

NOT LIGHT SUMMER READING

THE ECONOMY AND THE WAR, ETC.

President Bush is not troubled by the growth of the national debt, nor the trade deficit, nor the loss of American jobs, globalization, nor the lack of increase of real income for most Americans.

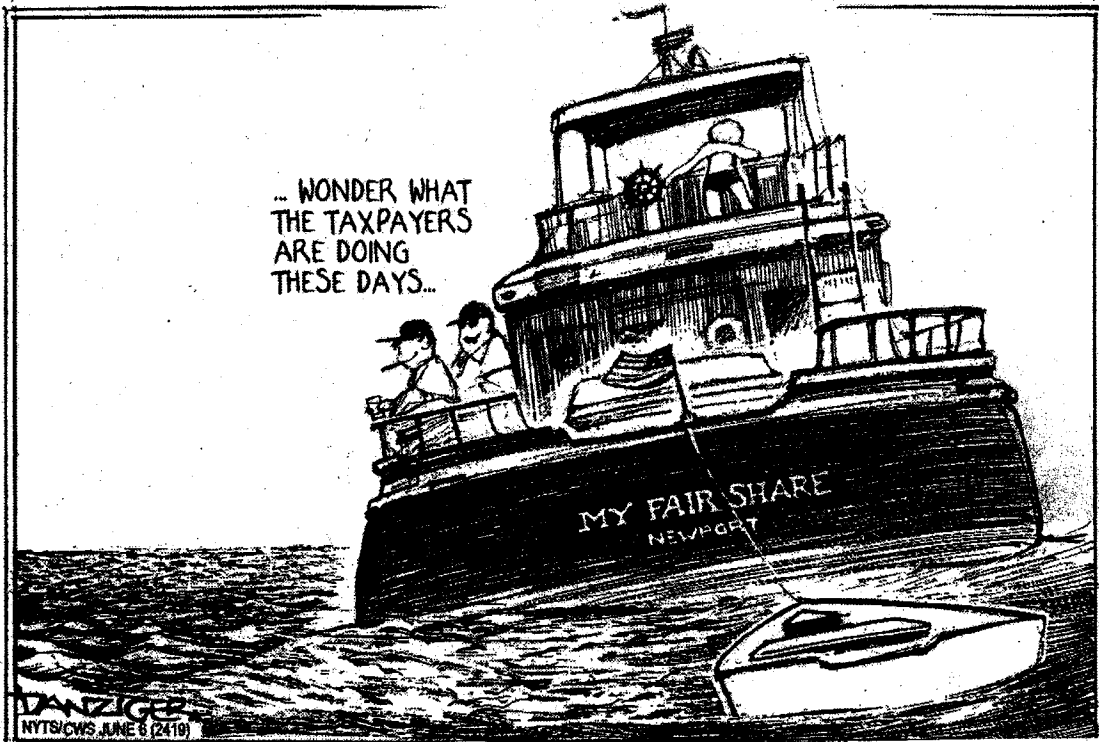
He is an optimist who knows that global warming (if it exists) will not be a problem, that America can go it alone and that we have already won in Iraq, are winning in Iraq, and will continue to win in Iraq for many years to come.

There are a few of us who are troubled by what appears to be an increase in the rich and the poor, and a gradual loss of the middle class of our nation. There are some of us who were not happy that we went to war in Iraq. Even more of us wonder, since we have entered dubious battle, when, if ever, we will be allowed to declare peace and leave.

There are even some of us who are outraged that our nation's leadership found excuses for ignoring the Geneva Convention and condoning torture and yet blamed it on the enlisted soldiers who did as they were told to do.

This is not light summer reading.

Gap Widens Between Rich and Poor Under Bush



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DANZIGER



Public-Sector Enemies

America has a problem with its public employees. They are not downwardly mobile enough.

Policemen, firefighters, teachers, hospital nurses -- they still belong to the one part of the U.S. economy where the New Deal hasn't been repealed. Fully 90 percent of them have defined-benefit pensions as of old. In the private sector, just 60 percent of employees have retirement plans, and a scant 24 percent still cling to defined-benefit plans. Fully 86 percent of public employees are covered by on-the-job health insurance; in the private sector, the rate has fallen to 66 percent.

According to the Employee Benefit Research Institute, public employees make on average \$49,275 a year. A sub-princely sum, that, but better than the \$34,461 that is the average annual income of private-sector workers.

There are a number of reasons public employees have been able to preserve the kinds of benefits and, in some instances, living standards that were once more common to American workers generally, but chief among these is unions. While 37 percent of public-sector workers are unionized, just 8 percent of private-sector workers are. Through their power at the ballot box, public employees have maintained the ability to bargain with their employers, who are either elected officials or their appointees. For all intents and purposes, their private-sector counterparts have lost the power to bargain collectively.

But are decent living standards in one sector sustainable when they're dependent on the taxes of an increasingly beleaguered private sector? More and more, conservative political strategists see an opportunity to weaken the Democrats -- traditionally the beneficiaries of public-employee union support -- by pitting private-sector voters against public-sector ones. That certainly was Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's goal earlier this year when he backed an initiative that would have terminated the defined-benefit pensions for California's state and municipal employees and shifted them to 401(k)s instead.

Schwarzenegger's plan had a few glitches -- most notably, ending survivor benefits for widows and orphans of police officers and firefighters killed on the job. Facing an onslaught of criticism, Schwarzenegger backed off the initiative. But the war between Arnold and California's public employees has spread across many fronts. He's been embroiled with nurses on the question of nurse-patient ratios, and with teachers over his renegeing on a funding commitment to public schools. He's been losing every one of these fights, with his support in the polls dropping from 60 percent to an anemic 40.

Now, a number of Schwarzenegger's business backers have funded yet another initiative, this one to curtail the ability of public-sector unions to fund political campaigns

(including those for and against initiatives). The governor -- unless he trades off his support for this measure in return for concessions from the Democratic legislature -- is likely to back it.

Though the attacks from the gazillionaire governor on the state's public servants have only backfired, Arnold's handlers do not sound daunted. On Sunday the Los Angeles Times, reporting on a series of bi-weekly phone calls that Schwarzenegger and his strategists hold with his leading business backers, quoted veteran Republican operative Don Sipple, in one recent call, telling the assembled Arnoldistas how they'd go after the public employees.

"When you get to the point of ... 'These people are on your payroll, and they are out to roll you every day,' that creates a kind of phenomenon of anger," Sipple said. "But it takes a long time to get there."

If Arnold truly believes he can convince his fellow Californians that the police, firefighters and teachers are out to roll them every day, then the tale of the Incredible Shrinking Governor will continue apace.

But the problems faced by public-sector workers as the private sector grows steadily meaner aren't going away, whatever the outcome of the immediate battles in California. When public-sector workers were first joining unions in the '60s, they were largely playing catch-up with private-sector employees. But as Wal-Mart has supplanted General Motors as America's largest private employer (and GM announced a cutback of 25,000 more workers Tuesday), it's the teachers and their public-sector cohorts who have emerged as the relatively more advantaged -- and politically exposed.

