# Skeptical of Chinese Innovation? Meet Jack Ma



After revolutionizing ecommerce in China, Alibaba **Group Holding** Ltd. may end

up becoming the world's biggest stock-market listing.

Now's a good time to bury the myth that China can't inno-

Skeptics abound. Alibaba, they note, was an e-commerce idea borrowed from companies like **Amazon.com** Inc. and eBay Inc. Its tech peers in China—among them Baidu Inc. in online search and **Tencent** Holdings Ltd. in messagingare themselves derivatives of American pioneers. They operate in what is less than a level playing field.

Yet their very success speaks to a type of innovation,

common in China, that's often underrated but nonetheless groundbreaking. Alibaba has 80% of the e-commerce market in China and Baidu a similar share of search. Tencent most recently reported more than 430 million active users of its instant-messaging service WeChat, All are examples of what Erik Roth, a partner at McKinsey & Co.'s Shanghai office, calls "innovation through commercialization."

They figured out a way to dominate their markets by adapting existing technologies and business models. That's not the same as invention. Many of China's most innovative companies don't arise from a flash of inspiration. Rather, they evolve in a series of incremental changes. In the end, they become uniquely Chinese, says Mr. Roth.

Alibaba's online shopping platform, Taobao, is a classic case. The American business model stood little chance in China because few people had faith in the Internet to protect their credit card details, or in merchants to deliver the promised goods. Along came Alibaba, which took those insights and developed its own secure payments system, Alipay, and a returns policy. EBay, meanwhile, left China defeated.

Alibaba came up with "the architecture of trust which allowed e-commerce to thrive in China," says Duncan Clark, the chairman of BDA, a Beijingbased business consultancy.

Mr. Clark first met Alibaba's founder, Jack Ma, in 1999 when the company consisted of a dozen employees working out of a tiny apartment in the eastern city of Hangzhou. He was

at New York's Waldorf Astoria Hotel last week as investors lined up around the block to catch a glimpse of Mr. Ma ahead of an IPO expected to raise as much as \$25 billion.

"We now think of innovation as a big bang. But it's not," savs George



Innovation at the China **Europe International Business** School in Shanghai. The type of innovation at which China excels, he says, is "pragmatic and

profitable." It relies on armies of lowpaid scientists and technicians who focus on small improvements to products: fractionally quieter air conditioners; fridge drawers more conveniently

sized and arranged. It's plodding, unglamorous work. But, over time, it can unlock enormous value.

Of course, China has the incomparable advantage of scale with a domestic market of 1.3 billion people and the world's biggest export machine.

And Chinese government protection for national champions helps, too. The online space is particularly cosseted. Foreigners are prohibited from owning Internet companies, and must work through local partners. Baidu's near monopoly in search was aided by **Google** Inc.'s decision to pull its search engine out of China after its servers were hacked. Tencent's path has been cleared by outright bans on Twitter and Facebook.

Still, the number of Chinese global success stories like Alibaba is small. And there are many failures. "Whenever China tries to go big and be revolutionary, they almost always fail," says Scott Kennedv. director of the Research Center for Chinese Politics & Business at Indiana University.

But incremental invention creates its own virtuous cycle: The profits it generates can be plowed back into research and development or used to buy global cutting-edge companies.

Besides, innovation that simply makes products more affordable and accessible can be revolutionary, too.

Alibaba's Mr. Ma didn't even have a garage when he got started. Come Friday, though, he will have turned what started as a haphazard online bazaar to one of the most valuable tech companies in the world.

# Beyond Alibaba: Rising Internet Stars

Continued from Page One nearly three billion Internet users are in Asia, according to the International Telecommunication Union, the United Nations information-technology agency. In China, more than 500 million people go online using smartphones. The number of socialmedia users in the Asian-Pacific region is expected to approach one billion by year-end, almost five times the total in North America, says research firm Webcertain Group Ltd.

Joseph Chen, chief executive of Renren Inc., a Chinese socialnetworking firm valued at about \$1.2 billion, says the "big market-cap companies benefit from the size of China. It's the same technology, but when you put it in China, it's worth more,"

Asia's gravitational pull on the Internet is bolstered by language differences in countries like Korea and censorship in China that keeps foreign firms out. Conversely, even the region's nimblest Internet companies usually have little presence in the U.S. and lack the muscle, pizazz or interest to challenge entrenched household names

like Google outside of Asia.

Their innovations also are seen as more practical than groundbreaking. For example, Tencent's mobile instant-messaging service WeChat (called "Weixin" in China), which has about 440 million users, is also used as a platform to sell games, helping Tencent generate far more revenue than larger rival WhatsApp Inc., which has about

#### About 45% of the nearly three billion global Web users are in Asia.

600 million users and is being acquired by Facebook for \$19 billion.

Tencent now is trying to move beyond games and is pitching WeChat as a way to buy airline tickets and money-market funds or make down payments on property. Tencent also has installed 10.000 beverage and snack vending machines across China where purchases can be made with the scan of a smartphone code—and then deducted from a personal online account at Tencent.

So far, the formula has been highly profitable. Tencent's profit margin in the second quarter was 32%, compared with 27% at Facebook and 21% at Google. Tencent's stock-market value is \$148 billion, compared with Facebook's \$194 billion.

Last year, Japanese messaging app Line Corp. had revenue of \$323 million from mobile games, sales of cutesy emoticons and advertising—or 16 times the estimated revenue of WhatsApp. Success will force at least

some of Asia's strongest Internet firms to become more ambitious elsewhere, says Takeshi Idezawa, Line's chief operating officer. The company has more users outside Japan than it does inside its home country and wants to expand even more aggressively abroad before foreign competitors push into Japan.

Line is preparing for a possible initial stock offering in New York or Tokyo. "I do think we are at a turning point," Mr. Idezawa says of Internet companies in Asia.

Rakuten Inc., Japan's biggest online-shopping site, is so determined to expand in other coun-

tries that it has required since 2012 that all in-house meetings and memos be in English.

Last week, Rakuten said it would buy U.S. online-coupon website Ebates Inc. for about \$1 billion. Rakuten has said it hopes to increase its business outside Japan to about 50% of sales from the current 10%. Ebates was Rakuten's third big purchase of a non-Japanese firm so far this year.

Baidu has a 79% market share of the Internet search business in China, but is barely a blip elsewhere. Baidu's search engine in Japan has gained little traction. In July, Baidu launched a search engine for Brazil, and the company is considering expanding into Egypt and Thailand.

In a sign of growing interest in Silicon Valley, Baidu is spending \$300 million to build an artificial-intelligence research center there. It will be run by Andrew Ng, the former chief of Stanford University's artificialintelligence lab.

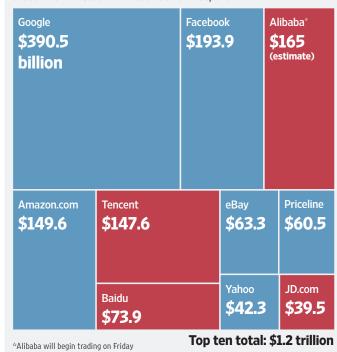
Tencent has bought stakes in two large U.S. game makers as part of its push to bring popular games into China. The company's international expansion beyond China consists largely of WeChat, which has been downloaded more than 100 million times outside the country.

Seven of this year's 10 biggest were made by Asian firms, with total of more than \$11 billion, according to Dealogic.

