

May 22, 2014

It's time for a look at India's elections. [Tunku Varadarajan](#) is first.

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India's voters had brought to power a man who is not permitted to visit the United States, having been denied a U.S. visa in 2005 on account of a State Department determination that he had violated religious freedoms in the Indian state of Gujarat. (Some 2,000 Muslims had died in riots that scarred Gujarat in 2002. Modi was the state's chief minister at the time, and his critics hold him responsible for the deaths.) The visa ban was still in place when Modi was nominated last September to lead the Bharatiya Janata [Indian People's] Party into the elections; and most awkwardly for Obama, the ban was still technically in place on the day of his victory. American diplomacy has been decidedly maladroit.

As if jolted awake by the obtuseness of his own State Department, Obama invited Modi to visit the U.S. "at a mutually agreeable time" when he called the Indian on Saturday to congratulate him on his triumph.

A meeting between the two men, when it occurs, could be fascinating to observe. Obama and Modi are from two different planets, and each, in his heart, is likely to have vigorous contempt for the other. The former is an exquisitely calibrated product of American liberalism, ever attentive to such notions as "inclusiveness." He is the acme of political correctness (notwithstanding the odd drone directed at "AfPak"). Modi, by contrast, is a blunt-spoken nationalist, opposed to welfare, and to the "appeasement" of minorities. ...

With a bit of hyperbole, [Kevin Williamson](#) calls Modi the "leader of the free world" and has a nice send off for Manmohan Singh.

... as Manmohan Singh steps off the stage, take a moment to appreciate what he managed. Political careers end either in death or disappointment, and Dr. Singh's is no different — the corruption and incompetence that his government slid into in its last years brought India to a virtual standstill. But before that, his policies, from his time as finance minister forward, were the proximate cause of hundreds of millions of people rising out of poverty. There are very few world leaders who can say as much, and Nobel prizes have been awarded for less — much, much less, within recent memory. ...

[WSJ Editors](#) celebrate the election.

... Mr. Modi's record offers reason for optimism. As governor for 13 years of Gujarat state, he was the archetypal energetic executive, forcing through approvals of new projects and welcoming foreign investment. Gujarat now accounts for 25% of India's exports, and the poverty rate has plunged. As the son of a tea-seller, Mr. Modi also has a gut sense of the economic aspirations of ordinary Indians.

That's more than can be said for the losing Congress Party. Under [Sonia Gandhi](#) —scion of the family that has ruled India for the better part of its 67 years—Congress reverted to its old political strategy of doling out benefits to the poor and discouraging foreign investment. The

result was growth below 5%, which to most Indians felt like a recession. With a work force growing by 12 million a year but only two million new jobs being created, it effectively was.

The best news from the BJP's landslide is that welfare-state promises didn't work with Indians who began to taste the fruits of reform and faster growth in the 1990s and 2000s. The country's burgeoning middle class has been exposed to the broader world and wants more opportunities. Mr. Modi appealed to this new class of Indians in his campaign. He emphasized the difference between an older generation who died "for independence" and a younger India that "will live for good governance." ...

More from the [Christian Science Monitor](#).

Right-wing Hindu nationalist Narendra Modi swept to power in a historic landslide victory in Indian elections, official results released on Friday showed.

Mr. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won an outright victory, the first single party to do so for 30 years, with at least 279 of the 543 parliament seats up for grabs. The ruling Congress party, which has dominated Indian politics for the last 65 years under the Gandhi family, was humiliated, reduced to its worst showing ever.

The results were a stunning personal triumph for Modi, who ran a presidential-style election campaign promising development and economic growth that would bring jobs and services after several years of slowing growth and nearly double-digit inflation.

"This is the end of the ice age in Indian politics," BJP spokesman Sambit Para told CNN-IBN TV.

"This is a huge meltdown for Congress," agreed Yashwant Deshmukh, a pollster and political analyst. "The BJP has replaced Congress across the country as the dominant national party."

Indian stock markets hit record highs on news of Modi's victory, and the rupee rose on currency markets. Outgoing Prime Minister Manmohan Singh congratulated Modi; he will resign tomorrow. ...

And [Kevin Williamson](#) with another note of optimism.

The loser was Rahul Gandhi. The Gandhi political dynasty descends not from Mohandas K. Gandhi, who is not related, but from India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, whose daughter, Indira Gandhi, served as prime minister, and was succeeded by her son, Rajiv. Rajiv's wife, Sonia, became head of the Congress party, and Rahul is her son. A member of the family occupied the Indian premiership for 40 of the country's first 60 years of independence.

I note the defeat of the Gandhi scion mainly to hearten those who fear that the 2016 U.S. presidential ballot will read "Bush/Clinton." Dynasties are not invincible.

