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# The Briefing

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4 March 2013

## Vitamin D deficiency may cause 'child abuse' injuries

**By Marika Hill**  
*Stuff.Co.NZ*

Two Dunedin parents who are fighting for the custody of their daughter say vitamin D deficiency caused her multiple broken bones, not child abuse.

Their case has highlighted a growing problem of children being born with brittle bones because of vitamin D deficiency, and the risks of parents being labelled child abusers as doctors try to understand what caused broken bones.

Child, Youth and Family (CYF) removed the couple's 14-week-old daughter from them after doctors raised alarm bells over the girl's fractured skull, limbs and six broken ribs.

When the case went to the Family Court, doctors were at odds over whether the infant's injuries were caused by trauma or a rare case of a baby so lacking in vitamin D in the womb that it was born with the Victorian era disease of rickets.

Vitamin D helps calcium to be absorbed, making bones stronger.

The Family Court ruled in favour of the CYF decision to place the girl in the care of an aunt for her protection.

Judge John Coyle said there was no evidence the "doting parents" were mistreating their daughter, but rejected rickets as a cause and said he could only conclude one of the parents caused her broken bones.

The debate is now likely to play out at an appeal hearing at Dunedin High Court later this year.

In a High Court decision released last month, Justice Graham Panckhurst granted the Dunedin parents permission to use evidence from a medical expert who testified in a landmark British case.

Justice Panckhurst said there were "striking similarities"

between the cases, including the children's ages and type of fractures. No court date has been set.

In April 2012, two British parents were cleared of killing their

4-month-old son, Jayden Wray, who inherited rickets from an undiagnosed vitamin D deficiency in his mother and died from a head injury in July 2009.

A London Court ruled the boy's injuries were caused by rickets and granted the parents custody of their daughter, who had been in care since birth.

The British case put the spotlight on vitamin D deficiency and raised concerns that hospital specialists were missing potentially

[Continue reading](#)

## Search for buried Spitfires to continue in Burma

**By Mark Magnier**  
*Los Angeles Times*

KYAN KHINN SU, Myanmar - No matter what anyone else says, antique-aircraft buff David Cundall remains adamant about finding valuable World War II Spitfires buried somewhere in Myanmar.

The 63-year-old English farmer and aviation fan told reporters in Yangon recently that he would continue his search even though his main sponsor had backed out.

Cundall has already led a 21-member team digging and

surveying for several weeks this year near Yangon's international airport in Mingaladon, convinced that dozens of the planes were buried unassembled in wooden crates at the end of the war in 1945. He maintains that more than 100 Spitfires - famously used against Nazi bombers during the 1940 Battle of Britain - sit some 25 to 40 feet underground, their fuselages wrapped in brown grease paper, their joints covered in tar to protect against water damage.

He says he knows their rough location based on survey data,

aerial photography, ground-penetrating radar and the recollections of military veterans. But extensive searching has turned up nothing.

Setbacks have not stopped Cundall. When his main sponsor, Belarusian video gaming company Wargaming.net, pulled its \$500,000 worth of support in February, the company said in a statement that it thought the planes didn't exist, that accounts of the burial were a myth, and that it was "almost impossible" that the crates were buried given bad weather and equipment

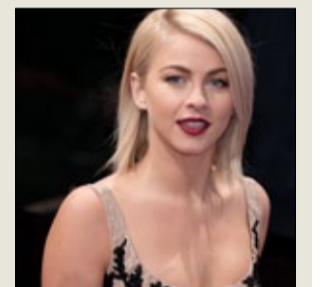
shortages at the time.

"Reality check time," Martin Perry wrote on the Facebook page Burma Spitfires. "A wild goose chase of mythical proportions," wrote Derek Tonkin, chairman of the nonprofit forum Network Myanmar and former British ambassador to Thailand, Vietnam and Laos, in a Myanmar Times article.

Cundall, meanwhile, has pledged to press on, saying: "There is no shortage of money. I'm still confident to find Spitfires."

He's reportedly made at least

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'Global warming currently on hold' [Page 5](#)

12 trips to Myanmar, also known as Burma, spending \$200,000 of his own money and lobbying the long-secretive government over the last 17 years. His quixotic quest gained some credibility last year when British Prime Minister David Cameron raised the idea with Myanmar President Thein Sein.

*CONT. ON P2*

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### LITTLE DOG SAVES 3 YEAR OLD GIRL

**Warsaw, (UPI)** — Authorities in Poland say a small dog likely saved the life of a 3-year-old girl who went missing and spent the night outside in freezing temperatures. The girl, Julia, disappeared with her dog from the village of Pierzwin in western Poland on Friday, RIA Novosti reported. More than 250 firefighters, police officers, rescue workers and local residents searched for the girl throughout the night, Vesti FM radio reported. She was found Saturday, lying in nearby marshland with the dog by her side. Firefighters who found Julia said the dog kept her warm enough through the night, when temperatures got down to 23 degrees. Julia was taken to a local hospital because she appeared to have suffered some frostbite, hospital workers said. Her condition is not life-threatening.

### MAN FAKES KIDNAP TO AVOID GIRLFRIEND

**New York, (UPI)** — A New York City man was arrested and charged with faking being kidnapped to avoid telling his girlfriend why he was gone for two weeks. Rahmell Pettway, 36, was discovered by passersby early Thursday between two cars parked on a street in Brooklyn, the New York Post reported. His hands, legs and mouth were covered with duct tape, and he complained of pain in his ribs, police said. When being questioned by police, Pettway said he had been kidnapped by two men in a blue minivan on Feb. 19. They then held him captive for about two weeks, driving him around from place to place, Pettway said. However, authorities became suspicious of Pettway's story and he soon confessed that the kidnapping was a hoax, saying he had been avoiding his girlfriend for a couple of weeks and was terrified of facing her. "He's a total moron", said one law-enforcement official. "It was a pathetic attempt to pull the wool [over] her eyes." Pettway was arrested and charged for filing a false report.

### FROM FRONT PAGE

deadly cases of the diseases.

Dunedin paediatrician Dr Benjamin Wheeler, who testified at the Family Court hearing, still insists the New Zealand girl's injuries could not be explained by vitamin D deficiency though he admitted the girl had a mild to moderate case of rickets, proven by radiology images of her bones. Eight doctors who gave evidence at the Family Court debated whether the girl's injuries were caused by abuse or vitamin D deficiency.

Judge Coyle said it was a complex case and "incredibly difficult". The parents were caring, responsible and intelligent people and there was no evidence of mistreatment but "despite the counter-intuitive factors that I have referred to, the inescapable conclusion is that [the child's] non-accidental injuries were caused by one of her parents".

### WHAT IS VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY?

The main source of vitamin D is synthesis of cholesterol triggered by the sun.

There are growing concerns the sun-safety and indoor working life are leading to an increasing number of people developing vitamin D deficiencies as well.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

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### FROM FRONT PAGE

Under an agreement reached in October, Myanmar's government would get 50 percent of the value of any find, local Burmese agents 20 percent and Cundall's group 30 percent. Each Spitfire could be worth more than \$2 million, based on the 2009 auction of a refurbished one that sold for \$2.5 million.

The project had generated excitement, with Wargaming.net, creator of such titles as "World of Warplanes," pledging to provide even more than the initial \$500,000 if any Spitfires were found. The publicity, an interest in military history and the chance of turning the search into a video game drove the decision, company head Victor Kislyi said, and any actual discovery would be considered a bonus.

"There aren't too many adventures like this on this planet," Kislyi had said.

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But like many treasure hunts, this one has had its share of doubt, distrust, intrigue and accusations of wrongdoing.

There are no known records of large Spitfire shipments to Myanmar in 1945, let alone burials.

Keith Win, founder of the Myanmar Britain Business Association, who worked with Cundall from 1997 to 2010 to identify likely burial spots, also has become convinced that there are no crates to be found.

# Wikileaker pleads guilty, faces 20 in slammer

By Richard A. Serrano  
Tribune Washington Bureau

FORT MEADE, Md. - Army Pfc. Bradley Manning pleaded guilty Thursday to sending huge digital archives of secret U.S. military and diplomatic records to the WikiLeaks website, saying he was motivated by a U.S. foreign policy "obsessed with killing and capturing people."

Manning, 25, sat erect in dress blues beside his lawyers in a military courtroom and read aloud for more than an hour - slowly but sometimes stumbling over his words - from a 35-page, handwritten statement that described his personal angst over America's wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I began to become depressed with the situation we had become mired in year after year," he said.

After his nearly three years in jail, Manning's sometimes rambling, sometimes riveting confession offered the first public insights into what drove the former low-level intelligence analyst to play a role in what prosecutors called the largest leak of classified information in U.S. history - an estimated 700,000 documents in all.

It is unlikely, however, to settle the argument of whether the pale, thin soldier in wire-rim glasses deliberately aided America's enemies and put U.S. lives at risk, as prosecutors contend, or was a whistleblower who committed civil disobedience to expose flaws in U.S. policies, as his supporters say.

Manning said his goal was to spark a domestic debate about U.S. foreign policy and "to make the world a better place." He said he thought the leaks "might be embarrassing" but would not harm the United States.

Manning said he alone was responsible for

uploading to WikiLeaks highly classified combat videos of U.S. airstrikes that killed civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan, detailed logs of U.S. military patrols and incidents, a memo from an unnamed intelligence agency, assessments of terrorism suspects held at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and diplomatic cables from U.S. embassies around the globe.

The release of the material on the anti-secrecy website beginning in February 2010 outraged U.S. officials, who said the leaks endangered intelligence sources and that the sometimes unflattering diplomatic dispatches embarrassed key allies. In Tunisia, allegations of corruption revealed in the files helped spur civil unrest that ultimately overthrew the autocratic regime.

Prosecutors are expected to present a detailed assessment of the alleged damage to national security caused by the leaks when Manning is sentenced.

Under a plea arrangement, Manning pleaded guilty Thursday to 10 criminal charges of misusing classified material, including unauthorized possession and willful communication of information from military databases. He is expected to be sentenced to 20 years in prison and a dishonorable discharge from the military.

But Manning also pleaded not guilty to 12 far more serious charges, including aiding the enemy and multiple counts of violating the Espionage Act. He is scheduled to face a court-martial beginning June 3. If convicted, he could face a life sentence.

Defense lawyers hope that prosecutors will decide that 20 years is enough punishment and will dismiss the remaining charges to avoid a public court-martial with 140 witnesses discussing a deeply embarrassing breakdown in the military's system

for safeguarding classified information.

The public-relations fallout for the military already has been significant. Protesters urging Manning's release routinely converge at the gates of Fort Meade for pretrial hearings. On Saturday, they marked his 1,000th day in custody with rallies in 70 cities in the U.S. and abroad.

Manning's comments were his first in court since November, when he testified about the harsh treatment he received at Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia after he was arrested in Iraq in May 2010. He said he was held in solitary confinement at Quantico for up to 23 hours a day, and considered suicide.

Asked repeatedly Thursday by the military judge, Col. Denise Lind, if he wanted to go forward with the guilty pleas, Manning answered each time with short, crisp words: "Yes, ma'am," and "Yes, your honor." He then read his statement. "I am a 25-year-old private first class in the Army," he began.

Manning said he enlisted in the Army to gain "real world experience," telling recruiters he was interested in "geopolitical matters" and advanced computer skills. He said he nearly washed out during basic training because "I quickly realized I was neither physically or mentally ready."

But he persevered, he said, and eventually was deployed as an Army intelligence analyst with a top-secret clearance to Contingency Operating Station Hammer near Baghdad. Upset by what he read in diplomatic cables and on a classified military network, he said he soon began collecting and storing classified material, taking some of it home to his quarters and printing or downloading it on his personal laptop.

"I looked everywhere and anywhere for information," he said.

In December 2009, he said, he started "conducting research" on WikiLeaks because the website seemed dedicated to "exposing corruption." He continued to follow the site, because "it is something good analysts do. ... I routinely monitored their website."

While on leave visiting his aunt in Potomac, Md., he said, "I tried to decide what to do with" the classified material on his personal computer. He traveled to Boston and told his boyfriend, Tyler, about the material, but he "was not excited about it."

When he returned to Maryland, a blizzard hit; so, suddenly snowbound, "I debated what to do" about the materials, he said. "Hold on to them or disclose them to a press agency?"

He said he called the Washington Post, but a reporter said she "did not believe him" and turned down his offer to provide the secret files. He said he then called the New York Times public editor and left a message, but "I never received a reply."

In February 2010, sitting in a Barnes and Noble bookstore in Rockville, Md., he visited the WikiLeaks website, he said, and "I clicked on the Submit Documents link."

