

## FIGHTING OURSELVES

Finally, someone who will say what has needed to be said since the Cheney/Rumsfeld administration launched the U.S. on its moronic war on terror. Mr. Bacevich is absolutely right, and virtually everything this administration has done in response to 9/11 has been wrong (Feb. 27). If the truth be spoken, we cannot call this a war at all—and if it is a war, it is one in which we are only fighting ourselves.

While the U.S. spends billions of dollars transporting hundreds of thousands of troops and equipment halfway around the world, al-Qaeda and its supporters build homemade IEDs out of ordinary household products and deliver them on motorbikes for pennies. While the administration rants about American moral superiority and military supremacy, a bunch of mail-order electricians humiliate the great American military machine on a daily basis—except, that is, when it is busy humiliating itself by the slaughter of civilians.

Thus far this war on terror has only brought us chaos and death, increased the number of terrorists in the world, ratcheted up international tensions, exacerbated cultural and religious animosities, wasted enormous amounts of American wealth, driven America's standing in the world to levels somewhere below whale excrement, and rent the last tenuous strands of the American democracy. If this be American conservative governance, I'll take the liberals.  
NORMAN MICHAEL HARMAN  
*Harpers Ferry, W.Va.*

## MUSLIM MANNERS

Mr. Buchanan's article captured and articulated the truth well (March 13). I truly appreciate his sensitivity. Please convey my appreciation.

Has anyone asked why Muslims have not mocked Jesus Christ or Moses in retaliation for Prophet Muhammad's caricature? The mobs burned embassies, flags, effigies, and chanted insults at

Western nations but not a single word against Jesus Christ or Moses. When an Iranian newspaper decided to "get even," it did not invite any insulting depiction of Moses or Christ, which would have been the natural and logical response.

The reason is that both Moses and Christ are regarded as Muslim prophets and worthy of respect. Their insulting depiction would be as offensive to Muslims as is Muhammad's, though the reaction would not have been as strong since they would expect Christians and Jews to respond to that.

The caricatures were initially published in September 2005. At that time, they did not attract much attention. A concerted effort was undertaken to provoke Muslims. It had more to do with a cynical and calculated move to insult than with so-called freedom of speech.  
S. NIZAMANI  
*via e-mail*

## RIGHT AT HOME

Thank you for providing a home for my political beliefs. I came of age as a Reagan Democrat and registered Republican. Yet, as nearly a quarter century has passed, I have found myself increasingly "homeless": repulsed by the policies of the Democratic Party yet increasingly feeling like the Republican Party was moving away from my beliefs.

Your magazine has been a welcome affirmation that I am not alone. I am gravely concerned about America's vulnerability as so much of our economy is in the hands of foreign countries. For years it has been easy for politicians of both parties to follow variations of New Deal/Great Society philosophies because the financial consequences were so diluted over future generations. Now the piper is calling. If China wanted, it could greatly destabilize our economy. All the fiscal responsibility that attracted me to the Republican Party was hot air. The U.S. could never respond, as it did in World War II, to a truly all-out war. Too

much is outsourced or owned by foreign interests.

I also found myself homeless in the build-up to the Iraq War. I felt betrayed by the deceptions used by President Bush to justify the war and began to question how could I be conservative when *National Review* was singing the praises of the Bush Doctrine. Again, your magazine gave me comfort. I could be conservative and against the war. When the president can do absolutely nothing wrong in the eyes of the numerous neocon radio talk shows, it is refreshing to read your magazine.

I could go on—the erosion of culture due to unchecked illegal immigration and the educational communism of No Child Left Behind—but in the end, I thank you for providing a home.  
JERRY BATCHA  
*Bethlehem, Penn.*

## TAKI'S BOOK CLUB

Every now and then, Taki writes about Ernest Hemingway. He's made me interested in reading Hemingway and so my question is: is there any chronological order to read them in so that I may appreciate and/or enjoy them more? Thanks, and keep up the good work!  
SAM HENSHAW  
*Dallas, Texas*

### *Taki replies:*

I'd start with *The Sun Also Rises*, followed by *A Farewell to Arms*. I'd skip to *A Moveable Feast* and then read *The Essential Hemingway*, especially short stories such as "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," "Snows of Kilimanjaro," "Fifty Grand," and "A Small, Well-Lighted Place."

