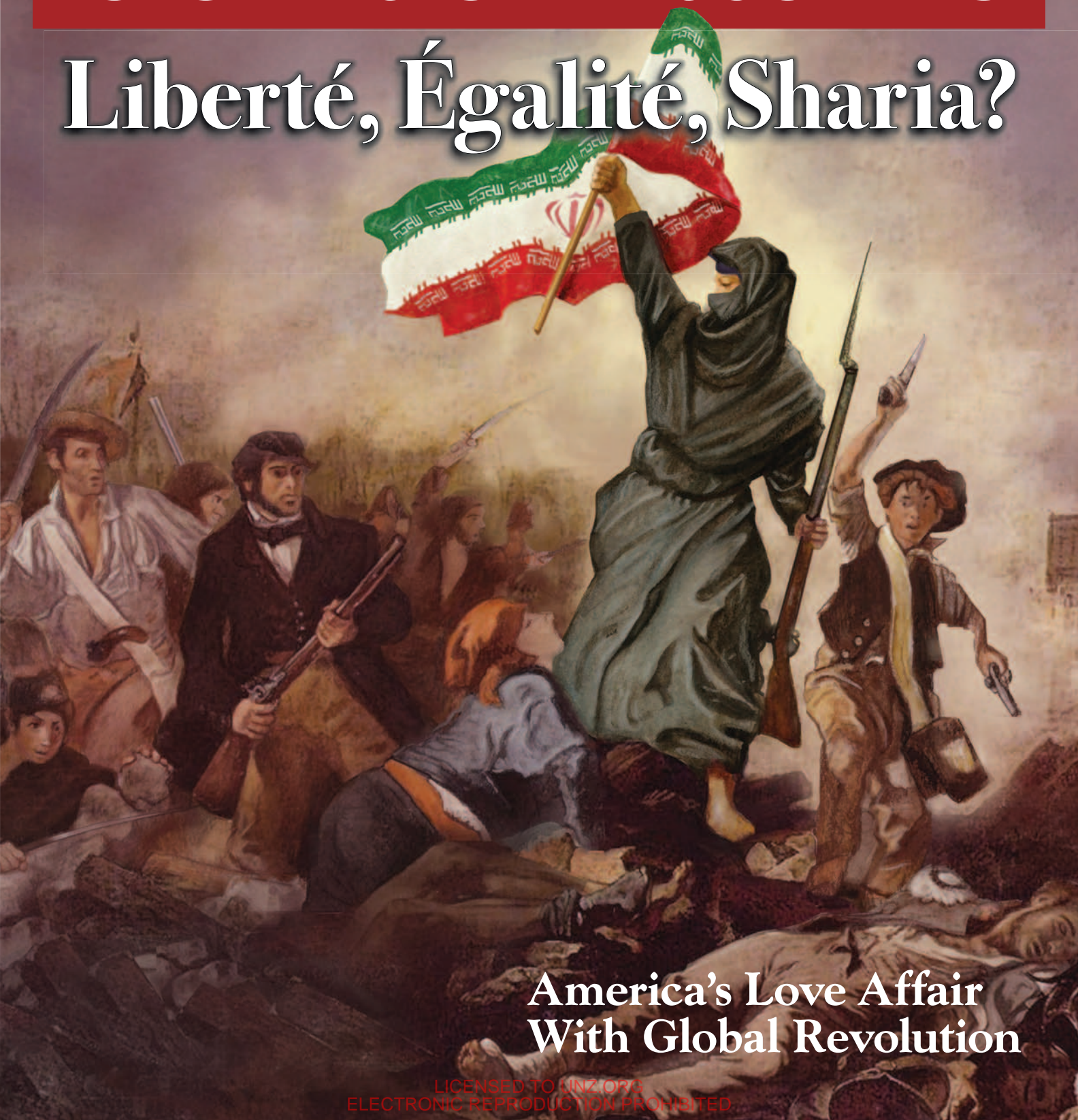


SACK BERNANKE ■ IS GOD AN AMERICAN? ■ HATS OFF TO HENTOFF

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The American Conservative

Liberté, Égalité, Sharia?



America's Love Affair
With Global Revolution

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HOW MANY PRONGS MAKE A RIGHT?

