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Victor Davis Hanson on the collapse abroad and at home.

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On a smaller scale, ISIS is doing to the surge cities of Iraq what Hitler did to his neighbors between 1939 and 1941, and what Putin is perhaps doing now on the periphery of Russia. In Ramadi, ISIS will soon do its accustomed thing of beheading and burning alive its captives, seeking some new macabre twist to sustain its Internet video audience. We in the West trample the First Amendment and jail a video maker for posting a supposedly insensitive film about Islam; in contrast, jihadists post snuff movies of burnings and beheadings to global audiences. We argue not about doing anything or saving anybody, but about whether it is inappropriate to call the macabre killers “jihadists.”

When these seventh-century psychopaths tire of warring on people, they turn to attacking stones, seeking to ensure that there is not a vestige left of the Middle East’s once-glorious antiquities. I assume the ancient Sassanid and Roman imperial site at Palmyra will soon be looted and smashed.

What is unique about American foreign policy today is not just that it is rudderless, but how quickly and completely the 70-year postwar order seems to have disintegrated — and how little interest the American people take in the collapse, thanks to the administration’s apparent redeeming message, which translates, “It’s their misfortune and none of our own.” ...

... Meanwhile, no one seems to much care that between 2009 and 2017, we will have borrowed 8 trillion more dollars. Yet for all that stimulus, the U.S. economy still has staggering labor non-participation rates, flat GDP growth, and stagnant household income. As long as zero interest rates continue, the rich make lots of money in the stock market, and the debt can grow by \$500 billion a year and still be serviced. Financial sobriety is now defined as higher taxes bringing in record revenues to service half-trillion-dollar annual additions to an \$18 trillion debt.

The liberal approach to the underclass continues as it has been for the last 50 years: The elites support huge, unquestioned redistributionist entitlements for the inner city as penance for avoiding it. Minorities are left to run their own political affairs without much worry that their supposed benefactors live apartheid lives, protected by the proof of their caring. The public is left with the lie “Hands up, don’t shoot” as a construct that we will call true, because the made-up last-seconds gasps of Michael Brown perhaps should have happened that way. As an elite bookend, we have a Columbia coed toting around a mattress as proof of society’s insensitivity to sexual violence, which in her case both her university and the New York City police agree never occurred. In theory, perhaps it could have and thus all but did.

As far as scandals go, no one much cares any more about the implosion of the Veterans Administration. In the public’s defense, though, how does one keep straight the multitudinous scandals — Lois Lerner and the rogue IRS, the spying on and tapping of Associated Press

journalists, the National Security Agency disclosures, Fast and Furious, the serial lying about needless deaths in Benghazi, the shenanigans at the General Services Administration, the collapse of sobriety at the Secret Service, the rebooting of air-traffic controllers' eligibility to be adjudicated along racial and ethnic lines, and the deletions from Hillary Clinton's private e-mail server, which doubled as her government server. ...

... Whatever liberalism is, it is not working. Our country's policies overseas are falling apart, while at home our society stagnates and turns tribal — with a growing and embittered underclass, a shrinking and angry middle class, and a plutocratic and apartheid elite who, as absolution for their privilege, are desperate to praise in the abstract what they so studiously avoid in the concrete.

Jennifer Rubin posts on the Current Occupant's dangerous misconceptions about the world.

President Obama remains impervious to world events that do not comport with his singular goal — a deal with Iran, which by virtue of his desperation will bear little resemblance to the “good deal” he promised was possible. In three instances last week, we got a peek into his motives and thinking. It was disturbing, to say the least.

The first revelation concerns the war against the Islamic State. On the heels of the defeats in Ramadi and Palmyra, the president gives no indication he is considering a dramatic course correction in the war against the Islamic State. More horrifying than the losses we have suffered is his determined passivity. ...

... The second revealing episode came in a speech at a Washington synagogue. Obama emotionally recalled Israel in the 1960s (when it was far weaker and less prosperous than it is now) before saying something truly extraordinary: “It is precisely because I care so deeply about the state of Israel — it’s precisely because, yes, I have high expectations for Israel the same way I have high expectations for the United States of America — that I feel a responsibility to speak out honestly about what I think will lead to long-term security and to the preservation of a true democracy in the Jewish homeland.” Acknowledging the Palestinians’ refusal to accept Israel he insisted that “it is worthwhile for us to keep up the prospect, the possibility of bridging divides and being just, and looking squarely at what’s possible but also necessary in order for Israel to be the type of nation that it was intended to be in its earliest founding.”

In other words, it is only because he loves you so much, Israel, that he holds you to a different standard than the rest of the world and that he demands Israel meet his own conception of Israeli democracy (“type of nation that it was intended to be in its earliest founding”). The insistence that Israel be treated differently than other nations and that others can define what is good for it is a sly but all too common form of anti-Israel rhetoric. ...