Over the next few months, he uploaded other documents and material, including encrypted gun-sight video and audio from a July 2007 incident in Baghdad in which two U.S. Apache helicopters killed a dozen people, including a photographer and driver working for the Reuters news agency. The military later said the helicopter crew mistook a camera lens for a weapon, but Manning called the video "war porn."

In leaking the classified material, he added, "I felt I accomplished something that would allow me to have a clear conscience."



## A solution to NZPost's mail woes?

By Rick Broida  
CNET

Mail service as we know it just doesn't work anymore. Too much

junk. Too much hassle sorting, scanning, and/or filing the stuff we need to keep. And, let's be honest, so much of what arrives in our mailboxes could -- some would

say should -- arrive electronically. Austin-based startup Outbox wants to make that happen by digitizing all of your physical mail and delivering it to you

electronically on your iPhone or iPad, or your PC.

Interesting proposition, wouldn't you say? Think about it: no more daily trek to the mailbox

followed by the daily armload of junk into the trash can. Instead, everything gets intercepted and made digital, thus allowing you to block what you don't want and archive what you do.

It works like this: Three times per week, Outbox collects your actual mail from your actual mailbox. (This works only with locked boxes. Interestingly, the company makes a copy of your key based on photos supplied by you.)

That mail gets opened, scanned, and stored. (Packages are delivered outright to your front door.) You can then view it via the Web or your iDevice, where you have options for organizing, archiving, searching, and so on. You can also e-mail your mail and create tasks based on specific mail (like, say, a bill or an invitation).

If there's a piece of mail you decide you want in the flesh, so to speak, just submit a request and Outbox will (re)deliver it. Anything left unrequested for 30 days gets shredded and recycled, though you retain access to the

digital version unless you delete it.

Of particular interest in Outbox's method for dealing with junk mail: one click and you can unsubscribe from the sender, meaning no more unwanted catalogs and similar junk.

Following an alpha test with some 500 users, Outbox is rolling out in San Francisco on March 25. The first month is free; the service costs \$4.99 per month after that.

Needless to say, this raises all kinds of security concerns. Someone other than the USPS has access to your mailbox? Your mail gets collected by strangers, then opened and viewed by a business?

You'll definitely want to read Outbox's privacy policy, which does note that "Outbox opens and scans the mail sent to you and your household, and in the process collects information about you, your household and the parties that send you mail. Outbox also retains such scanned images of your mail on its servers." That doesn't sound too keen...

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## Shale gas fracking creates US oil boom

By Sean Cockerham  
McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON - U.S. oil production has soared to heights not seen in 20 years, largely driven by an explosion in crude harvested from Texas shale rock.

America is producing more than 7 million barrels of oil a day, the highest volume since 1992, according to figures released

Thursday by the U.S. Energy Information Administration. It's another sign of the transformation of American energy, as the nation is forecast to overtake Saudi Arabia as the world's top oil producer in just a few years.

Texas and North Dakota are the dominant states behind the increase in oil production, with crude from the Bakken formation of North Dakota transforming

that state and allowing it to pass Alaska as the nation's second leading oil producer.

Texas, meanwhile, has doubled its crude production since January 2010 and is by far the U.S. oil king.

Its boom is mostly because of the Eagle Ford shale region in south Texas, said Philip Budzik, an analyst with the Energy Information Administration. The energy revolution there and

in North Dakota is a result of horizontal drilling techniques and hydraulic fracturing, in which high-pressure water and chemicals are injected underground to free up pockets of oil in shale rock.

Mark Perry, an economics professor at the University of Michigan-Flint and a visiting scholar at the conservative American Enterprise Institute think tank, said Texas has become "Saudi Texas."

"It's kind of mind-boggling how big the increase is and how fast it's happened," Perry said in an interview.

Texas now produces almost three times as much crude oil as the second-place state, North Dakota. Texas alone has accounted for nearly a third of U.S. oil output in the past six months, according to Perry. If Texas were a separate country, he said, it would rank above oil-rich Norway as the 14th largest oil-producing nation in the world.

Along with the booming south Texas Eagle Ford region, which just five years ago produced little oil, the Permian Basin in West Texas is seeing a drilling resurgence as oil is extracted from its shale rock.

The unlocking of such oil reserves from shale rock is a major reason the International Energy Agency forecasts the United States will become the world's leading oil producer by about 2017. The agency figures America will become a net oil exporter by 2030, a huge shift in which the nation moves away from its dependence on foreign oil.

But U.S. Energy Information Administration analyst Budzik cautioned there are a lot of variables in the forecasts.

That includes oil prices, what areas prove to be the most profitable, and how long a well drilled through hydraulic fracturing will continue to produce.

## Science on standby for major announcement

GENEVA 1 March 2012. Experiments at CERN's Large Hadron Collider (LHC) are set to present their latest results at the Moriond conference, which begins tomorrow in the Italian town of La Thuile, and runs until 16 March. Although all of the LHC experiments will present results, eyes will be on the ATLAS and CMS collaborations, which will give updates on the analyses of the new particle whose discovery was announced last July.

"Patience is the order of the day," said CERN's research director, Sergio Bertolucci. "Everyone wants to know exactly what it is we've discovered, and that will come through a long and painstaking analysis. But the Higgs is just one part of a wide research programme at the LHC experiments, and there will be plenty of other interesting physics at Moriond."

The new particle was discovered by first eliminating a vast range of mass values where both theory and previous experiments suggested that the long-sought Higgs boson should be, and then seeing a growing signal in the region of 125 GeV. The work now at hand is to measure the properties and quantum numbers of the particle, to determine whether it is indeed the type of particle first postulated by Peter Higgs and others in 1964. If it is such a particle, it could complete the so-called Standard Model of particle physics, which describes the fundamental particles that make up all the visible matter in the universe and the forces that act between them, with the exception of gravity.

Part of the key to finding out what kind of particle has been discovered lies in precisely measuring the rates at which it

decays into others. ATLAS and CMS will present and update on these eagerly awaited results at Moriond. Both collaborations will report some analyses based on the full 2012 dataset, including results on decays to two photons, Z, W or tau particles. The larger datasets going into the Moriond analyses will allow the signal strengths to be more precisely measured, providing more clarity about the nature of the new boson.

"Precise measurements may not at first sight seem as exciting as discovering a new particle," explained Bertolucci, "but it's there that we really learn things. For example a discrepancy with theoretical predictions for the signal strengths in any of the decay channels would be one of the strongest markers for new physics."

Complementing the studies of the new boson, ATLAS and CMS will present updated results on a range of searches for other new particles, such as heavier versions of known objects or supersymmetric particles. Another strand of results will be in precision measurements for a variety of Standard Model processes.

All told, there will be a plethora of new measurements and search results emerging from the LHC in the coming weeks.

For more information about the expected results at the upcoming Moriond conference:

<http://www.quantumdiaries.org/2013/03/01/is-the-big-higgs-news-for-next-week/>

<http://www.quantumdiaries.org/2013/03/01/la-reponse-sur-le-boson-de-higgs-est-t-elle-imminente/>



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# Bladerunners: wind energy's victims

By Melissa Wishart  
INVESTIGATE

With a healthy environment at the forefront of everybody's minds lately, New Zealand is jumping headfirst into wind energy as a supposedly "clean, green" alternative to the current array of ways to generate electricity.

On the surface, it seems ideal. Wind is clean, free and renewable, and is described by the New Zealand Wind Energy Association to be "crucial to New Zealand's energy future" – but are we looking at it through rose tinted glasses?

Wind farms are being hailed as the eco-friendly power source set to take the country by storm. In reality, while we may be protecting the earth from allegedly harmful toxins and gases, could the wildlife, and perhaps even the public, be suffering?

Wind turbines, while not burning



any fuel or emitting any gases into the atmosphere, are an unreliable and expensive energy source. For example,

Meridian had planned to construct a 52-turbine wind farm in the Moawhango Ecological District, an area which its

own engineering experts admitted...

[READ MORE HERE](#)

## 4deg higher by 2100? Not on current data

There continues to be many news outlets that are pushing the idea that the Earth will warm up 4 °C by the year 2100. Back in December I initially addressed the issue here, but a thought has percolated with me about how to really deal with this propaganda. The idea is simple enough, I am going to start tracking the prediction error that exists from the warming that will have to take place in order to reach 4 °C of warming by the year 2100. This is a way to see how realistic the projections for the next 87 years are.

To do this I had to pick a starting point. Since 2100 is a nice arbitrary point in the future, I picked January 1, 2000 as my arbitrary starting point for tracking the error. That gives the warmists 100 years for the Earth to warm up 4 °C. 1999 and 2000 both had very similar temperatures so using 2000 as the starting point for the error monitoring is also useful.

The error I will be measuring is the difference between the actual measured temperature (UAH is the one I will be using) and the predicted temperature. So a negative error means the Earth is cooler than predicted...

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## Sea levels 8m higher 2000 years ago

A new paper published in *Geophysical Journal International* finds that during the last interglacial, global sea levels rose more than twice as fast as the present rate, to more than 8 meters higher than the present.

According to the authors, the maximum 1000-year-average rate of sea level rise during the last interglacial exceeded 6 mm/yr, which is double the rate claimed by the IPCC of 3.1 mm/yr, and 5 times the rate claimed by NOAA of ~ 1.2 mm/yr.

The paper adds to many other peer-reviewed studies demonstrating there is nothing unusual, unnatural, or unprecedented regarding current sea level rise, and that there is no evidence of a human influence on sea levels.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



## Polar bear numbers leap

By Susan Crockford, Zoologist  
PolarBearScience

*Global warming appears to be having minimal impact on polar bears if the latest population numbers are anything to go by - Editor*

Polar bears are a conservation success story. Their numbers have rebounded remarkably since 1973 and we can say for sure that there are more polar bears now than there were 40 years ago. Although we cannot state the precise amount that populations have increased (which is true for many species – counts are usually undertaken only after a major decline is noticeable), polar bears join a long list of other marine mammals whose populations rebounded spectacularly after unregulated hunting stopped:

sea otters, all eight species of fur seals, walrus, both species of elephant seal, and whales of all kinds (including grey, right, bowhead, humpback, sei, fin, blue and sperm whales). Once surveys have been completed for the four subpopulations of polar bears whose numbers are currently listed as zero (how about funding that, WWF?), the total world population will almost certainly rise to well above the current official estimate of 20,000-25,000 (perhaps to 27,000-32,000?).

[READ MORE HERE](#)

## Antarctica warmer in recent past than now

THE HOCKEY SCHTICK

A new paper published in *The Holocene* finds the Antarctic interior was warmer than the present over a period lasting about 2000 years, from 4300 to 2250 years ago. The paper surveys 3 lakes within 10° of the South Pole and finds meltwater levels were up to 69.5 meters higher than the present, which the authors "interpreted as being the result of an increased number of meltwater events and/or degree-days above freezing, relative to the present." The paper adds to many other peer-reviewed papers demonstrating that Antarctica



STUDY: natural climate variation plays big role in polar temperature swings

has warmed for prolonged periods to temperatures higher than the present, and that there is nothing unusual,

unnatural, or unprecedented in regard to present day temperatures.

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## Media give false info on Oz heat records

"In none of the examples is the January temperature a record, or even close to being so, and in most cases higher temperatures were recorded 50 years or more ago.

"But don't take my word for it. NSW was probably the worst affected state, yet, according to the Australian Bureau of Meteorology (BOM), it was only the 5th warmest January since 1910, and all the others occurred prior to 1940. In other words, a once in 20 years event..

"And what about Tasmania, where there was so much concern about wildfires? Mean temperature for the month was a scorching 15.0C. Apparently it was so average, the BOM did not even bother giving it a ranking!

"Meanwhile, despite the record temperature set on the 4th of the month, the average maximum temperature at Hobart was 23.9C. a figure beaten on seven previous occasions, as far back as 1887"....

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## UN IPCC now admits - warming has stopped

In 2010, IPCC chief Pachauri refused to acknowledge that global temperatures had not risen for over a decade when CFACT interviewed him at the UN's COP 16 in Cancun, Mexico.

This week Pachauri caved and conceded 17 years without warming at a speech at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia.

Pachauri is the IPCC's highest climate official, but is not, by the way, a climate scientist. Rather (as Lord Monckton loves to point out), he is a railroad engineer. Remember this the next time you encounter a warming activist (who is also not a climate scientist) who insists that you may not evaluate global warming policy because you are not a climate scientist. Global warming advocacy is a world of double standards and double speak.

If the head of the IPCC is ready to acknowledge that Met Office and NOAA data show no warming for 17 years, he should also acknowledge that their data shows no more than three quarters of a degree Celsius of warming altogether. That's it, three quarters of a degree and it is highly debatable how much of that three quarters, if any, is man-made rather than natural and solar.

Once Pachauri admits that warming has been minimal, and less than climate models predict...

