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power to elicit identification and its promise of reconciliation. Consider the brave young men and women of the civil rights movement, sitting with dignity at lunch counters throughout the South. In film footage of the time, you can see them attacked by uncivilized whites, who curse them, beat them—and thus reveal themselves as bullies and cowards. The civilly disobedient cover themselves in self-defense but never raise their hands in anger. They appeal over their adversaries' heads to the majority who, they believe—they have to believe—will see the justice of their cause.

As thousands of Republicans gather to nominate Bush for re-election, and as many more protesters—perhaps fifty times more—gather to express themselves against the damage Bush is doing, Americans of all stripes will be watching. Fair-minded people can understand dignified opposition even when they disagree with it. Rage in the streets is something else altogether. Protesters who spell “Bush” with a swastika, who smash windows, fight the police or try to block Manhattan commuters might as well stay home and send their contributions to the Republicans.

It is, or ought to be, so obvious that violence and chaos in the streets works to Bush's advantage that not a few oppositionists worry about the Republicans planting their own provocateurs in the protest. Such a scenario is not farfetched. Provocateurs know some history, too. They know that disciplined handfuls can start riots amid turmoil. In 1968 a substantial number of the toughs who surged through the Chicago streets, inciting the police to riot, were later revealed to be police and intelligence agents. They urged violent actions, pulled down American flags, led taunts and otherwise triggered police attacks. Afterward, demonstrators exulted, equating their seduction of the cameras with victory. But most spectators who watched the clashes on TV sided with the police. Richard Nixon's people knew what use to make of the footage. They strengthened their hold over the law-and-order vote.

In jittery 2004, swing voters in a country poised on a political knife-edge could again be stampeded to support the incumbent if they equate the opposition with disruption. Although we have no idea how many demonstrators are prepared to act recklessly, recent postings on antiwar websites suggest a go-for-broke mood among some: “If we kick their ass in the early part of the week, we're going to inspire people to come out into the streets and join us.... Harassing the shit out of the GOP delegates is going to create a mosaic of interesting, militant resistance.” “We need to destroy the model of what ‘normal people’ think of protest movements: all that sign-holding, standing around and chanting slogans.” “Who gives a fuck about some voter in Missouri? How about the billions around the world who are fucking tired of the U.S.A.?”

Everyone shares responsibility to avert a debacle. The police ought to be scrupulously well-behaved. The media ought to cover disruptions proportionately. Viewers must understand that the cameras are drawn to sensational excess. And the marchers need their own monitors to practice nonviolent discipline and contain any disruptors—who are, de facto, not misguided friends but opponents.

Now, in a precarious time, every force in America is being tested. The Bush Administration plainly flunks. The Bloomberg administration has proved its small-mindedness. But we who oppose Bush face our own tests. If, as the whole world watches, rioters hi-

jack the protest, the fine intentions of millions will have been canceled by the behavior of a few. Let dissent with dignity win the day and let us get on with a more perfect chapter of American history.

TODD GITLIN AND JOHN PASSACANTANDO

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## Kristol's War



A silver lining amid the dismal outpouring of news from Iraq has been the unbroken parade of conservative (and liberal hawk) commentators who now admit—with mea culpas, half-apologies and sour complaints about Bush Administration incompetence—that they were misguided about the war. “The first thing to say,” David Brooks professed in April, “is that I never thought it would be this bad.” “I think it’s a total nightmare and disaster and I’m ashamed that I went against my own instincts in supporting it,” Tucker Carlson has affirmed. Says a recent *New Republic* editorial, “The central assumption underlying this magazine’s strategic rationale for war now appears to have been wrong.” But the most influential prowar pundit has thus far held his tongue: *Weekly Standard* editor William Kristol, who calls himself an “unapologetic hawk,” and whose journal was the foremost incubation chamber for neoconservative thinking and strategy on Iraq.

For Kristol and the *Standard*, Bush's war against Saddam marked the culmination of a protracted crusade. In 1997 the magazine, owned by Rupert Murdoch, published a special issue titled “Saddam Must Go: A How-To Guide.” The authors of one article—current US ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz—proclaimed, in language that would later become familiar, “Saddam is not ten feet tall. In fact, he is weak. But we are letting this tyrant, who seeks to build weapons of mass destruction, get stronger.”

The events of 9/11 created a historic opportunity for Kristol and his editors. Within days of the attacks, the *Standard* had already identified Saddam Hussein as a principal culprit for the violence. The cover of the *Standard*'s October 1, 2001, issue contained a single word—“WANTED”—above stark black-and-white photographs of Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. “Evidence that Iraq may have aided in the horrific attacks of September 11 is beginning to accumulate,” Kristol (and contributing editor Robert Kagan) intoned in an editorial. Over the next eighteen months, the *Standard* mounted a furious campaign against Iraq with a torrent of essays and editorials that, as we now know, were long on hubris and wishful thinking, and short on accuracy:

§ “It is not just a matter of justice to depose Saddam. It is a matter of self defense: He is currently working to acquire weapons of mass destruction that he or his confederates will unleash against America and our allies if given the chance.” (Max Boot, “The Case for American Empire,” October 15, 2001)