David Bernstein picks up these thoughts about Israel and says that the president is "nostalgic for white Israel." This is a good lesson about the racial divide in Israel between Western Jews and Eastern Jews.

Oh, the irony. Here's an excerpt from the president's interview with Jeffrey Goldberg:

Obama: *And I care deeply about preserving that Jewish democracy, because when I think about how I came to know Israel, it was based on images of, you know—*

Goldberg: *We talked about this once. Kibbutzim, and—*

Obama: *Kibbutzim, and Moshe Dayan, and Golda Meir, and the sense that not only are we creating a safe Jewish homeland, but also we are remaking the world. We're repairing it. We are going to do it the right way. We are going to make sure that the lessons we've learned from our hardships and our persecutions are applied to how we govern and how we treat others."*

To understand how this sounds to someone sensitive to the history of various historically disfavored groups in Israel, imagine a foreign leader had said "I came to know America based on images of Dwight Eisenhower, Harry Truman, the American Federation of Labor, the Daughters of the American Revolution..." Each of these individuals and groups had their virtues, but lots of us would think, "Geez, you're nostalgic for an America dominated by White Protestants, and you aren't even sensitive enough about the course of American history to recognize it, or assumedly you wouldn't say it."

*The Israel of kibbutzim (kudos to Obama for using the proper Hebrew plural), Dayan, and Meir, was perhaps a more idealistic, and certainly more socialistic Israel. But it was also an Israel dominated by a secularized, Ashkenazic (**European**) elite.*

Mizrahim (Jews from Arab countries), though more than half the population, were marginalized at every level of society. Discrimination was to a large extent institutionalized; the governing Labor Party was run by socialistic Ashkenazim, and given that state capitalism dominated the Israeli economy one's political and social connections (protectsia in Hebrew) went a long way toward determining one's economic prospects.

The kibbutzim in particular were a font of anti-Mizrahi chauvinism; as late as 1985, when I stayed for three weeks on a far-left Hashomer Hatzair kibbutz, the teenage kibbutzniks casually and derogatorily referred to the Moroccan city kids staying on the kibbutz for the Summer as "shechorim" (blacks) (for what it's worth, the Moroccan kids were much nicer than the kibbutzniks). ...

Roger Simon says Jeb Bush owes it to the country to withdraw.

... If Mrs. Clinton were to win the presidency, she would do so under a cloud of distrust unprecedented in any of our lifetimes. She would have no honeymoon period and would not deserve one. And this would be happening at a moment in history when the entire world is on a knife edge because of the rise of radical Islam and ISIS throughout the Middle East, Africa, South East Asia, Latin America and, increasingly, Europe, not to mention having to monitor the controversial nuclear deal with Iran, if and when such a thing is signed.

More than ever, we would need a man or woman in the White House we could trust — yet so many of us wouldn't. America would be split asunder at the beginning of a Hillary presidency as

never before since the Civil War. No other Democratic candidate would create such a rift. If that sounds like an exaggeration, I assure you it is not.

Jeb Bush is eminently positioned to prevent this from happening. He can sacrifice his own presidential ambitions for the good of the country. In the process he would be free to detail his reasons, free to be specific about the lies and evasions surrounding Hillary Clinton's tenure as secretary of state, the erased emails and missing server, the Benghazi prevarications, the ill-conceived and disastrous war in Libya, the dizzying corruption of the Clinton Foundation and then the inability to face the truth when confronted by her own myriad dishonesties, the quasi-fascistic silence of her political campaign during which she avoids substantive questions whenever possible.

While Jeb reminds us that the founding of our country was a rebellion against "royal families," not a blind embracing of them, he can be the one to save us from a rupture that has the potential to destroy our social fabric for years to come. ...

National Review

Disasters at Home and Abroad

From ISIS at Ramadi to riots at home, nothing is going right.

by Victor Davis Hanson

***"Things fall apart; the center cannot hold; / Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world."
– W. B. Yeats, "The Second Coming"***

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ISIS took Ramadi last week. That city once was a Bastogne to the brave Americans who surged to save it in 2007 and 2008. ISIS, once known at the White House as the "Jayvees," were certainly "on the run" — right into the middle of that strategically important city.

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As long as we are not involved at the center of foreign affairs and there is no perceptible short-term danger to our security, few seem to care much that western North Africa is a no-man's-land. Hillary Clinton's "lead from behind" created a replay of Somalia in Libya. The problem with Turkey's Recep Erdogan is not that he is no longer Obama's "special friend," but that he was ever considered a friend at all, as he pressed forward with his plan to destroy Turkish democracy in the long march to theocracy.