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# Don't believe spin: climate scientist



BY P GOSSELIN  
NOTRICKSZONE

This week's newsstand, print-edition of FOCUS magazine (February 25, 2013, No. 9/13) has a 2-page interview with leading German climate scientist Professor Hans von Storch (HvS) titled: Climate Scientist Against Panic Spreading.

The sub-heading of the FOCUS article on page 92 reads:

"Scientist Hans von Storch goes hard in his own way: He accuses climate science of hype and 'methodical failure'."

Here he is speaking about the IPCC scientists. The interview coincides with the official release of his latest book "Klimafalle", which will hit the bookshelves tomorrow.

HvS says the focus of the climate issue is too much on the alarmists and those who claim it's all humbug. His book attempts to move the discussion to the centre.

"There's little doubt that man-made CO2 emissions have caused the globe to warm since the industrial revolution, he tells FOCUS, but not all scientists say sea levels are going to rise 2 meters by the year 2100 and that hurricanes are getting more frequent."

He says the climate issue needs to be debated, and warns scientists against acting like they are the "keepers of the truth".

At the center of the magazine's 2-page spread are two juxtaposed images: the left one shows the divergence between the observed global mean temperature and the IPCC projections; the right image shows Chancellor Angela Merkel with Prof Han-Joachim Schellnhuber standing in the background. The text under the juxtaposed images reads "indeed the global mean temperature has stagnated for years" and that HvS's book Die

Klimafälle "criticises the alarmist view of the PIK" (Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research).

HvS has always been critical of scientists interfering in the political process. FOCUS asks HvS if Chancellor Merkel ought not have a climate advisor, to which HvS replies:

"Just a single advisor? No."

FOCUS then asks HvS about efforts by scientists to intimidate any media critical of alarmism, a practice Stefan Rahmstorf is infamous for:

"That is a not taking one of the most important institutions seriously, namely the media. Anyone who behaves like that obviously views himself as the judge who knows how media reporting is supposed to be."

FOCUS then describes the IPCC's embarrassing Himalayan error, asking HvS how it is that some scientists can claim to be infallible? HvS attributes it to a "circle-the-wagons mentality"

within the climate science community, and even blames the political discussion in the USA "which has a very aggressive skeptics' scene that extends all the way into Congress and has influence on policy-making."

On the 15-year temperature stagnation, HvS still does not believe it disproves in the AGW theory, but concedes:

"As the scientific community, we were just not prepared for the temperature not rising for a decade as CO2 concentrations rose. We had not thought enough about the possibility of falsification. [...] We concentrated too much on looking ahead and said: Great! Everything fits our explanation. For many colleagues asking questions was frowned upon because this 'could provide the climate skeptics with ammo'. And that is a methodological failure."

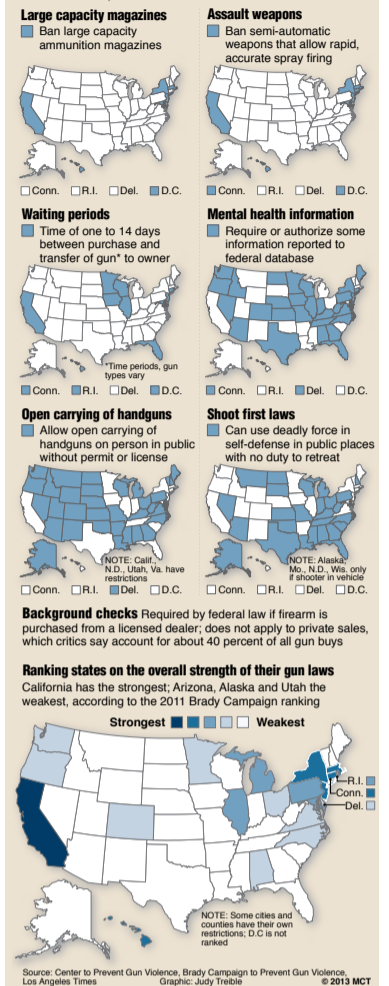
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### NEWS SNAPSHOT:

#### A patchwork of gun laws

State laws on the sale and ownership of guns vary widely. A look at some specific laws and how states rank overall.



## Eco firms buy political clout

BY DAVID ROSE  
DAILY MAIL

Like all MPs, Tim Yeo is paid £65,000 a year. But he never has to make do with just that. Last year alone, three 'green' companies paid the Conservative MP for South Suffolk £135,970.

For this, he usually did just a few hours' work a month. Yet he may be the firms' most valuable asset, as Mr Yeo is chairman of the Commons Select Committee on Energy and Climate Change, and so plays a key role in shaping the green economy in which his sometime employers - AFC Energy, Eco City Vehicles and TMO Renewables - operate.

And he may be about to perform his most valuable service yet.

Mr Yeo has moved an extraordinary amendment to the Energy Bill that would set a crippling and binding target for the amount of carbon dioxide emitted by generating power in 2030. It would transform the electricity industry and bring huge benefits to the business sector, which has so generously rewarded Mr Yeo.

For the rest of us, however, the effects will be very different. It will cause already high energy bills to soar further and could lead to more power cuts. The effect on business is likely to be even more dramatic.

Yet despite the considerable drawbacks, the amendment is likely to be passed into law. Following intense campaigning by an alliance of dozens of green pressure groups and renewable-energy firms, the move has won the support of Labour, many backbench Liberal Democrats and some Tories, which may be enough to push it through Parliament.

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# Vitamin D and autism



By Jenn Savedge  
Mother Nature Network

What role does the sun play in the development of autism? That's what a new study hopes to find out. According to a report published recently by Environmental Health News, scientists are now looking closely at the possible connection between autism and vitamin D.

A recent Saudi Arabian study published in the *Journal of Neuroinflammation* looked at the blood levels of vitamin D in children with and without autism and found that the autistic kids had significantly lower levels of the "sunshine vitamin" than their

peers. In all, researchers tested 50 children with autism, and 30 children without autism between the ages of 5 and 12. Forty percent of children with autism were also vitamin D deficient, while none of the children without autism were. And the numbers appeared to be inversely proportional - the lower the child's vitamin D levels, the higher that child scored on the Childhood Autism Rating Scale, which measures autism severity.

The researchers also found that 70 percent of the children with autism had higher levels of antibodies in their blood streams that could potentially disrupt the signaling of neurons in the brain. Again, the lower the child's level

of vitamin D, the more antibodies they had, and the more severe were the child's measurements on the autism scale. These antibodies could potentially induce inflammation that would trigger some of the symptoms of autism.

"There is a growing body of literature linking vitamin D to various immune-related conditions, including allergy and autoimmunity," said Laila Y. AL-Ayadhi, a professor of neurophysiology at King Saud University and one of the study's lead researchers.

One such study - this one conducted by the Vitamin D Council - found that children with the highest exposure to UVB rays in summer and fall had about half

the autism rates of children who lived in states with lower UVB exposures.

In addition to the potential autism link, vitamin D deficiency can also hinder bone strength and growth as the body uses vitamin D to absorb calcium from food. On a sunny day, the body can get all of the vitamin D it needs from 15

minutes of sun exposure without sunscreen. But with the increased use of sunscreen to protect skin, health care professionals are seeing a startling increase in the frequency of severe vitamin D deficiency. The American Academy of Pediatrics and the Institute of Medicine recommend a daily intake of 400 IU per day of

vitamin D during the first year of life beginning in the first few days, and 600 IU for everyone over age one. Talk to your doctor about the best way for you - and your kids - to get your vitamin D.

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1. Kaschel Phytomedicine R. 18 (2011) 1202-1207; 2. Kaschel et al., Journal für Pharmakologie und Therapie 16, (1), 3-9, 2007; 3. Casza, Maier et Poppel. Archives of Medical Research (2003) 373-380; 4. Mix & Crews. Human Psychopharmacology 17 (2002), 17-26-277; 5. Abdel-Kader, Eckert A., Muller et Al. Pharmacological Research 56 (2007) 493-502.

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# The power of a 30,000yr old mutation

By Eryn Brown  
Los Angeles Times

About 30,000 years ago, a tiny mutation arose in a gene now known as EDAR and began to spread rapidly in central China, eventually becoming common in the region.

This week, scientists at Harvard University offered some explanations for why the EDAR mutation may have been so successful. They observed how the gene affects mice, animals long used in disease research but never before for the study of human evolution.

The small change, substituting one chemical letter of DNA for another, may have helped humans in Asia survive crippling heat and humidity by endowing them with extra sweat glands, the scientists reported Thursday in the journal *Cell*. It may also have made people with the mutation more attractive to the opposite sex by allowing them to grow thicker hair or fuller breasts.

The research showed how scientists are getting better at identifying the DNA changes that made humans what they are today. The analysis also revealed that mutations in genes involved in bone density, skin color and immune system function were probably

important in helping humans adapt to new environments as they spread around the world.

"You can let the genome tell you what's been important in human evolution," said Harvard University geneticist Pardis Sabeti, senior author of the two studies published in *Cell*.

Living beings evolve through a process known as selection. Organisms with advantageous traits thrive, passing their DNA to another generation. Harmful traits die off when their hosts can't live long enough to reproduce.

Scientists can recognize patterns in DNA that indicate a particular version of a gene has spread through a population because it boosts survival. But those beneficial mutations are usually passed down along with thousands of other variants that happen to live in their chromosomal neighborhood.

That has made it hard for researchers to determine exactly which mutations tweaks conferred the competitive advantage.

Sabeti and an international group of scientists are using multiple techniques to dig out the key drivers of human evolution in the avalanche of genetic data made possible by faster, cheaper sequencing technology. A single

human genome contains 3 billion pairs of the chemical letters A, C, G and T.

To sort through all that, the researchers used powerful computers to identify genetic changes that seemed to be linked to evolutionary change. They examined the DNA of 179 people from Utah, East Asia and West Africa and revealed hundreds of potentially key variants, including mutations that made bones stronger and helped people absorb more vitamin D from the sun as they moved to northern latitudes.

Sabeti wanted to understand more about how these mutations influenced human traits. Such work requires experimentation - and that is where the mice entered the picture.

The EDAR gene was already known to influence hair thickness and to alter tooth shape in humans. But Sabeti wasn't sure whether the mutation her team turned up was a key change that drove human evolution.

To arrive at an answer, she and her collaborators genetically engineered mice that had the Asian version of EDAR.

They found that, as with humans, the mice had thicker hair than their counterparts without the variant. They also

displayed traits the researchers hadn't expected to see, including more sweat glands and changes in their mammary glands. (The variant had no discernible effect on the animals' teeth.)

Next, the team examined the fingertips and EDAR genes of 623 people in Taizhou, China, to see if those who had the mutation also had a larger number of active sweat glands. They did.

The results present a fuller picture of how the EDAR mutation may have helped drive evolution.

People who inherited the variant may have reproduced more successfully because having more sweat glands helped their bodies

cool off in hot, humid weather.

Or it might have spread through sexual selection. Thicker hair may have been more appealing in a mate. In addition, the mutation could have changed breast size or shape, making people who had it more attractive to the opposite sex.

The story was similar for the TLR-5 gene, which is involved in protecting the body from certain bacteria. Instead of testing in mice, the scientists used cell cultures in lab dishes to demonstrate that the mutation reduced the immune system's inflammatory response to a key protein in the bacterial pathogens.

The team's analysis suggested that many of the key genetic changes weren't in genes themselves, but in regions of the chromosome that scientists think contain instructions for how those genes should be turned on and off, or tuned up or down, Sabeti said.

The work offers a long-awaited view into the key mutations that billions of us share and that made us who we are, said David Kingsley, an evolutionary geneticist at Stanford University who was not involved in the new studies.

"We're reading a book of information about our past that has never been available before," he said.

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# Breast cancer in younger women linked to low Vitamin D

By Lynda Altman  
YAHOO! NEWS

The University of California, San Diego School of Medicine published the results of a recent study that shows a link between low vitamin D serum levels and premenopausal breast cancer. Women with low vitamin D serum levels are at a greatly increased risk for breast cancer. The study looked at 1,200 blood samples before coming to this conclusion. I wish that this information was known several years ago. My vitamin D serum levels were extremely low at the time of my breast cancer diagnosis. It appears that Sharif B. Mohr, Ph.D et al, are onto something.

The study

A total of 1,200 blood samples were examined for this study. 600 of the samples were from women

who developed breast cancer and 600 were from women who stayed cancer-free. After examining the samples, researchers concluded that premenopausal women with low vitamin D serum levels three months before diagnosis had three times the risk of getting breast cancer than those with the highest blood serum levels.

Researchers say that although they do not completely understand the role vitamin D plays in the development of breast cancer, it is believed that it has to do with the tumor's ability to form blood vessels. Prior studies with a time frame of greater than 90 days have not shown a conclusive link between vitamin D and breast cancer risk.