From the period of the three decades after World War II, when the long boom in the American economy was felt in every class and quadrant, we have devolved into a nation of separate economies -- increasingly insecure private-sector workers, a public sector where the guarantees of the New Deal order still pertain and a stratum of mega-rich whose investment income is taxed at lower rates than the incomes of those who work for a living. If we can't create more security in the private sector (and universal health insurance would be a good start), the modest security of a work life in the public sector will surely be eroded, too.

Harold Meyerson is The American Prospect's editor-at-large. This column originally appeared in The Washington Post.

Prospect of the poorhouse

By Vivian Werner

LENOX ONCE UPON a time, I lived in the poorhouse. Actually, I not only lived in it but owned it, too. It was in a small town in Connecticut, a town that boasts more pre-Revolutionary houses on one street than any other place in the country. (I once lived in — and owned — one of those houses, too.)

Through the centuries, most of those old houses had been upgraded, going from primitive to comfortable, some even on to elegant. With the passage of time, those owners who could afford to had gone in for remodeling. They installed heating systems; they installed indoor plumbing. They replaced tiny, blemished window panes with large sheets of flawless glass. Eventually, "birthing rooms" became living rooms; "keeping rooms" became kitchens.

Later generations modernized those kitchens, installing whatever was state-of-the-art at the time. They added ells; they tore up the old chestnut floor boards and put down floors that seemed more practical: hardwood, sometimes, or pine or even bright and shiny linoleum. Fireplaces were bricked up or converted into closets; court-ing benches torn out to make room for whatever was deemed more necessary.

Eventually people discovered the quaint little town with its quaint little churches and its quaint village green. They discovered those old houses, too, and began to buy them. Then, like earlier generations of owners who "upgraded" their houses, the newcomers set about restoring them, returning them as near to their original state as they could afford.

But one house that remained untouched for almost a century, the forlorn place that stood on the outskirts of the town, was the one I bought: the Almshouse. It was never touched, of course, because

it was the poorhouse, home to the indigent: men, women and children. And it served in that capacity from the time of the Civil War, until the late '30s of the last century, when home relief was at last introduced.

The place had been a house of horrors, Dickensian in its squalor. Walls had collapsed, forming one large room, to be replaced by partitions of a flimsy wood that provided only a modicum of privacy. The whole house was filthy and infested with rats and roaches. The partitions, when the final poverty-stricken inhabitant had at last been moved out, were found to be encrusted with dirt, embedded with dead bugs.

Yet this was where people lived; those people unfortunate enough to have lost their jobs and their savings, if they had such, in any of the panics that swept the country periodically and brought with them financial ruin.

By the time the poorhouse was abandoned, much had changed, and for the better. The country by then was climbing out of the Great Depression, and with Roosevelt in the White House, there truly was a New Deal, as one law after another was enacted to see that such a disaster would not — could not — happen again.

To prevent another crash, like that of 1929, the Securities and Exchange Commission was established, to regulate the stock exchange. (And the New York Stock Exchange itself was investigated for illegal practices, with its president sent to jail.) An insurance system was instituted to protect Americans from the loss of their savings should the banks where they had been deposited fail. Jobs were created by the Works Progress Administration. A minimum wage was set by law. Child labor was outlawed.

The Labor Relations Act was passed to protect unions and union workers; as they organized they were able to improve working conditions, raising wages and incorporating pension plans into their

contracts. Unemployment insurance was instituted, so that those who lost their jobs would not starve as they searched for work.

And, probably the most important measure of all, in 1935 the Social Security system was established. Even though wags went around fitting new words to a then-popular tune: "When you're 65 you'll get/ Pennies from heaven. /If you're still alive you'll get/ Pennies from heaven ... " the measure was almost universally praised for giving the elderly, the disabled, the widows and orphans a basic income.

That income in turn gave them hope and dignity; it kept them from that centuries old fear of "going to the poorhouse." But in the last decade, many of those laws, have been weakened, only partially enforced, or simply ignored. And now an attempt is being made not only to undermine Social Security, but to dismantle it.

At the same time private pension funds that would have supplemented it are disappearing as corporations fail, their assets looted by corporate honchos. Bankruptcy laws have been tightened for the needy individual, generously loosened for corporations. Many of the watchdog boards and commissions are now headed by those who oppose them in principle, and are therefore undermining them. In short, the entire safety net set up to protect the average American is being shredded.

A few, of course, have benefited greatly from lax enforcement or outright repeal of some laws, just as those robber barons of a century ago benefited from the lack of regulation and oversight and thereby made huge fortunes.

Like those then, who built "cottages" in the Berkshires or at Newport, their modern counterparts have been building McMansions. But there will be no McMansions for most of us. And for all too many, there will be only the chilling prospect of the poorhouse.

Vivian Werner is a frequent Eagle contributor.

A tutorial in greed

By Robert Scheer

LOS ANGELES

BECAUSE THEY keep re-vamping and expanding the SAT, I'll propose a new economics puzzle for the testmakers' consideration.

Question: What is the difference between a loan shark and a banker?

Answer: Not much. The former uses hired thugs to enforce repayment from debtors; the latter employs the feds as paid muscle.

Even better would be to make the fast-tracked bankruptcy bill — already passed by the Senate and expected to be approved soon by the House and signed by the president — the subject of one of the test's new critical-thinking essays. Teens could trace the correlation between the massive campaign contributions of credit card companies and banks and the imminent passage of legislation making it much more difficult for the hopelessly indebted to find the kind of relief offered by enlightened societies for millenniums.

Of course, not many high school students have been taught the central place of class warfare in modern American politics, but the bill would provide an excellent classroom case study in the political economy of greed. Consider it an updating of that old staple of government classes, "How a bill becomes a law." It would accurately place the role of corporate money in clear ascendance over the interests of regular people.

This subject is not an academic one for young Americans, because after high school they will become prime targets for predatory lenders, plastic-peddlers who just love to offer easy lines of credit to kids without jobs or even degrees. Once

Sen. Charles E. Grassley, R-Iowa, actively opposes abortion and same-sex marriage on biblical grounds yet believes the Good Book's clear definition and condemnation of usury is irrelevant.

a student has that first shopping spree at the college bookstore, he or she is often off and running in a cycle of unsecured debt that can last a lifetime.

This exploitation of the naive extends to many Americans who are plagued by seductive credit card offers, despite low or uncertain sources of income and other major risk factors. There is no cap on interest rates; the card companies simply harvest risky debtors, slam 'em with outrageous fees and rates and keep them for decades in indentured servitude because they can't afford to dent the principal.

Yet for the banks, the inevitable surge in bankruptcies caused by these immoral business strategies hasn't slowed this fantastically profitable industry a whit. For all of the whining about deadbeats ripping off the system, credit card companies' annual pretax profits have soared 2 1/2 times in the last decade, and last year was their most profitable in more than 15 years.

So why gut the bankruptcy law now? Greed, pure and simple. And, pathetically, this bankers'

dream is becoming a reality through the support of Republicans who have decided, as they often do with social issues, to selectively pick and choose when to follow the teachings of the Bible.

A key sponsor of the bill, Sen. Charles E. Grassley, R-Iowa, actively opposes abortion and same-sex marriage on biblical grounds yet believes the Good Book's clear definition and condemnation of usury is irrelevant. The Old Testament, revered by Jews, Muslims and Christians alike, mandates debt forgiveness after seven years, as was pointed out earlier this month by an organization of Christian lawyers in a letter to Grassley.