Faux commencement address from P. J. O'Rourke delivered to Rutgers, the university that kicked Condi to the curb.

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I hear Condoleezza Rice stood you up. You may think it was because about 50 students—.09 percent of your student body—held a “sit-in” at the university president’s office to protest the selection of Secretary Rice as commencement speaker. You may think it was because a few of your faculty—stale flakes from the crust of the turkey pot pie that was the New Left—threatened a “teach-in” to protest the selection of Secretary Rice.

“Sit-in”? “Teach-in”? What century is this?

I think Secretary Rice forgot she had a yoga session scheduled for today.

It’s shame she was busy. [You might have heard something useful](#) from a person who grew up poor in Jim Crow Alabama. Who lost a friend and playmate in 1963 when white supremacists bombed Birmingham’s Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. Who became an accomplished concert pianist before she tuned her ear to the more dissonant chords of international relations.

Secretary Rice was Phi Beta Kappa at the University of Denver and received a B.A. cum laude in political science—back before the worst grade a student had ever heard of was a B-.

The professor who influenced her most was Josef Korbel, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright’s father.

Secretary Albright and Secretary Rice don’t agree on much about international relations. But they don’t sit-in or teach-in at each other’s public appearances.

Secretary Rice got a master’s in political science from Notre Dame, a Ph.D. in political science from Denver and, in the meantime, was an intern at the Carter administration State Department and the Rand Corporation and studied Russian at Moscow State University.

She rose from assistant professor to provost at Stanford. (Ranked fifth-best university in America by U.S. News & World Report. You’re ranked 69th.) While she was doing that, she also served, from 1989 to 1991, as the Soviet expert on the White House National Security Council under President George H. W. Bush. ...

Late night humor from Andrew Malcolm.

Seth Meyers: A new study claims that one-in-10 Americans no longer carries cash. They’re called ‘English majors.’

Conan: There is now an app that will choose something random for you to watch on Netflix. The app is called ‘Your Girlfriend.’

Fallon: A Texas town plans to recycle toilet water and use it for drinking water. Dogs said, “How are you only thinking of this now?”

Daily Beast

Mr. Politically Correct Obama, Meet Your Opposite, India's Mr. Modi

India's new prime minister has been barred from the U.S. because of alleged links to a religious massacre, but that's not the only reason a meeting with the president will be difficult.

by Tunku Varadarajan

NEW DELHI, India -- When Barack Obama was made aware that Narendra Modi would be India's next prime minister, the chances are that he moaned softly to himself...and cringed.

India's voters had brought to power a man who is not permitted to visit the United States, having been [denied a U.S. visa in 2005](#) on account of a State Department determination that he had violated religious freedoms in the Indian state of Gujarat. (Some 2,000 Muslims had died in riots that scarred Gujarat in 2002. Modi was the state's chief minister at the time, and his critics hold him responsible for the deaths.) The visa ban was still in place when Modi was nominated last September to lead the *Bharatiya Janata* [Indian People's] Party into the elections; and most awkwardly for Obama, the ban was still technically in place on the day of his victory. American diplomacy has been decidedly maladroit.

As if jolted awake by the obtuseness of his own State Department, Obama invited Modi to visit the U.S. "at a mutually agreeable time" when he called the Indian on Saturday to congratulate him on his triumph.

A meeting between the two men, when it occurs, could be fascinating to observe. Obama and Modi are from two different planets, and each, in his heart, is likely to have vigorous contempt for the other. The former is an exquisitely calibrated product of American liberalism, ever attentive to such notions as "inclusiveness." He is the acme of political correctness (notwithstanding the odd drone directed at "AfPak"). Modi, by contrast, is a blunt-spoken nationalist, opposed to welfare, and to the "appeasement" of minorities.

Unlike Obama, who can scarcely bring himself to embrace the notion of American Exceptionalism, Modi is an Indian exceptionalist—although not in the manner of Indian leaders who have preceded him. Traditional Indian foreign policy, mired in a reflexive, postcolonial non-alignment, has always held that India has moral lessons to impart to other nations. Its international posturing has had a preachy (and frequently hypocritical) quality to it, of the sort that can get on the nerves of American presidents and other Western leaders. Modi's foreign projection is likely to be more assertive: It is plain that he envisions a strong India that is accorded respect by other nations, and that also pulls its weight in the world.

This assertiveness comes with its dangers, of course. Will he show restraint in the event of a cross-border terrorist incursion into India from Pakistan? Will he provoke a crisis with neighboring Bangladesh—that rarest of societies, a secular Muslim-majority democracy—by cracking down hard on the movement of its migrants into India? How will he react to Chinese provocations, which are sure to come, given Beijing's increasingly bellicose insistence on its territorial claims on land and at sea?