§ “If all we do is contain Saddam's Iraq, it is a virtual certainty that Baghdad will soon have nuclear weapons.” (Gary



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Schmitt, "Why Iraq?" October 29, 2001)

§ "Iraq is the only nation in the world, other than the United States and Russia, to have developed the kind of sophisticated anthrax that appeared in the letter sent to Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle." (Kagan and Kristol, "Getting Serious," November 19, 2001)

§ "Today, no one knows how close Saddam is to having a nuclear device. What we do know is that every month that passes brings him closer to the prize." (Kagan and Kristol, "What to Do About Iraq," January 21, 2002)

§ "According to an Iraqi newspaper...Saddam told the bomb-makers to accelerate the pace of their work...Saddam has been moving ahead into a new era, a new age of horrors where terrorists don't commandeer jumbo jets and fly them into our skyscrapers. They plant nuclear bombs in our cities." (Kagan and Kristol, "Back on Track," April 29, 2002)

This incendiary language, directed at a grieving, traumatized nation, appeared in the pages of the nation's most influential conservative journal of opinion—one that has a symbiotic relationship with the present Administration. "Dick Cheney does send over someone to pick up thirty copies of the magazine every Monday," Kristol bragged to the *New York Times* on the eve of war. And the *Washington Post* has reported that Kristol meets regularly with Karl Rove and Condoleezza Rice. Kristol's clout in Washington, combined with his bellicosity toward Iraq, inspired in mid-2002 a phrase from columnist Richard Cohen: "Kristol's war."

A hallucinatory quality infused the *Standard's* Iraq coverage right up through the first phase of the war, and beyond. "In all likelihood, Baghdad will be liberated by April," contributing editor Max Boot averred in February 2003, adding, "This may turn out to be one of those hinge moments in history—events like the storming of the Bastille or the fall of the Berlin Wall—after which everything is different." A delusory note was sounded immediately after the fall of Baghdad, when a *Standard* editorial, written by executive editor Fred Barnes, wondered if George W. Bush would be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for toppling Saddam.

In mid- to late 2003, as the Iraqi resistance proliferated, the *Standard* dug in its heels with a series of editorials demanding additional resources for the war effort, while simultaneously expressing a rosy view. "Iraq has not descended into inter-religious and inter-ethnic violence," the editors announced last September. "There is food and water. Hospitals are up and running." As recently as June, the editors informed their readers that "we are actually winning the war in Iraq," and went on to say "the security situation, though inexcusably bad, looks as if it may finally be improving; Moktada al-Sadr seems to have been marginalized, and the Shia center is holding; there is nothing approaching civil war."

At the same time, the *Standard* worked assiduously to forge a link between Iraq and Al Qaeda. Over the past eight months, the magazine has published three cover stories on the "connection" by staff writer Stephen Hayes. "Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein," Hayes wrote in November, in an article praised by Cheney, "had an operational relationship from the early 1990s to 2003 that involved training in explosives and weapons of mass destruction...." (Emphasis added.) Hayes's second cover story arrived on newsstands just weeks before a staff statement by the 9/11 com-

mission transformed his theory into a pile of rubble. (In the *Standard's* June 28 issue, Kristol dismissed the work of the 9/11 commission as "sloppy" and "unimpressive.")

The performance of Kristol & Co. raises disconcerting questions about the magazine. Is the *Standard*, which publishes the work of respected commentators like Christopher Caldwell, Joseph Epstein and John DiIulio Jr., a weekly compendium of responsible conservative opinion, or is it a haven for charlatans, conspiracy theorists and con men? In a recent appearance on Terry Gross's *Fresh Air*, Kristol grouched about the Bush Administration's handling of the war but was rather reticent on the subject of Iraq's WMD. Not so long ago, Kristol addressed the matter with confidence. Before US troops entered Baghdad, he assured his readers, "The war itself will clarify who was right and who was wrong

## CALVIN TRILLIN

## BUSH, AFTER SAYING HE'LL CEDE HOLLYWOOD TO THE DEMOCRATS BECAUSE HE HAS THE REGULAR PEOPLE BEHIND HIM, SINGS A SONG TO THAT EFFECT, TO THE TUNE OF THAT OLD MARGARET WHITING FAVORITE, 'FARAWAY PLACES'

Regular people, just plain working folks  
Always stood out in my eyes.

I scorn all those people who drink wine instead  
Of eating Frito pies.

Prince Bandar bin Sultan's a regular Joe—  
Bandar eats grits and he hunts.  
Ol' Bandar digs NASCAR and country and snuff,  
And that's why I do what he wants.

*Bridge (sung with gusto):*

That Kenny Boy Lay was the salt of the earth.  
Too bad he took the fall.  
I like CEOs, they're all common as dirt.  
I liked Kenny Boy best of all.

It's plain folks with money this country's about.  
Not Hollywood, not all that smut.  
To people in bluejeans with millions I pledge  
Your taxes will be cut.