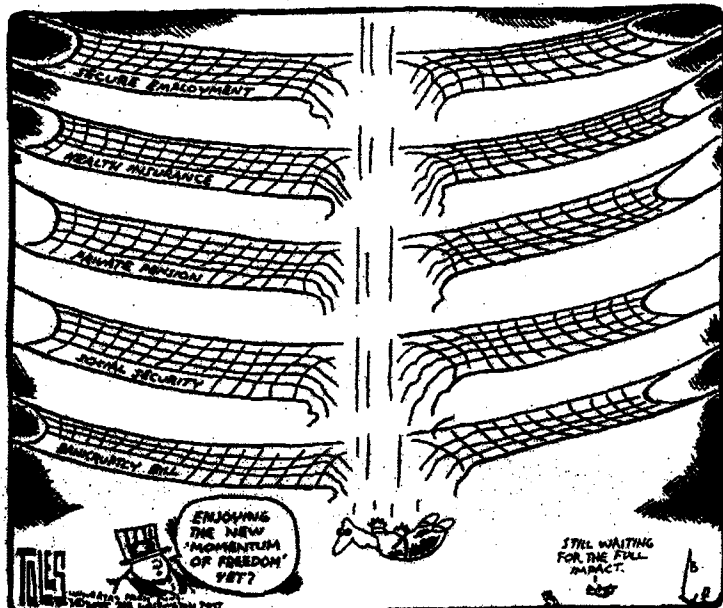
"I can't listen to Christian lawyers," said the senator, "because I would be imposing the Bible on a diverse population."

Sadly, when it comes to serving the prerogatives of banks, you can forget about those family values that folks such as Grassley prattle on about. The bill he wrote placed mothers and their children behind credit card companies in the line for a bankrupt ex-husband's paycheck, for example, which is positively Dickensian. Expected to sail through the House and onto the president's desk in the next few weeks, the bill turns the federal government into a guardian angel of an industry gone mad, placing no significant restriction on soaring interest rates and proliferating fees.

One extremely modest amendment that was rejected by the Senate would have blocked creditors from recovering debts from military personnel if the loans had annual rates higher than 36 percent. Also killed were sensible amendments designed to protect those ruined by a medical emergency, identity theft, dependent-care expenses or loss of income due to being called to full-time military duty through the National Guard or the Reserve.

In the end, these individuals are simply not powerful enough to earn the protection of our by-the-powerful, for-the-powerful government. Creditors can scam consumers, Enron can burn California, Halliburton can gouge the Pentagon, the rich can enjoy obscene tax cuts, our "conservative" president can run up the deficit like a drunken sailor — and none of it seems to faze our elected leaders. For them, "fiscal responsibility" is just a high-minded prescription appropriate only for the commoners.

The Los Angeles Times



Is the pay raise passing into U.S. history?

By Harold Meyerson

Time was when wage increases tracked gains in productivity and profitability — but that time is long gone.

WASHINGTON
THE MARKETS are anxious. There's every sign that the world's investors have grown nervous about the continued ability of the American consumer to keep the economy perking along. Companies that sell big-ticket items are floundering: General Motors reported a \$1.1 billion quarterly loss this week. Conversely, drug and utility stocks are doing all right; companies that rely on nondiscretionary spending remain a safe bet.

Part of the problem is that gas prices are siphoning off a bigger share than usual of Americans' incomes. But the bigger problem is that Americans' incomes are stuck or even in mild decline. Though the economy grew by 4.4 percent last year and added 2.2 million jobs, real wages fell by 0.9 percent. The last time U.S. wages fell was in the recession year of 1991. Now they're falling in the middle of a recovery.

Time was when wage increases tracked gains in productivity and profitability — but that time is long gone. Since 2001 yearly productivity growth has averaged 4.1 percent, while wages and benefits have grown on average by just 1.5 percent. No longer does a rising tide, as John Kennedy famously pronounced, lift all boats. We are now in the 11th quarter of the current recovery.

Averaging all the recoveries from 1947 through 1982, at this point — the 11th quarter — private-sector wages and salaries had

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risen by 18.2 percent, according to a study by the Economic Policy Institute. By the 11th quarter of the Clinton recovery of the early '90s, however, wages and salaries had grown by just 7.4 percent. And in the current Bush recovery, they've increased by an anemic 4.5 percent. In the new American economy, rising tides don't raise boats; they swamp them.

Plainly, two factors have altered our economy, profoundly and for the worse.

The first is our free-market form of globalization, which exerts downward pressure on the income from all jobs — from software writer to shirt stitcher — that can be performed elsewhere. The second is deunionization, which removes the bargaining power of employees. Get rid of unions — and the rate of unionization in the private sector is 7.9 percent, the lowest level since before the New Deal — and who is it that even bargains for wage increases?

On one hand, this is a consummation for which American employers have devoutly wished. Employer opposition to workers' attempts to unionize is the rule, not the exception. The share of revenue going to profits and shareholders has increased as wages have flat-lined. On Wall Street and

in boardrooms, deunionization has been an elegant solution to the problem of increased global competition (or, for companies not subject to global competition, simply an elegant source of profits).

Except last week, when even on Wall Street the solution began to look more like a problem. Home values may keep rising and consumers may keep going deeper into debt, but there's a limit to how much Americans will spend if their wages can't keep up with prices — even in the midst of a recovery.

Given the abysmal way in which economic history is taught in the United States, we tend to forget that the New Deal legalized unions as part of a strategy to stabilize and restart an economy that had been subject to chronic under-consumption. "The inequality of bargaining power between employees who do not possess full freedom of association" and employers, reads the preamble to the 1935 National Labor Relations Act, "tends to aggravate recurrent business depressions, by depressing wage rates and the purchasing power of wage earners."

The law worked for about 40 years, until employers figured out

that they could violate its terms with relative impunity. Since the 1970s, however, employers routinely fire workers engaged in organizing drives and threaten to shutter their doors if their workers go union — tactics proscribed by the act but not seriously penalized. The percentage of unionized workers in America plummeted.

And now the percentage of Americans able to keep the global economy afloat by buying the world's goods may be falling, too.

This week a bipartisan coalition in Congress introduced the Employee Free Choice Act, which would make it possible for workers to join unions without putting their livelihoods on the line. Not that President Bush would ever sign it, but the bill is a twofer, creating a civil right for American workers and resurrecting the very idea of the raise. Which is something the American economy could use right about now.

The Washington Post



Greenspan belatedly points out the obvious

By Ronald Brownstein

LOS ANGELES

IS HE KIDDING?

That's the only possible reaction to Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan's conclusion last week that the massive federal budget deficit accumulated under President Bush was "unsustainable." Declared Greenspan: "The principle that I think is involved here ... (is) that you cannot continuously introduce legislation which tends to expand the budget deficit."

That would be an entirely reasonable — even urgent — warning from someone who didn't bear so much responsibility for the problem he's describing. Greenspan lamenting higher deficits is like New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner complaining about inflated baseball salaries.

Let's recap. When Bush was elected, the nation had enjoyed three consecutive years of federal budget surpluses under Bill Clinton. The Congressional Budget Office projected that the government was on track to amass surpluses large enough to pay off the publicly held national debt by 2008. That would make the nation debt-free for the first time since the presidency of Andrew Jackson.