The foreign leader he will bond with best is unlikely to be Obama, an American president who has none of the instinctive feel for India, or for the enormous potential of a U.S.-India alliance, that George W. Bush had. The withering of that alliance has been one of the bleak, untold stories of Obama's period in office, and one senses that India will have to wait for Hillary Clinton to reach the White House before the Delhi-Washington relationship blossoms again.

Modi's keenest ally—potentially his BFF—is likely to be Japan's Shinzo Abe, who was one of the first to send his congratulations to the Indian politician when it became apparent that he would be the next prime minister. Abe and Modi are, in many ways, made for each other: Ardent nationalists yearning to break free from their respective nations' patterns of international passivity, they both face the terrifying challenge of a China that plays by its own unyielding rules, a maximalist hegemon which has the economic and military heft to dispense with diplomacy as the primary means of dispute resolution.

Shinzo Abe, disconcerted by the ebbing of American influence—and by the reluctance of Obama to project (much less deploy) American power in the service of its allies—has every reason to cultivate Narendra Modi. Japan has a lot to offer India in the renovation of the latter's appalling infrastructure, and Tokyo is raring to ramp up the rate of its business with India. India is a fellow democracy, and, like Japan, feels acutely vulnerable to Chinese territorial and economic expansionism. By linking up, Tokyo and Delhi can bolster each others' defense, each others' confidence, and give heart also to the other nations in the region that feel the burn of the Chinese nationalist furnace.

Although national security is a primary concern for Modi, his foreign policy is likely to be carried on the back of his economic policy. He is aware that India can only be consequential if its economy is growing: not only would growth enable India to afford the military hardware it needs to match China; it would also ensure that the widest possible range of international business interests come to have a stake in India. As the case of China shows, a sufficiently extensive foreign business presence confers on the host country a high degree of immunity from foreign criticism and sanctions. So the American leaders with whom Modi will have the most direct dialogue will not be in Washington but on Wall Street, and in the American corporate sector. And he will not need a visa to see them; they will come to Delhi.

Modi's victory will also energize the large and wealthy Indian diaspora in the United States. He has many supporters in that country, and it was an invitation from an Indian-American business group that gave rise to the need for a visa in 2005. Modi, one suspects, will be in no hurry to visit the land that considered him unfit for entry only a short while ago. And Obama, one also suspects, is in no great hurry to see Modi, in spite of his pro forma invitation on Saturday. It's not that the twain will never meet: it's that they don't particularly relish the prospect of ever doing so.

The Corner

[And the New Leader of the Free World Is . . .](#)

by Kevin Williamson

To nobody's surprise, Narendra Modi. But the [scale of his victory](#) was surprising, indeed.

(If you want to know why I call the Indian PM the leader of the free world, there's much more [here](#).)

But as Manmohan Singh steps off the stage, take a moment to appreciate what he managed. Political careers end either in death or disappointment, and Dr. Singh's is no different — the corruption and incompetence that his government slid into in its last years brought India to a virtual standstill. But before that, his policies, from his time as finance minister forward, were the proximate cause of hundreds of millions of people rising out of poverty. There are very few world leaders who can say as much, and Nobel prizes have been awarded for less — much, much less, within recent memory.

If Mr. Modi can do as much, he'll have something to be proud of.

WSJ - Editorial

India's Modi Moment

A landslide for the BJP offers hope for an economic breakthrough.

National elections in India are often better as a democratic spectacle than for their results, but that can't be said of the landslide win Indian voters have given Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party. In parliamentary elections that lasted five weeks and counted some 550 million ballots, Indians put their faith in a party promising economic opportunity and better governance over the traditional Indian formula of welfarism, patronage, corruption and hostility to foreign competition.

Mr. Modi will be the first Prime Minister to govern without a coalition in nearly 30 years, and he has a rare mandate to enact market-opening reforms that had stalled under the government of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Indian equities soared on the news, though there's also a risk that he could attempt to implement a Chinese-style version of state capitalism on a country that lacks Chinese-style political controls.



BJP leader Narendra Modi gestures while speaking to supporters in Vadodra, India, after his landslide victory in elections on Friday

Mr. Modi's record offers reason for optimism. As governor for 13 years of Gujarat state, he was the archetypal energetic executive, forcing through approvals of new projects and welcoming foreign investment. Gujarat now accounts for 25% of India's exports, and the poverty rate has plunged. As the son of a tea-seller, Mr. Modi also has a gut sense of the economic aspirations of ordinary Indians.