There was never much American good will for the often duplicitous Gulf monarchies, so the general public does not seem to be worried that they are now spurned allies. That estrangement became possible because of growing U.S. self-sufficiency in oil and gas (thanks to fracking, which Obama largely opposed). Still, let us hope the Gulf States remain neutral rather than becoming enemies — given their financial clout and the availability of Pakistani bombs for Sunni petrodollars. Meanwhile, the Obama administration has it in for Israel. Why, no one quite knows, given that the Jewish state is the only democratic and liberal society in the Middle East. Perhaps it resembles the United States too closely, and thus earns the reflected hypercriticism that so many leftists cultivate for their own civilization.

Theocratic Iran has won more sympathy from the Obama administration. No neutral observer believes that the current policy of lifting sanctions and conducting negotiations will not lead to an Iranian bomb; it is hoped only that this will be unveiled on the watch of another president, who will be castigated as a warmonger if he is forced to preempt its rollout. The current American foreign policy toward Iran is baffling. Does Obama see the theocracy as a valuable counterweight to the Sunni monarchies? Is it more authentic in the revolutionary sense than the geriatric hereditary kingdoms in the Gulf? Or is the inexplicable policy simply a matter of John Kerry's gambit for a Nobel Peace Prize or some sort of Obama legacy in the eleventh hour, a retake of pulling all U.S. peacekeepers home from a once-quiet Iraq so that Obama could claim he had "ended the war in Iraq"?

Hillary Clinton has been talking up her successful tenure as secretary of state. But mysteriously she has never specified exactly where, when, or how her talents shone. What is she proud of?

Reset with Russia? The Asian pivot to discourage Chinese bellicosity? The critical preliminary preparations for talks with Iran? The Libyan misadventure?

Or perhaps we missed a new initiative to discourage North Korean aggression? Some new underappreciated affinity with Israel and the Gulf monarchies? The routing of ISIS, thanks to Hillary's plans? Shoring up free-market democracies in Latin America? Proving a model of transparency as secretary? Creating a brilliant new private-public synergy by combining the work of the State Department, the Clinton Foundation, and Bill's lecturing — as evidenced by the Haitian renaissance and nation-building in Kazakhstan?

Meanwhile, no one seems to much care that between 2009 and 2017, we will have borrowed 8 trillion more dollars. Yet for all that stimulus, the U.S. economy still has staggering labor non-participation rates, flat GDP growth, and stagnant household income. As long as zero interest rates continue, the rich make lots of money in the stock market, and the debt can grow by \$500 billion a year and still be serviced. Financial sobriety is now defined as higher taxes bringing in record revenues to service half-trillion-dollar annual additions to an \$18 trillion debt.

The liberal approach to the underclass continues as it has been for the last 50 years: The elites support huge, unquestioned redistributionist entitlements for the inner city as penance for avoiding it. Minorities are left to run their own political affairs without much worry that their supposed benefactors live apartheid lives, protected by the proof of their caring. The public is left with the lie “Hands up, don’t shoot” as a construct that we will call true, because the made-up last-seconds gasps of Michael Brown perhaps should have happened that way. As an elite bookend, we have a Columbia coed toting around a mattress as proof of society’s insensitivity to sexual violence, which in her case both her university and the New York City police agree never occurred. In theory, perhaps it could have and thus all but did.

As far as scandals go, no one much cares any more about the implosion of the Veterans Administration. In the public’s defense, though, how does one keep straight the multitudinous scandals — Lois Lerner and the rogue IRS, the spying on and tapping of Associated Press journalists, the National Security Agency disclosures, Fast and Furious, the serial lying about needless deaths in Benghazi, the shenanigans at the General Services Administration, the collapse of sobriety at the Secret Service, the rebooting of air-traffic controllers’ eligibility to be adjudicated along racial and ethnic lines, and the deletions from Hillary Clinton’s private e-mail server, which doubled as her government server.

Always there is the administration’s populist anthem of “You didn’t build that”; instead, you must have won the lottery from President Obama. If his economic programs are not working, there is always the finger pointing at those who are too well off. Michelle Obama lectured a couple of weeks ago on museum elitism and prior neglect of the inner city, in between recounting some slights and micro-aggressions that she has endured, presumably on jumbo-jet jaunts to Costa del Sol and Aspen. I think her point is that it is still worse to be rich, powerful, and black than, say, poor, ignored, and non-black.

Then there is the strange populism of Hillary Clinton. It is hard to know why she rails about growing inequality and the lack of fairness in American life. After all, Barack Obama has been president for over six years, an administration in which she served for four. Did she ever visit the Oval Office to decry her own administration’s failure to use its House and Senate majorities in 2009–2011 to help the poor?

