

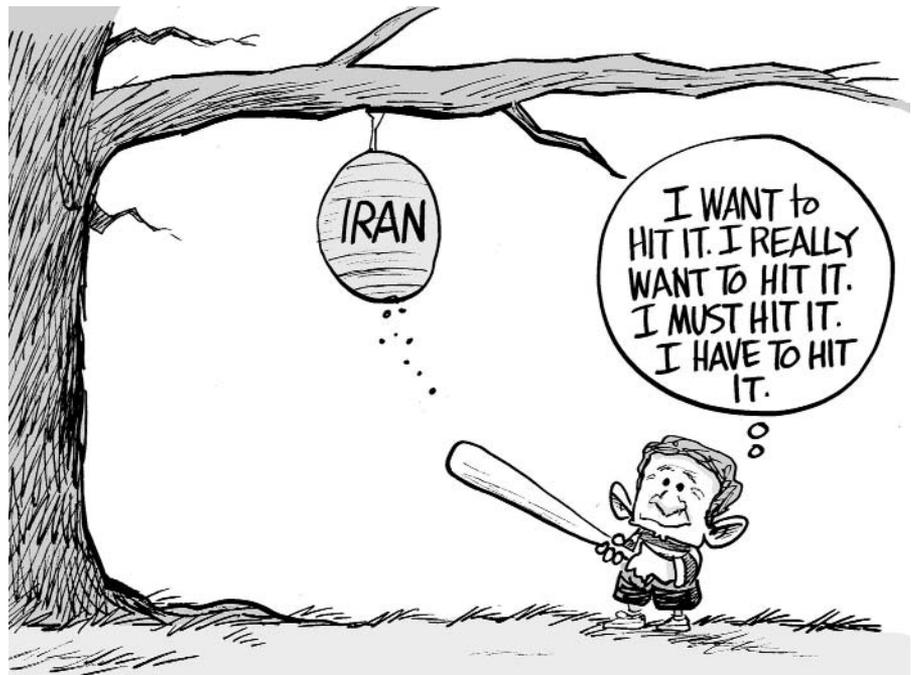
[RIGHTS]

CLINGING TO THEIR GUNS

The Supreme Court's *Boumediene* decision gave us a strange new respect for the four-and-a-half (counting Kennedy) liberal justices, for reasons that William Ziegler's essay this issue explains. The court's June 26 decision in *District of Columbia v. Heller*, however, reminds us why we need men like Scalia and Alito on the bench.

The majority—Thomas, Alito, Roberts, Kennedy, and Scalia—upheld the 2nd Amendment as enshrining an individual right that government shall not infringe. In a sign of how political terrain has shifted in the past decade, both John McCain and Barack Obama hailed the decision. "I have always believed that the Second Amendment protects the right of individuals to bear arms," Obama said, assuring voters that "As president, I will uphold the constitutional rights of law-abiding gun owners, hunters, and sportsmen"—though in the next breath he touted the need for "closing the gun show loophole" and "improving our background check system." The Democrats have not given up on gun control. But Obama knows how many votes the issue cost Al Gore in working-class America.

As the Democratic nominee's words suggest, *Heller* does not do away with impediments to individual firearms ownership—not by a long shot. "Despite the decision's enormous symbolic significance, it was far from clear that it actually posed much of a threat to the most common gun regulations," the *New York Times* reported, quoting Justice Scalia's majority opinion saying that nothing in the ruling "should be taken to cast doubt on ... laws imposing conditions and qualifications on the commercial sale of arms." Harvard Law School professor Mark Tushnet underscored the point: "the Court's opinion says that many existing regulations are 'presumptively



MARSHALL RAMSEY CISCARTOONS

constitutional,' and ... the Court declines to say what standard of review should be applied in determining constitutionality." That means more litigation before Americans can exercise their right to keep and bear arms with the freedom the Founders intended.

[DIPLOMACY]

PROTESTING PEACE

After news broke that North Korea had delivered an overdue declaration detailing its nuclear activities, the headline of John Bolton's *Wall Street Journal* reaction pronounced "The Tragic End of Bush's North Korea Policy." Surely he is disappointed that AEI's legion isn't off to work its liberation magic on another member of the Axis of Evil. But the rest of us are breathing a sigh of relief. What's so tragic about not starting another war to disarm or democratize or whatever we claim children will throw flowers for this time?