That's more than can be said for the losing Congress Party. Under [Sonia Gandhi](#)—scion of the family that has ruled India for the better part of its 67 years—Congress reverted to its old political strategy of doling out benefits to the poor and discouraging foreign investment. The result was growth below 5%, which to most Indians felt like a recession. With a work force growing by 12 million a year but only two million new jobs being created, it effectively was.

The best news from the BJP's landslide is that welfare-state promises didn't work with Indians who began to taste the fruits of reform and faster growth in the 1990s and 2000s. The country's burgeoning middle class has been exposed to the broader world and wants more opportunities. Mr. Modi appealed to this new class of Indians in his campaign. He emphasized the difference between an older generation who died "for independence" and a younger India that "will live for good governance."

The immediate challenge Mr. Modi will face is whether he can provide not only disciplined governance but also statesmanlike consensus-building. His record in Gujarat was tarnished at the start by allegations that he did not stop bloody anti-Muslim rioting in which more than 1,000 people were killed. The BJP is a Hindu nationalist party, but India is not a Hindu-only country.

The Gujarat episode landed Mr. Modi on a State Department list of foreigners who can't enter the U.S., though that should long ago have been lifted since there is no evidence of his complicity in the massacre. The White House said Friday he will be invited for an official visit.

More importantly, Mr. Modi will need to build ideological consensus to reverse India's deep-rooted distrust of markets. Riding herd on civil servants is possible in a state of 60 million people like Gujarat, but it is impossible in a fractious nation of 1.2 billion people.

If Mr. Modi pursues industrial policy rather than pro-market reforms, he may revive growth over the next few years as some businesses expand. But he would also create a web of crony capitalism that leads back to stagnation in the longer term. This would also be politically unpopular, since corruption is now one of the public's top concerns. A model that sets equitable ground rules and withdraws government to the role of referee is more compatible with India's democracy.

Mr. Modi will signal which direction he is turning by his choice of finance minister, especially since the BJP does not have a deep bench of economic policy makers. While the party pushed through significant reforms when it was in power from 1998 to 2004, that generation of leaders has largely passed from the scene. In recent years its members in Parliament have competed with Congress to promise more welfare spending, and Mr. Modi himself opposed foreign investment in Indian retailing.

One promising candidate is Arun Shourie, an economist, former journalist and one of the BJP's few free-market intellectuals. He served as Disinvestment Minister under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and proved courageous in privatizing state firms. He also has experience in parliamentary maneuvering, and since he is now 72 he is unlikely to harbor ambitions to become Prime Minister.

Mr. Modi may have a strong mandate, but if he is to transform India he needs to set a bold reform course early and avoid the pitfall of governing like a chief minister. Picking a man of ideas to balance his own strength as a man of action could be a winning combination.

Christian Science Monitor

Modi takes India with eye-popping margin of victory

Narendra Modi's BJP was the first party to win outright in 30 years. It was a stunning triumph for Modi, who ran a presidential-style election campaign promising development and economic growth.

by Peter Ford

New Delhi - Right-wing Hindu nationalist Narendra Modi swept to power in a historic landslide victory in Indian elections, official results released on Friday showed.

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The results were a stunning personal triumph for Modi, who ran a presidential-style election campaign promising development and economic growth that would bring jobs and services after several years of slowing growth and nearly double-digit inflation.

"This is the end of the ice age in Indian politics," BJP spokesman Sambit Para told CNN-IBN TV.

"This is a huge meltdown for Congress," agreed Yashwant Deshmukh, a pollster and political analyst. "The BJP has replaced Congress across the country as the dominant national party."

Indian stock markets hit record highs on news of Modi's victory, and the rupee rose on currency markets. Outgoing Prime Minister Manmohan Singh congratulated Modi; he will resign tomorrow.

The scale of the BJP victory, and Modi's key role in it, means that "power will be more concentrated in the hands of one person than it has been since Indira Gandhi" ruled the country in the 1970s, says Gilles Verniers, an analyst of Indian politics.

The BJP won its highest-ever share of the vote, but still took little more than one-third of the ballots. The Congress party's share dropped only slightly from recent elections, to around 24 percent, but India's "first past the post" electoral system ensured a thumping victory for the BJP and its allies, who together won an estimated 335 seats.

Outside BJP headquarters in Delhi a small but joyful crowd gathered in the early afternoon, decked out in orange caps and lotus flower brooches proclaiming their party sympathies. Dancing girls swayed to the rhythm of deafening drums as two elephants, lotus flowers drawn in chalk on their trunks, looked on.

“We are happy because Modi is a true Indian and a good leader,” Parween Singh, a quality control engineer, shouted over the din. “We want jobs and he will definitely bring them.”

