

CLEARING THE AIR

Eamonn Fingleton's article ("Boeing, Boeing ... Gone," Jan. 31) is riddled with factual errors and faulty conclusions. He relies heavily on the specious work of a pair of "industrial geographers" from the University of Buffalo. Their conclusions have been roundly dismissed by legitimate industry experts as "beyond the realm of conceivable scenarios."

Fingleton's story is built around the Buffalo pair's erroneous premise that "nearly 70 percent of the (Boeing) 7E7's manufacturing content will come from foreign sources." The facts are exactly opposite. The 7E7, now called the 787, will have approximately 75 percent U.S. content by dollar value—which is about the same as today's 777.

We also found incredibly distasteful your choice of covers. Manipulating a photo of a passenger jet to suggest it is going to crash is as inappropriate as it is insensitive. It is an affront to the professionals who work tirelessly to make commercial aviation the world's safest form of mass transportation. One would hope for something less sensational and misleading from a journal that claims to offer thoughtful examination of serious issues.

THOMAS J. DOWNEY
Vice President, Communications
Boeing Commercial Airplanes
Seattle, Wash.

Eamonn Fingleton replies:

Although Mr. Downey alleges my article was "riddled with factual errors," he challenges only one point: the 787's American content, he says, will be 75 percent, not 30 percent as alleged by my sources. That's a big discrepancy—but where's his evidence? While he airs an essentially frivolous complaint about the article's cover art and takes a disingenuous shot at my sources, he offers no geographic breakdown of 787-related jobs. Understandably so.

Boeing defines as "American" a vast swathe of foreign-sourced content. To help maximize the plane's apparent American content, key foreign suppliers are going through financial contortions to

ensure that Boeing is supplied from fig-leaf plants in the United States. Many of these will do no more than perfunctory processing on foreign added value. Even much of Boeing's own contribution will originate in its Australian and Canadian factories. According to a press announcement in late 2003, the most significant complete section to be made in the U.S. by Boeing will be the vertical tail fin. Meanwhile, fully 35 percent of the plane, including the wings, will be built by Japanese companies and a further 26 percent by an Italian-led consortium. While the foreigners' share is subject to adjustment and will include some American content, the decisive point is that Boeing's hollowed out American suppliers will go abroad for much of their advanced content—and indeed are allegedly being pressured by Boeing to do so. Perhaps Downey's most surprising claim is that the share of foreign content in the 787 will not exceed that in the 777. The 777 was planned in the 1980s when the United States still did some serious manufacturing.

PROCESS DUE

I was surprised to read Austin Bramwell's support for Substantive Due Process (Jan. 31). The Due Process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment has been interpreted to contain certain rights, including the right to marry, have children, abort a child, and, more recently, to engage in sodomy.

Bramwell argues that because the right to marry is rooted in the Constitution (the word "marriage" appears nowhere in the document), Congress can define what "marriage" means. This is legitimizing an illegitimate enterprise and ought to be avoided. It is not a good argument anyway.

Though Bramwell is correct to point out that a constitutional amendment defining marriage "has no hope of passing," the solution is not to give in to the liberal agenda by an expansive reading of the Constitution. Not that a constitutional amendment defining marriage is a good idea. Conservatives want to mini-

mize the powers of the federal government. We don't want to turn that concept on its head by supporting an amendment that takes power away from the states.

A better solution is to propose a constitutional amendment that mirrors the Defense of Marriage Act. By turning DOMA into a constitutional amendment we will guarantee every state the right to decide for itself what "marriage" means and that no state needs to recognize marriages performed in another state. (This is of course necessary to avoid a court declaring DOMA unconstitutional.) This advances conservatives' interests by (1) isolating gay marriage to a handful of liberal states, (2) promoting states' rights, and (3) staying true to the text of the Constitution.

HIRBOD RASHIDI
Los Angeles, Calif.

Austin Bramwell replies:

Substantive Due Process—which I abhor as much as Mr. Rashidi—is not the only possible source of unenumerated rights in the Fourteenth Amendment. On the contrary, however contested the original meaning of the Privileges or Immunities Clause, it almost certainly does protect an unspecified number of fundamental rights. Personally, I would prefer a Constitution that didn't protect any fundamental rights, much less any unenumerated ones, but as long as that's the Constitution we have, I would also prefer that those rights be protected by Congress rather than the Supreme Court.

Happily, Congress is exactly the institution to which the Fourteenth Amendment gives primary responsibility for enforcing the Fourteenth Amendment (see Section 5). In short, my proposal for a statute underscoring the national definition of marriage is consistent with both the original meaning of the Constitution and a conservative approach to constitutional government.

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.



SIPA

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BY ANDREW J. BACEVICH Instead of summoning the American people to shared sacrifice, the Bush administration insulates us from the costs of conflict. **Page 11**

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ROBERT LOCKE and DANIEL MCCARTHY square off on just how much freedom a society can endure. **Page 17**

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Church of the Open Sky

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[IRAQ]

MANY HAPPY RETURNS?

The Iraqi election has apparently produced an absolute parliamentary majority for the United Iraqi Alliance, a group of Shi'ite religious parties. Their most likely coalition partner is the Kurdish Alliance. In any case, it appears that Prime Minister Allawi, the American selection to run Iraq, won't figure in its future—at least if the election results hold.

