—while we built a democratic Disneyland.

On some level, the two million who have fled are lucky: they escaped with their heads. But little else. The professional class, those citizens with the skills and resources vital for reconstructing a livable society, was first to go. It won't soon return. Meanwhile, the 50,000-70,000 new refugees displaced each month pile unsustainable pressure on Iraq's neighbors, riven with sectarian struggles of their own and straining to manage the humanitarian crisis.

Questioned for a *New York Times Magazine* article, former UN Ambassador John Bolton claimed that the refugees have "absolutely nothing to do with our overthrow of Saddam." Further, "our obligation was to give them new institutions and provide security. We have fulfilled that obligation. I don't think we have an obligation to compensate for the hardships of war." Delusions come easy in an air-conditioned office at the American Enterprise Institute.

Congress isn't washing its hands quite so quickly: the Responsibility to Iraqi Refugees Act currently under consideration would increase by 20,000 the number of Iraqi refugees eligible to immigrate to the U.S. in the next two years. (In a tragicomic twist, the legislation makes special provision for "vulnerable" groups like gay Iraqis—as if average citizens tortured to death with power tools aren't sufficiently persecuted.) Thus the conservative dilemma: of course, the U.S. can't absorb the millions of Iraqis set adrift by our folly, but neither can we pretend that actions don't have consequences.

The *Times* relates that in the no-man's land near the Syrian entry point of Tanf, a baby recently born to refugee parents was named Khiyam, which translates "tents." Don't expect him to grow up loving America.

[TERROR]

HEY, DIDN'T WE LIBERATE YOU?

It's not clear how far along the Fort Dix jihadis were in their plot to launch an attack on the New Jersey base. But if this seemingly harebrained scheme—the target was chosen because one of the alleged plotters used to deliver pizza there—proves to be a major instance of the terror threat we're combating on a global basis, it has some pretty unusual aspects.

Many Americans, hearing that the alleged plotters were "former Yugoslavs," surely assumed initially that some Serbs, angry that the United States had bombed their country in 1999 in order to help out the Kosovar Albanians, had decided to wreak a crazy kind of revenge. But no, it turns out that the pepperoni jihadists were members of the very ethnic group we mobilized our air power to support: ethnic Albanian Muslims.

If you believe what was written in *The Weekly Standard* and *The New Republic* when they were beating the war drums on behalf of the Muslim Kosovo Liberation Army, this group was largely made up of Balkan George Washingtons and Martin Luther Kings.

The Serbs withdrew from their province in the face of American and NATO bombardment. Today, nearly independent Kosovo is a mess and has substituted ethnic cleansing of Serbian Christians for the ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Muslims.

Now some of these Muslims, far from being content with their new little state in the Balkans, are living in America and plotting *jihad* against the very Army that liberated them. There are several lessons to be drawn from the episode, but perhaps the most obvious is that intervening in someone else's civil war is not an enterprise that elicits much gratitude from either side. ■

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Bear Baiting

Who lost Russia? This may be one of the questions of the decade if relations continue their downhill slide.

Today, as Condoleeza Rice flies to Moscow for talks with President Putin, a *Washington Times* story, datelined Tbilisi, begins, “Emboldened by its growing alliance with the United States, Georgia is increasing pressure on two separatist territories that have bedeviled it since it gained independence from the Soviet Union.”

The “separatist territories” are Abkhazia (pop. 200,000), an old Russian resort area on the Black Sea, and South Ossetia (pop. 50,000). Both enclaves border on Russia as well as Georgia.

“Although the territories are small,” writes the *Times*, “the conflicts have a superpower dimension reminiscent of the Cold War.”

“Russia backs the separatists in both territories, while the U.S. has given substantial support to Georgia, including help in training and reforming the military.”

Georgia is now backing a new pro-Tbilisi regime in South Ossetia and a government-in-exile for Abkhazia and vows to bring both back to Georgian rule by 2009. The separatists are trying to escalate their conflict with Tbilisi into a Washington-Moscow collision.

Says Sergey Shamba, foreign minister of Abkhazia’s breakaway regime, “The U.S. and NATO give Georgia military support and, because of that support, Georgian authorities conducted that operation [in Upper Abkhazia] and destabilized the situation. So there’s only one way out, the military option.”

Query: what is the U.S. military doing in the birthplace of Joe Stalin? What is the vital interest in Georgia that has us

training its military? To fight whom?

Can we not understand the rage of the Russians at what we have been up to?

We brought six former Warsaw Pact nations into NATO: East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria. Then we brought in three Soviet republics: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia. Now NATO expansionists want to bring in Ukraine and Georgia.

Why are we moving a U.S.-led military alliance into the front yard and onto the side porch of a nation with thousands of nukes? How would the Union have reacted if, after the Confederacy won independence, the Royal Navy put bases in Charleston and New Orleans, the British army trained troops in Tennessee, and half the Confederate states entered a military alliance with Lord Palmerston’s Britain?

Have we forgotten that General Grant sent Sheridan and 50,000 U.S. troops to the Mexican border in 1865, and Seward told Napoleon II to get his army out, or we were coming in? Can we not understand that other nations might want their own Monroe Doctrine?

President Bush has junked the Nixon ABM Treaty and is putting anti-missile missiles in Poland and radar in the Czech Republic. We say they are to defend us against Iran. But Iran has no ICBM.

Estonia has just enraged Moscow by removing a World War II statue of a Red Army soldier and the remains of 14 soldiers from the heart of Tallinn to a suburban cemetery. The perceived insult has ignited anti-Estonian demonstrations in Russia. Bush’s response? He has

invited the Estonian president to the White House.

Why is he involving us in quarrels that are none of our business?

The United States has also colluded with Azerbaijan and Georgia on a pipeline to ship Caspian Sea oil to Turkey, bypassing Russia. Dick Cheney, on a trip to commune with that great democrat Nursultan Nazarbayev, former first secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, ripped Russia for backsliding on democracy.

After helping dump over a government we did not like in Serbia, our Neocomintern—the National Endowment for Democracy, Freedom House, and other fronts—interfered in Ukraine and Georgia, helping to oust pro-Moscow regimes and install pro-American ones. Since then, NED has been on a losing streak, routed in Belarus, with its subsidiaries about to get the boot from Moscow.

Can we blame the Russians for being angry? How would we react to a nest of left-wing NGOs in Washington, flush with Beijing’s boodle, aiding and abetting elements hostile to the Bush administration?

Truman is often condemned for having started the Cold War. This is an historic libel. Indeed, Harry was late, mighty late, to recognize just who “Good Old Joe” really was and what he was up to. But if Harry did not start the first Cold War, George W. and the neocons have a strong claim to having started the second.

A first order of business of the next president should be to repair the damage this crowd has done to Russian relations. And the way to begin is by getting NATO out of Russia’s front yard. Respect Russia’s turf, as we would like her to respect ours. ■