Greenspan had reliably supported this fiscal discipline under Clinton. But after Bush's election, Greenspan bent to the prevailing wind. Within days of Bush's inauguration, he gave his seigniorial blessing to tax cuts in testimony before the Senate Budget Committee.

Greenspan described this slow-motion crisis as if he were only some concerned bystander.

As Bruce Bartlett, a leading conservative economist, wrote at the time: "With Greenspan's support ... the last substantive barrier to tax reduction has evaporated." And Congress, with Greenspan's critical reassurance, passed the largest of Bush's massive tax cuts that year.

Greenspan built his argument for tax cuts in 2001 largely on his concern that the projected surpluses would be too large, allowing the government not only to extinguish the debt but also to accumulate financial assets, such as stocks and bonds.

That always seemed a dubious notion. But if that concern was ever legitimate, it seemed to be pretty well resolved by the time Bush came back for another tax reduction in 2003. The federal budget had already fallen back deeply into deficit under the weight of Bush's 2001 tax cuts, the economic slowdown and the cost of responding to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Rather than falling, much less falling too fast, the national debt was rising again.

Against that backdrop, surely the great voice of fiscal restraint would counsel caution about burdening future generations with more debt through more tax cuts.

Well, sort of. Greenspan, to his credit, said the second round of tax cuts shouldn't be passed without offsetting spending reductions. But he never seriously pushed Congress to reconsider the initial tax cuts passed on the obsolete assumption of vast surpluses.

Even today, Greenspan endorses even more borrowing for Bush's Social Security private investment accounts (if not quite as much as Bush wants), and points at spending cuts as the principal answer to the debt trap that he helped create. Taken together, Greenspan's advice paints him more as an activist committed to shrinking government than a dispassionate banker counseling fiscal prudence.

Tax cuts, of course, aren't the only reason Washington is drowning in debt again. But no one should minimize their impact. One recent study by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a nonpartisan research group, found that of all the federal policy changes since 2001 that have enlarged the deficit, tax cuts contributed fully 48 percent, followed by increases in defense and homeland security at 37 percent and domestic spending at just 15 percent. The best estimate is that over the next 75 years, Bush's tax cuts will cost \$11 trillion — about triple the projected

Social Security shortfall over the same period that Bush has labeled a crisis.

Greenspan really earned a place in the annals of chutzpah when he raised the impending costs of baby-boomer retirements as a principal reason Washington should tackle its deficits. It isn't exactly a news bulletin that large numbers of baby boomers will be retiring at the end of this decade, or that this will swell the costs of Medicare and Social Security. These trends were well known when Greenspan endorsed tax cuts in 2001. And yet by doing so, he helped sabotage America's best chance to reduce the burden of those costs for future generations.

Let's recap again. Clinton's plan was to use the projected federal surpluses to pay down the national debt. That would have significantly reduced, and eventually eliminated, federal interest payments on that debt (now running just under \$180 billion annually). Then he proposed to use those savings to help fund Social Security.

That wouldn't have solved the problem of an aging society entirely: the exploding costs of Medicare would almost certainly have demanded tougher efforts to control medical costs, as well as reduced services and more taxes.

But Clinton's fiscal strategy represented a good-faith effort by taxpayers to lighten the load on their children.

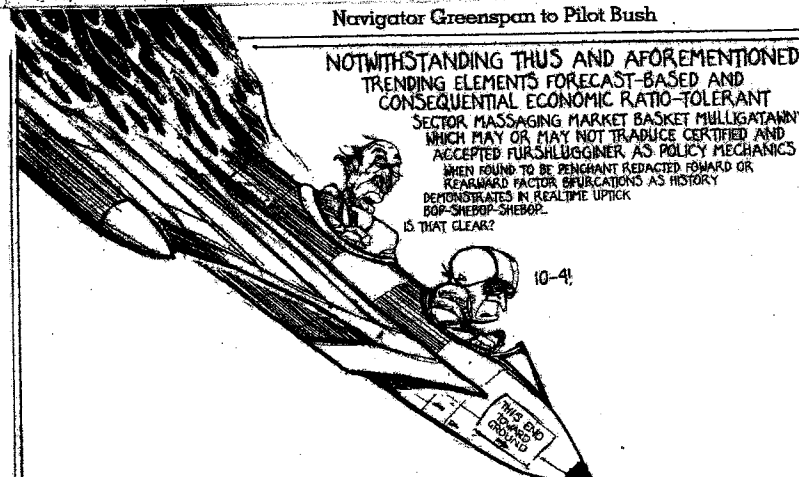
Instead, we increased their burden. After voting ourselves lower taxes and more services (such as the Medicare prescription-drug benefit), we have virtually guaranteed that future generations will need to raise their taxes. As Greenspan noted last week, today's young people now face the prospect of exploding interest costs (projected to exceed \$300 billion by 2010) to fund our rising debt — even as our retirement and the unrelenting rise in health-care costs saddles them with soaring bills for Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

Sure, the kid doesn't make the bed, but doesn't that seem a little severe?

Greenspan last week described this slow-motion crisis as if he were only some concerned bystander. But in the federal government's financial crackup, he's more like the guy at the party who hands the car keys to a drunk. Now, after the wreckage, he's sad. But we'd all be better off if he had spoken up when it could have done some good.

Los Angeles Times

Navigator Greenspan to Pilot Bush



Mr. Bush Assures Americans
that No Torture is Going
On In the United States...

Nope... none at all...
none...



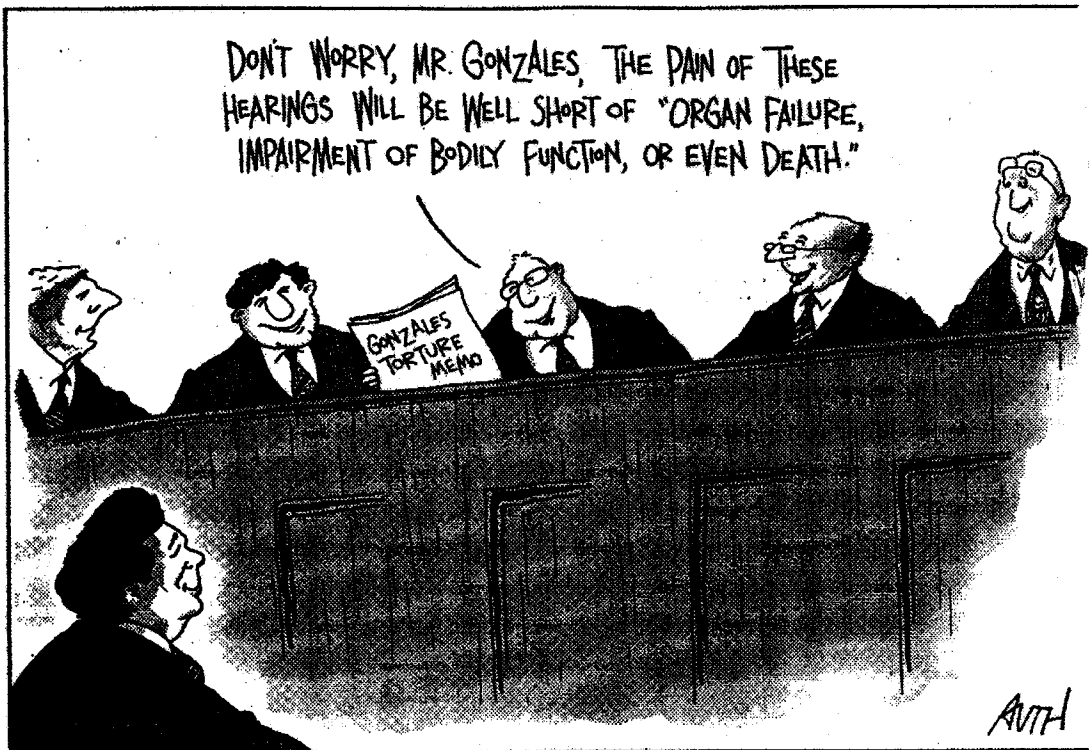
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WHAT RIGHT DO YOU
HAVE TO A DAY
IN COURT?
YOU'RE MOST LIKELY
A TERRORIST —
WHY ELSE WOULD WE
HAVE YOU IN A
BLINDFOLD? AND
WHAT ARE YOU DOING
WITH A SWORD?
WE SHOULD STICK YOU
IN GUANTANAMO!