Alibaba founder and Executive Chairman Jack Ma said Monday ture-capital firm Cherubic Venthat the Chinese e-commerce firm plans to expand aggressively in the U.S. and European markets after its stock sale. In an earlier

Asia's Growing Web

Four of the world's most valuable Internet companies are based in China. Stock-market value as of Sept. 15.



Sources: S&P Capital IQ; staff reports (Alibaba) letter to investors, he wrote: "In

The Wall Street Journal ing of promising startups and an

the past decade, we measured ourselves by how much we changed China. In the future, we will be judged by how much progress we bring to the world." In its latest quarter, Alibaba's online shopping sites in China

generated 85% of the company's revenue of \$2.5 billion. In June, Internet acquisitions by value Alibaba launched a U.S. shopping site called 11 Main, which is cur-Alibaba and Tencent spending a rently available only to customers who first sign up and get an email invitation.

Matt Cheng, founder of ventures, says he has seen a huge transformation over the past decade, particularly in China. At first, the country had a smatteroverwhelming number of clones trying to copy Internet businesses in the U.S. Now, young Internet entrepre-

neurs in Asia bristle at being compared with Silicon Valley. and Mr. Cheng is increasingly battling some of the largest U.S.based venture-capital firms to buy stakes in up-and-coming Internet firms, "Competition has gotten really fierce," he says.

–Eric Pfanner and Carlos Tejada contributed to this article.

#### Online>>

Watch a video about WeChat at

### **ISIS Cruelty Deserves Our Strongest Condemnation**

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

As a practicing Muslim deeply influenced by the tenets of my faith, I strongly condemn the brutal atrocities of the ISIS terrorist group. Their actions are a disgrace to the faith they proclaim and are crimes against humanity. Religion provides a foundation upon which to establish peace, human rights, freedoms and the rule of law. Any interpretations to the contrary, including the abuse of religion to fuel conflicts, are simply wrong and deceitful.

ISIS is not the first group to use religious rhetoric to mask its cruelty—Al Qaeda did so 13 years ago and Boko Haram more recently. What they all have in common is a totalitarian mentality that denies human beings their dignity.

Any form of violence against innocent civilians or persecution of minorities contradicts the principles of the Qur'an and the tradition of our Prophet (upon whom be peace and blessings). ISIS members are either completely ignorant about the faith they proclaim, or their actions are designed to serve individual interests or those of their political masters. Regardless, their actions represent those of a terrorist group and, as such, they should be brought to justice and compelled to answer for their horrific crimes.

I send my heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased in Iraq and Syria, and to the families of James Foley, Steven Sotloff and David Haines. May God give them strength, patience and perseverance, and alleviate their suffering. I also pray for the immediate and safe release of hostages and ask God, the Merciful, to lead us all toward mutual respect and peace. I invite everyone around the world to join me in these prayers.

#### Fethullah Gulen

Islamic scholar, preacher and social advocate

This message is from the Alliance for Shared Values — a non-profit that serves as a central resource for information on Fethullah Gulen and the civil society movement he inspired and from its member organizations focused on interfaith and intercultural dialogue: Atlantic Institute, Dialogue Institute, Pacifica Institute, Peace Islands Institute, Niagara Foundation and Rumi Forum

Fethullah Gulen's original August 22 statement on ISIS is available at www.afsv.org.

#### Who Ordered 770 Pounds of Frozen Squid?



Scientists in Wellington, New Zealand, on Tuesday examined a colossal female squid, weighing 770 pounds and thought to be only the second

intact specimen ever found. Some 142,000 people streamed online footage of the exam.

The squid was caught in Antarctica's Ross Sea and had

been frozen for eight months until scientists thawed out the animal to inspect it—once they used a forklift to maneuver it into a tank. —Associated Press

**WORLD WATCH** 

#### FRANCE **HOLLANDE'S GOVERNMENT SURVIVES CONFIDENCE VOTE**

President François Hollande's government survived a confidence vote in Parliament on Tuesday, but failed to garner a margin of support large enough to create momentum for his shift toward pro-business policies.

In a vote of 269 to 244, the lower house of France's Parliament supported a government that Mr. Hollande hastily assembled in August. But support for Mr. Hollande was hampered by abstentions and no-shows that left his government 20 votes short of an absolute majority of the 577-seat assembly.

The failure to secure a strong majority risks undercutting Mr. Hollande's pivot toward business-friendly Stacy Meichtry policies.

#### **GERMANY** PROSECUTORS CHARGE MAN **IN NAZI CAMP ATROCITIES**

Prosecutors in Germany have charged a 93-year-old man with at least 300,000 counts of accessory to murder while a member of Adolf Hitler's SS unit at the Auschwitz concentration camp.

Prosecutors accuse Oskar Gröning from Lower Saxony of having collected money from Nazi victims' luggage on their arrival, which he turned over to SS headquarters in Berlin.

In 2005, Mr. Gröning described to the magazine Der Spiegel his role as tallying money seized from victims, most of them Jewish, but said he didn't commit any crimes.

#### —Harriet Torry VIETNAM

**ADOPTIONS BY AMERICANS** 

**TO RESUME AFTER 6 YEARS** Americans will be allowed to adopt from Vietnam again after a six-year break. Vietnam's Ministry of Justice on Tuesday said only children with special needs, children aged 5 and older, and ones with biological siblings will be available for U.S. adoptions.

-Vu Trong Khanh and Nguyen Anh Thu

BLACKUTA

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FRANK BRUNI

## Apples And Hurricanes

Whenever Barack Obama seems in danger of falling, do we have to hear that George W. Bush made the cliff?

It happened with the economy. For the president's staunchest defenders, legitimate questions about whether the stimulus was wisely crafted and whether Obamacare was rushed took a back seat to lamentations over the damage that his predecessor had done. Obama wasn't perfect, but at least he wasn't Bush.

And with the Middle East, those defenders sometimes turn Bush's epic mistakes into Obama's hall pass. Perhaps he hasn't figured out what's right, but he isn't guilty of the original wrong, which is constantly being litigated anew, as if a fresh verdict on the events of 2003 could alter the challenges and stakes of 2014.

On Tuesday there was another spasm of this. As Congress debated the escalation of airstrikes against Islamic extremists, Representative Lloyd Doggett, a Texas Democrat, digressed to inveigh against "the wholly unnecessary Bush-Cheney invasion of Iraq," a bell that was rung 111/2 years ago and can't be un-rung now.

And to judge from my inbox lately and the chatter I overhear, what matters to many of Obama's most stalwart fans isn't whether he erred in the way he spoke of those extremists, turned his attention to them quickly enough or is now confronting them with the correct dose of belligerence: not too little, not too much.

At least he's not Bush. He didn't hallucinate weapons of mass destruction, make a spurious case for war or condone torture. I hear so much about Bush's failings and Bush's sins that

# Obama can be measured without the yardstick of Bush.

you'd think he were still huddled over a desk in Washington rather than dabbing at a canvas in Texas.

Enough. It's true that Obama hasn't replicated Bush's offenses, and it's consoling. But it isn't exactly reason for a parade, and it doesn't inoculate him. The culpability that lies elsewhere doesn't relieve the responsibilities that are now his.

And not being as bad as someone else is hardly the same as being good. Obama can rise far above Bush and still fall short. The presidency isn't "The Voice" (though it is a little like "Survivor"). You're not judged only in relation to the other performers who've been on stage. You're judged by how well you respond to the unique circumstances of your time and place — by your ability to clean up the mess, not whether you made it

This not-as-bad-as defense is a pointless partisan tic. We've seen a lot of it over the course of this presidency and will no doubt see a lot of it during the next, be it Democratic or Republican.