Jeff Huber's article on the Civilian Response Corps ("Dumbest Idea on the Planet," August) is obviously a hit piece on Mr. Feith. I hope my boss agrees to write something. We have many men and women that we are deploying to make a difference in preventing conflict and stabilizing countries. We are putting people in harm's way to support our embassies to not need thousands of American troops. This piece is an unfortunate slap at the work these Americans are doing.

For example, fighting piracy is not only a military operation. There are many prongs to it. My office put money toward stabilizing the government in Somalia a year before this latest piracy issue. A strong central government is what is needed most to end piracy. We are working with courts to see that pirates get proper trials, to stabilize governments that are fostering this activity, and we are working on development and diplomatic approaches to find solutions. These are all nonmilitary roles and non-combat missions.

TODD D. CALONGNE
Public Affairs Officer
U.S. Department of State
Via e-mail

UNCONQUERABLE AFGHANS

With regard to Paul Robinson's piece on the Soviet experience of nation-building in Afghanistan ("Russian Lessons," August), while I'm far from an expert in geopolitics, I do have the advantage of having traveled across Afghanistan in 1976, shortly before the Russian invasion and while the country was still relatively safe and hospitable to foreigners. I traveled with one of the British companies generically referred to as "overlanders" who provided a retrofitted British Army truck and a guide to ferry groups of 15 to 20 tourists between Kathmandu, Nepal, and London. So while I was there in the guise of a mere tourist, I did see the lay of the land.

It's incredibly tough countryside. You can be 20 minutes out of Kabul and be unfindable if you so choose. And if the landscape is tough, the people are tougher. They're intelligent, hard-bitten, excellent shots with even the most primitive rifles, and ultimately unconquerable. Genghis Khan, Alexander the Great, the British Empire, and the Soviets chased these wily mountain men around the Hindu Kush for thousands of years with only limited success. (One of the more interesting activities in Afghanistan is trying to identify the descent of the local people, from Mongol features in a remote northern province to Macedonian blue eyes in Kabul.)

Whatever the answer is to containing al-Qaeda's activities, a strictly military solution isn't it.
SHAY LYNN
Centennial, Colo.

TAC ON THE RACK

Sometimes when reading *TAC*, I have to look at the cover to make sure I'm not reading *The New Republic*. This happened again while reading Andrew Brown's "Tortured Truth" (August). I agree that torture is to be disdained by civilized societies, but I think that first you have to define what torture is. I don't agree that waterboarding is in fact torture. Torture is being decapitated with a dull knife or having someone go to work on your nipples, knuckles, and testicles with a pair of vise grips. Torture leaves the victim dead or permanently deformed or dysfunctional. Waterboarding leaves the victim with an unpleasant memory.

I think your vitriolic hatred of Bush and Cheney has destroyed your objectivity. While I agree that going to war in Iraq was at best a very bad idea, I don't agree that everything that resulted from the war was bad. I suspect you of having a pathological craving for Keith Olbermann's approval.

Finally, if you ask anyone who has been in combat or has had friends killed

or wounded in combat what their priorities are, I believe that causing the "agony of their enemies" would be very high on the list.

Ultimately, war is immoral but inevitable. Is it possible to practice moral behavior while participating in an immoral act?

DR. STEVEN JOHNSON
Via e-mail

SOUTHERN AVENGER

Bill Kauffman wrote a brilliant column ("Hush, Hush, Sweet Charlotte") in the August issue. As a native North Carolinian, I am outraged that my home state's largest city is apparently ashamed to be part of it. The very phrase "New South" makes my blood boil and must make my Confederate ancestors turn over in their graves. "New South" is a sellout and a betrayal of Southern heritage, along with being a politically correct code phrase.

I know this applies to the University of North Carolina, but it could also easily apply to natives and residents of our great state: "I am Tar Heel born and Tar Heel bred. And when I die, I'll be Tar Heel dead." I am exceedingly proud of my home state, and the city of Charlotte should be too.

My comments are in no way directed at the people of Charlotte, who I am sure are exceedingly proud to be North Carolina residents. My criticism is for the civic and business leaders who seemingly want to detach "North Carolina" from the city's name to appease Big Business and the globalist community.

PATRICK LLOYD
High Point, N.C.

The American Conservative welcomes letters to the editor. Submit by e-mail to 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.