To me, this all makes sense and low vitamin D levels may have caused my breast cancer. I have several risk factors, like drinking

alcohol and being above my ideal weight. Bloodwork done after my biopsy showed very low levels of vitamin D. This might have been the catalyst needed to set breast cancer in motion.

The good news is that it is very easy to find out if you are deficient in vitamin D. Ask your physician to order a blood test to screen for vitamin D levels. If your serum level is less than ideal, a simple supplement can bring it back up.

The researchers concluded that women with vitamin D blood serum levels of 50 ng/ml or higher reduced their risk of breast cancer by 50 percent. Had I known this earlier, maybe I could have avoided getting this awful disease.

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## Confusing study on Vitamin D and calcium

By Barbara Hannah Grufferman  
HUFFINGTONPOST

Why does it sometimes seem as though the medical community purposely wants to confuse, confound and worry us with a continuous flow of reports that are often at odds?

Another medical study was published this week that is a solid example, and which is confusing everyone, especially those of us over 50 who worry about osteoporosis, a debilitating disease that affects millions of Americans every year, costing billions of dollars in healthcare.

According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF), each year, more than two million broken bones occur in the U.S. due to osteoporosis. For women, this incidence is greater than that of heart attack, stroke and breast cancer combined. And, unless we take action, it is estimated that by 2020 more than 61 million Americans will suffer from osteoporosis or low bone mass.

The government advisory group behind the report that's making all the headlines this week -- the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) -- questioned the benefits of vitamin D and calcium to prevent bone fractures when taken by healthy women. (To read the full report, click here.) However, many studies have shown that calcium is essential for bone growth and healthy maintenance, and vitamin D is necessary to absorb the calcium. (It should be noted that current research on vitamin D also suggests it may



provide protection from high blood pressure, certain cancers, some autoimmune diseases and possibly even Alzheimer's.) And, of great importance to those who are taking osteoporosis medications, the meds don't work without proper amounts of calcium and vitamin D.

What's really confusing is that only last month a huge study was issued by the Women's Health Initiative (WHI) confirming that a combination of vitamin D3 and calcium every day not only offers tremendous health benefits, but is safe. The risk of hip fractures was reduced by a whopping 38 percent in women over 50, and, according to the study's authors, "Long-term use of calcium and vitamin D appears to confer a reduction that may be substantial in the risk of hip fracture among postmenopausal women."

Additionally, the WHI study reassured doctors and women worried about the potentially negative health impact vitamin D and calcium might have by showing that taken supplementally both are safe. In fact, the risk of kidney stones or urinary tract infections appear to be modest and not something average postmenopausal women need to be concerned about. To read the full report, click here.

We can probably get the calcium we need every day from the foods we eat, such as yogurt, cheese, almonds, tofu and green leafy vegetables (very much in keeping with the 'Mediterranean Diet'). However, getting enough vitamin D isn't as easy without supplementation. We would have to overeat or get too much sun, which has its own risks, to get the amount we need for good health.

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## Vitamin D halves diabetes risk - study

Adequate levels of vitamin D during young adulthood may halve the risk of adult-onset Type 1 diabetes, according to a new research.

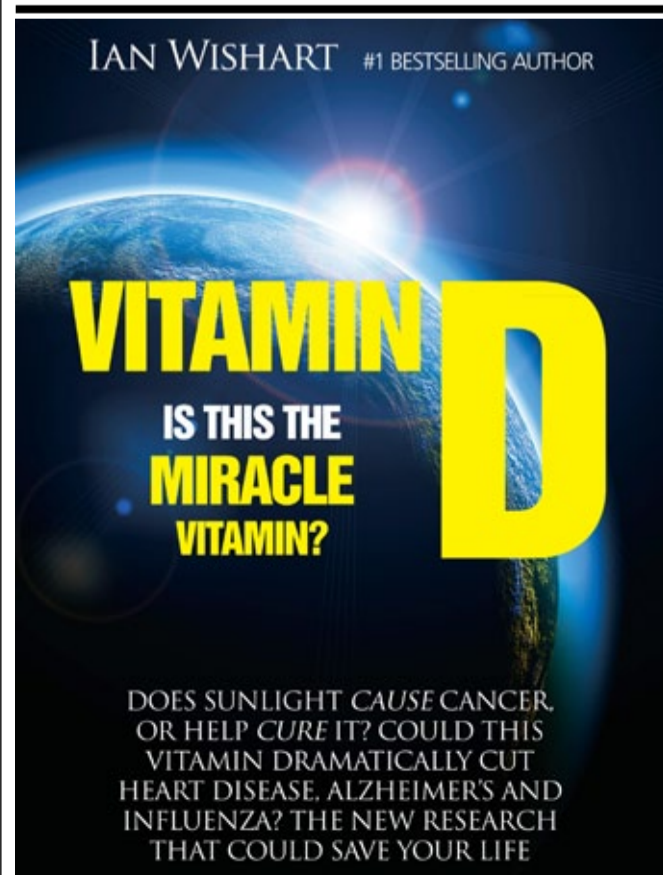
The findings by the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) could lead to a role for vitamin D supplementation in preventing this serious auto-immune disease in adults, when the immune system starts damaging tissues.

"It is surprising that a serious disease such as Type 1 diabetes could perhaps be prevented by

a simple and safe intervention," said Cassandra Munger, research associate at HSPH, who led the study, the American Journal of Epidemiology reports.

In Type 1 diabetes, the immune system attacks and permanently disables the insulin-making cells in the pancreas. About five per cent of the estimated 25.8 million people in the U.S. suffer from this condition, according to the American Diabetes Association...

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# Nuclear Iran: minutes to midnight

By James G. Zumwalt

UPI Outside View



## Obama guts US military capability

By Howard P. "Buck" McKeon  
Los Angeles Times

Mindful of the repeated rounds of cuts the military has already endured, Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, recently delivered a grim warning: "If you want (the military) to be doing what it's doing today, then we can't give you another dollar."

His worries reflect reductions that started in 2009 and have reached crippling levels, even in President Obama's proposals to avert sequestration. I take the general at his word, but I am concerned that the president does not.

Sequester hurts national security, not just because 50 percent of the cuts fall on the military's 18 percent share of the overall budget but because the Pentagon has been the only place the president is willing to cut. For four years he has mismanaged our nation's most vital resource, our uniformed military, fomenting the sequester-inspired readiness crisis it faces today. His actions, his under-resourced strategies, accelerated withdrawal plans and lead-from-behind policies have left the Pentagon far less able to shoulder the burden of another 10 percent cut.

The wide swath of missions Dempsey referred to benefit Americans in varied ways. Some are obvious, like fighting terrorism; some are subtler, like patrolling our airspace and shoring up

our economic security by keeping vital avenues of commerce free - on the seas and in space and cyberspace.

Those are missions the military should be able to perform without putting undue stress on the armed services as a whole. Actually, I want them to be fully prepared if they are called on to do much more. While there is no question the Pentagon was long overdue for a housecleaning, we have cut down so rapidly and so blindly that we're in danger of breaking the back of the force.

And, perhaps more important, the sequester will cripple our military's ability to fulfill its primary role: to keep this nation out of war.

Already, Pentagon planners are going through the laundry list of missions that could be cut. The Navy has been forced to keep a carrier in port rather than send it on a scheduled deployment to the Middle East. That message is not lost on the Iranians.

Sequestration manifests itself in less prominent but no less potent ways. For example, tons of illegal narcotics are intercepted annually by military patrols in the Caribbean. The Navy is now shuttering operations that will leave the door open for those drugs to find their way to America's suburbs. The Navy may also have to curtail its ballistic missile defense patrols - even as North Korea successfully launched a missile into space in December and conducted a nuclear test in recent weeks.

With talks scheduled between Iran and the P5+1 nations -- China, England, France, Russia, the United States and Germany -- on Tehran's nuclear program, a world leader is expressing urgency the negotiations yield concrete results.

Perhaps shaken by the recent test of a nuclear device by North Korea, he fears failure simply allows Tehran to do what Pyongyang did -- complete building a bomb under the continuing cover of negotiations.

Recognizing the ineffectiveness of talks with Iran to date, he warns, "We should not give much more time to the Iranians and we should not waste time. We have seen what happened with (North Korea). It ended up that they secretly, quietly, without any obligations, without any pressure, (were) making progress toward developing a nuclear weapon."

The P5+1 have been unable to present a unified front to Iran due to two uncooperative members: Russia and China. It is more the group of P5+1-2 with such lack of unity inhibiting effective enforcement by the United Nations while enabling Tehran to advance its nuclear program objectives.

One would hope it was U.S. President Barack Obama sounding the clarion call for urgency; it wasn't.

Obama's most recent admonition to Iran was his State of the Union Address in which he warned (or, more accurately, encouraged) Iranian leaders they must recognize that now is

the time for a diplomatic solution, because a coalition stands united in demanding that they meet their obligations and we will do what is necessary to prevent them from getting a nuclear weapon.

To underscore the seriousness of his concern to the Iranians, he then goes off to play golf with Tiger Woods.

Iran's mullahs don't take Obama's words seriously due to his actions and because, contrary to his claim, the coalition isn't united. Accordingly, there is very little indication P5+1-2 intends to prevent them from getting a nuclear weapon.

The words and sanctions directed against Tehran won't keep the Iranians from their appointed rounds of possessing nuclear weapons in fulfillment of the religious prophecy those weapons are to trigger. The prophecy centers on the 12th Imam who, as world chaos evolves, supposedly descends from a state of occultation, into which he ascended centuries earlier, to restore Islam to greatness, ridding the world of non-Muslims in the process.

The Iranians don't hide their belief catastrophe looms large on the horizon for non-believers, even producing a documentary film explaining this. Their openness that a future death sentence awaits infidels is tied to inevitability as, regardless of what the West does, Allah will make it happen. All that is lacking is the necessary world chaos -- which Tehran will trigger by detonating a nuclear device once it is acquired.

The new sense of urgency injected into the upcoming nuclear discussions with Iran

comes from U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. During five years of leadership, Ban has closely monitored Tehran's nuclear program. He sees nothing reassuring about claims its intentions are peaceful. Accordingly, Ban says the Security Council must show a firm, decisive and effective, quick response that the world still remains unconvinced.

Negotiations with Iran have been ongoing for almost a decade with nothing to show for it. The last meeting took place in July 2012. Based on how far apart the parties remained then on key issues, no substantive progress should be expected from the upcoming talks.

Meanwhile, in a constant effort to keep the West guessing as to its intentions, Tehran sends mixed signals. While recently trying to buy specialized items for its nuclear program, suggesting it seeks to shorten the path to weaponization, contrarily it makes weaponization more difficult by converting some of its uranium stockpile into metal form.

Questions arise:

-- Why would Iran choose to confuse the issue as to the purpose of its nuclear program if, in fact, it is peaceful?

-- Why would Iran subject its economy to such a beating from sanctions if, in fact, its purpose is peaceful?

-- Why force its people to undergo such hardship when the problem can be so easily resolved?

-- With a straightforward solution to the issue possible -- i.e., simply allowing inspections -- why complicate the problem,

creating lingering doubts by rejecting verification? (Of course, the same could be said about Obama's refusal to release his original birth certificate.)

As for Iran's lack of cooperation, the answer should be clear -- it has every intention of developing a nuclear weapon!

While Ban is to be congratulated on understanding the Iranian threat, a quicker lesson was learned by Yukiya Amano who, in 2009, became head of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Quickly grasping Iran's methodic game plan of buying time to continue its program, he kept pressing the P5+1 to pressure Tehran.

By November 2011, Amano was so concerned about Iran's program, he announced it was his duty to report to the world Tehran was involved in nuclear weapons research. Last month, with Iran much closer to its nuclear armament goal, Amano repeated his earlier warning while adding, "I have absolutely no reason to soften my report. ... The overall pattern led me to the decision to alarm the world. The more pieces (of information), the clearer the pattern becomes."

Amano is sounding his alarm to the world but it is falling on deaf ears in the White House.

--

(James G. Zumwalt, a retired U.S. Marine Corps lieutenant colonel and infantry officer, served in the Vietnam war, the U.S. invasion of Panama and the first Persian Gulf war. He is the author of *Bare Feet, Iron Will* - Stories from the Other Side of Vietnam's Battlefields, *Living the Juche Lie: North Korea's Kim Dynasty and Doomsday: Iran - The Clock is Ticking*. He frequently writes on foreign policy and defense issues.)



The Air Force will be hit so hard, its leadership is being forced to cut flight hours for air crews. If they cannot train adequately enough to deploy, our pilots may well be grounded during the next national crisis.