The I.R.S. scandal was not as bad as Watergate. (Nothing's ever as bad as Watergate, which serves a nifty historical function as the gold standard of executive malfeasance and mendacity.)

The bungled rollout of Obamacare was not as bad as the botched response to Katrina.

It's apples and hurricanes, but they're put in the same basket, in a manner that recalls a child trying to evade punishment by ratting out a sibling for something worse. Don't be mad, Mommy, about Operation Fast and Furious and all those guns that ended up with Mexican drug cartels. Ronnie traded arms for hostages as part of this whole Iran-contra affair!

I sometimes like to imagine presidential campaigns waged along these lines and what the candidates' not-as-bad-as bumper stickers might say.

"Fewer Lies Than Nixon." "Fewer Sweaters Than Carter." "Fewer Interns Than Clinton." "Better Speller Than Quayle."

It works in the other direction, too, and Obama has definitely suffered plenty of not-as-good-as slings. Former presidents are held up not merely as yardsticks; they're rulers used to rap the knuckles of the Oval Office's current inhabitant and beat him over the head.

*Smack*: That Teddy Roosevelt certainly understood the power of the bully pulpit! *Thwack*: That L.B.J. really knew how to schmooze! A president is like a second spouse living in the saintly shadow of a first one who perished too soon.

Edmund Burke famously said that those who don't know history are destined to repeat it. But are those who fixate on it blind to how peculiar the present is, and to the fact that no degree of longing for a lost hero or blaming of a departed villain is going to change what lies ahead?

If we're determined to glance back at a figure who flatters Obama, let's really have at it and look all the way to Warren Harding. Golf wasn't his only distraction. He also had a thing for poker. And when it came to seeming and feeling overwhelmed, the 29th president, an Ohio Republican, reputedly confessed to friends that he was lost in the job.

By that measure Obama is a rock. But it doesn't make him a boulder.  $\hfill\Box$ 



### Israel's N.S.A. Scandal

WASHINGTON

unenforceable. "This agreement," it

reads, "is not intended to create any le-

gally enforceable rights and shall not be

construed to be either an international

agreement or a legally binding instru-

It should also trouble Americans that

the N.S.A. could head down a similar

path in this country. Indeed, there is

some indication, from a top-secret 2012

document from Mr. Snowden's leaked

files that I saw last year, that it already

is. The document, from Gen. Keith B. Al-

exander, then the director of the N.S.A.,

notes that the agency had been compil-

ing records of visits to pornographic web-

sites and proposes using that information

to damage the reputations of people

whom the agency considers "radicaliz-

ers" — not necessarily terrorists, but

those attempting, through the use of in-

cendiary speech, to radicalize others.

(The Huffington Post has published a re-

In Moscow, Mr. Snowden told me that

the document reminded him of the

F.B.I.'s overreach during the days of J.

Edgar Hoover, when the bureau abused

its powers to monitor and harass political

activists. "It's much like how the F.B.I.

tried to use Martin Luther King's infidel-

ity to talk him into killing himself," he

said. "We said those kinds of things were

inappropriate back in the '60s. Why are

we doing that now? Why are we getting

It's a question that American and Is-

raeli citizens should be asking them-

involved in this again?"

dacted version of the document.)

ment according to international law."

By James Bamford

N Moscow this summer, while reporting a story for Wired magazine, I had the rare opportunity to hang out for three days with Edward J. Snowden. It gave me a chance to get a deeper understanding of who he is and why, as a National Security Agency contractor, he took the momentous step of leaking hundreds of thousands of classified documents.

Among his most shocking discoveries, he told me, was the fact that the N.S.A. was routinely passing along the private communications of Americans to a large and very secretive Israeli military organization known as Unit 8200. This transfer of intercepts, he said, included the contents of the communications as well as metadata such as who was calling whom.

Typically, when such sensitive information is transferred to another country, it would first be "minimized," meaning that names and other personally identifiable information would be removed. But when sharing with Israel, the N.S.A. evidently did not ensure that the data was modified in this way.

Mr. Snowden stressed that the transfer of intercepts to Israel contained the communications — email as well as phone calls — of countless Arab- and Palestinian-Americans whose relatives in Israel and the Palestinian territories could become targets based on the communications. "I think that's amazing," he told me. "It's one of the biggest abuses we've seen."

It appears that Mr. Snowden's fears were warranted. Last week, 43 veterans of Unit 8200 — many still serving in the reserves — accused the organization of startling abuses. In a letter to their commanders, to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and to the head of the Israeli army, they charged that Israel used information collected against innocent Palestinians for "political persecution." In testimonies and interviews given to the media, they specified that data were gathered on Palestinians' sexual orienta-

# Is American intelligence data being used to persecute Palestinians?

tions, infidelities, money problems, family medical conditions and other private matters that could be used to coerce Palestinians into becoming collaborators or create divisions in their society.

The veterans of Unit 8200 declared that they had a "moral duty" to no longer "take part in the state's actions against Palestinians." An Israeli military spokesman disputed the letter's overall drift but said the charges would be examined.

It should trouble the American public that some or much of the information in question — intended not for national security purposes but simply to pursue political agendas — may have come directly from the N.S.A.'s domestic dragnet. According to documents leaked by Mr. Snowden and reported by the British newspaper The Guardian, the N.S.A. has been sending intelligence to Israel since at least March 2009.

The memorandum of agreement between the N.S.A. and its Israeli counterpart covers virtually all forms of communication, including but not limited to "unevaluated and unminimized transcripts, gists, facsimiles, telex, voice and Digital Network Intelligence metadata and content." The memo also indicates that the N.S.A. does not filter out American communications before delivery to Israel; indeed, the agency "routinely sends" unminimized data.

Although the memo emphasizes that Israel should make use of the intercepts in accordance with United States law, it also notes that the agreement is legally

James Bamford is the author of three books on the National Security Agency, including "The Shadow Factory: The Ultra-Secret N.S.A. from 9/11 to the Eavesdropping on America." THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

### Take a Deep Breath

Loni

An existential struggle is taking place in the Arab world today. But is it ours or is it theirs? Before we step up military action in Iraq and Syria, that's the question that needs answering.

What concerns me most about President Obama's decision to re-engage in Iraq is that it feels as if it's being done in response to some deliberately exaggerated fears — fear engendered by YouTube videos of the beheadings of two U.S. journalists — and fear that ISIS, a.k.a., the Islamic State, is coming to a mall near you. How did we start getting so afraid again so fast? Didn't we build a Department of Homeland Security?

I am not dismissing ISIS. Obama is right that ISIS needs to be degraded and

# Behind the fight against ISIS.

destroyed. But when you act out of fear, you don't think strategically and you glide over essential questions, like why is it that Shiite Iran, which helped trigger this whole Sunni rebellion in Iraq, is scoffing at even coordinating with us, and Turkey and some Arab states are setting limits on their involvement?

When I read that, I think that Nader Mousavizadeh, who co-leads the global consulting firm Macro Advisory Partners, is correct when he says: "When it comes to intervening in the Arab world's existential struggle, we have to stop and ask ourselves why we have such a challenge getting them to help us save them."