The election results ensure a stable government, since the BJP will not need to seek parliamentary allies to ensure its majority, as all Indian governments have been obliged to do for the past three decades. Though Modi is expected to rally regional parties to his coalition in order to boost his position, none will be in a position to impose its demands.

Rahul Gandhi, the current incarnation of the Gandhi dynasty descended from independence leader Jawaharlal Nehru, held his parliamentary seat, but his political future seems uncertain in the wake of his party’s crushing defeat. “I take full responsibility for what has happened,” Mr. Gandhi said in brief statement to reporters.

“Some serious introspection and maybe beyond introspection needs to be done,” acknowledged Congress spokeswoman Ragini Nayak. All the party’s chief ministers in provincial states offered their resignations when the extent of their party’s rout became clear.

The Corner

Last Thought on the Indian Election

by Kevin D. Williamson

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Daily Beast

My Commencement Speech to Rutgers’ Geniuses: Go Forth and Fail

Greetings, Class of 2014. So Condoleezza Rice was too offensive for you. Just wait until Monday morning. Did you learn how to spell KFC?

by P. J. O'Rourke

Rutgers Did Not Invite Me to Give Its Commencement Speech Today...

The university got pretty confused about who would, after [Condoleezza Rice declined](#).

Rutgers invited, then disinvited, then re-invited Eric LeGrand, the Rutgers defensive tackle who was paralyzed from the shoulders down in a 2010 football game. LeGrand went on to write two books, become a motivational speaker, and finish his Rutgers degree via Skype.

Between inviting and re-inviting LeGrand, Rutgers invited and confirmed the invitation of former New Jersey governor and former head of the 9/11 Commission Tom Kean. So the university has two—and, for all I know, still counting—commencement speakers. But Rutgers never got confused enough to invite me.

Eric LeGrand and Tom Kean are uplifting figures. LeGrand has raised hope. Kean has raised hell with the CIA and FBI. I am not uplifting.

Here Is What I Would Tell the Rutgers Graduating Class of 2014...

I hear Condoleezza Rice stood you up. You may think it was because about 50 students—.09 percent of your student body—held a “sit-in” at the university president’s office to protest the selection of Secretary Rice as commencement speaker. You may think it was because a few of your faculty—stale flakes from the crust of the turkey pot pie that was the New Left—threatened a “teach-in” to protest the selection of Secretary Rice.

“Sit-in”? “Teach-in”? What century is this?

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It’s shame she was busy. [You might have heard something useful](#) from a person who grew up poor in Jim Crow Alabama. Who lost a friend and playmate in 1963 when white supremacists bombed Birmingham’s Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. Who became an accomplished concert pianist before she tuned her ear to the more dissonant chords of international relations.

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Secretary Albright and Secretary Rice don’t agree on much about international relations. But they don’t sit-in or teach-in at each other’s public appearances.

Secretary Rice got a master’s in political science from Notre Dame, a Ph.D. in political science from Denver and, in the meantime, was an intern at the Carter administration State Department and the Rand Corporation and studied Russian at Moscow State University.

She rose from assistant professor to provost at Stanford. (Ranked fifth-best university in America by *U.S. News & World Report*. You’re ranked 69th.) While she was doing that, she also served, from 1989 to 1991, as the Soviet expert on the White House National Security Council under President George H. W. Bush.

1989 happens to be when the Berlin Wall fell. I know, I know, most of you weren’t born, and you get your news from TMZ. A wall falling over can’t be as interesting as Beyoncé’s sister punching and kicking Jay Z in a New York hotel elevator. But that 1989 moment of “something there is that doesn’t love a wall” (and I’ll bet you a personal karaoke performance of Beyoncé’s “Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)” that you can’t name the poet who wrote it) had interesting consequences. Stop taking selfies and Google “Berlin Wall” on the iPhones you’re all fiddling with.

Condoleezza Rice was named National Security Adviser in December 2000, less than a year before some horrific events that you may know of. She became Secretary of State in 2005 during an intensely difficult period in American history (which your teach-in was not going to teach you much about). And she saw the job through to the end of the fraught and divisive George W. Bush presidency, making moral and ethical decisions of such a complex and contradictory nature that they would have baffled Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle (of whom I suppose, perhaps naively, you have heard) put together.

You've made complex and contradictory moral and ethical decisions about serving beer to freshmen during Greek Week and whether to stealthily Google "Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle" during your Philosophy 101 exam.

Some of your professors don't believe that Secretary Rice would be worth listening to. Some believe you need to be taught to disapprove of her morals and ethics. I am quoting your state's *Star-Ledger* newspaper: "Attending the teach-in will be a strong signal that we will not sit quietly while a small group of irresponsible people [although I'd thought we'd established who they were during the sit-in] dishonor our beloved university," said history professor Rudolph Bell."