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about weapons of mass destruction." The verdict is in; we have the facts; the matter has been clarified. Writers like David Brooks and Tucker Carlson, who have an extensive history with the *Standard*, have already unburdened themselves. It's time for William Kristol to follow their lead and say he was wrong. SCOTT SHERMAN

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## Sex, Lies and Politics

Throwing a bone to its sex-obsessed religious base, the GOP has slipped an abstinence activist into its convention mix of mostly moderate speakers. Miss America 2003 will put a smiley face on President Bush's bulging chastity industry, for which he has allotted \$273 million in his 2005 budget, plus a third of the \$15 billion global AIDS-relief package.

The ascendancy of abstinence-only under Bush has not only altered funding priorities; it has sanctioned a climate of hostility toward sexual health professionals, who increasingly face harassment, intimidation and marginalization if they stray from the abstinence-only-unless-married line. For example, in the spring of 2003 a Tennessee teacher's thirty-year career nearly derailed after she commented on an abstinence video shown to her seventh-grade health class (her comments, presumably critical, were not made public). Charged with incompetence and insubordination, she was retrained and reassigned. Or take the Florida teacher who was suspended after his students used a banana to demonstrate how to put on a condom; he couldn't make the meeting where school officials fired him because his wife was in labor.

Even abstinence educators face right-wing wrath if they depart from the movement's dogma. University of Arkansas health science professor Michael Young, co-author of the award-winning "Sex Can Wait" curriculum, has been targeted by conservatives

simply because he adheres to a law dictating that abstinence education be medically accurate and neutral on religion and abortion. Young was vilified by Focus on the Family and the Abstinence Clearinghouse for conducting a university-approved survey asking state abstinence coordinators how they define "sexual activity." "I've been involved in controversy forever," said Young, a Southern Baptist deacon, "but I never before felt I could lose my job." After an aide to US Congressman Dave Weldon smeared Young last year, the state dropped its contract for "Sex Can Wait."

Unlike buttoned-down Young, the bearded, free-spirited University of Kansas professor Dennis Dailey seems just the 1960s throwback conservatives love to slam. A single student complaint spun into accusations that "Dr. Dailey's a pedophile," a dozen death threats and hundreds of ugly e-mails. The offended student turned out to be an intern for hard-right Kansas State Senator Susan Wagle. "It doesn't matter if what you're doing is good or bad," said Dailey, honored for teaching excellence when under fire. "When they attack, it's about forwarding their agenda."

Dailey noted that the field has always been controversial, but today's attacks are more vile and infused with more money. Sexuality professionals discuss this trend's chilling effect, but most insist on anonymity for fear of losing their jobs or organizational funding. "Principals are afraid, teachers are nervous," said Elizabeth Schroeder, a sex ed trainer and consultant. "We walk around on eggshells when we're offering life-saving, life-enhancing information." Eva Goldfarb, assistant professor in health professions at Montclair State University and co-author of the sexuality curriculum "Our Whole Lives," added, "The difference now is the assault is top down. It's sanctioned at the highest levels." Thus, after Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) and Advocates for Youth initiated an online campaign against federal funding of abstinence-only in late 2002, the two groups were subjected to three federal audits each.

Caged and cornered, the thirty-seven-year-old American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists (AASECT) and forty-six-year-old Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality (SSSS) are venturing into the political fray. With their members demonized as "the condom crowd" or "promiscuity pushers," these professional organizations have joined activist coalitions in support of sexual health education and research; are backing the comprehensive Family Life Education Act; and both chose unprecedented advocacy themes for their conferences this year. Of course, chastity crusaders have long shed any modesty about pushing a political agenda. While AASECT conference presentations in May included research on sexuality and aging, disability and sexual abuse, the Abstinence Clearinghouse's "Pure Country" conference in June included presentations by Focus on the Family, Bush Administration officials and Judith Reisman, known for pedophile smears against sex researchers like the late Alfred Kinsey. The Abstinence Clearinghouse, whose founder also runs an anti-abortion center, is a key cog in a retro-right movement experienced in ideological warfare. "Who wins in the end?" Dailey asked. "I vote on science, rationality and good hearts." LARA RISCOL

### NATION NOTES

Sidney Morgenbesser, the philosopher's philosopher, died on August 1. Sidney was one of a kind. An ordained rabbi who didn't practice (but belonged to Americans for Peace Now); a scholar who mostly didn't publish (if your grandmother knows it, don't publish it, he would say, adding, "Moses only published one book"); a teacher whose main classroom was Broadway between 110th and 116th Streets (where he would wander like a kibitzing Socrates asking Columbia colleagues, students, friends and passers-by essential questions that as often as not had no answers); and not least, for many years a member of *The Nation's* editorial board who made constructive trouble, and whose jokes, analytic interventions and nagging pushed us in the direction of clarity, logic, moral intelligence and humanism.

We also note the death on August 4 of Gloria Emerson, best remembered for her fiercely honest dispatches from Vietnam. In a 1995 *Nation* book review, she wrote that a writer must make war imaginable, for "in the detail is the horror."

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