The Marine Corps faces an equally dire outlook, where cuts are so deep we risk losing the Marines as a deployable force. Adm. Jonathan Greenert, chief of naval operations, warned in congressional testimony that because there will be no amphibious ready group around Africa, the Marines can no longer provide quick-reaction support to our embassies there. The next time America needs to call 911, we may not be able to call in the Marines.

The Army faces similar challenges, as do the industries that

support the Defense Department.

In California alone, it is estimated that we could lose 126,000 private sector jobs, 20,000 active-duty military jobs and more than 15,000 civilian Defense Department jobs. I have spent the last year and a half talking with my constituents who will be directly affected by these cuts. It is unbelievable that the president would support a plan that would dissolve a highly skilled and dedicated workforce at installations such as the Antelope Valley's Plant 42. Remember, many workers in California and across the nation have lost their jobs because of previous dramatic defense cuts. Sequester only adds to this pain.

That brings us to a choice. If there were a proposal on the table that spared the troops and

heeded Dempsey's warning of not a dollar more from the armed forces, I would ask House Speaker John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) to consider it. But after cutting defense three times, the president's solution to replacing sequester means another \$250 billion out of the armed forces and more taxes. The choice the American people are being given is "break the military" or "break the military and new taxes."

Let's be clear: Even if the president were given every dollar in new taxes he has requested, it wouldn't make a difference in our national debt. Entitlement programs will continue to grow out of control, and the amount we spend on interest to service the debt soon will start to outpace even what we spend on the military. The cuts he continues

to insist on, while below the level of sequestration, are still severe enough to hollow out our force. This approach forces me to conclude that the president, for all his stump speeches and props, wants the sequester to happen.

The president is forcing America to indulge him in this dangerous experiment with national security. It is unworthy of the sacrifice of the hundreds of thousands in uniform whom he has directed into harm's way over the last four years. It is a reckless experiment when one takes stock of the growing threats and commitments that occupy our forces around the world.

ABOUT THE WRITER

Rep. Howard P. "Buck" McKeon, R-Calif., is chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. He wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.



## Mission Brief

# Why we've published The Briefing:

Welcome to InvestigateDaily's 'The Briefing'. As you've probably gathered by now, this is a free digital newspaper available online worldwide, providing a round-up of recent events and offering a range of analysis on global issues.

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It's a communication point, first and foremost, between our publishing company and our readers. Hundreds of thousands of people have purchased or read our books and magazines, and *The Briefing* is a way for us to offer something in return at no cost.

With the rise of smartphone and tablet technology, digital publishing is taking hold everywhere. Retail stores are cutting the numbers of printed magazines they stock as more people make the switch to digital.

As part of our particular focus, *The Briefing* includes specialist sections on Climate Change and Vitamin D. We're keeping an eye on the significant

developments in these fields and committing them to a permanent record in *The Briefing* archives that readers can come back to as and when they need to. Often, the headlines fade away and change each week, and it's too hard to stay across all the different blogs and news websites.

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## INVESTIGATEDAILY



## Husband and Wife to be banned

New Zealand officials have confirmed the words 'husband' and 'wife' and 'bride' and 'bridegroom' will be removed from all legislation to make gays feel included, if the country passes controversial gay marriage laws as expected.

The bill has just passed through its select committee stage and will go to a second reading in Parliament on 13 March.

Just a day after the latest polling showed support for gay marriage had dropped below 50% for the first time in almost a year, now comes the news that people will no longer be allowed to call themselves 'husband' and 'wife' when dealing with government agencies.

Lobby group Family First has accused officials of rail-roading the gay marriage laws through parliament's select committee process. More than three thousand unique submissions were received by the select committee, out of 21,000 in total, "yet the committee has heard a little over 200 of them as they attempt to ram the bill through - equating to one per cent of [total] submissions," said Family First director Bob McCoskrie today.

"National and Labour are ramming this bill through because they know that their core voter support bases are not happy with it, and they are desperate to get it off the political agenda - but in the process, they are trampling over the rights of New Zealanders to have their chance to speak up and contribute to the debate on this issue," says Bob McCoskrie, National Director of Family First NZ and coordinator of the Protect Marriage campaign.

"The fact that a record of more than 20,000 submissions has been received on this bill shows just how important this issue is to so many people. It is a major change to an important human institution and foundation of our society, and in a healthy democracy, the people are entitled to speak and deserve to be heard in full. It should not be rushed, and democracy should not be denied, just because of a pre-determined reporting date which fails to recognise the weight of the issue," says Mr McCoskrie.

"Other Members' bills are not being rammed through at such speed. Yet the same-sex marriage bill has had just six months to consider 21,500-plus submissions, hear oral submissions, and report back."

"This is a cynical attempt to ram through a highly controversial law change without due consideration."

There has also been an embarrassing backdown by the politicians and the Human Rights Commission who argued that the bill originally put forward by Labour MP Louisa Wall protected faith groups and celebrants. They now acknowledge that the law needs to be amended despite originally labeling Family First's concerns as 'scare-mongering'.

Family First is seeking legal advice on the effects of the proposed amendment.



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## Comment

# When in Rome, panic

By Martin Walker  
BRUSSELS, UPI

There is a significant chance that by this time next week the world could be back in the throes of a full-blooded financial crisis. The Italian election result could make the eurozone's third-largest economy look ungovernable just as the sequestration drama is doing the same for Washington. These may be problems of politics rather than of economics but in a world in which where market confidence is itself a crucial commodity, political dysfunction can lead to financial disaster. We are unlikely to know that the precise components of the next Italian government until the votes are counted and the coalition negotiations are complete. Other European leaders, hoping for stability, are praying for a stable majority of the center-left in coalition with the technocrats of outgoing Prime Minister Mario Monti. That may be the result in the popular assembly but the upper house of the Italian Parliament looks much more problematic. It is important to understand why. The reason is that Italian politics have never recovered from the early days of the Cold War and have never managed to evolve into the stable two-party system of left and right that is the pattern in most democracies. From 1924 until the closing years of World War II Italy was ruled by the fascist Benito Mussolini. When his regime collapsed, the Communists were the largest and best-organized party and as the Cold War got under way, the prospect of Italians freely voting a Communist government into power was very real. Much of the local political power was in their hands, thanks to their leading role in the anti-fascist partisan movement. It became a top priority of British and U.S. policy, and thus of the fledgling CIA, to prevent Italy going Communist. The fear was that France might follow Italy and that the red flag could fly over Western Europe and the whole Mediterranean. The stakes were high. George F. Kennan, head of Policy Planning at the U.S. State Department, and its representative on the newly coined National Security Council, even suggested military occupation of Italy if it looked like going Communist in the 1948 elections. The means chosen were simple; oceans of cash to help build anti-communist political parties, labor unions and newspapers. We know from the memoirs of William Colby, CIA station chief in Rome in the 1950s, that one of his biggest problems was finding Italian cars with trunks big enough to carry the vast wads of lire he routinely distributed to defeat the reds.

**FOR HAVING SEX WITH AN UNDER-AGE PROSTITUTE, BERLUSCONI REMAINS THE LEADING STANDARD BEARER OF THE CENTER-RIGHT**



The strategy also required the closest cooperation with the Vatican and the Roman Catholic church, seen as the essential bulwark against the godless communists. It also meant accepting that another useful ally against the Communists, particularly in the south, would be the Mafia. The result was that the church, the Mafia and financial corruption thus became woven into the Christian Democratic Party from the beginning. When the Cold War ended and Italy's dwindling ranks of communists began breaking apart into more or less moderate left-wing parties, the dominant Christian Democrats also collapsed under the massive scandal known in Italy as tangentopoli. This exposed the Mafia links of prime ministers, the tangled finances of the Vatican bank and discredited much of Italy's political establishment, a context that helps illuminate the extremism of the violent revolutionary tactics of the Red Brigades. For the past two decades, Italy has been trying to construct a new political system from this ruin. It now has a center-left party but with influential far left groups on its flank. The church has been further discredited by the pedophile scandals. The right is divided between the Liga Nord which seeks more autonomy or even independence for the more prosperous northern regions, the reformed

fascist party which still looks back to Mussolini and the various parties founded by former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and based on his dominance of Italy's media. Discredited by the sex and corruption scandals that swirl around him, including the forthcoming criminal trial for having sex with an under-age prostitute, Berlusconi remains the leading standard bearer of the center-right. Berlusconi has recast himself as a critic of the European Union, arguing that it has become a German-dominated system that requires too high a price from Italy for the survival of the euro currency. In this Berlusconi makes common cause with the former comedian Beppe Grillo, whose grassroots M5S (Five Star Movement) is based on disgust with the whole political system but could yet hold the balance of political power. This isn't a political system designed to cope with the severe challenges of recession and debt that face Italy. But the stability of the euro and the European Union are among the stakes in this election and with them go the prospects of a new global financial crisis. We may all yet pay a stiff price for saving Italy from communism in the Cold War.



## HOW THE US LOST THE WARS

By Arnaud de Borchgrave  
UPI

The United States fields 17 intelligence agencies with a combined annual budget of \$100 billion. They employ 100,000 intelligence specialists. And we still got the genesis of two major trillion-dollar wars, Iraq and Afghanistan, back to front.

Three months before 9/11, Mullah Mohammed Omar, the Afghan Taliban chief who welcomed Osama bin Laden to Afghanistan, was willing to make a deal. His guest and now former close friend was stepping out of bounds. Omar made that much clear to two visitors -- Ammar Turabi, a Pakistani-American who represented UPI in south Asia at that time, and this reporter.

U.S. intel specialists said, "We tried everything with Mullah Omar and nothing would budge him". But no U.S. intelligence operative actually sat down with Omar for a one-on-one talk. This was at least an opportunity to disrupt 9/11 plans for the mass murder of some 3,000 civilians in New York.

U.S. Special Forces chased bin Laden and his band of terrorists out of Afghanistan into Pakistan Dec. 9, 2001. That should have been

the end of it as we held Pakistan responsible for the terrorist monster it had created. Instead, we have fought the longest war in our history against Taliban's ragtag guerrillas, with 48 allied nations by our side, and we are now planning to leave by the end of next year -- short of victory.

On the other front, the genesis of the 2003 invasion of Iraq should have told U.S. intelligence specialists that the defeat of the Saddam Hussein regime would be helpful to Iran, not the United States.

Three months before the U.S. invasion, a prominent Iraqi-born international businessman, flew to Washington for dinner with Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz. The Iraqi advised: "After you invade, it is essential you keep both the Iraqi army and the ruling Baath party intact. Simply get rid of the top 50 to 100 officials in both institutions and you'll be out of there in six months with the gratitude and friendship of the Iraqi people."

The Iraqi's advice was politely dismissed because Wolfowitz's intelligence was quite different. "I believe," he rejoined, "that should we invade, it will be very much like Paris in 1944, when U.S. soldiers were greeted deliriously by a liberated populace, free after four years of Nazi occupation."

Instead, we listened to Ahmed Chalabi, an Iraqi banker who had been indicted in Jordan

for a major international financial swindle and who metamorphosed into the darling of the American right and the neocons. From there, Chalabi constantly misled U.S. intelligence and his conservative friends about what he could do to revive an Iraqi-US alliance in a liberated Iraq.

Chalabi's man for persuading U.S. intelligence that Saddam Hussein was hiding nuclear weapons was an Iraqi codenamed Curveball who defected to Germany but wouldn't go to Washington to be questioned by the CIA. Curveball later recanted and said he had invented everything about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction to get permission to live in Germany

with his girlfriend.

There was only one problem with Chalabi's tall tale spun with threads of disinformation. He was never America's man, but covertly Iran's. Chalabi was the spark plug in Iraq's Maliki government's shuffle off to Tehran's sphere of influence. U.S. intelligence, America's conservative right and the neocons got taken -- big time.

The bad call cost the U.S. taxpayer a cool \$1 trillion. Some 4,500 U.S. servicemen and women were KIA. And Iran was the principal beneficiary.

Now the latest cry is that across the board budget cuts will cripple the U.S. military. Gen. Ray Odierno, the army's chief of staff, says a \$40 billion reduction in the Pentagon's fiscal 2013 budget could curtail training for 80 percent of ground forces.

The U.S. Navy has delayed the deployment of one aircraft carrier to the Persian Gulf, leaving just one carrier, instead of two, to face a possible war with Iran (should Israel trigger one). The U.S. Air Force says it has to curtail flying hours, leaving two-thirds of its pilots below acceptable norms of readiness.

The need for 9,000 tanks in the U.S. arsenal doesn't pass the Rorschach test (the psychological exam in which one looks at a series of 10 inkblots -- in this case tanks -- and then asked what one sees). But nary a word about drones and robots and

the future of warfare. A crewless submarine has already been tested. Ditto drones as fighter aircraft or bombers.