Is she now running against Obama’s economic policies, which she never publicly objected to before? And how can an unjust country be so fair to Bill and Hillary, who just made \$30 million in the last 16 months, or about, on average, \$62,500 per day — their speaking fees predicated on the likelihood that she would soon be a candidate for president and, as secretary of state emerita, had already enhanced the pay-to-play modus operandi of the Clinton Foundation?

The Foundation currently pays young Chelsea — who bragged in bohemian fashion that money had no hold over her inner self (but only after achieving a net worth of a reported \$15 million from various hedge-fund sweetheart billets) — \$600,000 a year and provides her with a staff of five. At some point, to paraphrase Barack Obama, might the Clintons have confessed that making, say, \$15 million was enough? Or might Chelsea now agree to work for her parents for the discount rate of \$499,999 per annum to free up more money for the Haitians? Or might Hillary have talked to her son-in-law about paying a little more in taxes on his hedge-fund profits?

Perhaps populist Clinton donor George Stephanopoulos can interview his former employer on transparency, as he recently did the author of *Clinton Cash*, Peter Schweizer. Stephanopoulos last year signed a seven-year, \$105 million contract with ABC; that equals about \$41,000 a day for the next 2,555 days for his disinterested journalism. I wonder how those wages factor into

the Clintons' populism. Is it better or worse than the \$26,724 per televised minute that ace reporter Chelsea Clinton received not long ago from NBC?

The center of this culture is not holding. Even a few Democrats are worried that Hillary Clinton's mendacities are unsustainable. More Americans privately confess that American foreign policy is dangerously adrift. They would agree that the U.S. no longer has a southern border, and will have to spend decades and billions of dollars coping with millions of new illegal aliens. Some Americans are starting to fear that the reckless borrowing under Obama will wreck the country if not stopped. Racial tensions, all concede, are reaching dangerous levels, and Americans do not know what is scarier: inner-city relations between blacks and the police, the increasing anger of the black underclass at establishment America — or the even greater backlash at out-of-control violent black crime and the constant scapegoating and dog whistles of racism.

Whatever liberalism is, it is not working. Our country's policies overseas are falling apart, while at home our society stagnates and turns tribal — with a growing and embittered underclass, a shrinking and angry middle class, and a plutocratic and apartheid elite who, as absolution for their privilege, are desperate to praise in the abstract what they so studiously avoid in the concrete.

NRO contributor Victor Davis Hanson is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the author, most recently, of The Savior Generals.

Right Turn

Obama's dangerous misconceptions of the world

by Jennifer Rubin

President Obama remains impervious to world events that do not comport with his singular goal — a deal with Iran, which by virtue of his desperation will bear little resemblance to the “good deal” he promised was possible. In three instances last week, we got a peek into his motives and thinking. It was disturbing, to say the least.

The first revelation concerns the war against the Islamic State. On the heels of the defeats in Ramadi and Palmyra, the president gives no indication he is considering a dramatic course correction in the war against the Islamic State. More horrifying than the losses we have suffered is his determined passivity. “Administration officials now suggest the fight against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria could last longer than three years, a pessimistic projection which would push the conflict well into the first term of the next president,” reports the [Wall Street Journal](#). In essence, Obama no longer is trying to win with any dispatch; he is merely going to leave it to the next president to clean up — regardless of the deaths incurred, the atrocities committed and the territory lost. (“Administration officials, however, argue the only long-term solution is for Iraqis and Syrians to fight their own fights, while conceding Mr. Obama's refusal to deploy American combat troops means this will be a longer campaign. . . . U.S. officials previously have spoken of a three-year commitment in Islamic State fight since it began in August, but more in terms of a limit on U.S. involvement.”) And to top it off, he relies on a false choice in order to justify a strategy not designed to win: “The White House has cast critics of the president's strategy as advocates of another U.S. invasion of Iraq although no lawmaker or presidential candidate has suggested that option.” The president's cynicism and irresponsibility are quite remarkable.

The second revealing episode came [in a speech](#) at a Washington synagogue. Obama emotionally recalled Israel in the 1960s (when it was far weaker and less prosperous than it is now) before saying something truly extraordinary: “It is precisely because I care so deeply about the state of Israel — it’s precisely because, yes, I have high expectations for Israel the same way I have high expectations for the United States of America — that I feel a responsibility to speak out honestly about what I think will lead to long-term security and to the preservation of a true democracy in the Jewish homeland.” Acknowledging the Palestinians’ refusal to accept Israel he insisted that “it is worthwhile for us to keep up the prospect, the possibility of bridging divides and being just, and looking squarely at what’s possible but also necessary in order for Israel to be the type of nation that it was intended to be in its earliest founding.”