So before we get in any deeper, let's ask some radical questions, starting with: What if we did nothing? George Friedman (no relation), the chairman of Stratfor, raised this idea in his recent essay on Stratfor.com, "The Virtue of Subtlety." He notes that the ISIS uprising was the inevitable Sunni backlash to being brutally stripped of power and resources by the pro-Iranian Shiite governments and militias in Baghdad and Syria. But then he asks:

Is ISIS "really a problem for the United States? The American interest is not stability but the existence of a dynamic balance of power in which all players are effectively paralyzed so that no one who would threaten the United States emerges. ... But the principle of balance of power does not mean that balance must be maintained directly. Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia have far more at stake in this than the United States. So long as they believe that the United States will attempt to control the situation, it is perfectly rational for them to back off and watch, or act in the margins, or even hinder the Americans. The United States must turn this from a balance of power between Syria and Iraq to a balance of power among this trio of regional powers. They have far more at stake and, absent the United States, they have no choice but to involve themselves. They cannot stand by and watch a chaos that

could spread to them."

Therefore, he concludes, the best U.S. strategy rests in us "doing as little as possible and forcing regional powers into the fray, then in maintaining the balance of power in this coalition." I am not sure, but it's worth debating.

Here's another question: What's this war really about?

"This is a war over the soul of Islam — that is what differentiates this moment from all others," argues Ahmad Khalidi, a Palestinian scholar associated with St. Antony's College, Oxford. Here is why: For decades, Saudi Arabia has been the top funder of the mosques and schools throughout the Muslim world that promote the most puritanical version of Islam, known as Salafism, which is hostile to modernity, women and religious pluralism, or even *Islamic* pluralism.

Saudi financing for these groups is a byproduct of the ruling bargain there between the al-Saud family and its Salafist religious establishment, known as the Wahhabis. The al-Sauds get to rule and live how they like behind walls, and the Wahhabis get to propagate Salafist Islam both inside Saudi Arabia and across the Muslim world, using Saudi oil wealth. Saudi Arabia is, in effect, helping to fund both the war against ISIS and the Islamist ideology that creates ISIS members (some 1,000 Saudis are believed to be fighting with jihadist groups in Syria), through Salafist mosques in Europe, Pakistan, Central Asia and the Arab world.

This game has reached its limit. First, because ISIS presents a challenge to Saudi Arabia. ISIS says it is the "caliphate," the center of Islam. Saudi Arabia believes it is the center. And, second, ISIS is threatening Muslims everywhere. Khalidi told me of a Muslim woman friend in London who says she's afraid to go out with her head scarf on for fear that people will believe she is with ISIS — just for dressing as a Muslim. Saudi Arabia cannot continue fighting ISIS and feeding the ideology that nurtures ISIS. It will hurt more and more Muslims.

We, too, have to stop tolerating this. For years, the U.S. has "played the role of the central bank of Middle East stability," noted Mousavizadeh. "Just as the European Central Bank funding delays the day that France has to go through structural reforms, America's security umbrella," always there no matter what the Saudis do, "has delayed the day that Saudi Arabia has to face up to its internal contradictions," and reform its toxic ruling bargain. The future of Islam and our success against ISIS depend on it.

#### Editors' Note

An Op-Ed article last Wednesday about Russia's role in tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan did not disclose that the writer has been an adviser to Azerbaijan's state-run oil company. Like other Op-Ed contributors, the writer, Brenda Shaffer, signed a contract obliging her to disclose conflicts of interest, actual or potential. Had editors been aware of her ties to the company, they would have insisted on disclosure.

# ISIS Cruelty Deserves Our Strongest Condemnation

As a practicing Muslim deeply influenced by the tenets of my faith, I strongly condemn the brutal atrocities of the ISIS terrorist group. Their actions are a disgrace to the faith they proclaim and are crimes against humanity. Religion provides a foundation upon which to establish peace, human rights, freedoms and the rule of law. Any interpretations to the contrary, including the abuse of religion to fuel conflicts, are simply wrong and deceitful.

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www.afsv.org

# THE FED PAGE

#### More talk of Holder as a short-timer



Al Kamen

IN THE LOOP

officials familiar with Holder's plans, reported that he had decided to stay in his job through the fall midterm elections but that he would not commit beyond the end of the year.

Is Attorney

General Eric

our colleague

Sari Horwitz,

citing Justice

Department

**Holder** readying

his exit strategy?

Back in April,

At a February staff meeting, she wrote, he felt faint and was taken by ambulance to a hospital, where he was treated for an elevated heart rate. Holder told close friends that it was "spooky' and that he felt as if it was a "sign" he should spend more time with his family — something a certain member of his family has been urging him to do.

Granted, there had been speculation last year that he might be gone soon. Now there's renewed speculation that he could be calling it quits, perhaps by the end of this year. But, after the police shooting of an unarmed teenager in Ferguson, Mo., and Holder's call for a federal civil rights investigation — plus Obama's dispatching him to that locale a few days after the  $shooting-some\ folks\ thought$ he'd be obliged to hang in there for a while longer.

On the other hand, his travel schedule this month could give another clue to his intentions.

One of his major goals, we understand, is to visit every U.S. attorney's office in the country all 93 of them. He's been doing that since he settled in at the Justice Department, and now there are only three left on the list - and he's traveling to two of them this week, in Louisville and Lexington, Ky.

He's saving for last the office nearest and dearest to him at the William J. Nealon Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Scranton, Pa. Holder and Judge Nealon, 87, have been close for many years, after Holder, then a young Justice Department prosecutor, handled a major

corruption case in Scranton. But he's going to Scranton at the end of this month, so that's one more initiative checked off.

#### Drafted by the NFL

A former Joe Biden aide who worked for him in the Senate when he wrote the Violence Against Women Act has taken a senior-level position with the National Football League as it struggles with its reputation among women.

Cynthia Hogan will be the league's senior vice president of public policy and government affairs, the organization announced Tuesday.



Eric Holder: Nearly done with a whimsical goal, and maybe the job.

"The complex and compelling issues of interest to the NFL and the opportunity to help shape policy on those issues is a unique and exciting challenge," Hogan said in a news release. "I could not be more excited about joining the NFL team."

Hogan, a counsel for Biden in the White House, helped shepherd Sonia Sotomayor through her confirmation as a Supreme Court justice. She also was on the team that shaped the administration's anti-gunviolence message after the school massacre in Newtown, Conn.

Biden tweeted congratulations to Hogan, calling her "a great friend and a great lawyer."

The NFL is facing terrible public relations over how it responds to domestic violence involving its players after video circulated showing Ray Rice of the Baltimore Ravens punching and knocking out his fiancee, who is now his wife. Hogan's credentials on women's issues and in Washington are an obvious choice to help the NFL rehabilitate its image.

Just how connected is she? We hear Hogan belonged to a book club that over time included such women as future Supreme Court justice Elena Kagan, former Obama deputy chief of staff for policy Nancy-Ann DeParle and U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission chief Chai Feldblum.

With friends like that . . .

#### The Biden bunch

Attention, Biden alumni! A reunion for former staff members of Vice President Biden, initially scheduled for Tuesday in Washington and Delaware, has been postponed, according to an unsigned e-mail we got Monday night.

A Biden counselor had e-mailed a save-the-date for the event back in July, but no actual invite with time or location was ever set. The postponement note, as we reported with colleague Sean Sullivan, pointed to the "large number of Delaware and DC folks who wanted to be able to attend both events to reconnect

with friends and former colleagues." So, to accommodate those desires, the friends of the veep are going to have the events on different dates.

While there was no word that Biden was to attend, we noticed that he's scheduled to head to Iowa on Wednesday to speak at a Nuns on the Bus "We the People, We the Voters" tour kickoff.

In July, Loop fans may recall, Biden arranged a brief conference call with some of his former staffers (unclear how many) that raised a few eyebrows about his electoral aspirations. We dismissed it, however, as just Joe being friendly.