Looking and planning for the future is bound to cost less than the current tab -- 46 percent of the entire world's defense spending. Stealth ships will be small and crewless and more lethal but hardly the kind of command an admiral dreamed of when he graduated from the Naval Academy. Hard to imagine today, but carriers will be retired when one hostile missile from a third-rate power can score a bull's eye on the flight deck -- or a swarm of small boats on suicide missions can encircle the carrier and inflict enough damage to send it back to Norfolk, Va., for months of repairs.

The multi-service F-35 Joint Strike Fighter has already cost \$70 billion to develop. Its future is assured as it employs 35,000 workers in almost all congressional districts. The F-22 ran \$79 billion.

In the just published *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War*, author Fred Kaplan describes how creative doctrine can harden into dogma and how the best and brightest strategists can win the battles at home but not the wars abroad. By adapting the U.S. military to fight the conflicts of the modern era, says the book's blurb, they also created the tools -- and made it more tempting -- for political leaders to wade into wars they would be wise to avoid.

One has to be irredeemably myopic not to see that the new priorities are at home, rebuilding America's aging infrastructure; prioritizing shale oil production to end our dependency on precarious foreign supplies; dismantling the armed services voluntariat of 20 years service followed by a pension and a civilian job; restoring some form of compulsory national service for young men and women.

New thinking about the proper defense posture is also long overdue. One former and recent four-star agreed privately and added, "You have no idea how tough it is to turn the Pentagon around."

As the new defense secretary, Chuck Hagel has the toughest job of all. Many of the Republican senators who opposed him have their counterparts in the Pentagon.

## ARISE KING BARACK THE THIRD

By Peter Morici

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND



U.S. President Barack Obama has taken the middle class hostage in a thinly veiled bid to hike their taxes.

Having refused to work with Congress to reduce spending by \$1.2 trillion over 10 years, as he agreed when drafting the Budget Act of 2011, the president must now implement \$85 billion in across-the-board cuts to defense and non-entitlement government spending.

House Republicans have offered ease burdens on the public -- by increasing administration flexibility in implementing those cuts in the continuing resolution to keep the government funded past March 27 -- but the president wants no part in that.

Instead, he campaigns across the country, painting the dire consequences sequestration will impose if new revenues aren't raised, as he proposes, by limiting tax deductions benefiting the wealthy. That is a cynical ploy -- Obama talks like President Harry Truman but taxes like King George III. Taxes imposed at his insistence on Jan. 1 eliminated 80 percent of the benefits of tax deductions -- mortgage interest, state income taxes, local property levies and the like -- for wealthier households. Any substantial gains from further tightening deductions must come from similarly limiting their use by middle-class taxpayers.

Already, by hiking Social Security tax rates,

the majority of \$150 billion in additional revenue obtained Jan. 1 was extracted from the working poor and middle-class families, and federal revenues share of gross domestic product will substantially exceed its average for the last 40 years.

And the president is unwilling to acknowledge the government is spending is flying out of control. Over the last five years, outlays are up \$1 trillion -- three times the amount required by inflation -- and tax revenues are short because high rates and burdensome regulations are choking economic growth and jobs creation. Instead, the president threatens furloughed meat inspectors, food shortages and streets without police. His Cabinet secretaries threaten three-hour waits at airport security, reduced embassy protection and border patrols and the list goes on.

Appropriation legislation does limit president's ability to allocate cuts among departments. However, even without additional legislation, he has considerable discretion in allocating the 10 percent spending cuts within departments but the president has refused to entertain options that would limit the pain in his pursuit of higher taxes.

For example, the Agriculture Department has one of the largest staffs of economists in the world -- surely, safe food is more important than yet another dull research paper. Military bands could

stand down to maintain Marine guards at embassies.

Repeatedly, the president has exclaimed if congressional Republicans don't cooperate, spending cuts could derail the hard won recovery. It puzzles why he believes \$85 billion in spending cuts could make such a difference, when avoiding those cuts through higher taxes wouldn't.

Whether a second recession occurs is already baked in the cake. Obama's \$150 billion January tax hikes and similar rate increases imposed by Democratic governors from Maryland to California have forced consumers to trim purchases. Retailers and wholesalers are reporting weaker traffic and are trimming inventories and corporate leaders have announced plans to cut new investments and hiring owing to weak demand and more burdensome health care costs and regulations.

When Americans can't get hamburger at the supermarket and unemployment rises this spring, the president will blame on Republicans for permitting sequestration but it is the American people who bear the burden of his inflexibility, disregard for the facts and neglect in undertaking the responsibilities of his office.

Peter Morici is an economist and professor at the University of Maryland Smith School of Business, and a widely published columnist. Follow him on Twitter: @pmorici1

## OUTSIDE VIEW: UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

By Harlan Ullman

**KILLOWEN GROUP**

Unintended consequences often combine the most diabolical of dangers with the greatest of huge rewards. This Janus-like face of danger and reward is often unrecognized and even ignored in the taking of major decisions by states and leaders. Consider a few unintended consequences arising from seminal decisions over war and peace during the past eight decades.

Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941 assuming a speedy victory and swift collapse of the Stalin government. The Fuhrer dismissed Napoleon's experiences in 1812. And, Nazi ambitions weren't helped by Japan's decision to launch its attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

The Japanese High Command believed that the destruction of the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Hawaii would so shock and paralyze the United States that Washington would immediately seek peace.

The first order unintended consequences, of course, was the unconditional surrender of both Nazi Germany and Fascist Japan in 1945.

Ironically, the greatest unintended consequence led to the creation of flourishing democracies in these defeated states forming the cornerstone for Western security that persists today. A further irony of course was the reversal of the one-time Soviet ally

into the West's major adversary.

Regarding the Soviet Union, after a succession of gerontocratic leaders finally died, Mikhail Gorbachev inherited the reins of power. Fully aware of the fossilized condition of the Soviet system, Gorbachev imposed perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness) as remedial actions to revitalize communism. To Gorbachev's astonishment, the reverse happened and the Soviet Union imploded.

Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979, the United States engaged in what was called Charlie Wilson's war to arm the mujahedin particularly with anti-air shoulder-fired Stinger missiles. These weapons helped turn the tide. The Soviets were defeated and withdrew.

But, alas, many of the mujahedin metamorphosed into Taliban and Afghanistan is anything from settled two decades later -- clear examples of unanticipated consequences.

Across the Afghan border in Pakistan, India was the overwhelming threat. Three losing wars sharpened the sense of danger. Not only would Pakistan develop nuclear weapons as a counterweight to its super-sized neighbor but it created an array of militant groups such as Lashkar-e-Toiba as insurgents to chip away at India. These groups turned into Frankenstein monsters almost precipitating a fourth war after the attack in Mumbai five years ago and turning against the government so that

these insurgencies have surpassed India as the No. 1 threat to Pakistan.

In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, with North Africa ablaze from Tunisia to Egypt; civil war in Syria further infecting the region; Iraq leaning toward its neighbor Iran; and of course Iran's nuclear ambitions, this column has suggested a situation akin to July 1914 in slow motion. Here the United States and the West in the form of NATO and the European Union face an array of potentially horrendous policy options each laden with frightening unintended consequences, with second-, third-, fourth- and even fifth-order effects.

The case for intervention in Syria for humanitarian reasons is self-evident. Arming the rebels seems appealing. But distinguishing between good and bad rebel groups is exceedingly difficult and a repeat of the Afghan experience cannot be easily dismissed.

Iran cannot be allowed to develop nuclear weapons. The ultimate option is the use of military force to prevent that outcome. Yet, the unintended consequences of any attack may be impossible to forecast or predict. As what happened after the initial invasion of Iraq and massive defeat of Saddam Hussein's army in 2003 that produced continuing chaos and violence, those unintended consequences must haunt any White House contemplating a strike against Iran.

Where does this take us? George W. Bush, unin-

tended or otherwise, implicitly tried to repeat in Iraq what happened after World War II when enemies became staunch democratic allies. The effort to democratize the greater Middle East beginning with Iraq became America's greatest foreign policy blunder certainly since Vietnam and possibly ever. Thus, expecting good results may be as naïve as failing to consider unintended consequences.

In a majority of cases, unintended consequences arising from U.S. unilateral actions tend to produce negative and not positive results. Still, the pressure to intervene in Syria and in Iran may prove overwhelming. Should that occur, the United States must take careful stock not only of first order unintended consequences. Many orders of consequence must be examined before deciding on any action.

If the United States chooses to intervene in Syria and Iran, the likelihood of greater harm and damage being done than good is present. American leaders would be derelict if this history is ignored. However, since the U.S. government may be incapable of averting budgetary sequestration this very week, how will it deal with tough and very dangerous policy issues filled with oceans of unintended consequences?

*Harlan Ullman is chairman of the Killowen Group, which advises leaders of government and business, and senior adviser at Washington's Atlantic Council*



## FORTRESS DAMASCUS NOW CENTER OF SYRIAN WAR

By special correspondent

**UPI**

Damascus, the world's oldest continually inhabited city, is now a key battleground in Syria's civil war, which enters its third year in March.

Rebel forces are intensifying their assault on the ancient capital, where the beleaguered minority regime of President Bashar Assad has concentrated its elite and most loyal troops.

The other flash point is in the north around Aleppo, another ancient city that used to be Syria's commercial heart, with rebel forces steadily making gains in heavy fighting.

But the war, which the United Nations estimates has killed 70,000 people since the uprising against Assad began March 15, 2011, is likely to be won or lost in Damascus. And there's probably hard fighting still ahead.

Government forces hold the center of Damascus and a ring of strong points that have blocked major rebel efforts to break into the inner city where the regime's military and intelligence power centers are located.

Fighting has raged for months and the rebels, mainly the ferocious jihadist groups and the secular Free Syria Army, are able to sometimes penetrate this ring of steel and concrete with devastating effect.

On Feb. 21, a huge car bomb exploded outside the headquarters of the ruling Baath Party, a prominent symbol of the regime on Thawra Street in the downtown district of Maazra.

The state news agency reported 53 people killed and more than 200 wounded. The United Kingdom's

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a pro-opposition monitoring group, put the death toll at 61.

Including other bombings in the city that day, the Observatory said the fatality toll was 85.

One of the wounded was Nayef Hawatmeh, leader of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a longtime Syrian puppet and a relic of the Palestinian wars of the 1970s and '80s.

The Russian Embassy was damaged in the Thawra Street blast, which occurred as rebel forces made a determined effort to push into the city center. These forces, largely from Syria's Sunni majority, have been held by regime's superior firepower and control of the air.

The army's elite units are manned by minority Alawites, an obscure offshoot of Shiite Islam which dominates the regime.

As pillars of thick black smoke billowed over the city, army headquarters came under mortar fire. Other mortar rounds exploded near Assad's presidential palace.

Some parts of the old city have been badly hit by the destructive chaos. World heritage sites, including the fabled Umayyad Mosque, built after the Arab conquest of the city in A.D. 634, have been damaged, just as much of the historic vaulted souk, or market, in Aleppo were burned down.

Damascus has seen it all before over the millennia -- and survived. Carbon dating indicates it has probably been inhabited since 6300 B.C.

It's always been fought over. In 1260 B.C., it became a battlefield between the Hittites from the north and the Egyptians from the south, who emerged victorious. By the eighth century B.C. Damascus was the cultural and economic center of the Near East, and remained so for more than 1,000 years.

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It's been conquered many times, by Alexander the Great in 323 B.C., finally by Australian cavalry, as well as Britain's legendary Col. T.E. Lawrence on Oct. 1, 1918, when the Ottoman Empire finally crumbled.

The current conflict seems to have evolved into a war of attrition, says Middle East analyst Victor Kotsev.

"Despite significant rebel advances in the last few weeks and months -- including the capture of a major air force base in Aleppo and the largest dam in the country -- the conflict has stalemated and right now it looks as if President Assad may be able to cling to power for longer than most Western

officials and media outlets acknowledge.

"Still, in the end, he's likely doomed, but not so much because he stands to collapse rapidly in the manner in which Moammar Gadhafi did in 2011.

Instead, as experts note, regime troops can't easily be replaced, as compared to rebels, who are drawing on a larger pool of willing fighters, from Syria and abroad, Kotsev noted. So things may be getting pretty bad for Assad. The regime was recently reported to have been forced to recruit women to fill the ranks of the beleaguered army.

# Bridging the Great Divide

By Elizabeth Rata  
NZCPR

In January 2013 I was asked by the secretariat of the Government Constitutional Advisory Panel to take part in audio and video taped interviews. The invitation was probably issued on the basis that I have written extensively about Treaty issues and that I am a member of the Independent Constitutional Review Panel that has its presence on this NZCPR website. I wish to share these interviews with NZCPR readers and raise troubling issues that emerged for me while doing the interviews. One issue is about the difference between "proving information" and seeking New Zealanders' views. The second issue concerns the assumptions that the Government's Panel works from.