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## Hillary the Hawk

BY JUSTIN RAIMONDO A second President Clinton would lead the Democratic wing of the War Party. **Page 7**

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## Mission Improbable

BY SCOTT MCCONNELL Much as they may want war with Iran, neoconservatives concede that forceable regime change isn't feasible. **Page 11**

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BY LEON HADAR The Jacksonian populists who fight Bush's war reject his Dubai deal. **Page 13**

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## Cheney of Command

BY JAMES BOVARD Claiming the right to declassify on his whim, the vice president becomes a law unto himself. **Page 17**

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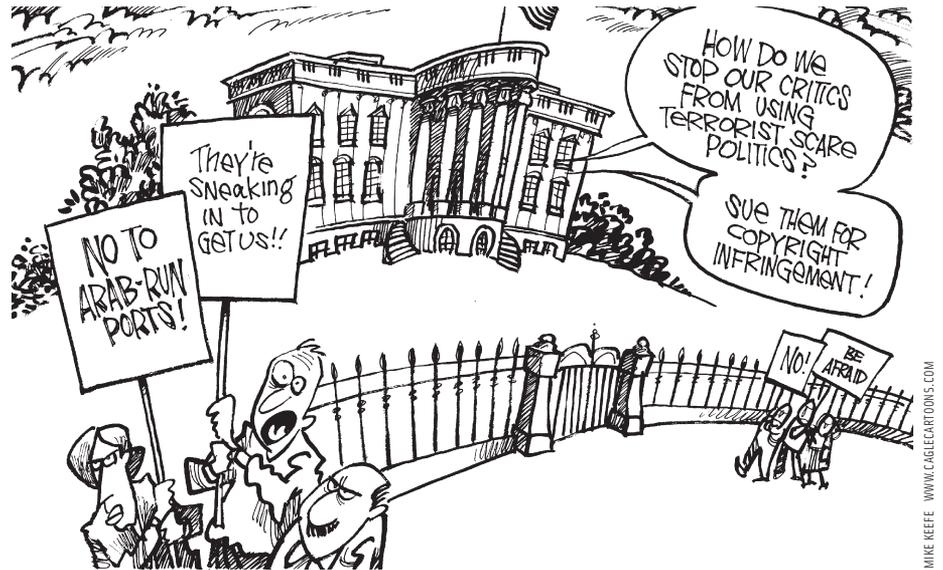
[IRAQ]

## FIGHTING FOR FICTION

In the wake of what may be the first battle in a full-scale Iraqi civil war—1,300 Iraqi casualties, mostly by execution, in two days—pollster John Zogby published a stunning survey of the attitudes of American soldiers serving in the country. The surprising result was not so much that they want the U.S. to pull out within a year (72 percent said so) but what they perceive as reasons for the mission. Eighty-five percent believe they are there “to retaliate for Saddam’s role in the 9-11 attack.” This is certainly odd since the Bush administration has long stopped pretending that Saddam played such a role. Only 24 percent believed that “establishing a democracy that can be a model for the Arab world” was the reason for the U.S. presence, though this has been the administration’s public rationale since the WMD gambit turned out to be fraudulent.

It seems the soldiers have been developing independent rationales for why they fight. *TAC* contributor Gregory Cochran comments: “[T]he alternative for the average Joe is to conclude that we did it for no reason that he can understand at all: i.e., that the government is insane. So many people make up a reason because the alternative is too disturbing—more so if they think of the government as being run by their side. ... [T]he idea that a friend would have been crippled or killed for no reason that anyone would understand would be hateful.”

However understandable, the idea that so many American troops hold completely fanciful beliefs about the war they are fighting is, to say the least, disturbing in itself. One can hope that somewhere at the end of this, the United States might establish a genuine Truth Commission in which the reasons the Bush administration initiated this war



are thoroughly and honestly explored—and those responsible will be brought to justice.

[MEDIA]

## BUCKLEY'S BABY REBUKES HIM

The boys at *National Review* never had a nice word for conservatives prescient enough to recognize that invading Iraq would be a fool's errand. “Unpatriotic Conservatives” was the title *NR* gave to antiwar conservatives in a cover story on the eve of the invasion. According to the piece's author, David Frum, conservatives who opposed the war “deny and excuse terror,” “espouse a potentially self-fulfilling defeatism,” and “hate their country.”

Now it seems that William F. Buckley, *National Review's* founder, is in danger of getting on his magazine's black list. Two years ago, he wrote that if he knew at the war's outset what he later learned, he wouldn't have backed the war. Now, in the wake of savage Sunni-Sh'ite violence in Iraq, Buckley writes “One can't doubt that the American objective in Iraq has failed” and any reappraisal of U.S. policy would need to begin with “the acknowledgement of defeat.”

Three years ago, Frum called on *NR* readers to “turn their backs” on conservatives who opposed the war, and far too many followed the advice. We're curious to see whether Rich Lowry and the titans who now run the magazine will follow Frum's counsel and “turn their backs” on Bill Buckley, the man who well into his eighties still has more courage and wisdom in his little finger than the lot of Republican hacks who now set the tone at the magazine he founded.

[LIBERTIES]

## WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS

There isn't much novel to say about an Austrian court's sentencing of British historian David Irving to three years in prison for violating a law against denying or minimizing the Holocaust. Virtually every soul who has published an opinion on it, from Deborah Lipstadt—who six years ago won a libel suit against Irving in a London court—on, thinks it wrong to imprison a man for expressing opinions.

By jailing Irving, Austria reveals the tenuous nature of its hold to the values of the democratic West. The outraged reaction of Muslims to what they per-