In other words, it is only because he loves you so much, Israel, that he holds you to a different standard than the rest of the world and that he demands Israel meet his own conception of Israeli democracy (“type of nation that it was intended to be in its earliest founding”). The insistence that Israel be treated differently than other nations and that others can define what is good for it is a sly but [all too common form of anti-Israel rhetoric](#).

In a brilliant piece, [David Bernstein points out](#), “Obama pined for the days when a minority Ashkenazic secular elite dominated Israel in every sphere, including through state control of the economy.” And worse still, Obama sees Israel through a lens not of Zionism but of modern American Jewish liberals. (“if the point is that Obama came to support Israel because he saw in Israel a fully-realized version of the Religious Action Committee of Reform Judaism, he’s right to be disappointed in Netanyahu, but wrong to think that Israel ever aspired to such an ideal. Not only do American Jewry and Israeli Jewry have very different ideological influences, but they have very different political cultures and demographics.”) In short, he loves Israel, just not the real Israel.

Finally, in an [interview with Jeffrey Goldberg](#) Obama made a bizarre assertion that seemed to shock his friendly interviewer:

Goldberg: . . . So you’ve argued, quite eloquently in fact, that the Iranian regime has at its highest levels been infected by a kind of anti-Semitic worldview. . . . And yet, you’ve also argued that the regime in Tehran—a regime you’ve described as anti-Semitic, among other problems that they have—is practical, and is responsive to incentive, and shows signs of rationality. So I don’t understand how these things fit together in your mind.

Obama: Well the fact that you are anti-Semitic, or racist, doesn’t preclude you from being interested in survival. It doesn’t preclude you from being rational about the need to keep your economy afloat; it doesn’t preclude you from making strategic decisions about how you stay in power; and so the fact that the supreme leader is anti-Semitic doesn’t mean that this overrides all of his other considerations. . . .

Goldberg: And they make irrational decisions—

Obama: They may make irrational decisions with respect to discrimination, with respect to trying to use anti-Semitic rhetoric as an organizing tool. At the margins, where the costs are low, they may pursue policies based on hatred as opposed to self-interest. . .

In other words, the very nature of the regime — apocalyptic, anti-Western, anti-modern and above all else anti-Israel — has no bearing whatsoever on his assessment of a potential deal.

According to Obama, Iran wouldn't let a little thing like devotion to a world rid of Jews get in the way of improving its gross domestic product and getting along better with the West.

This misconception about the regime with which Obama is dealing is terrifying, to be candid. Yes, if Iran were Denmark, he would be crafting a fine deal, but if Iran is Iran, does it really make sense to let it keep its nuclear infrastructure, get sanctions relief up front and reach a point when it has an industrial-sized nuclear weapons program? Only if you believe all that anti-Semitism is beside the point, not a central facet of the regime, do you believe Iran would abide by a deal or change over time. Only if you understand that its motives are based on a nihilistic version of Islam can you appreciate how dangerous his outlook is.

Whether it is his cynical disinterest in fighting to defeat the Islamic State; his embrace of a double-standard for Israel and a definition of its national mission as one that comports with his own liberalism; or a bizarrely inaccurate view of Iran, the president repeatedly revealed last week that he fundamentally misunderstands the world. No wonder the policies that flow from his flawed ideas are such a disaster.

Volokh Conspiracy

Obama is nostalgic for “white” Israel

by David Bernstein

Oh, the irony. Here's an excerpt from the president's [interview with Jeffrey Goldberg](#):

Obama: And I care deeply about preserving that Jewish democracy, because when I think about how I came to know Israel, it was based on images of, you know—

Goldberg: We [talked about this once](#). Kibbutzim, and—

Obama: Kibbutzim, and Moshe Dayan, and Golda Meir, and the sense that not only are we creating a safe Jewish homeland, but also we are remaking the world. We're repairing it. We are going to do it the right way. We are going to make sure that the lessons we've learned from our hardships and our persecutions are applied to how we govern and how we treat others.

To understand how this sounds to someone sensitive to the history of various historically disfavored groups in Israel, imagine a foreign leader had said “I came to know America based on images of Dwight Eisenhower, Harry Truman, the American Federation of Labor, the Daughters of the American Revolution...” Each of these individuals and groups had their virtues, but lots of us would think, “Geez, you're nostalgic for an America dominated by White Protestants, and you aren't even sensitive enough about the course of American history to recognize it, or assumedly you wouldn't say it.”

The Israel of kibbutzim (kudos to Obama for using the proper Hebrew plural), Dayan, and Meir, was perhaps a more idealistic, and certainly more socialistic Israel. But it was also an Israel dominated by a secularized, Ashkenazic elite.