According to the terms of reference the Advisory Panel's

primary task is "to stimulate public debate and awareness of constitutional issues by providing information about New Zealand's constitutional arrangements". While I was happy to have my views recorded in that forum I was puzzled why the Advisory Panel has been so slow in calling for submissions so that all of us can present our viewpoints. (In fact, the Panel has only this week begun the submission process.) It seems to me that the Advisory Panel's task to "provide information about New Zealand's Constitutional Arrangements" doesn't square with the usual practice of seeking submissions from the people on issues of national significance that concern us all. Providing information and collecting views serve quite different purposes.

Calling for submissions is the usual practice when the government wants to know what the

people think. Providing information occurs when the government wants to tell us what to think. Making submissions is an extremely important democratic act. We, as citizens, don't need to wait to be asked. We don't need to be given the information by a government panel or to be considered 'experts'. As citizens, we have formed our own opinions and wish to make those known. Making submissions is the time-honoured way to do this. It is citizenship in action.

The balance between government and citizen is part of our constitution. (I discuss the importance of citizenship below in my response to the first question of my Panel interview.) It is a delicate balance that contains within it part of the wider process through which citizens contribute to politics and through which governments are made accountable to the people. We elect our fellow citizens to represent us but we don't leave them to it. There are a number of ways by which we keep our representatives in tune with the people to ensure on-going accountability. One of

these is the submission. How else can your voice be included? The Panel that I belong to is so concerned about the preference for consultation over submissions by the Government Advisory Panel that we have decided to take submissions ourselves. My advice to to send your submission to both panels: to the Government Constitutional Advisory Panel and to our Independent Constitutional Review Panel. Our Independent Panel will ensure that your submission is noted in our final report. We are committed to the integrity of the submission process and believe that the Government's Advisory Panel is comprised by the confusion in its terms of reference resulting from "providing information" and its preference for consultation.

I was also concerned about the type of questions asked by the Government Panel's interviewer. When we present our own submission on a particular issue we are able to say what we want to say. Responding to specific questions as I did for the Government Panel's interview controlled my responses to match the type of

questions asked. This was not a problem for four of the six questions but it was for questions two and three. Both asked about Maori representation in government practice. This implies that such practice is normal and part of government operation. That reinforced the incorrect view that Maori representation through the vehicle of the Treaty principles is already included in our constitutional arrangements. You will note in my responses to Questions Two and Three below that I get around this problem by addressing the assumptions behind the questions not the questions themselves.

I gave a lengthy response to the first question which asked "how I would best explain or describe New Zealand's constitution to people who don't know much about it".

Here is the full response which was later expanded into the published article 'Tribalism and Democracy are Incompatible'. My answer reads: "The constitution is how we arrange the way authority works in New Zealand; who is in charge and to whom they are accountable. It is how politics is organised and what sort of institutions and systems we have to control the use of power and authority. New Zealand is a democracy.

There are three elements to democracy: the nation, the state, and the citizen. The nation is the overall framework and idea we have of ourselves. The state is parliament and all the institutions and systems of government. Citizens are the subjects of the nation-state and hold it accountable. These three elements are held together by the principles of universalism, equality, and freedom. Universalism is the base. It is the commitment to the belief that the human being is the political subject. This means that a person is regarded as human before he or she is seen as a member of a race, religion or other type of social group. Universalism is the basis of democracy because it justifies the equal status of the citizen and our 'human rights'.

My first important point is that the political status of citizenship is different from cultural/race identity. This means that political status, that is, citizenship, is part of the constitution but race/cultural/religious identity is not. Take the example of religion. Many New Zealanders have a religion but their religious identity is not part of the political arrangements. Your religious status is not your political status. Religion is kept out of politics. Race and culture are like religion – it is an identity but not a political status.

Race/cultural identity cannot be included as a political status in



a constitution. What a constitution can include, and New Zealand's one already does, is the right that each individual has to practise his or her cultural identity. This right is enshrined in legislation which says that a person cannot be discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, cultural affiliation and so on. That right can only exist because of our equal status as citizens, a status that comes from the universalist principle that we are all equal as human beings."

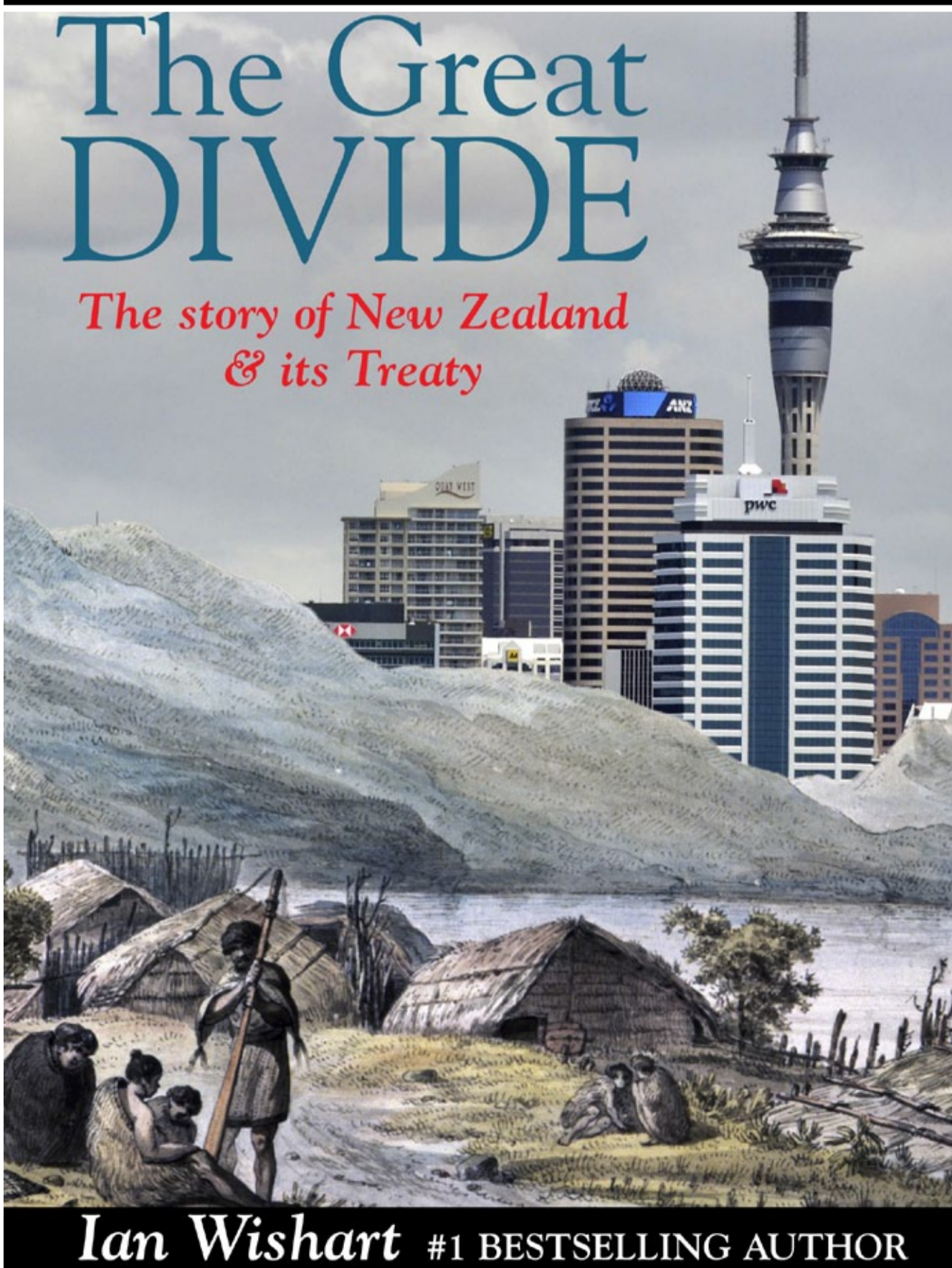
In summing up this point I noted that citizenship is at the basis of our freedom and an essential part of a democratic constitution.

My second important point to Question One concerned the nature of tribalism as a political system. I described tribalism as a pre-modern system that is anti-democratic saying how the history of the world is the move from tribalism to democracy. This occurred because tribalism is based on principles of inequality. In tribal organisations a person's political status comes from the status of his or her ancestors. In addition tribalism is unable to include newcomers. There are many New Zealand families with members who are Maori and members who are non-Maori. The latter can never be a full member of the tribe. This divides families as well as dividing the wider NZ society on the basis of race. Race (genetic heritage), not universalism, is the basic principle of tribal organisation.

For these two reasons: the fundamental difference between the political status of citizenship and the fundamental nature of tribalism as an unequal, exclusive system, the Treaty of Waitangi must not be included in New Zealand's constitution. Including the Treaty in a constitution would divide us into two peoples, one of whose political status comes from genetic heritage or race and the other whose political status is citizenship. It would bring into the constitution an anti-democratic political system – the tribe/iwi. Tribalism/iwi and democracy are fundamentally incompatible.

The second question put to me by the Panel's interviewer...

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Ian Wishart #1 BESTSELLING AUTHOR

# 100 days to keep them honest - book

By Amy Brooke

Extracted from 'The 100 Days'

A shockingly sad photograph published in the *Nelson Mail* last year showed an embarrassed elderly woman, in the early hours of the morning, walking home in her night-gown having been discharged from Christchurch hospital and unable to afford a cab – something the hospital was well aware of. She had felt diffident about having to wait in her nightwear in the reception area of the hospital until the morning, when she could be taken home, and had hoped to make her way unobtrusively.

What are we to make of the early morning discharges, the lack of ongoing observation of those presenting with worrying symptoms and too readily made to leave, in some cases subsequently dying, either because of a bed shortage or because of hospital policy? What are we to make of sending home from hospital on the same day mothers who have just given birth, all of whom should be routinely kept in hospital and observed until both mother and baby are stabilised, rested, and seem to be doing well?

So much of what has happened in New Zealand since our parents' time cannot be counted as progress, but regress.

What are we to make of the fact that it is almost impossible now for young families to be able to save to buy their own homes when once a lawn for children to play on and garden area to grow vegetables and flowers was the norm?

What are we to make of the growing State intrusion into families' and individuals' lives? How much do you trust the New Zealand government and New Zealand authorities?

The recent farce over Kim Dotcom is hardly likely to increase the faith of the public in government, in politicians, in the police and officials – in what has long been publicised as a largely corruption-free country.

Against this claim, New Zealanders' trust in institutions of authority has been eroded for many years now and highlighted in a number of surveys. One showed that over two-thirds of the public had either not much confidence, or none at all, in

Parliament, and that three-quarters had little or no confidence in political parties. These levels of distrust and disquiet are also paralleled by public misgivings about other agencies of the State and our powerful bureaucracies such as our education system and the well-entrenched and state-funded literary and arts establishments – as well as about the scandalous and conscienceless behaviour of too many in charge of those financial institutions which have cost so many so dearly.

Very many New Zealanders suspect they do not count, particularly in the eyes of government – in that they are not "celebrities", current glitterati upon whom a media feeding on sensationalism fixate on, fawn over and promote. Nor are they members of powerful corporate "tribes" granted privileged access to ministers denied other New Zealanders and upon whom both the major parties have lavished extraordinarily large financial settlements – in some cases, scandalously, for arguably spurious claims which have cost the country dearly. They are continuing to do so.

When important institutions caring for our disadvantaged young are being quietly closed down behind-the-scenes; when frontline police staff so very obviously needed to be visible are being relegated to desk jobs because of the dismissing of so many non-sworn staff previously doing clerical work – while the police are being told to cut their budget by \$200 million in this coming year and \$400 million in the year after; while treaty claims, no matter how obviously manipulative, unproven, or opportunistic, are now endorsed to swell the already \$37 billion in wealth of corporate part-Maori whose radicalised spokespersons are pushing more and more to divide and basically impoverish the country; when our poorly performing economy, mismanaged by successive governments, sees an exodus of New Zealanders unable any longer to afford to live in their own country – while more and more New Zealanders who would prefer to stay here are losing their jobs and struggling to make ends meet; when CEOs, in spite of poor performances, have their already over-generous remuneration continually boosted; when the New Zealand family farm is going the way of the past, as New Zealanders cannot meet

the price being paid for the best of our farmland and coastal areas, outbid by far wealthier overseas investors and individuals; while we are arguably now being commercially colonised by communist Chinese interests, as this problematic and aggressive country moves down into our waters... what has happened to us as a country?