Rudolph "Jingle" Bell. It is to be hoped poor Rudolph doesn't have a very shiny nose.

Anyway, you might have heard something good from Secretary Rice. You'll hear nothing good from me.

Here you are graduating from Rutgers, which is, as I mentioned, the 69th best university in America. Maybe Rutgers should add more vegan selections to its cafeteria fare. *U.S. News & World Report* scorekeepers go for that kind of thing. Actually, you're tied for 69th with Texas A&M, an NFL first-round draft with a small college attached.

Your most famous alumni are Garret A. Hobart, 24th vice president of the United States, Ozzie Nelson of *Ozzie and Harriet*, Mr. Magoo, and seven former governors of New Jersey. Given the recent history of that office, I promise not to tell anybody. (Gov. Kean went to Princeton.)

And you just wasted \$100,308 on tuition, fees, and room and board, assuming you were able to zip through Rutgers in a mere four years. Although you only wasted \$53,996 if you were living in your parents' basement. But you wasted \$156,404 if you're one of those bridge and tunnel people from out of state. Let's call it a hundred long. Approximately 14,000 of you are graduating this year. That's \$1.4 billion wasted.

Why do I say "wasted"? Those of you who are, know why. Those of you who, for reasons unfathomable, are sober on this occasion may need it explained.

I have done research. I used the same tools for deep and comprehensive understanding that you used for your essays and term papers—Wikipedia and random Internet searches.

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (at least as reliable a source as the National Association of Cats and Dogs), the average starting salary for a newly graduated B.A. is \$45,633.

Not bad, you say. There's almost rent and a car payment in that, after taxes. But "average starting salary" assumes you're salaried. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 75

percent of college graduates are in the labor force. Maybe the rest are on a grad-school full ride getting a Ph.D. in string theory.

There's reason to doubt it. A study by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York shows 44 percent of recent college graduates are underemployed. A report in *The Atlantic* claims half of those recent graduates are working "in jobs that don't require a degree." And, in a National Center for Education Statistics survey, 48 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds with student-loan debt say they are unemployed or underemployed. Can you spell KFC?

The Consumer Finance Protection Bureau puts the total U.S. student loan debt at \$1 trillion. The average college student—look up here, that's you—graduates owing \$24,301 in student loans, never mind your credit-card balance and the second mortgage your parents took out on their house. Ten percent of graduates owe more than \$54,000. Nearly 42 percent of graduates are still paying off college loans between the ages of 30 and 50.

Among the debtors, 14 percent are behind in student-loan payments, and 13.4 percent of all student loans are in default. Therefore you, if you're lucky enough to become a future taxpayer, will be burdened with \$134 billion of other people's student loans as well as what you owe.

I have done research. And I have done mathematical analysis. College is, or once was, for smart people. Less-than-smart people do most of the hard and dangerous work, raise families, show decency and fair play, and possess the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. But somebody needs to be smart or what would happen to predatory hedge funds, evil political machinations, [the entertainment industry's production of awful trash...](#)

Well, maybe nobody does need to be smart. But that's your problem, sitting here thinking you're so smart for graduating from Rutgers.

What intrigues me is that there are 31.1 million Americans between 18 and 24, and 21.8 million of you—70 percent—are going to college. It is not possible that 70 percent of you are among the 50 percent of you who are above-average in intelligence.

Granted, Rutgers' acceptance rate is only 61 percent. This still leaves 1,260 Rutgers graduates who ought to be out providing the world with faith, hope, and charity, and not stuck in this place waiting to receive degrees in Park, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies. That, by the way, is the fastest growing college major in America, so says *U.S. News & World Report*.

Now let me address just the young men in the audience. Guys, of the 21.8 million college students, 12.5 million are women and 9.3 million are men. Guys? What? As someone who's been married a couple of times, I can tell you your wife was always going to be smarter than you. But you're letting her frame it and hang it on the wall.

I have done research. I have done mathematical analysis. I have also done fieldwork. That is, I've talked to people who went to college after the jingle bells of academia took over the institutions. Gosh.

What constitutes a "college education"?

You need to study history, so that it doesn't come around again and, per Santayana, bite you in the Ukraine. You're thinking, "Santayana—historically great guitar player."

You need philosophy, not the modern bull session kind but the Socratic method of “What the hell am I thinking?” And what the hell were you thinking, majoring in History of Film? At least you got to see So-crates in action in *Bill and Ted’s Excellent Adventure*.