Then came the save-the-date in August, which raised more eyebrows, but we still dismissed the notion that Biden was seriously contemplating a third presidential bid, despite Hillary Clinton's disastrous memoir rollout.

But now he's headed to Iowa? This looks really suspicious. Well, given the last-minute reunion postponement, the effort so far seems a bit slipshod. On the other hand, campaigns — er, reunions - are never easy to organize.

#### A bundler, packing for Paris

The Senate on Tuesday afternoon confirmed Obama mega-bundler Jane Hartley to be ambassador to France, a post that's been vacant since November. Hartley is chief executive of the Observatory Group, an economic and political advisory firm in Manhattan.

The Senate also filled two vacancies on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Jeffery Baran, who works for the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and Stephen Burns, a longtime NRC lawyer, were confirmed by largely party-line votes. Finally, the Senate confirmed

ambassadors to Guatemala and Lesotho.

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## On security checks, a year of change

Government points to reforms that followed the Navy Yard rampage

#### **BY JOSH HICKS**

A year after a Navy and Marine Corps subcontractor killed 12 people at the Washington Navy Yard, the federal government has fired the firm that handled most of its background checks and changed key screening policies.

Gunman Aaron Alexis, with his troubling police record and signs of mental illness, had maintained his security clearance, exposing gaps in the system responsible for vetting the workers who handle some of the government's most sensitive work.

Now the government is touting major reforms of the process, which faced challenges long before incidents with Alexis and Edward Snowden, the former National Security Agency contractor who leaked U.S. surveillance documents, brought critical problems into focus.

"The quality and security of our background investigations has continued to be a top priority since I became Office of Personnel Management director last November," Katherine Archuleta said in a statement. The OPM oversees background checks for the nearly 5 million federal employees and contractors with security clearances. "As a whole, the administra $tion\,has\,made\,great\,strides\,toward$ revamping the security-clearance system."

After the shooting a year ago Tuesday, President Obama appointed a special council to review the federal security-clearance system. The panel includes Archuleta and Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper Jr.

In a February report, the council said screeners need greater access to state and local police reports. It concluded that they can't always view records that could raise red flags, often because of legal and technological limitations.

The OPM said it now has increased its engagement with local and state police agencies and is working on technology upgrades to connect with crime databases.

The council also called for the OPM to conduct follow-up probes every five years for employees and contractors with clearances. That requirement is now in place.

In addition, it recommended reducing the number of workers with clearances. The Defense Department made the same recommendation in its review of the shooting, released in March.

Clapper has directed all agencies to identify clearances they could eliminate. The Pentagon has said it expects to reduce its authorizations by 10 percent.

This month, the OPM announced another major change: It would not renew its contract with USIS for background checks.

The company has handled about 40 percent of federal background investigations for several years, averaging about 21,000 a month. The firm screened Alexis and Snowden.

In February, an OPM official testified before Congress that the contractor's investigative file on Alexis was "complete and in compliance with all investigative standards."

But the Justice Department sued the firm, alleging it filed more than 660,000 incomplete background checks in a process known as "dumping." The Washington Post revealed the case last October.

USIS has since hired a new management team and said it has sharpened oversight procedures. The company has stressed that it was never in charge of making clearance decisions, which was always the government's job.

"We are deeply disappointed with OPM's decision, particularly given the excellent work our 3,000 employees have delivered on these contracts," USIS said in a statement. "While we disagree with the decision and are reviewing it, we intend to fulfill our obligations to ensure an orderly transition."

The OPM this year also stopped allowing screening contractors to review their own work for quality, requiring federal workers to do the job.

In June, an OPM inspector general's report found that USIS had completed an "abnormally high

number" of reviews in a short period, with one worker finishing 15,000 cases in a month, often closing them in minutes.

The report also said two of the government's other largest background-check contractors, Key-Point Government Solutions and CACI International, had submitted investigations without reviews, and that KeyPoint had no record of training its screeners.

The firms' contracts are set to end in November 2016. Neither firm responded to requests for comment.

Many lawmakers applauded the OPM's decision about USIS.

Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.), who has proposed legislation to overhaul the clearance process, described it as a "welcome sign that the federal government is finally beginning to hold contractors accountable for taking millions in federal money and then failing to get the job done for the taxpayer."

Lawmakers have also proposed various background-check bills.

In October, a bipartisan group of women senators proposed a bill that would make the follow-up reviews law. Bill sponsors are awaiting action by the full Senate.

Additionally, Tester and Sen. Clair McCaskill (D-Mo.) won approval for a measure that allows the OPM inspector general to harness additional agency funding to regularly examine the screening process. Obama signed the bill into law in February.

Tester followed up in May with a bill that would prohibit screenings by federal workers and contractors who have compromised background probes. It would also require the government to update its policies for determining how many positions require security clearance. The proposal awaits action by the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

The House oversight committee has been working with other panels on legislation to further address problems. "We owe it to the victims of the Navy Yard shooting to fix this process once and for all," said Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), the committee chairman.

josh.hicks@washpost.com

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### **ISIS Cruelty Deserves Our Strongest Condemnation**

As a practicing Muslim deeply influenced by the tenets of my faith, I strongly condemn the brutal atrocities of the ISIS terrorist group. Their actions are a disgrace to the faith they proclaim and are crimes against humanity. Religion provides a foundation upon which to establish peace, human rights, freedoms and the rule of law. Any interpretations to the contrary, including the abuse of religion to fuel conflicts, are simply wrong and deceitful.

ISIS is not the first group to use religious rhetoric to mask its cruelty—Al Qaeda did so 13 years ago and Boko Haram more recently. What they all have in common is a totalitarian mentality that denies human beings their dignity.

Any form of violence against innocent civilians or persecution of minorities contradicts the principles of the Qur'an and the tradition of our Prophet (upon whom be peace and blessings). ISIS members are either completely ignorant about the faith they proclaim, or their actions are designed to serve individual interests or those of their political masters. Regardless, their actions represent those of a terrorist group and, as such, they should be brought to justice and compelled to answer for their horrific crimes.

I send my heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased in Iraq and Syria, and to the families of James Foley, Steven Sotloff and David Haines. May God give them strength, patience and perseverance, and alleviate their suffering. I also pray for the immediate and safe release of hostages and ask God, the Merciful, to lead us all toward mutual respect and peace. I invite everyone around the world to join me in these prayers.

#### Fethullah Gulen

Islamic scholar, preacher and social advocate

This message is from the Alliance for Shared Values — a non-profit that serves as a central resource for information on Fethullah Gulen and the civil society movement he inspired — and from its member organizations focused on interfaith and intercultural dialogue: Atlantic Institute, Dialogue Institute, Pacifica Institute, Peace Islands Institute, Niagara Foundation and Rumi Forum.

Fethullah Gulen's original August 22 statement on ISIS is available at www.afsv.org.

Paid for by Alliance for Shared Values.

# When mortgages, babies don't mix

**HUD** probes denial of loans to new moms and pregnant women

#### BY EMILY WAX-THIBODEAUX

The couple, who had just had twins, thought everything was on track when their mortgage application was approved and the closing for their new Virginia home was scheduled.

But when the lender — First-Bank — learned that the wife was on maternity leave, it reversed its decision and denied the loan, causing the wife and twins to move in with her parents. There wasn't enough space, so her husband moved to an apartment with their 3-year-old.