GUILTY
INNOCENT
PROBENT

ORANT
EDWARDS/UNIVERSITY PRESS



Editorials

The yes man

It is amazing that in this land of liberty, a nominee for attorney general of the United States should be called upon to denounce the practice of torture. It's even more amazing that the author of legal briefs that allowed the government to circumvent its own laws and international treaties prohibiting torture, who has argued that the president has the power to suspend the constitutional rights of anyone he deems a terrorist, will be the next chief law enforcement officer of the United States.

But what is most amazing is that even after all these sickening revelations, complete with photos of the most graphic nature, the United States continues to torture people. And nobody can stop it. Who are we going to call? The attorney general?

He says it's not torture. And a man on the wrong end of a cattle prod is in no position to argue semantics that allow the president to say "the United States will never engage in torture," even as our soldiers hold men underwater at Guantanamo Bay or outsource our torture to Egypt or Jordan while our spies listen in over an open phone line.

These things are happening because our highest leaders have decided it is necessary to abandon 200 years of humane and enlightened legal principle to engage with an enemy that has thrown away the rule book. Torture is com-

mon practice across the Arab and Muslim world. Arab fighters expect to be tortured if captured. No doubt al-Qaida's leaders privately laugh at us for our squeamishness, even as they denounce us publicly for our cruelty. But if in the belief that the ends justify the means we lower ourselves to the level of our enemies, we become the evil we seek to defeat.

Mr. Gonzales' name, like Lynndie England's face, will be forever associated with torture. But he is just the yes man, a willing tool for men more powerful than himself. It is a role he has always played for George W. Bush. Governor Bush said, in essence: "Alberto, is it all right for me to kill these people on Death Row?" And Mr. Gonzales said "Yes, George." President Bush said "Alberto, find me a legal justification so our boys can do what they need to do to get the terrorists to talk." And Mr. Gonzales said "Yes, George."

There is no way this man should be the attorney general, but he will be, now that he has eaten his words about the Geneva Convention being "quaint and obsolete." He will be the man who ostensibly decides how the laws will be enforced. At some point, he will be nominated to the Supreme Court, where, if confirmed, he will continue to do his master's bidding. "Hey Alberto, what does the law say?"

"Yes, George."

Is no one accountable?

By Bob Herbert

NEW YORK

THE BUSH administration is desperately trying to keep the full story from emerging. But there is no longer any doubt that prisoners seized by the United States in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere have been killed, tortured, sexually humiliated and otherwise grotesquely abused.

These atrocities have been carried out in an atmosphere in which administration officials have routinely behaved as though they were above the law, and thus accountable to no one. People have been rounded up, stripped, shackled, beaten, incarcerated and in some cases killed, without being offered even the semblance of due process. No charges. No lawyers. No appeals.

Arkan Mohammed Ali is a 26-year-old Iraqi who was detained by the U.S. military for nearly a year at various locations, including the infamous Abu Ghraib prison. According to a lawsuit filed against Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Ali was at times beaten into unconsciousness during interrogations. He was stabbed, shocked with an electrical device, urinated on and kept locked — hooded and naked — in a wooden, coffinlike box. He said he was told by his captors that soldiers could kill detainees with impunity.

(This was not a boast from out of the blue. On Saturday, for example, The Times reported that the Army would not prosecute 17 American soldiers implicated in the deaths of three prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan.)

Ali's story is depressingly similar

to other accounts pouring in from detainees, human rights groups, intelligence sources and U.S. government investigators. If you pay close attention to what is already known about the sadistic and barbaric treatment of prisoners by the United States, you can begin to wonder how far we've come from the Middle Ages. The alleged heretics hauled before the Inquisition were not permitted to face their accusers or mount a defense. Innocence was irrelevant. Torture was the preferred method of obtaining confessions.

No charges were ever filed against Ali, and he was eventually released. But what should be of paramount concern to Americans is this country's precipitous and frightening descent into the hellish zone of lawlessness that the Bush administration, on the one hand, is trying to conceal and, on the other, is defending as absolutely essential to its fight against terror.

The lawsuit against Rumsfeld was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and Human Rights First, a New York-based group, on behalf of Ali and seven other former detainees from Iraq and Afghanistan who claim to have been tortured by U.S. personnel.

The suit charges that Rumsfeld personally authorized unlawful interrogation techniques and abdicated his responsibility to stop the torture and other abuses of prisoners in U.S. custody. It contends that the abuse of detainees was widespread and that Rumsfeld and other top administration officials were well aware of it.

According to the suit, it is unreasonable to believe that Rumsfeld

could have remained in the dark about the rampant mistreatment of prisoners in U.S. custody. It cites a wealth of evidence readily available to the secretary, including the scandalous eruptions at Abu Ghraib prison, the reports of detainee abuse at Guantanamo Bay, myriad newspaper and magazine articles, internal U.S. government reports, and concerns expressed by such reputable groups as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

(The committee has noted, among other things, that military intelligence estimates suggest that 70 percent to 90 percent of the people detained in Iraq had been seized by mistake.)

Whether this suit will ultimately be successful in holding Rumsfeld personally accountable is questionable. But if it is thoroughly argued in the courts, it will raise yet another curtain on the stomach-turning practices that have shamed the United States in the eyes of the world.

The primary aim of the lawsuit is quite simply to re-establish the rule of law. "It's that fundamental idea that nobody is above the law," said Michael Posner, executive director of Human Rights First. "The violations here were created by policies that deliberately undermined the rule of law. That needs to be challenged."

Lawlessness should never be an option for the United States. Once the rule of law has been extinguished, you're left with an environment in which moral degeneracy can flourish and a great nation can lose its soul.

The New York Times

Truth is much worse than fiction

By Paul Krugman

NEW YORK

I'VE BEEN thinking of writing a political novel. It will be a bad novel because there won't be any nuance: The villains won't just espouse an ideology I disagree with — they'll be hypocrites, cranks and scoundrels.