Granted, North Korea's declaration is probably as genuine as Kim Jong Il's pompadour. Not all pledges have been met. Verification is very much incomplete. And blowing up the cooling tower at the aging Yongbyong reactor was little more than pleasant theater. They did something symbolic and so did we: we initiated a process to take them off a list.

Contra the neocon howling, this doesn't mean the terrorists win. Military options are still "on the table"—as the

Bushies regularly remind us. And the U.S. can certainly continue to use every coercive weapon in the diplomatic arsenal—however unavailable they may be to Bolton, who previously growled, "I don't do carrots."

He pouts, "it is hard to see what remains of President Bush's doctrine that those who support terrorists will be treated as terrorists." Precisely. The administration is learning the hard way that every rogue isn't our worst enemy, that every cesspool isn't in our backyard, and that invasion isn't the best way to manage proliferation. There's nothing tragic about that.

[IMMIGRATION]

IT'S THE AMNESTY, STUPID

After disappointing races for anti-amnesty Republicans in 2006, pundits told us that voters don't mind open borders. The *Wall Street Journal* opined, "Like trade protectionism, the immigration issue is the fool's gold of American politics. Voters like to sound off to pollsters about immigrants, yet they pull the lever with other matters foremost in mind." The *Journal* ignored the fact that these conservative stalwarts were usually defeated by Democrats who also ran as border hawks. They ignored Arizonans who overwhelmingly passed four get-tough initiatives to crack down on illegal immigration. How will they ignore the sound of a Cannon exploding?

In Utah's Republican primary elections, incumbent Chris Cannon, a devoted supporter of amnesty, was ousted by Jason Chaffetz, a conservative who promised to restore law to the border. Cannon had proclaimed, "We love immigrants in Utah. And we don't oftentimes make the distinction between legal and illegal." He sponsored amnesty bills in the House. He received the endorsements of Sen. Orrin Hatch and President Bush. He spent seven times as much as Chaffetz did in the campaign. But voters gave a stunning 20-point victory to the newcomer who could "make the distinction between legal and illegal."

In 2006, voters were rejecting Republicans, not border security. Cannon's misfire should be a warning to the improbable GOP nominee, John McCain. Don't believe the *Journal*: amnesty is still a loser.

[POLITICS]

NATIONALIZE THE GOP

The *Politico* reports that the National Republican Campaign Committee has a bold new strategy for House GOP candidates: don't run as "traditional Republicans." In a PowerPoint presentation to the Party's House leaders, NRCC chairman Tom Cole pinned blame for recent Republican defeats in Illinois, Louisiana, and Mississippi on candidates who failed to distinguish "themselves and their local brand in contrast to the negative perception of the GOP."

"Nationalizing these elections as a choice between a traditional Republican and a traditional Democrat did not work in this political environment," Cole continued, "Democrats ran candidates that were a reflection of their districts."

That much is common sense, as Michael Brendan Dougherty's article in this issue on moderate Republican Chris Shays—the only kind who can win in Connecticut—shows. But the traditional Republican brand had long been

popular throughout the South and in Denny Hastert's Illinois district. The GOP candidates in those special elections, though flawed, were not poor fits for their areas—Republicans didn't run Shays in Mississippi's 1st Congressional District.

Running localized campaigns with good local candidates is not enough as long as the overall brand keeps pulling the Party down. The fix must be national. That means cleaning out the Augean stables of the Republican Party and finding new leadership untainted by the sins of Bush—the kind of leadership that Tom Cole, and John McCain, cannot provide.

[WAR]

SURGE THE GLOBE

The Taliban in Afghanistan has been "decapitated," military sources told the press in early June. Air and ground operations in the southwestern Helmand province had eliminated key rebel strongholds.

It seems, however, that a headless insurgency is even more dangerous. In June, 45 Coalition soldiers, including 27 Americans, were killed in Afghanistan, more than any month since the invasion of 2001.