Three-quarters of U.S. moms are in the labor force, but securing a mortgage while on maternity leave or pregnant is "a significant challenge and producing a steady flow of complaints," said Bryan Greene, general deputy assistant secretary for fair housing and equal opportunity at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

HUD launched 15 maternityleave discrimination investigations this year, part of a pattern that has seen the federal agency investigate 173 allegations against lenders since 2010, Greene said.

In the latest case, FirstBank Mortgage Partners will pay \$35,000 to settle allegations that it violated the Fair Housing Act when it denied a mortgage loan to the couple because the mother was on maternity leave, though she planned on returning to work outside the home.

Both the Justice Department and HUD have settled with - and levied monetary penalties against — a number of lenders, including Bank of America, PNC Mortgage, Cornerstone Mortgage and MGIC. The MGIC settlement in 2012 involved 70 women and led to a \$511,250 compensation fund for the alleged discrimination victims and a \$38,750 civil penalty.

"In many instances, we find lenders just stop dead at the word 'pregnancy' or 'maternity leave,' " Greene said. "And in many instances, women are planning to go back to work, but lenders don't make those inquires. They go on the assumptions that women won't return to work."

The banks, which denied any wrongdoing as part of the settlement, argue that there will be a loss of income during maternity leave and women may not return

That assumption is "antiquated, ridiculous and just not true," said Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, executive director of MomsRising, a national advocacy group with more than 1 million members.

Her organization is working with HUD to combat the practice. The group is asking members to write in if they experience lending discrimination. The reports will then be sent to HUD.

"There's a myth that moms are not as committed to work as Rowe-Finkbeiner said. "But, this is not the 'Mad Men' era with Betty Draper at home."

Today, 50 percent of women return to work within three months after giving birth to their first child, she said. More than 70 percent of mothers with young children are in the workforce, and four in 10 mothers are the sole or primary breadwinner.

On the MomsRising Web site, Linda Falcão, a civil rights lawyer and mother of three from Pennsylvania who was one of the first people to raise the issue, said a bank told her family to write a "motivational letter."

"After asking two separate mortgage reps to be excused from this aspect of the process (and being refused) and after telling them I thought it was illegal (they didn't seem to care) I was inspired to write a satirical letter about what 'was brewing in my uterus' that I've published on a blog and shared with friends," she said, adding that she did not send the mocking letter to the bank.

"We really needed the new house," Falcão said. After closing on the loan, she

filed a complaint with HUD. Earlier this summer, HUD an-

nounced that the Irvine, Calif.based mortgage lender Greenlight Financial Services will pay \$20,000 to Stefanie and Jonathan Alvanos, who filed a complaint alleging discrimination. The lender also will pay \$7,000 each to four other applicants.

The Alvanoses — she is a middle school teacher and he is a real estate and bankruptcy lawyer were about to have their first child and were seeking to refinance their home when Greenlight told them it couldn't serve them because of the upcoming maternity leave.

"I couldn't believe they would say 'You are pregnant and can't refiance," Jonathan Alvanos said in a phone interview from their home in Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif. "They called it just another form of disability. But I thought that's discrimination on a few different levels. You basically are telling me that my wife and unborn child are a liability. I contacted HUD. I'm glad to know they can't just walk over everyone."

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# The high cost of punishment

By Newt Gingrich and B. Wayne Hughes Jr.

MAGINE YOU have the power to decide the fate of someone addicted to heroin who is convicted of petty shoplifting.

How much taxpayer mon-

ey would you spend to put that person in prison — and for how long? Is incarceration the right form of punishment to change this offender's behavior?

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Those are questions states across the nation are increasingly asking as the costly and ineffective realities of incarceration-only policies have set in. Obviously, we need prisons for people who are dangerous, and there should be harsh punishments for those convicted of violent crimes. But California has been overusing incarceration. Prisons are for people we are afraid of, but we have been filling them with many folks we are just mad at.

Reducing wasteful corrections spending and practices is long overdue in California. The state imprisons five times as many people as it did 50 years ago (when crime rates were similar). And as Californians know, the state's prison system ballooned over the last few dec-

ades and became so crowded that federal judges have mandated significant reductions.

Contributing to the growth in the number of prisoners and in prison spending has been a dramatic expansion in the number of felonies. In addition, mandatory minimum sentences have been applied to an increasing number of crimes. These policies have combined to drive up the prison population, as more prisoners serve longer sentences. On top of that, California has an alarmingly high recidivism rate: Six out of 10 people exiting  $\,$ California prisons return within three years.

It makes no sense to send nonserious, nonviolent offenders to a place filled with hardened criminals and a poor record of rehabilitation — and still expect them to come out better than they went in. Studies show that placing low-risk offenders in prison makes them more dangerous when they are re-

leased.
Over-incarceration
makes no fiscal sense. California spends \$62,396 per
prisoner each year, and \$10
billion overall, on its corrections system. That is larger
than the entire state budget
of 12 other states. This expenditure might be worth it if
we were safer because of it.

# Across the nation, states are realizing they lock up too many people.

But with so many offenders returning to prison, we clearly aren't getting as much public safety — or rehabilitation — as we should for this large expenditure.

Meanwhile, California spends only \$9,200 per K-12 student, and the average salary for a new teacher is \$41,926. And as California built 22 prisons in 30 years, it built only one public university.

California is not alone in feeling the financial (and public safety) consequences of over-incarceration. Several states — politically red states, we would point out — have shown how reducing prison populations can also reduce cost and crime.

Most notably, Texas in 2007 stopped prison expansion plans and instead used those funds for probation and treatment. It has reduced its prison population, closed three facilities and saved billions of dollars, putting a large part of the savings into drug treatment and mental health services. Better yet, Texas' violent crime rates are the lowest since 1977.

Another red state, South Carolina, made similar reforms for nonviolent offenses. The drop in the number of prisoners allowed South Carolina to close one prison and also lower its recidivism rate. Other states (Ohio, Georgia, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Missouri, Pennsylvania and Mississippi) have similarly shifted their approach to nonviolent convictions.

Now voters in California will have a chance to do the same, using costly prison beds for dangerous and hardened criminals. It is time to stop wasting taxpayer dollars on locking up low-level offenders. Proposition 47 on the November ballot will do this by changing six nonviolent, petty offenses from felony punishments (which now can carry prison time) to misdemeanor punishments and local accountability.

The measure is projected to save hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars per year, and it will help the state emphasize punishments such as community supervision and treatment that are more likely to work instead of prison time.

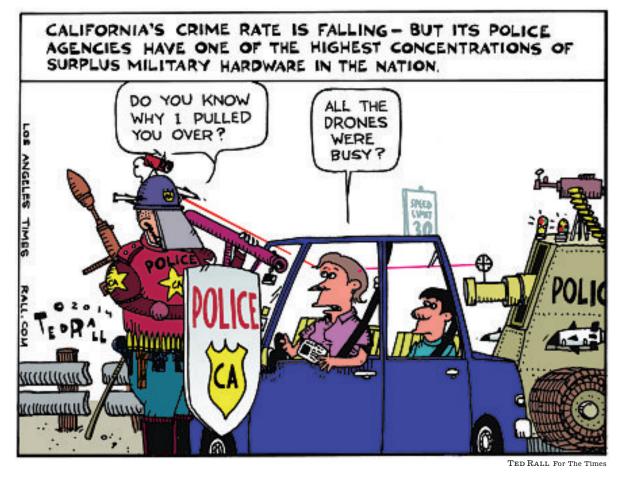
Take the example of Ray Rivera of San Diego, who represents a very common experience. Rivera was addicted to drugs from early in life. At age 24, he stole \$50 of merchandise from a store to buy drugs, and was sentenced to prison.