In my bad novel, a famous moralist who demanded national outrage over an affair and writes best-selling books about virtue will turn out to be hiding an expensive gambling habit. A talk radio host who advocates harsh penalties for drug violators will turn out to be hiding his own drug addiction.

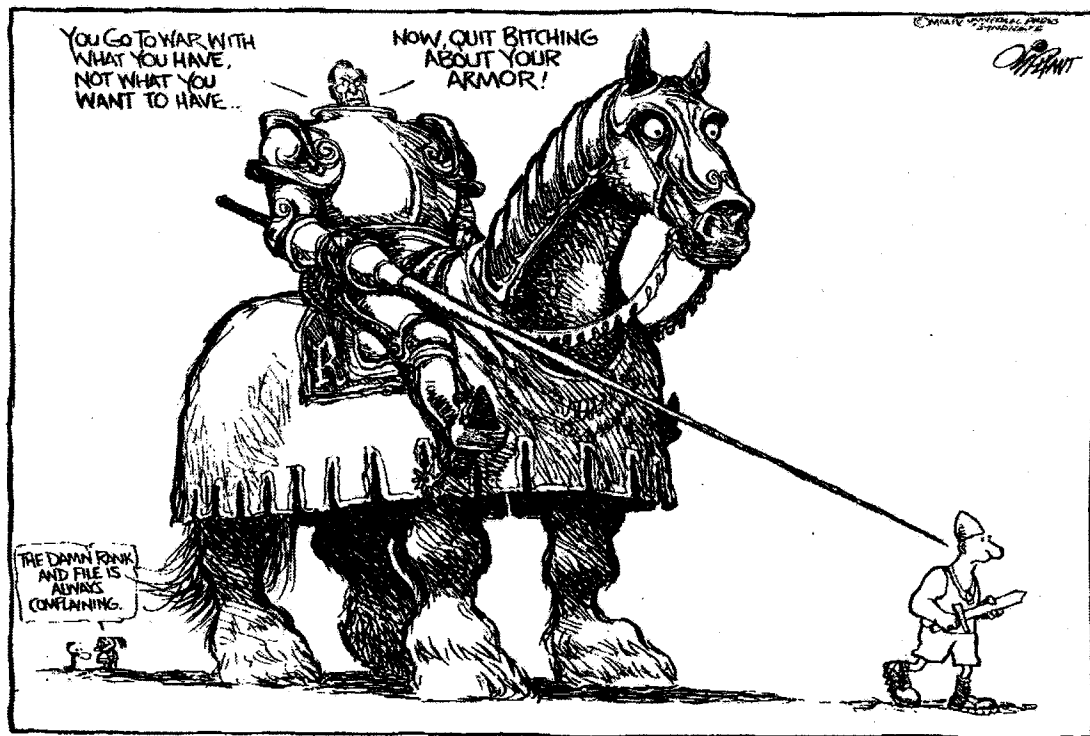
In my bad novel, crusaders for moral values will be driven by strange obsessions. One senator's diatribe against gay marriage will link it to "man on dog" sex. Another will rant about the dangers of lesbians in high school bathrooms.

In my bad novel, the president will choose as head of homeland security a "good man" who turns out to have been the subject of an arrest warrant, who turned an apartment set aside for rescue workers into his personal love nest and who stalked at least one of his ex-lovers.

In my bad novel, a TV personality who claims to stand up for regular Americans against the elite will pay a large settlement in a sexual harassment case, in which he used his position of power to — on second thought, that story is too embarrassing even for a bad novel.

In my bad novel, apologists for the administration will charge foreign policy critics with anti-Semitism. But they will be silent when a prominent conservative declares that "Hollywood is controlled by secular Jews who hate Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular."

In my bad novel the administration will use the slogan "support the troops" to suppress criticism of its war policy. But it will ignore repeated complaints that the troops lack armor.



The secretary of defense — another "good man," according to the president — won't even bother signing letters to the families of soldiers killed in action.

Last but not least, in my bad novel the president, who portrays himself as the defender of good against evil, will preside over the widespread use of torture.

How did we find ourselves living in a bad novel? It was not ever thus. Hypocrites, cranks and scoundrels have always been with us, on both sides of the aisle. But 9/11 created an environment some liberals summarize with the acronym IOKIYAR: It's OK if you're a Republican.

The public became unwilling to believe bad things about those who claim to be defending the nation against terrorism. And the hypocrites, cranks and scoundrels of the right, empowered by the public's credulity, have come out in unprecedented force.

Apologists for the administra-

The hypocrites, cranks and scoundrels of the right, empowered by the public's credulity, have come out in unprecedented force.

tion would like us to forget all about the Kerik affair, but Bernard Kerik perfectly symbolizes the times we live in. Like Rudolph Giuliani and, yes, President Bush, he wasn't a hero of 9/11, but he played one on TV. And like Giuliani, he was quick to cash in, literally, on his undeserved reputation.

Once the New York newspapers began digging, it became clear that Kerik is, professionally and personally, a real piece of work. But that's not unusual these days among people who successfully pass themselves off as patriots and

defenders of moral values. Kerik must still be wondering why he, unlike so many others, didn't get away with it.

And Alberto Gonzales must be hoping that senators don't bring up the subject.

The principal objection to making Gonzales attorney general is that doing so will tell the world that America thinks it's acceptable to torture people. But his confirmation will also be a statement about ethics.

As White House counsel, Gonzales was charged with vetting Kerik. He must have realized what kind of man he was dealing with — yet he declared Kerik fit to oversee homeland security.

Did Gonzales defer to the wishes of a president who wanted Kerik anyway, or did he decide that his boss wouldn't want to know? (The Nelson Report, a respected newsletter, reports that Bush has made it clear to his subordinates that he doesn't want to hear bad news about Iraq.)

Either way, when the Senate confirms Gonzales, it will mean that IOKIYAR remains in effect, that the basic rules of ethics don't apply to people aligned with the ruling party. And reality will continue to be worse than any fiction I could write.

Torture girls gone wild

By Maureen Dowd

WASHINGTON
BY THE time House Republicans were finished with him, Bill Clinton must have thought of a thong as a torture device.

For the Bush administration, it actually is.

A former U.S. Army sergeant who worked as an Arabic interpreter at Gitmo has written a book pulling back the veil on the astounding ways that female interrogators used a toxic combination of sex and religion to try to break Muslim detainees at the U.S. prison camp in Cuba. It's not merely disgusting. It's beyond belief.

The Bush administration never worries about anything. But these missionaries and zealous protectors of values should be worried about the American soul. The president never mentions Osama, but he continues to use 9/11 as an excuse for American policies that bend the rules and play to our worst instincts.

"I have really struggled with this because the detainees, their families and much of the world will think this is a religious war based on some of the techniques used, even though it is not the case," the former sergeant, Erik R. Saar, 29, told The Associated Press. The AP got a manuscript of his book, deemed classified pending a Pentagon review.

What good is it for President

Bush to speak respectfully of Islam and claim Iraq is not a religious war if the Pentagon denigrates Islamic law — allowing its female interrogators to try to make Muslim men talk in late-night sessions featuring sexual touching, displays of fake menstrual blood, and parading in miniskirt, tight T-shirt, bra and thong underwear?