You need literature and the arts so you can read something longer than a Beyoncé tweet and throw Bartok into the iPod mix and hear what Jay Z is up against experimenting with music.

A general understanding of science is necessary. You don’t have to learn how to cure cancer. You just have to learn that the guy my age with what’s left of his hair tied in a ponytail who works at the organic locavore shop and talks about the healing properties of crystals and magnetic fields is crazy.

The same goes for mathematics and economics. You should be able to do the math—if you’re still repaying your student loans when you’re 50, college education probably wasn’t a good investment.

Do you know Milton Friedman graduated from Rutgers? Do you know who he is? Won the Nobel Prize for economics. I checked your Department of Economics website. Courses are offered in “Economics of Crime,” “Income Inequality,” “Women in the Economy” (Condoleezza Rice won’t be getting her honorarium for speaking at this ceremony), and “Game Theory.” (Useful on Xbox? Or not so much?) But I don’t see a course called “Capitalism and Freedom,” also the title of the book by Milton Friedman that has been shaping economic debate in this country for half a century.

A language or two is requisite. Preferably Latin and Greek to let you comprehend where our civilization came from. And to let you comprehend whether you are heir to that civilization or spouting hot air about it.

And there’s civics. Although I suppose living in New Jersey is civics lesson enough. An AP credit for civics, you got it.

Eight or so subjects to get a college education. Think you could find 100 wonderful experts in each of these, 800 professors, for \$1.4 billion? That’s \$1.75 million a year apiece. There would be applicants. You could hold classes in the Moose Lodge or at the Y. Classes would be large. So was the agora where Socrates taught. But there’s no free WiFi in the Moose Lodge. And this kind of college education sounds like work. Which is something you’ll be looking hard for, starting tomorrow.

Go Forth and Fail.

IBD

Late Night Humor

by Andrew Malcolm

Seth Meyers: A new study claims that one-in-10 Americans no longer carries cash. They’re called ‘English majors.’

Conan: There is now an app that will choose something random for you to watch on Netflix. The app is called ‘Your Girlfriend.’

SethMeyers: Richard Branson has plans to develop a new plane that could fly from New York to Tokyo in one hour. Apparently, the engines are powered by human screams.

Conan: Jamaica is reportedly close to approving a measure to legalize marijuana. Political analysts call it a "bold move that could change nothing."

Conan: A new report calls Venezuela the most miserable country on Earth. After hearing this, Kim Jong Un said, "What do I have to do?"

Conan: A Florida man went to court for the right to marry his laptop computer. He said his laptop computer is just like a wife because whenever he brings it into bed, it freezes.

Fallon: NBC has won the Olympic broadcast rights for the next 18 years. Now, CNN has won the broadcast rights for that missing plane for the next 18 years.

Conan: The stock price for Whole Foods' has plummeted 20%. That's a drop of \$9, or the price of one grape at Whole Foods.

Conan: Astronomers say they have found a planet with an eight-hour day. Even more surprising, at least six hours of that day are wasted on Facebook.

Conan: A New Hampshire court says a man has the right to have a license plate saying: "Cops Lie." The man also has the right to get pulled over 18 times a day.

Conan: Kim Kardashian and fiance Kanye are still working on their pre-nup. Apparently, they're fighting over whether the marriage should last three months or four.

Fallon: A Texas town plans to recycle toilet water and use it for drinking water. Dogs said, "How are you only thinking of this now?"

SethMeyers: The White House was put into lock-down again after an object was thrown over the fence. So, finally President Obama took away Joe Biden's Frisbee.

Letterman: The oldest guy in the world, 111, now lives in New York City. And he's in great shape, thanks to Coolidge-Care.

SethMeyers: Last week a six-foot-eight Brazilian woman married her longtime boyfriend, who's 5-4. The couple met at a park when the woman noticed her shoe was untied.

SethMeyers: Medical officials across the nation report more baristas are complaining of wrist-related injuries from making drinks. So much for the tough-guy image of baristas.

SethMeyers: The 2015 US Open for Bowling has been cancelled due to a lack of interest from sponsors. And spectators. And bowlers.

Fallon: Eleven past and present co-hosts of 'The View' reunited for Barbara Walters' last show. All had nice things to say. Unfortunately, it was all at the same time.

SethMeyers: A Chicago priest is offering a \$5,000 reward to help stop gun violence. Meanwhile, people with guns just found out about a Chicago priest who has \$5,000.

Fallon: Alec Baldwin was busted for riding his bike the wrong way in a bike lane, and then arguing about it with the cops. That's right, he was charged with two counts of "Being Alec Baldwin."

Fallon: They asked for his ID, but Alec didn't have it. Now we know what's not in his wallet.