Mizrahim (Jews from Arab countries), though more than half the population, were marginalized at every level of society. Discrimination was to a large extent institutionalized; the governing Labor Party was run by socialistic Ashkenazim, and given that state capitalism dominated the

Israeli economy one's political and social connections (*protectsia* in Hebrew) went a long way toward determining one's economic prospects.

The kibbutzim in particular were a font of anti-Mizrahi chauvinism; as late as 1985, when I stayed for three weeks on a far-left Hashomer Hatzair kibbutz, the teenage kibbutzniks casually and derogatorily referred to the Moroccan city kids staying on the kibbutz for the Summer as "shechorim" (blacks) (for what it's worth, the Moroccan kids were much nicer than the kibbutzniks).

The cozy Labor/Ashkenazi dominance of Israel was upset by Menachem Begin's stunning victory in 1977. Begin put together a coalition of anti-Socialist Ashkenazim, religious nationalists, and especially Mizrahim. Since then, Begin's Likud has dominated Israeli politics, and the Israel of Kibbutzim, Dayan, and Meier, has been replaced by the Israel of Begin, Ofra Haza, and high-tech. Mizrahim, while still lagging somewhat economically, are much better integrated into Israeli society, have a very high rate of intermarriage with Ashkenazim, and have come to dominate the Israeli music and food scenes.

Israel, in short, has gotten more Middle Eastern, and its populist politics reflects that. But that's natural given that most Israelis' families have lived in the Middle East for hundreds of years. Meanwhile, national religious types are increasingly prominent throughout elite Israeli society, over a million Russian immigrants have been successfully integrated, and Israel has welcomed, but struggled to integrate, one hundred thousand or so Ethiopian Jews.

To further the irony, Obama repeated his criticism of Netanyahu for encouraging his voters to turn out based on fear of the Israeli-Arab vote. Netanyahu's comment is indefensible, but it's also true that [Israeli Arabs have never been more integrated into Israeli society, or made more rapid economic and social progress, than they have been under Netanyahu.](#)

In part, this reflects the liberalization of the Israeli economy, as Arab workers have taken advantage of high-tech and other opportunities, and in part this reflects policies by the Israeli government, including affirmative action policies for government employment, that have largely gone under the radar. (I think this is a product of, on the one hand, Netanyahu's recognition that a better-integrated the Israeli-Arab population is essential to Israel's future, and, on the other, that there aren't a lot of votes in it.)

By contrast, from 1948 to 1966, when Dayan and Meir's Labor Party were in control, most of Israel's Arab population, living in the Galilee, though granted citizenship *was under military rule*. I'm not enough of a historian of Israel to say how much this rule interfered with day to day life, or to what extent it was justified by security considerations, but it surely suggests that a naive, simplistic nostalgia for the "good old days" in Israel is just that.

In short, Obama pined for the days when a minority Ashkenazic secular elite dominated Israel in every sphere, including through state control of the economy [update: and importantly, when Israel was by no reasonable measure more liberal a society than it is today, unless one either thinks that state socialism is the essence of liberalism, or confused the [rhetoric of Labor Zionism](#) with actual practice]. Oy.

UPDATE: Obama made similar remarks today at speech [at the Adas Israel synagogue in DC](#). The only sense I can make out of it is that he seems to link the rather modern American concept of "tikkun olam" (repairing the world, which has been reinterpreted over the last several decades from its kabbalistic roots to mean "pursuing social justice"), and the ideology of liberal American Jews more generally, with the Labor Zionism of Meir etc., which is, charitably, rather a stretch.

Labor Zionism arose out of a combination of Eastern European socialism and early twentieth century nationalism, and has rather little in common with, say, the ideology of Betty Friedan, one of four American Jews that Obama chose to honor by name today.

Anyway, if the point is that Obama came to support Israel because he saw in Israel a fully-realized version of the [Religious Action Committee of Reform Judaism](#), he's right to be disappointed in Netanyahu, but wrong to think that Israel ever aspired to such an ideal. Not only do American Jewry and Israeli Jewry have very different ideological influences, but they have very different political cultures and demographics. As [Walter Russell Mead put it](#), "Israel isn't an underachieving Denmark; it would be more accurate to say that it is an overachieving Turkey or a miraculously liberal and tolerant Lebanon."

That's not perhaps as uplifting as Obama's belief that the Israel of his youth was going to "repair the world," but it's precisely the unrealistic, often fantastical, idealism that often motivated previous generations of Labor Zionists that has led many of them to grave disappointment with, even hostility to, Israel.

Even under the best of circumstances, many of the hopes laid in Israel were unrealistic. In actual circumstances, surrounded by hostile enemies, absorbing about four times its original population in refugees, very few of whom came from countries with a longstanding liberal or democratic traditions, expecting a progressive utopia to emerge was ridiculous. Creating a reasonably liberal, multiethnic, democratic state with religious freedom in a region where there aren't any others should be more than enough to satisfy all but the most starry-eyed idealists. ("The occupation" is another matter; but even if Obama primarily blames Israel for the situation, that would include Golda Meir's government, under which the settlement project got going).