It's like a bad porn movie, "The Geneva Monologues." All S and no M.

The AP noted that "some Guantanamo prisoners who have been released say they were tormented by 'prostitutes.'"

Saar writes about what he calls "disturbing" practices during his time in Gitmo from December 2002 to June 2003, including this anecdote related by Paisley Dodds, an AP reporter:

A female military interrogator who wanted to turn up the heat on a 21-year-old Saudi detainee who allegedly had taken flying lessons in Arizona before 9/11 removed her uniform top to expose a snug T-shirt. She began belittling the prisoner — who was praying with his eyes closed — as she touched her breasts, rubbed them against the Saudi's back and commented on his apparent erection.

After the prisoner spat in her face, she left the room to ask a Muslim linguist how she could

break the prisoner's reliance on God. The linguist suggested she tell the prisoner that she was menstruating, touch him, and then shut off the water in his cell so he couldn't wash.

"The concept was to make the detainee feel that after talking to her he was unclean and was unable to go before his God in prayer and gain strength," Saar recounted, adding: "She then started to place her hands in her pants as she walked behind the detainee. As she circled around him he could see that she was taking her hand out of her pants. When it became visible the detainee saw what appeared to be red blood on her hand. She said, 'Who sent you to Arizona?' He then glared at her with a piercing look of hatred. She then wiped the red ink on his face. He shouted at the top of his lungs, spat at her and lunged forward," breaking out of an ankle shackle.

"He began to cry like a baby," the author wrote, adding that the interrogator's parting shot was: "Have a fun night in your cell without any water to clean yourself."

A female civilian contractor kept her "uniform" — a thong and miniskirt — on the back of the door of an interrogation room, the author says.

Who are these women? Who allows this to happen? Why don't the officers who allow it get into trouble? Why do Rummy and Paul Wolfowitz still have their jobs?

The military did not deny the specifics, but said the prisoners were treated "humanely" and in a way consistent "with legal obligations prohibiting torture." However the Bush White House is redefining torture these days, the point is this: Such behavior degrades the women who are doing it, the men they are doing it to, and the country they are doing it for.

There's nothing wrong with trying to squeeze information out of detainees. But isn't it simply more effective to throw them in isolation and try to build some sort of relationship?

I doubt that the thong tease works as well on inmates at Gitmo as it did on Bill Clinton in the Oval Office.

Letters

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Bizarro



Army admits 27 died in custody

By Robert Burns
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Twenty-seven detainees were killed in U.S. custody in Iraq and Afghanistan in suspected or confirmed homicide cases between August 2002 and November 2004, the Army said yesterday in its first comprehensive accounting.

The Army Criminal Investigation Command said that in the 16 cases it has completed thus far, it found sufficient evidence to support a range of charges against 21 soldiers, including murder, negligent homicide and assault. It did not specify how many of the 21

had been charged.

Five of the 16 closed cases were referred to other agencies, including the case of an Iraqi who died at the Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad on Nov. 4, 2003. The cause of death was determined to be "blunt force trauma." No Army personnel were found to be involved; the Navy took the case and has court-martial charges against several Navy SEAL commandos and one sailor.

The CIA and Justice Department also are investigating that death.

There are 24 cases encompassing the 27 deaths. All but two of the 24 cases involved a single Iraqi

or Afghan death. One case involved two deaths and another involved three.

Of the eight Army criminal investigations that remain open, pending further leads and action, five of the cases involved incidents that occurred during raids or fire-fights or in other circumstances outside of a U.S.-operated detention facility.

Chris Grey, spokesman for the Criminal Investigation Command, said detailed information about the eight open cases is not being released "to protect the integrity of the investigations."

In two of the open cases, howev-

er, legal actions have begun against accused soldiers. One involves the death of an Iraqi major general in November 2003. Four soldiers from the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, based at Fort Carson, Colo., have been charged with murder and dereliction of duty.

Another of the open cases involves three separate killings in the Sadr City sector of Baghdad in August 2004, all involving soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division who allegedly shot the Iraqis during search operations. Two soldiers in these cases have pleaded guilty at courts-martial and charges against two other soldiers are pending courts-martial, the Army said.

In one of the Sadr City cases, two 1st Cavalry soldiers have been convicted of murder.

One is Staff Sgt. Johnny M. Horne, of Winston-Salem, N.C., who pleaded guilty Dec. 10, 2004 to killing a critically wounded 16-year-old Iraqi on Aug. 18, 2004. Horne described it as a mercy killing. He was sentenced to three years in prison, a reduction in rank

to private, total forfeiture of wages and a dishonorable discharge.

The other soldier convicted in the same killing was Staff Sgt. Cardenas J. Alban of Inglewood, Calif. He was convicted Jan. 14 and sentenced to one year in prison, a bad-conduct discharge from the Army and reduction in rank to private.

Another 1st Cavalry soldier faces charges of murder and obstruction of justice in the deaths of two other Iraqis who were killed while being detained during the same August 2004 operation in Sadr City. Still another soldier faces charges of murder and making a false statement in connection with one of those two deaths. The involvement of other soldiers is still under investigation.

Grey said 17 of the 24 total homicide cases happened in Iraq; the other seven were in Afghanistan.

"We take each and every death very seriously and are committed and sworn to investigating each case with the utmost professionalism and thoroughness," Grey said.



We can't remain silent

By Bob Herbert

NEW YORK

AT DINNER on a rainy night in Manhattan this week, I listened to a retired admiral and a retired general speak about the pain they've personally felt over the torture and abuse scandal that has spread like a virus through some sectors of the military.

During the dinner and in follow-up interviews, Rear Adm. John Hutson, who is now president of the Franklin Pierce Law Center in Concord, N.H., and Brig. Gen. James Cullen, a lawyer in private practice in New York, said they believed that both the war effort and the military itself have been seriously undermined by official policies that encouraged the abuse of prisoners.

Both men said they were unable to remain silent as institutions that they served loyally for decades, and which they continue to love without reservation, are being damaged by patterns of conduct that fly in the face of core values that most members of the military try mightily to uphold.

"At some point," said Cullen, "I had to say: 'Wait a minute. We cannot go along with this.'"

The two retired officers have lent their support to an extraordinary lawsuit that seeks to hold Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld ultimately accountable for policies that have given rise to torture and other forms of prisoner abuse. And last September they were among a group of eight retired admirals and generals who wrote a letter to President Bush urging him to create an independent 9/11-type commission to fully

The two retired officers have lent their support to a lawsuit that seeks to hold Rumsfeld accountable for policies that have given rise to torture and other forms of prisoner abuse.

investigate the problem of prisoner abuse from the top to the bottom of the command structure.

Hutson, who served as the Navy's judge advocate general from 1997 to 2000, said he felt sick the first time he saw the photos of soldiers abusing detainees at Abu Ghraib prison. "I felt like somebody in my family had died," he said.

The letter to President Bush emphasized the wide scope of the problem, noting that there were "dozens of well-documented allegations of torture, abuse and otherwise questionable detention practices" involving prisoners in U.S. custody. It said:

"These reports have implicated both U.S. military and intelligence agencies, ranging from junior enlisted members to senior command officials, as well as civilian contractors. No fewer than a hundred criminal, military and administrative inquiries have been launched into apparently improper or unlawful U.S. practices related to detention and interrogation. Given the range of individuals and

locations involved in these reports, it is simply no longer possible to view these allegations as a few instances of an isolated problem."