SethMeyers: Ikea has announced plans to turn its first-ever store into a museum. And all they need to do it is four pegs and an Allen wrench.

SethMeyers: The president of social media site BuzzFeed has announced that he's stepping down. When asked why he was leaving BuzzFeed, he listed 37 reasons that will blow your mind.

SethMeyers: New research suggests that people who are more ambitious will live longer. While people who are less ambitious will live longer with their parents.

Fallon: During his recent White House visit, Uruguay's President said that more Americans should be bilingual. Then Joe Biden said, "Thanks, but I'm happily married."

Conan: The St. Louis Rams drafted the first openly gay NFL player. Michael Sam celebrated by kissing his boyfriend. This is historic because it's the first time anyone has celebrated being drafted by the St. Louis Rams.

SethMeyers: The Chicago Cubs recorded their 10,000th loss over the weekend. And that's just this season.

SethMeyers: Texas police arrested a 31-year-old woman after she enrolled as a 15-year-old high school sophomore. They became suspicious when the woman was caught not texting during class.

Fallon: Michelle Obama is inviting celebrities to a White House talent show. I heard Joe Biden's been practicing three new songs on his armpit.

Conan: Gay marriage is now legal in Oregon. More amazingly, in Portland it's mandatory.

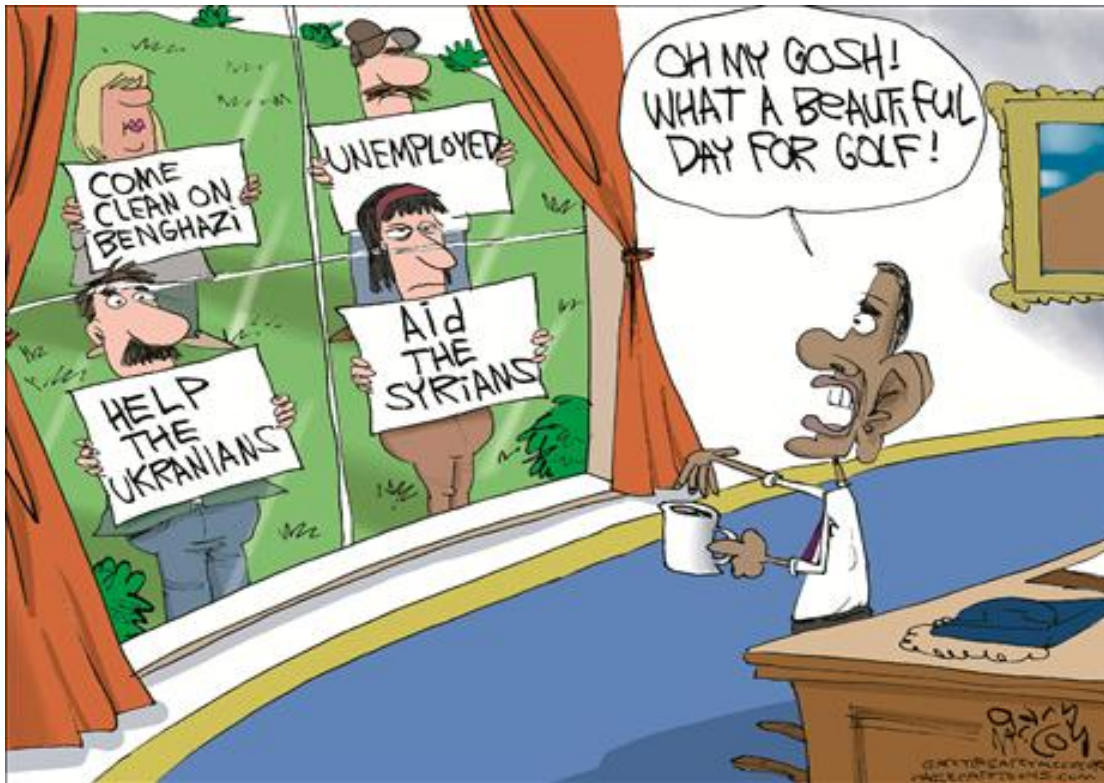
Conan: A high school girl invited Joe Biden to her prom. But her father says No! Not with someone who can't describe what he does for a living.

Conan: Medical researchers now say dogs can sniff out prostate cancer. So finally, we know what they're doing down there.

Fallon: CNN fired an editor for plagiarizing in 50 stories. Not good. CNN was like, "Can you imagine if somebody actually *SAW* them?"

Meyers: An 11 year-old Irish boy saved his grandfather by taking the wheel of his car, using skills he learned playing 'Grand Theft Auto.' Though it was probably unnecessary for him to pull over and beat up that hooker.

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