

JOE BIDEN WILL  
BE HERE ALL WEEK  
MICHELLE COTTE

KAFKA AT  
THE OFFICE  
LOUIS BEGLEY

MATT DRUDGE GOES  
UNDERGROUND  
GABRIEL SHERMAN

BUSHIES RISE  
AGAIN!  
JONATHAN CHAIT


# *The New* REPUBLIC

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An illustration of a hand holding a tomato, surrounded by various vegetables like cucumbers, eggplants, and peppers, with a cityscape in the background.

## LIBERALISM'S MOMENT

Barack Obama's  
New Theory of the State  
FRANKLIN FOER and NOAM SCHEIBER

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Barfield, the “Commissary Commando,” about the importance of a balanced diet. Little cooking was done on-screen, and, while the recipes are available online, each dish was assembled in just a few minutes of screen time.

Which was fine by me, because I didn’t have the necessary wonton wrappers, tuna, or cabbage on hand to construct McNulty’s Neapolitan. However, I *had* planned on attempting the on-screen workout on “Fit For Duty” in my living room. Instead, I found Air Force Master Sergeant Mike Skaggs leading a workout featuring a complicated-looking military-issue “suspension trainer” called

TRX. This bungee-enhanced strap/brace/harness contraption exists at the strange nexus of S&M and fitness equipment. “I know all of you warriors have them,” Skaggs exhorted.

This warrior doesn’t, naturally, which left me on the couch, watching Skaggs lead two assistants, their TRX braces fastened to a truck, through a workout on a beach at Naval Air Station Coronado. The Rolling Stones’ “Brown Sugar” thumped dimly in the background. Informational tidbits—“The TRX was designed for soldiers in mobile environments”—periodically appeared on-screen. Skaggs pointed a stern fin-

ger into the camera and barked, “Don’t you quit!”

But by the second go-round of “Fit For Duty,” I quit. I had to. For the sake of my sanity. Yet I stepped away from the couch heartened. Because, although the channel’s very existence recalls an era, not so long past, when the idea of a state-sponsored propaganda network seemed queasily plausible, the Pentagon Channel is, first and foremost, a vivid demonstration of why no pundit will ever propose nationalizing NBC.

DAVID ROTH

David Roth is a writer living in New York.

## Pointillist Questions

*There’s an element of the stunt to Christian Faur’s work—thousands of crayons packed tightly together, so that their tips join to form photorealistic portraits. Or are they sculptures? Crayons, the tool of choice for indiscriminate scribbling, are meticulously arrayed. (Faur, a physicist by training who is director of collaborative technologies in the arts at Denison University, hand-casts his crayons in thousands of colors.) But the medium adds to the poignancy of the message. Faur’s subject is often childhood—and the haunting nature of nostalgia. His work can be seen at [christianfaur.com](http://christianfaur.com).*