Instead of being held accountable and confronting his drug habit through treatment, Rivera languished in prison and came out in worse shape. It wasn't until he was out of the justice system that he sought and found the treatment he needed and cleaned up his life. Sending him to prison was a waste.

If so many red states can see the importance of refocusing their criminal justice systems, California can do the same. It's not often the voters can change the course of a criminal justice system. Californians should take advantage of the opportunity and vote yes on Proposition 47.

Newt Gingrich, a former speaker of the House of Representatives, is a co-host of CNN's "Crossfire." B. WAYNE HUGHES JR., a California businessman, is founder and chairman of the board of Serving California, a foundation that helps ex-offenders, crime victims and veterans.

#### TED RALL



# The Senate will change, but how?

#### DOYLE MCMANUS

or Most of the year, it seemed almost certain that Republicans would win the six additional Senate seats they need to oust Democrats from the majority and take control of Congress.

But the outlook has

turned murkier recently. While a GOP majority is still the most likely outcome, it's no longer as sure a bet. Endangered Democratic incumbents in North Carolina and Alaska are waging surprisingly strong campaigns, and a Republican incumbent in Kansas is in unexpected trouble. "We don't have a lock on this thing at all," one GOP strategist told me recently.

It even seems possible that Senate elections could end in a draw, with a 50-50 split, in which case Vice President Joe Biden would cast votes as a tiebreaker.

And that's not even the

This electronic tearsheet confirms the ad appeared in the Los Angeles Times on the date and

most exotic possibility. One scenario is a Senate

in which neither major party wins 50 seats. The next Senate will include two, maybe three independents. Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Angus King of Maine, whose seats aren't up this year, may be joined by Greg Orman, a newcomer who leads the polls in Kansas. Sanders, a socialist, would continue to vote with Democrats, but King and Orman, both centrists, would be wooed by both parties — and could instantly become two of the most powerful politicians on Capitol Hill.

We could see senators switching sides. Republicans are talking hopefully about persuading Sen. Joe Manchin III (D-W.Va.), the Senate's most conservative Democrat, to cross the aisle and sit with them. Manchin has so far dismissed the idea, but that won't stop the GOP from trying.

the GOP from trying.

And the Senate's makeup could be in doubt for
months after the election.

In Louisiana, if no candidate wins 50%, the state holds a runoff on Dec. 6— and that's likely to happen, since the "jungle ballot" includes three Republicans running against incumbent Democrat Mary L. Landrieu. In Georgia, if no candidate wins 50%, a runoff is held on Jan. 6— one day after the new Senate convenes. In other tight races, recounts could take months.

But the most intriguing scenario for next year's Senate is the least exotic one: What happens if Republicans win a slim majority of 51 or 52 seats?

The party would then be like the dog who caught the car and has to figure out. what to do with it. When the two houses of Congress have been held by different parties, gridlock has made governance almost impossible. But if the GOP controls both the Senate and the House, its members will be under pressure to govern. At least in the Senate, where 60 votes are needed to move major legislation, thev'll even have an incentive to compromise to rescue their wholly owned legislative branch from the cellar of public esteem.

"To elect a president in 2016, we're going to have to show in 2015 and '16 that the American people can trust Republicans with the government," Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.), a leading GOP deal-maker, said recently.

But that won't be easy. The Senate GOP is deeply divided. On one side are pragmatic conservatives such as Alexander and Ohio's Rob Portman, who want to pass a budget, rein in federal regulations and even tackle tax reform — and are willing to work with Democrats to do it.

Portman even sounds enthusiastic about the prospect, pointing to earlier eras when Presidents Reagan and Clinton negotiated successfully with opposition majorities. "I know I may sound naive," he said, but "when we have divided government, that's when we've done tax reform; that's when we've done enti-

tlement reform."
Opposing them from
within the party, however, is
the take-no-prisoners
caucus of Sen. Ted Cruz
(R-Texas), conservatives
who want to send uncompromising bills to the White
House (beginning with the
repeal of Obamacare) and
force President Obama to

veto them.
The man in the middle is Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, the GOP leader, who wants to do a little of each. When he talks to conservative donors and voters, McConnell sounds as ferocious as any tea party militant.

party militant.

Obama "needs to be challenged, and the best way to do that is through the funding process,"

McConnell told Politico last month. "We're going to pass spending bills, and they're going to have a lot of restrictions on the activities of the bureaucracy."

But when he realized that sounded as if he were threatening a government shutdown, McConnell told reporters that wasn't what he meant. "I'm the guy who gets us out of government shutdowns," he insisted.

Can the GOP's pragmatists resist their party's swing to the right, strike alliances with centrist Democrats and actually pass important legislation next year?

them. But it's worth a try—and at least would offer a new, more interesting form of gridlock.

The odds are against

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**Patt Morrison** 

will run on Thursday.

Patt Morrison's interview

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# ISIS Cruelty Deserves Our Strongest Condemnation

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Fethullah Gulen's original August 22 statement on ISIS is available at **www.afsv.org**. Paid for by Alliance for Shared Values.

## COMMENTARY

# Why some parents love the whip too much



CLARENCE PAGE

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Retired NBA star Charles Barkley exposed a hazardous culture clash in the Texas grand jury indictment of Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson for child abuse.

If parents are going to be sent to jail for giving their children a "whipping," then "every black parent in the South is going to be in jail," Barkley claimed.

Some people were upset that Barkley, a black Alabama native, singled out black people and Southerners. But as a fellow offspring of Southern parents, I know Barkley was not gratuitously playing a race card.

A variety of academic studies have found that while spanking occurs in every major racial or ethnic group, African-Americans approve of the practice more often than others.

For example, an extensive study of spanking and ethnicity by Elizabeth Gershoff, a human ecology associate professor at the University of Texas at Austin, found 89 percent of black parents said they had spanked their children, compared with 80 percent of Hispanic parents, 79 percent of white parents and 73 percent of Asian parents.

By region, a 2013 Harris Interactive study found people are more likely to be in favor of spanking if they live in the South and Midwest than in the West or

And that, I quickly add, is not a good thing.

Regardless of how much some of us look back with wistful nostalgia on our own spankings



A Texas grand jury indicted Minnesota Vikings running back Adrian Peterson on Friday for reckless or negligent injury to a child.

 as my Alabama cousins and I jovially recalled at a recent family reunion — corporal punishment poses more hazards than it is worth when compared to many nonviolent alternatives.

Numerous theories have been raised as to why so many black parents approve of whipping, or "whooping," as my parents said in their Alabama accents. Some researchers have associated it with the legacy left by the brutality of slavery. Slaves whipped their children, it is said, to teach them to avoid being whipped by white slave masters, which would be so much worse.

Others point out that African-American parents are disproportionately more poor, Southern and religiously conservative, all of which are factors that correlate with support for corporal punishment, regardless of race. The biblical injunction about

sparing the rod is taken quite literally by religious conservatives, surveys show.

But that excuse also is rejected by such experts as Dr. Alvin Poussaint, the black Harvard psychiatrist who advised Bill Cosby's "The Cosby Show."

"There's an overuse of beating kids - corporal punishment," he said at a conference on black youth violence that I wrote about in 2006. "So that you have 80 percent

of black parents believing you should beat them — beat the devil out of them. And research shows the more you beat them, the angrier they get. It is not good discipline.

"Violence begets violence," Poussaint said, pointing out that disciplinary practices at home may help to explain why black children have been expelled from preschool at as much as

twice the rate for white and Hispanic children.