David Bernstein is the George Mason University Foundation Professor at the George Mason University School of Law in Arlington, VA. His latest book, [Lawless: The Obama Administration's Unprecedented Assault on the Constitution and the Rule of Law](#), will be published in November.

Roger L. Simon

[Jeb Should Withdraw to Save the Country from Hillary](#)

Jeb Bush should withdraw from the presidential contest of 2016. He should do so soon to become a true hero to our country that sorely needs one. And he should accompany his withdrawal with a detailed explanation of his reasons. It is not just because his mother Barbara Bush was correct in her original assessment that the United States does not any more Bushes or Clintons. It is far more.

The Democratic Party looks determined to nominate a woman for president that a majority of the country thinks a liar. A recent poll from NBC and the *Wall Street Journal* found a paltry 25% of Americans believe Hillary Clinton to be honest. And this is *before* Mrs. Clinton assumes office. Who knows what would happen thereafter when so many presidents find themselves in crisis situations demanding courage and integrity?

If Mrs. Clinton were to win the presidency, she would do so under a cloud of distrust unprecedented in any of our lifetimes. She would have no honeymoon period and would not deserve one. And this would be happening at a moment in history when the entire world is on a

knife edge because of the rise of radical Islam and ISIS throughout the Middle East, Africa, South East Asia, Latin America and, increasingly, Europe, not to mention having to monitor the controversial nuclear deal with Iran, if and when such a thing is signed.

More than ever, we would need a man or woman in the White House we could trust — yet so many of us wouldn't. America would be split asunder at the beginning of a Hillary presidency as never before since the Civil War. No other Democratic candidate would create such a rift. If that sounds like an exaggeration, I assure you it is not.

Jeb Bush is eminently positioned to prevent this from happening. He can sacrifice his own presidential ambitions for the good of the country. In the process he would be free to detail his reasons, free to be specific about the lies and evasions surrounding Hillary Clinton's tenure as secretary of state, the erased emails and missing server, the Benghazi prevarications, the ill-conceived and disastrous war in Libya, the dizzying corruption of the Clinton Foundation and then the inability to face the truth when confronted by her own myriad dishonesties, the quasi-fascistic silence of her political campaign during which she avoids substantive questions whenever possible.

While Jeb reminds us that the founding of our country was a rebellion *against* "royal families," not a blind *embracing* of them, he can be the one to save us from a rupture that has the potential to destroy our social fabric for years to come. He will be enshrined in the history books for his patriotic act of withdrawal, because that is what it will have been. He might even be able to shame Hillary Clinton and her supporters in the process, if such a thing is possible. At the very least, he will shine a bright light on her mendacity and extreme entitlement that would seriously threaten her candidacy.

I write urging this withdrawal with no special animosity toward Jeb Bush, nor is this about his policies as they may or may not evolve. For all I know, he could be a great president. No matter how smart we think we are, none of us really knows how someone will behave once they assume that office. History plays tricks on almost every president.

And I know I'm not the first to make this suggestion. Others have talked to me about it. But I make it here publicly in the hopes that the potential candidate reads it and considers.

Do it, Jeb.

