

PARIS – Criticism is mounting against French Culture Minister Frederic Mitterrand over an autobiographical book in which he describes paying boys for sex in Thailand.

The Socialist Party spokesman on Wednesday joined the leader of the far right National Front party in questioning Mitterrand's fitness for his job.

Mitterrand, nephew of late President Francois Mitterrand, said it was a "disgrace" that his fellow leftists had joined in the criticism.

Mitterrand's 2005 book, "La mauvaise vie" or "The Bad Life," describes painful periods in his childhood and his homosexuality. One passage describes his "bad habit of paying for boys" in Thailand. Mitterrand later denied he was a pedophile, saying on France-3 television that he uses the term "boys" loosely.

Mitterrand was a television personality when the book came out but not in the government. President Nicolas Sarkozy named Mitterrand culture minister in June this year.

Concern about the book resurfaced in French political circles after Mitterrand's impassioned defense of Roman Polanski last week. The director was arrested in Switzerland on U.S. charges of having sex with a 13-year-old girl in 1977 in Los Angeles.

Posted at [9:19 AM](#)

#### **AC/DC GOP** [[Jonah Goldberg](#)]

No, this isn't a Larry Craig punchline in the making. Yesterday, in response to [this great anti-Creigh Deeds ad](#), I suggested we needed a contest for other AC/DC songs that might lend themselves to GOP ads. Here are the most common themes/suggestions.

Fiscally responsible Republicans should run with the promise to get us "Back in Black." Or, they could use "Down Payment Blues" while running through a montage of headlines about spending, ACORN, mortgage stuff, etc.

Just about everyone voted for "Highway to Hell." 'Nuff said.

Lots of jokes about John Edwards "Love at First Feel" and so forth.

An at times inappropriate and often poorly articulated series of suggestions about Sarah Palin using the "Big Balls" song to out-man the rest of the field. Ditto "You Shook Me All Night Long."

And so on.

Posted at [9:15 AM](#)

#### **Sowing the Seeds of Future Disasters** [[John Hood](#)]

Having learned all the wrong lessons from the boom-and-bust cycle of the 2000s, most Democrats and many Republicans continue to think that federal manipulation of the markets for housing and mortgage lending is inevitable and beneficial. I'd understand -- but not be inclined to give them a pass -- if policymakers simply said that tackling tax deductions and government guarantees is too hard a task to attempt. Unfortunately, it goes beyond that. They genuinely believe the spin put out by the industries that benefit, or at least think they benefit, from the government manipulation.

The latest thing to worry about is the increasingly significant role of the Federal Housing Administration. From the [LA Times](#):

This year alone the agency has backed nearly 2 million mortgages worth at least \$328 billion. It insured 21.5% of all new mortgages last year, up from fewer than 6% in 2007.

Some lawmakers, however, worry that the FHA may be doing its job too well -- enabling too many people with shaky finances to get loans, and in effect setting up a potential repeat of the housing bubble fueled in part by no-questions-asked subprime loans.

Recent numbers appear to underscore those concerns. The percentage of FHA loans that are delinquent or in foreclosure climbed to nearly 8% at the end of June, from about 5.5% in early 2006, according to the Mortgage Bankers Assn. And in the weeks ahead, its reserves for loan losses are projected to slip below federally mandated limits.

"It's not the least bit implausible to be concerned about the ever-deteriorating performance of the FHA portfolio," said UCLA finance professor Stuart Gabriel, director of the university's Ziman Center for Real Estate. "The jury is out as to whether the FHA is going to need a government infusion."

Well, actually, I think the jury is back. The sentence is another bailout. The only unanswered question is when. The Cato Institute's Jeffrey Miron offers related thoughts [here](#).

Posted at [8:52 AM](#)

### **Muse Ick, Pt. 2** [[John J. Miller](#)]

An e-mailer informs me that Muse singer Matthew Bellamy is the son of George Bellamy, who played guitar in the 1960s band the Tornados, a group whose smash-hit "Telstar" was a favorite song of -- I'm not making this up, either! -- [Margaret Thatcher](#).

UPDATE: Jeez o'Pete! According to [this](#), Matt Bellamy thinks 9/11 was an inside job.

Posted at [8:52 AM](#)

### **Herta So Good** [[John J. Miller](#)]

I haven't heard of this year's winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Herta Mueller. But [this summary in the AP story](#) is hopeful:

Herta Mueller, a member of Romania's ethnic German minority who was persecuted for her critical depictions of life behind the Iron Curtain, won the 2009 Nobel Prize in literature Thursday in an award seen as a nod to the 20th anniversary of communism's collapse. ...

The 56-year-old author made her debut in 1982 with a collection of short stories titled "Niederungen," or "Nadirs," depicting the harshness of life in a small, German-speaking village in Romania. It was promptly censored by the communist government.

In 1984 an uncensored version was smuggled to Germany, where it was published and devoured by readers. That work was followed by "Oppressive Tango" in Romania but she was eventually prohibited from publishing inside her country for her criticism of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu's rule and its feared secret police, the Securitate.

A Nobel winner from about a decade ago, Dario Fo, actually was a Communist.

Posted at [8:13 AM](#)