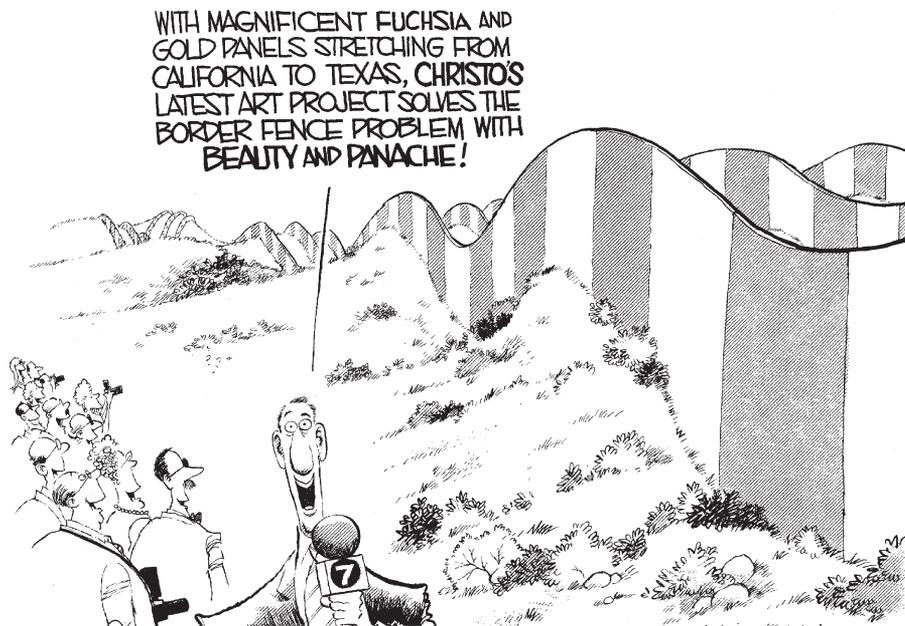
Speculation is perilous, but it is worth wondering whether the Bush administration is happy with the result: \$300 billion spent, nearly 1,500 dead, thousands of Americans seriously wounded—not to mention hundreds of thousands of Iraqis with dead relatives to avenge and destroyed property—all for a government with close links to the Shi'ite mullahs of Tehran. For that is the likely result: the leader of the Shi'ite coalition, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, spent two decades in Iran; the leader of the Kurdish Alliance is also close to Tehran.

It is not clear whether the new government will be able to enact *Sharia* in Baghdad, but it does seem that such a government would be less likely to co-operate with Bush administration plans to use Iraq as a platform to start a war with Iran. (Yes, we know that Condi Rice said there are “no plans” for an attack “now,” but there are numerous signs that one is being considered, and the neocon desire for a war with Iran is well-documented.) So perhaps the new Iraqi theocratic “democracy” will prove nettlesome to the neoconservative project of endless war in the Mideast. Not a Jeffersonian result, but hardly an unwelcome one.

[BUDGET]

DOLLARS & NONSENSE

The Bush administration is busy congratulating itself on the frugality of its latest federal budget. While this may be true by profligate Bushie standards, a little fiscal honesty is in order.



STEVE BREEN/COPEYNEWS SERVICE

The president's budget proposal usually ends up being a spending floor rather than a ceiling. Congress will increase spending beyond the requested levels and end only a fraction of the programs the administration has put on the chopping block. Last year, only five of the 65 programs slated for termination were abolished. And the 2006 spending blueprint requests new largesse of its own: \$1.5 billion more in foreign aid, \$268 million for coal research, \$260 million for hydrogen research, \$100 million to promote “healthy marriages,” and \$1.5 billion for the No Child Left Behind high-school initiative. All told, the budget weighs in at \$2.57 trillion, without a penny for the Iraq War factored in.

Bush could veto excessive congressional appropriations, but apparently he only reaches for that pen when Congress decides it might cut one of his programs. When Republicans sought to bring the Medicare prescription drug benefit back to its originally projected size—a mammoth \$400 billion—he promised any changes would meet his veto.

[FREEDOM]

LIBERATE UNLV

The habits of freedom cannot be imposed at the barrel of a gun, but if they could, a good target for the U.S. military might

the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. There the libertarian economist Hans-Hermann Hoppe faces university punishment for allegedly offending a “protected group” in one of his lectures. Hoppe was teaching his banking and finance class about a general tendency of some groups to defer their spending and save more than others. Among the savers, parents of young children; among the non-savers, who tend to be less inclined to forgo immediate gratification, were the very young, the very old, and ... take a deep breath ... homosexuals.

Apparently this deeply offended one student, who filed a complaint to the university. It is beyond the scope of this space to speculate whether Hoppe's theory might in fact be true (though recent front-page stories about the growth of methamphetamine use and behaviors involving hundreds of sex partners in pockets of the gay community do not exactly discredit it). But clearly the student who was so outraged that he felt he had to file a formal complaint to the university has led, intellectually at least, a very sheltered life.

A university with any sense of academic freedom (as opposed to a *madrasa*) would have laughed aloud and told the offended student to grow up. Regrettably, UNLV chose the other course, and put Professor Hoppe