Increasingly New Zealanders are asking just this. And a great deal of what has taken place has been as a result of overweening government control, both from the Left and from the Right. The failed policies of a socialist government intent on expanding the "entitlements" to welfare which stifle energy, enterprise and self-respect, have encouraged a handsout mentality. It can be contrasted with the equally damaging ideologies of the far Right maintaining that Free Trade policies contribute to a rising tide which lifts all boats – in theory.

However, in the real world, the same rising tide has washed many onto the rocks, and is continuing to do so. It seems that the lesson still has to strike home that individuals' livelihoods are destroyed, businesses forced to close down, and manufacturing faces insuperable odds where there is no level ground on which to compete – when for example, a country like China with a low-wage economy and punitive policies towards its own people can undercut anything that we can manufacture here.

We have the example of the well-intentioned repeal of the Corn Laws in Britain in the 1870s when, as historian A. N. Wilson points out in *The Victorians*, economic liberals enthusiastically celebrated their repeal.

Cheap American corn then flooded into England and Europe and almost every other country responded to the threat by introducing tariffs on imported corn to protect their own people, i.e. by introducing Corn Laws very similar to the ones so enthusiastically abolished in England. Russia slapped on import tariffs, as did France and Germany. Only Britain and Belgium chose to believe Cobden's discredited dogma that unregulated commercial intercourse between nations inevitably spells progress for all.

The result was corn, the largest arable product of English farms, falling drastically in price. The British area under wheat shrank by one million acres and by the 1880s the British were importing 65% of their wheat – with devastating results for rural England.

The flipside to cheaper products being made available to the public as a whole has to be balanced against the long-term consequences of a country los-

ing its own people, its jobs, manufacturing and industry, with the rise of unemployment and the growth of welfare payments – and its young, nowadays too often saddled with debt, leaving for better opportunities.

Ideologies, no matter from what end of the spectrum, should not replace common sense, nor the right of the people of the country to make their own choices – which does not happen in this country.

When an English immigrant who arrived here nearly 30 years ago, loving this country, can now say sadly that New Zealanders have squandered their inheritance – many very much agreeing with him – then something has gone wrong with New Zealand.

We need to recognise this in order to undo as much of the damage as possible, some of it part of the process of the venal vote-buying which Parliamentarians now deal in to shore up their own positions – and which in many cases has been damaging to the country.

Nothing now can possibly rescue New Zealand from the ongoing process of poor decision-making by our political parties, unless New Zealanders themselves take matters in hand. And this will not happen unless individuals in far greater numbers stand up to be counted, individuals like George Eliot's Dorothea...

*"whose full nature... spent itself in channels which had no great name on the earth. But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive; for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who have lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs."*\*

If New Zealanders have one fault as a people it is that they have too easily tolerated the highly flawed concept of leadership – when the evidence is plain that it is as damaging an ideology as any other from either the far Right or the far Left.

In the end, everything depends upon the individual – if we are to reclaim a genuine democracy. And there is essentially a very simple and highly achievable way to do this – one which the most successful democracy in the world insisted upon – and which is responsible for its present pre-eminence. It is the 100 Days – as clarified within.

And if not? Then the alternative is even more stark. And the hour is more than late, with so much already lost.

*The 100 Days by Amy Brooke, Howling At The Moon Publishing, 374p, \$38.99 Available nationwide at all good bookstores or from <http://www.ianwishart.com>*

"Reform (of our institutions, laws, regulations, politics) must come from outside the realm of public institutions. It must come from the associations of civil society. It must come from us, the citizens."

– Niall Ferguson, BBC Reith Lecture No 2, 2012  
*The Rule of Law and Its Enemies*

"Politicians... I have come to the conclusion that the only way to control them is through your proposal".

– Emeritus Professor David Flint  
<http://www.davidflint.com.au>

"That Amy's book will be attacked by the 'progressives' will only endorse how adrift they are. The hope is that New Zealanders may find this book as a compass in a storm."

– Leighton Smith, Talk-back radio host, NewstalkZB

"As always, the quality of writing is superb, the power of the arguments is compelling, the research behind the debate is impressive... The book draws from a wide and eclectic range of sources and displays deep understanding of a number of pertinent issues. It's a high-quality piece of work and a joy to read... I find myself saying 'Absolutely! Hear! Hear!' to the great bulk of your analysis – particularly in relation to education and Maori matters. Agree or disagree, because of the concerns it raises and the information it contains, this book should be compulsory reading for all New Zealanders in public office. I really do congratulate you on a magnificent effort."

– Greg Newbold, Professor, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Canterbury

AMY BROOKE

THE 100 DAYS

Amy Brooke

THE 100 DAYS  
Claiming Back New Zealand

What has gone wrong  
and how we can control  
our politicians

AMY BROOKE'S 100 DAYS: OUT THIS WEEK



## Sparks flies in romantic *Safe Haven*

### Safe Haven

➤ **Director:** Lasse Hallström

➤ **Cast:** Josh Duhamel, Julianne Hough, David Lyons

➤ **Length:** 115 minutes

➤ **Rated:** PG-13 (for violence, sexual references)

When it comes to trying to make you cry, there are no safe havens in "Safe Haven."

The latest film based on a novel by Nicholas Sparks -- the author who has elicited more tears than an onion factory -- includes plot points of spousal abuse, cancer, cute kids, children in peril, a hunk with a heavy heart, loss of a parent, letters from the grave and a lot more.

None of this story is very original. But if you have even the tiniest sliver of romance in you, see no other movie than this one. And be sure to bring some extra tissues.

"Dancing With the Stars" alumnus Julianne Hough plays Katie, a woman on the run who ends up in a sleepy -- on the verge of comatose -- little North Carolina community (a favorite locale for a Sparks tale of tears). No sooner is she off the bus than she meets the town's eligible widower, Alex (Josh Duhamel), who is trying do his best to raise his kids since his wife died a few years ago.

Sparks fly. But the relationship unfolds slowly because Katie has a dark past and Alex is cautious about bringing another woman into his family. His young son (Noah Lomax) dislikes the idea of any new woman who threatens the memory of his mom, while young daughter (Mimi Kirkland) is desperate for some maternal attention.

Since the story elements aren't that new, the major key to making a Sparks movie work is how much you want the central couple to fall in love. The characters played by Duhamel and Hough have so



much pain, it would be a sin for them not to find some happiness together.

Lasse Hallström's film is a beautiful blend of Hallmark Card moments, from meeting to sharing a disastrous date in the rain to eventually giving into their obvious attraction for each other. These are such schmaltzy moments they block the dark side of the tale.

Of course, it wouldn't be a Sparks story without some hurdles to overcome. The film's biggest weakness is the police officer (David Lyons) on an unrelenting mission to track down Katie. There's devotion to duty and there's dark obsession. Lyons' performance goes way beyond both, to the point of caricature. He's a modern day melodramatic villain without the handlebar moustache.

There are so many points that can't be discussed without giving too much away. All that can be said safely is Cobie Smulders gets the most out of her role to make this romance a full tearjerker.

Sparks never has been subtle when it comes to being an emotional manipulator and there are moments of "Safe Haven" that seem like the biggest manipulations of his career. Cynics, and those who believe love is nothing more than the name of a Beatles-themed Las Vegas show, should not wander into a theatre showing "Safe Haven." This kind of emotional barrage can weaken even the hardest of hearts.

- Rick Bentley



## TV &amp; Film



## Ray Winstone channels John Thaw in *The Sweeney*

### The Sweeney

➔ **Director:** Nick Love

➔ **Cast:** Ray Winstone, Hayley Atwell, Damian Lewis, Ben Drew

➔ **Length:** 112 minutes

➔ **Rated:** M (for violence, offensive language & sexual references)



Movie shoot-outs are often dazzling feats of marksmanship. Few filmmakers have the guts to show their version of "Gunfight at the OK Corral" the way such gunfights actually go down - dozens of rounds, most missing the mark - pistols popping off, incessantly, their owners unable to hit the broad side of a crook in the heat of battle.

That's one thing the two-fisted British crime drama "The Sweeney" gets absolutely right. In a running gun battle, the pistol packing coppers are at a distinct disadvantage to "villains" toting semi-automatic weapons. And neither has much luck at hitting ducking, moving non-civilian targets who are shooting back.

"The Sweeney," based on an influential British TV show of the 1970s starring John Thaw and a young Dennis Waterman, is a down-and-dirty genre picture that manages a couple of decent plot twists, a couple of passable car chases and two epic shoot-outs. The Brits may be decades behind the French in the car-chase game, but director Nick Love has studied his Michael Mann ("Heat") and learned how hard-boiled men and women of violence look, think, fight and shoot.

"The Sweeney" are cops, men and women who live for the adrenaline rush of the chase and the tussle, the satisfaction of the arrest. "We're The Sweeney. You're nicked."

They're working class and coarse - a flying squad of violent-crime detectives who still go by their unit's bloody Cockney nickname, slang for Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street.

The charismatic Ray Winstone is their leader, Jack Regan, an "any means necessary" brute with more than a hint of corruption about him. Not that he cares.

He's carrying on a sordid affair with a fellow cop (Hayley Atwell) who is also the wife of an Internal Affairs officer who'd like nothing more than to shut

down the flying squad. Jack runs roughshod over his boss (Damian Lewis) and makes a point, after a big bust, of closing down the pub with his crew.

Then a jewelry store robbery ends with an execution, and Jack & Co. (Ben Drew is his young protege) become obsessed with catching the villains who did it, willing to risk each other, scores of innocent civilians and prison terms to get their guy.

The film takes repeated "didn't see that coming" turns, which help. Director Love gives it an R-rated '70s look and feel, from the rough and tumble men's room sex to the immediacy of the violence. But he's as bad as any Hollywood hack at not showing the collateral damage of a shootout in crowded Trafalgar Square. And the script (he co-wrote it with John Hodges) loses track of most of the squad, and is overflowing with silly expediencies and the odd eye-rolling "You were right all along" apology.

Winstone, growling, sneering, threatening villains and dating WAY out of his league, but plainly able to through sheer macho and charisma, makes up for that. He sees to it that Regan and his not-so-sharp-shooters are the most believable, dangerous cops the screen has seen in ages.

3 stars (Grade: B)

[View trailer here](#)

— By Roger Moore



“THE SWEENEY,” BASED ON AN INFLUENTIAL BRITISH TV SHOW OF THE 1970S STARRING JOHN THAW AND A YOUNG DENNIS WATERMAN,, IS A DOWN-AND-DIRTY GENRE PICTURE



## entertainment NEWS

### BORN IDENTITY

**Los Angeles, (UPI)** — U.S. actor Matt Damon and wife Luciana say they've welcomed their third daughter into the family, named Gia Zavala Damon. Gia was born Thursday at an undisclosed location, a publicist for the couple said in a statement given to *People Magazine*. Everyone's doing great, Damon spokeswoman Jennifer Allen told *People*. She is a healthy baby girl. The newest Damon child joins 2-year-old Isabella in sharing Matt and Luciana as parents, while the couple also is raising Luciana's 10-year daughter by a previous marriage, Alexia. The magazine said Damon, 37, and Luciana, 32, met in Miami Beach in 2003 while he was filming the comedy *Stuck on You*, tying the knot in December 2005 in New York City.

### JUDGE: LABELS MUST CONSIDER 'FAIR USE'

**San Jose, Calif., (UPI)** — A U.S. judge says record labels cannot order YouTube users to remove videos featuring their music unless they can show it's not a legal fair use. In what is being considered a victory for individual computer users over corporate music copyright holders, U.S. District Judge Jeremy Fogel of San Jose, Calif., ruled Thursday that music companies cannot issue blanket orders to remove YouTube videos unless they first determine if each video is using the copyrighted music in a way that's legally permissible, the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported Thursday. The case stems from a 2007 incident in which Universal Music Corp. ordered a Pennsylvania woman to remove a YouTube video of her 13-month-old son dancing to the Prince song "Let's Go Crazy." Universal ordered YouTube to remove the video and nearly 200 others involving Prince compositions. The woman sued, saying she was within the fair use provision of a law giving companies the power to issue takedown orders. Consumer groups have long argued record labels abuse their power to order YouTube video removals and do not consider whether they're being used legally. Fogel agreed, saying the law is intended to prevent the abuse of takedown notices, the *Chronicle* reported.

### FRANCE BANS BABY TV CABLE CHANNELS

**Paris, (UPI)** — French television authorities say they've banned programming aimed at toddlers and babies as possibly hurtful to small children's development. The issue arose earlier this year with the advent in France of two U.S. channels, BabyFirstTV and Baby TV, which feature programming geared to children under 3 years old. On Thursday, the French High Audiovisual Council ruled to ban such programming in order to protect children under 3 from the effects of television, the *Times of London* reported. In issuing the ruling, the council quoted health experts' warnings that interaction with other people is crucial to early child development, the newspaper said. Television viewing hurts the development of children under 3 years old and poses a certain