2011

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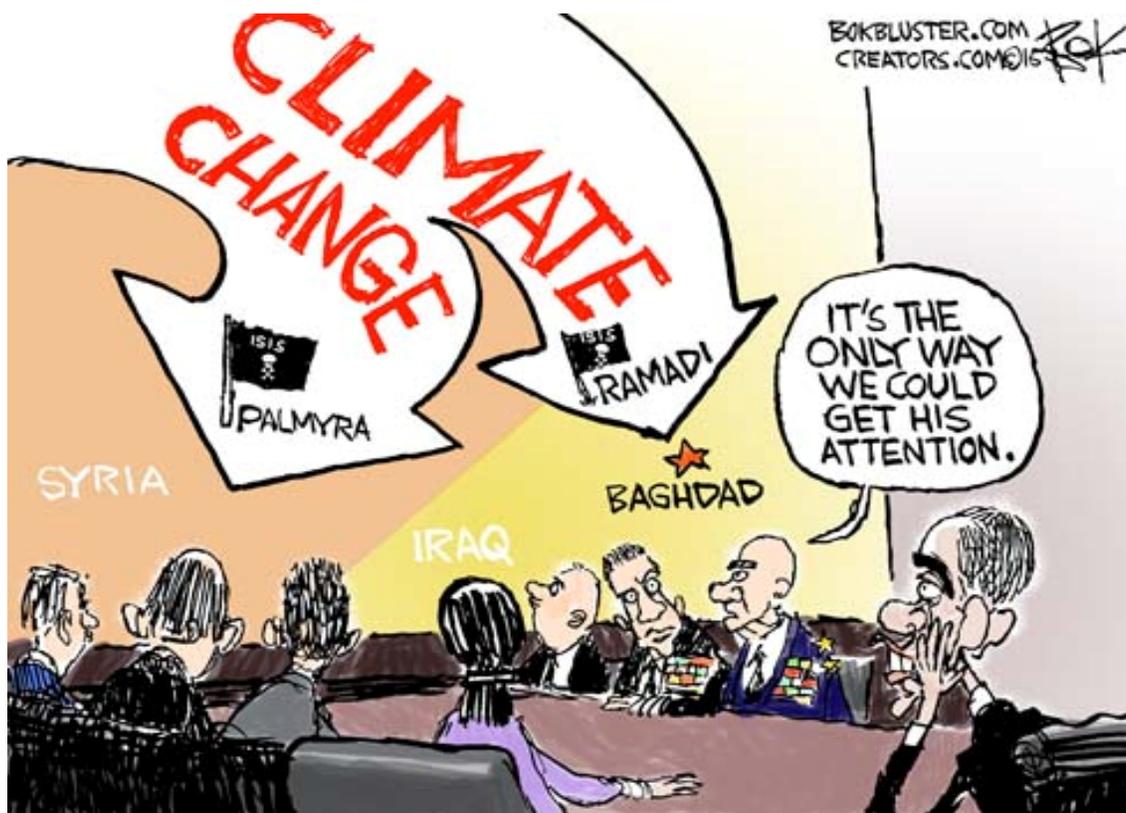
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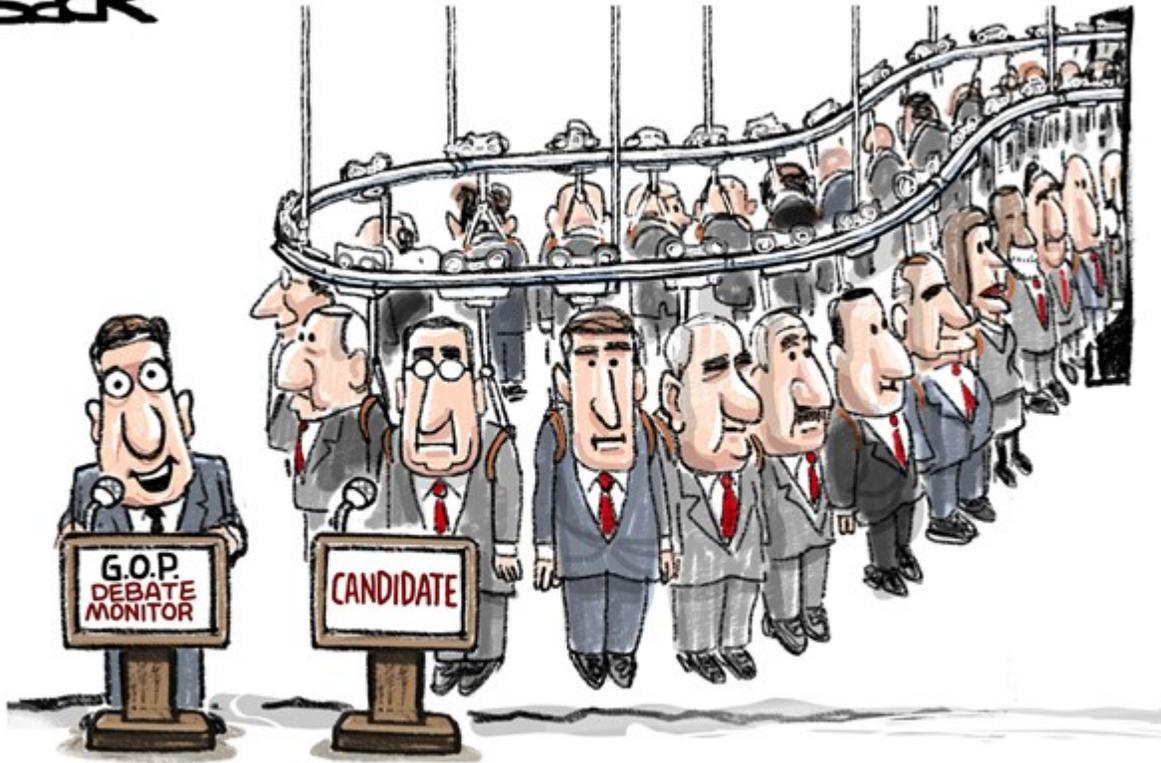




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