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Right Now

Inside the conservative movement and the Republican Party with David Weigel

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WHAT I'M READING

- Alexander Zaitchik has turned his **gripping Salon profile** of Glenn Beck into a full-bore bio of the host, **Common Nonsense**. The publisher has kindly requested that reporters don't quote from the book; instead, I'll just recommend it.
- The Winston Group **gives us the first in-depth survey** of the Tea Party movement.
- Andrew Ferguson **brings the hammer down** on those snobby people at metropolitan new papers who cover the conservative movement.

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Real talk on Israel at the Cato Institute's Milton Friedman dinner

Last night the Cato Institute awarded its fifth biannual Milton Friedman Prize for Advancing Liberty to Akbar Ganji, an Iranian dissident whose reporting on the murder of journalists and activists in his country landed him in prison for six years. The evening provided a reminder of one of the disputes between libertarians and mainline conservatives -- most such disputes having been shunted to the side during Barack Obama's presidency.

Before Ganji's speech, Cato Institute President Ed Crane and keynote speaker George Will gave the audience red meat that would have fit comfortably at a Republican event. Crane referred the Obama White House as "the Saul Alinsky administration," and both men portrayed the current economic turmoil in Greece as the natural conclusion to European socialism.










"I want to thank the people of Cato for making tonight possible," said Will. "I also want to thank the millions of people who have just demonstrated why the work of Cato is necessary -- the people of Greece."

Ganji, however, chose not to touch on partisan politics. He spoke along the lines of an address he'd [given to journalists](#) the day before, criticizing America for a "double standard" in its approach to Israel and Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. "The regime," said Ganji, referring to Iran, "exploits this double standard."

Early in his speech, which was delivered by a translator, Ganji offered a 2003 quote from George W. Bush about the mistake America had made by not previously always siding with pro-democracy activists and dissidents over tyrants. The praise for Bush got warm applause. Then, Ganji quickly criticized Bush for thinking America could impose freedom on Iraq and Afghanistan. There was no applause -- no more until the end of his speech.

By David Weigel | May 14, 2010; 8:52 AM ET
Categories: [Foreign Policy](#)


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