In the same period, 31 Western troops—29 of them American—lost their lives in Iraq. The Bush administration was quick to attribute the low Iraq death toll to the high troop levels of its surge strategy. But the relative stability there was spoilt by the increasing havoc in Afghanistan.

The Bush administration's simplistic solution for deteriorating conditions in Iraq was the surge. But with U.S. forces already stretched taut and overdeployed, an Afghan surge is out of the question. So what is Bush to do? Instead of looking for an exit from two wars already underway, he dreams of launching a third against Iran. ■

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How Good Was the Good War?

FOR MANY AMERICANS, World War II remains the Great Crusade. For George W. Bush, John McCain, and legions of Churchill-worshipping neoconservatives, it is that and more: they take from the war—especially the war against Hitler—“lessons” that must inform current American statecraft. Patrick Buchanan disagrees. In *Churchill, Hitler, and the Unnecessary War*, a book critically reviewed for *TAC* by historian John Lukacs, he depicts the war as an avoidable disaster and object lesson in what not to do.

Revisionism is the lifeblood of history. Facts may not change, but with the passage of time perspective can. Perhaps the moment is ripe for Americans to take a fresh look at World War II, one that might revolve around the following questions:

Do the war’s canonical lessons, such as Munich, retain their instructive power, or does the war offer other lessons of greater relevance? Does Churchill provide a model of statesmanship useful for American presidents? What about the largely forgotten Pacific War? Are there other wars, for example, the Great War of 1914-18 in which Churchill also figured prominently, that might offer more when it comes to illuminating the present?

While it would be impossible to respond to all of these questions in a brief essay, we invited several *TAC* contributors to use them as guideposts in offering their own interpretations of the lessons of World War II.

Scott McConnell How could Americans not think of World War II as “the good war”? We were victors. Our cities weren’t burned, our towns not occupied, our civilians not starved or slaughtered. Our battlefield casualties, nearly a million killed and wounded, were the heaviest in American history but lighter than other major combatants’. In terms of military and economic power—not the sole measure but important in assessing world politics—the war’s outcome was overwhelmingly favorable to the United States.

But most victories carry the seeds of their own undoing: 1945 left America more prone to seek military solutions than the chastened and war-exhausted Europeans. And, of

course, the victory was partial. No one could claim that Hungary, Poland, or Czechoslovakia was liberated by the conflict, though as “captive nations” they were able to breathe and eventually played noble roles in the decomposition of communism. Today they have become part of a Western world in which human rights are enshrined and no one fears the knock on the door in the middle of the night.

This accomplishment should never be taken for granted. One needs to remember how the world appeared in the prewar ’30s, and indeed in the early postwar years, when the most plausible political trendline in the West pointed to a forced march toward some variant of Orwell’s dystopia.

Indeed, these deeper social and political trends, barely discussed in Pat Buchanan’s book, formed the psychological backdrop for the flawed diplomacy that preceded the war. By the late 1930s, the Western democracies were gripped by lassitude. While Britain and France had stumbled through the Depression, few believed their democracies were the wave of the future. The energy belonged to the totalitarian alternatives. Probably most intellectuals were Marxists, the lion’s share of them committed Stalinists—acolytes and propagandists for a murderous dictatorship that had starved millions of its own citizens though forced collectivization. This regime of the “necessary murder” was what many of the West’s *bien pensants* aspired to. For the rest, the virile alternative was fascism: order, modernism, trains on time, a vigorous and—to its admirers—poetic mass politics for anti-Marxists. By contrast, the bourgeois and social-democratic parties seemed exhausted. It is no surprise that occupied France saw the cream of its young writers dive into open collaboration.

Yet the politicians of the old, still ruling parties could not shirk their duty to make choices. Was Stalin the more dangerous enemy or was Hitler? To what extent was Hitler, as Buchanan and before him A.J.P. Taylor have argued, simply pursuing traditional German statecraft, seeking escape from the terms of Versailles and an ingathering of German peoples? To argue this, it helps to overlook not only Hitler’s writings—about which there was nothing traditional—but also the dynamics of his regime. It is true that the commitment to carry out the Holocaust was not made until 1942. But the Nazi regime virtually from its inception meant concentration camps, the end of political freedom, mass arrests, and a free pass for Nazi street thugs. German foreign