



Your January/February issue on "Homeland Dangers" was cathartic: exhilarating and refreshing beyond description. Karina Rollins ("No Compromises on Terror") provided the common sense that could lead to a return of national sanity.

The only reservation I had was Ms. Rollins' reference to mosques as a threat. Our problem is not with mosques, but with some of the people who go to them.

Wayne Skaggs
Wimberley, Texas

In the late 1960s, my family, now residents of Massachusetts, lived in rural Virginia. We gained a perspective on the Confederate story that Yankees like us rarely have.

Your March 2003 issue was unusually thorough as well as empathetic to both sides of the Civil War. All I can say is, "WOW, what a great issue!"

Art Needham
Fitchburg, Massachusetts

Bravo to Dinesh D'Souza and Jay Winik for their comprehensive refutations of Abraham Lincoln's smarmy critics ("Revising Mr. Lincoln," March).

Whether advancing from the Left or the Right, these flaccid Lincoln-bashers succeed only in exposing their own pettiness and insignificance. To the small-minded, apparently, nothing is sacred. Out-of-context quotes and distorted anecdotes can be misused to "prove" just about anything.

Winik could just as well be impugning these inconsequential slanderers with his statement that "second-rate

men are shaped and manipulated by the force of events."

Steven Fantina
Philipsburg, New Jersey

For Jay Winik to compare Lincoln with "George Washington and other revolutionary rebels" is shameful.

Washington and the other revolutionaries never invaded England nor did they shut down newspapers, suspend *habeas corpus*, establish martial law, or destroy an economy and way of life. They did not slaughter civilians and rout children for their "higher purpose."

We are now living with the fruit of what was accomplished in the Civil War: An ever-expanding, immorally inefficient, centralized government without the benefit of the check that sovereign states offered.

Debra Jared
Winnsboro, Texas

Many of the authors who write about the Civil War in your March issue do not hail from the South.

Those of us who live here might be inclined to welcome some vestige of what Jay Winik describes as Lincoln's "remarkable compassion and charity" in the face of the continuing scurrilous attacks against our honor and culture. Many of us would once again prefer to be left alone as much as is possible, now that the slavery issue has been settled. We have had quite a bit more reconstruction than we care to endure.

Michael Kilpatrick
Macon, Georgia

The notion that the Civil War was "the original Good War" (BIRD'S EYE, March) ought to be challenged.

From an economic point of view, slavery was a failing institution that would have vanished in another two decades without a war. Paying the Southerners to free the slaves would have cost the Union \$3 billion, as compared to the \$12 billion the Civil War actually cost.

There should be a special place in hell for men like Grant and Lee who sent thousands of young men to their deaths for no useful purpose. There have been just wars. The Civil War just wasn't one of them.

Martin Harris
Brandon, Vermont

My take on *About Schmidt* is slightly broader than Josh Larsen's (NOW PLAYING, March).

I too was disappointed by the movie's depiction of the Midwest, but I had an additional objection. Tucked in the trailers before *About Schmidt* was a slick commercial for ChildReach, the organization that lets Schmidt "adopt" the Tanzanian boy, Ndugu. I attend movies frequently; that was the first time I've seen a commercial of any kind inserted within the trailers that way.

About Schmidt is the last Jack Nicholson movie I'll attend.

Bob Stanton
Valrico, Florida