Even Peterson acknowledges that his discipline went further than he intended, according to his attorney. Police say Peterson whipped his 4-year-old son so hard with a switch made from a tree branch that he caused numerous cuts and bruises to the child's back, buttocks, ankles, legs and scrotum, plus defensive wounds to the child's hands.

Yet, during a Sunday interview with Jim Rome on the CBS pregame show "The NFL Today," Barkley raised an argument that I know was on many peo-ple's minds. "I think there's a fine rearing. "I've had many welts on my legs."

Yet Barkley eventually noted that the pictures of Peterson's child were "disturbing." He also agreed with Rome that maybe we as a society "need to rethink" this issue.

Many of us are. I tried spanking our son in his preschool years, but he's too much like me. He only grew more angry and defiant.

But the kid was terrified of timeouts. The prospect of spending more than 10 seconds in solitary confinement — away from friends, TV, books, computer or video games — brought instant compliance.

Every child is different, of course. Barkley is right about how "we have to really be careful trying to teach other parents how to discipline their kids."

But it's still a worthy cause to

Clarence Page, a member of the Tribune Editorial Board, blogs at chicagotribune.com/pagespage

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### We are listening

Editor's note: Bob Foys, of Chicago, is the latest Tribune reader to join the editorial board as its community member.

Foys, 74, was born and raised in Pilsen and has lived in the Chicago area for 60 years. He taught writing and



bana-Champaign and the University of Wisconsin at Madison, ran a small security consulting and private in-

literature at the

University of

Illinois at Ur-

vestigation company for three years and worked in insurance brokerage at Aon for 30 years before retiring in 2005.

He is a graduate of Loyola University Chicago and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

In 2011, Foys received a surgical implant of a ventricular assist device - essentially a batterypowered heart — to treat endstage congestive heart failure. After receiving the implant, a psychologist suggested he find a way to re-engage with the world, so he wrote a letter to the editor. He kept writing and has become one of the Tribune's most frequent letter writers.

He writes almost daily on his iPad and is most passionate about topics concerning "infringements on liberty and limitations on free choice."

He describes himself as curious, observant and skeptical but says he's generally optimistic about the world and smiles more than the average person. He likes to say he loves three women: his wife, Melinda, to whom he's been married for 49 years; his daughter, Susan; and his granddaughter, Sabrina.

— Jessica Reynolds, Tribune reporter

#### **VOICE OF THE PEOPLE**

#### **UN oversight**

No one was surprised to discover that Hamas was storing and shooting rockets from United Nations schools during the latest

However, we were shocked to learn that UNRWA, the UN body tasked with aiding Palestinian refugees, gave those very rockets back to Hamas to continue the rocket assault on Israel from its very

That is why the American Jewish Committee is supporting a congressional letter to Secretary of State John Kerry calling for an investigation into how U.S. funding of UNRWA may have been misused and to institute proper vetting of UNRWA staff to ensure that members of Hamas and Hezbollah cannot join the organization.

This oversight is critical to make sure UNRWA does not continue to act in a way that jeopardizes both Israelis and Palestinians.

- Harry Seigle, president, and Amy Stoken, director, American Jewish Committee Chicago

#### Rejecting anti-Semitism

This electronic tearsheet confirms the ad appeared in The Chicago Tribune on the date and pa

Date:

It was refreshing to see a professor appropriately rejected for his overt anti-Semitism.

I refer to Steven Salaita. It is one thing to disagree with Israel's position on issues.

It is entirely different to wish the deaths of its citizens.

But the hand-wringing of many in the academic community about feared infringements on "academic liberty" rings hollow.

When these same people begin to defend politically incorrect viewpoints as strongly as they do ones that are anti-Semite, anti-Christian and anti-American, I may believe they are



PAUL OSBUN

But just consider their silence when an ardent Christian professor is denied tenure, or note that when anyone questions the group-think of man-made global warming or evolution, these strident advocates of "free thought" are not to be found!

- Thorin Anderson, Chi-

#### Revolting statements

I wish to compliment the University of Illinois for denying a position on the university faculty to Steven Salaita, who has written truly despicable and cruel statements about Israel.

I agree that Salaita's statements are as revolting as those of Bill Ayers, who dedicated his book to the man who murdered Robert Kennedy.

Many supporters of Israel feel as I do that the loss of life in Israel and Gaza in this recent war is

Salaita's opinion is that we should only murder more Israelis. My thanks go to the

university. - Sarah Rabens, Chicago

#### Freely expressed thoughts

Regarding Steven Salaita, every citizen has the right to freely express his or her thoughts, but in doing so, he or she runs the risk that some people will not agree with him or her.

However, any employer has the right to accept or reject anyone applying for a This subject case has a

complicating fact in that the applicant quit his existing job and sold his home. The university may have

some liability here, but only for the costs incurred by the applicant in anticipation of a new position.

- Bud Glickman, North-

#### Term limits

When you think about it, the lack of term limits for political office is probably the root cause of most of society's biggest problems and the primary reason for government waste.

When one individual can inhabit a powerful public office for a period of decades, he clearly possesses an undue influence on

public policy. Without term limits there is an endless campaign process in motion, which necessarily precludes the public servant from spending the appropriate time devoted to solving the problems he was hired to fix in the first place

A person occupying a public office for too long is simply not in the long-term public interest.

It becomes only in the interest of the office holder.

I believe politicians should only be able to hold elected office for two terms or no longer than eight years.

Upon leaving office they should be paid one month's pay for each year served as severance pay.

they can re-enter the pri-

No pensions. After their public service,

vate workplace. If they can't find a job, then maybe they should have worked more closely with the business community to create a more prosperous economic environ-

ment. — Mike Simon, Glen Ellyn **ADVERTISEMENT** 

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### **ISIS Cruelty Deserves Our Strongest Condemnation**

As a practicing Muslim deeply influenced by the tenets of my faith, I strongly condemn the brutal atrocities of the ISIS terrorist group. Their actions are a disgrace to the faith they proclaim and are crimes against humanity. Religion provides a foundation upon which to establish peace, human rights, freedoms and the rule of law. Any interpretations to the contrary, including the abuse of religion to fuel conflicts, are simply wrong and deceitful.

ISIS is not the first group to use religious rhetoric to mask its cruelty—Al Qaeda did so 13 years ago and Boko Haram more recently. What they all have in common is a totalitarian mentality that denies human beings their dignity.

Any form of violence against innocent civilians or persecution of minorities contradicts the principles of the Qur'an and the tradition of our Prophet (upon whom be peace and blessings). ISIS members are either completely ignorant about the faith they proclaim, or their actions are designed to serve individual interests or those of their political masters. Regardless, their actions represent those of a terrorist group and, as such, they should be brought to justice and compelled to answer for their horrific crimes.

I send my heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased in Iraq and Syria, and to the families of James Foley, Steven Sotloff and David Haines. May God give them strength, patience and perseverance, and alleviate their suffering. I also pray for the immediate and safe release of hostages and ask God, the Merciful, to lead us all toward mutual respect and peace. I invite everyone around the world to join me in these prayers.

Fethullah Gulen

Islamic scholar, preacher and social advocate

This message is from the Alliance for Shared Values — a non-profit that serves as a central resource for information on Fethullah Gulen and the civil society movement he inspired and from its member organizations focused on interfaith and intercultural dialogue; Atlantic Institute, Dialogue Institute, Pacifica Institute, Peace Islands Institute, Niagara Foundation

Fethullah Gulen's original August 22 statement on ISIS is available at www.afsv.org. Paid for by Alliance for Shared Values.

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