Hutson and Cullen have worked closely with a New York-based group, Human Rights First, which, along with the American Civil Liberties Union, filed the lawsuit against Rumsfeld. A report released this week by Human Rights First said that the number of detainees in U.S. custody in Iraq and Afghanistan has grown to more than 11,000, and that the level of secrecy surrounding U.S. detention operations has intensified.

Burgeoning detainee populations and increased secrecy are primary ingredients for more, not less, prisoner abuse.

One of the many concerns expressed by Hutson and Cullen was the effect of the torture and abuse scandal on members of the military who have had nothing to do with it. "I think it does stain the honor of people who didn't participate in it at all," said Hutson. "People in the military who find that kind of behavior abhorrent are painted with the same broad brush."

Cullen, who has served as chief judge of the Army's Court of Criminal Appeals, spoke in terms of grief. "You feel sorrow," he said, "because you know there are so many servicemen and women out there who want to do the right thing, who are doing tough jobs every day. And to see these events blacken their names and call into question their whole mission just makes me sad. Very, very sad."

The New York Times

Worse than an embarrassment

By Thomas L. Friedman

LONDON

SHUT IT DOWN. Just shut it down.

I am talking about the war-on-terrorism POW camp at Guantanamo Bay. Just shut it down and then plow it under. It has become worse than an embarrassment. I am convinced that more Americans are dying and will die if we keep the Gitmo prison open than if we shut it down. So, please, Mr. President, just shut it down.

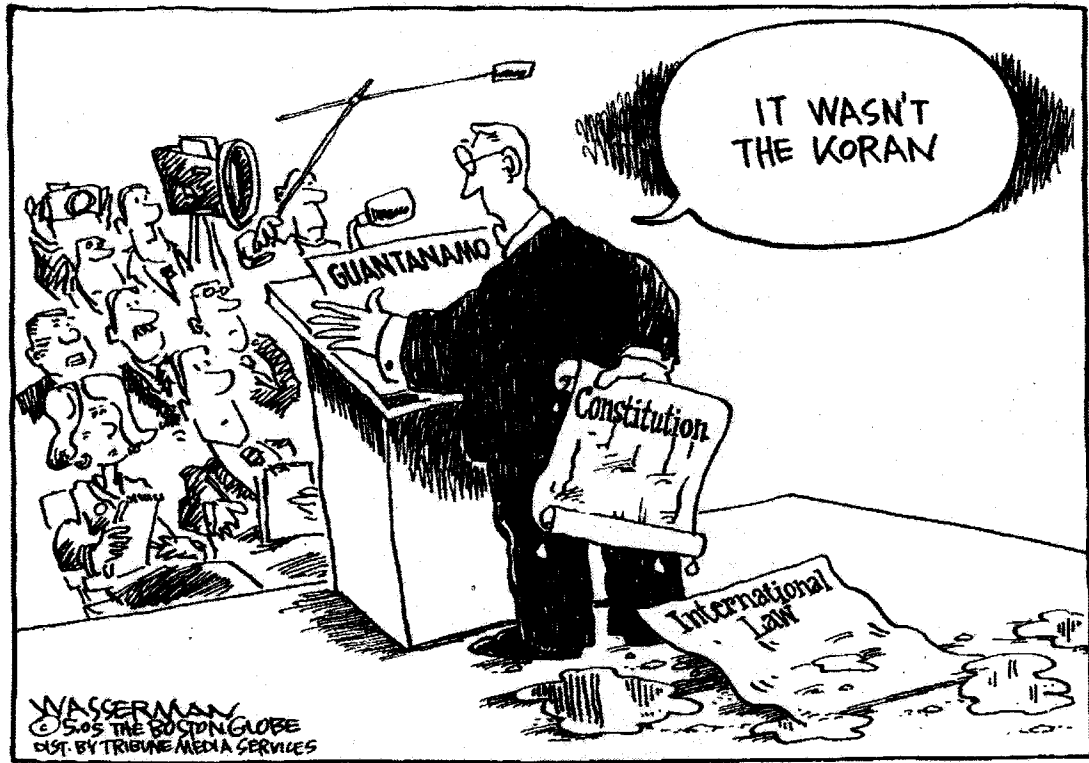
If you want to appreciate how corrosive Guantanamo has become for America's standing abroad, don't read the Arab press. Don't read the Pakistani press. Don't read the Afghan press. Hop over here to London or go online and just read the British press! See what our closest allies are saying about Gitmo. And when you get done with that, read the Australian press and the Canadian press and the German press.

It is all a variation on the theme of a May 8 article in The Observer of London that begins, "An American soldier has revealed shocking new details of abuse and sexual torture of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay in the first high-profile whistle-blowing account to emerge from inside the top-secret base." Google the words "Guantanamo Bay and Australia" and what comes up is an Australian ABC radio report that begins: "New claims have emerged that prisoners at Guantanamo Bay are being tortured by their American captors, and the claims say that Australians David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib are among the victims."

Just another day of the world talking about Guantanamo Bay.

Why care? It's not because I am queasy about the war on terrorism. It is because I want to win the war on terrorism. And it is now obvious from reports in my own paper and others that the abuse at Guantanamo and within the whole U.S. military prison system dealing with terrorism is out of control. Tell me, how is it that over 100 detainees have died in U.S. custody so far? Heart attacks? This is not just deeply immoral, it is strategically dangerous.

I can explain it best by analogy. For several years now I have argued that Israel needed to get out of the West Bank and Gaza, and behind a wall, as fast as possible. Not because the Palestinians are right and Israel wrong. It's because Israel today is surrounded



Guantanamo Bay is becoming the anti-Statue of Liberty.

by three large trends. The first is a huge population explosion happening all across the Arab world. The second is an explosion of the worst interpersonal violence between Israelis and Palestinians in the history of the conflict, which has only recently been defused by a cease-fire. And the third is an explosion of Arabic language multimedia outlets — from the Internet to al-Jazeera.

What was happening around Israel at the height of the intifada was that the Arab multimedia explosion was taking the images of that intifada explosion and feeding them to the Arab population explosion, melding in the minds of a new generation of Arabs and Muslims that their enemies were JIA — "Jews, Israel and America." That is an enormously toxic trend, and I hope Israel's withdrawal from Gaza will help deprive it of oxygen.

I believe the stories emerging from Guantanamo are having a similar toxic effect on us — inflaming sentiments against the

U.S. all over the world and providing recruitment energy on the Internet for those who would do us ill.

Husain Haqqani, a thoughtful Pakistani scholar now teaching at Boston University, remarked to me: "When people like myself say American values must be emulated and America is a bastion of freedom, we get Guantanamo Bay thrown in our faces. When we talk about the America of Jefferson and Hamilton, people back home say to us: 'That is not the America we are dealing with. We are dealing with the America of imprisonment without trial.'"

Guantanamo Bay is becoming the anti-Statue of Liberty. If we have a case to be made against any of the 500 or so inmates still in Guantanamo, then it is high time we put them on trial, convict as many possible (which will not be easy because of bungled interrogations) and then simply let the rest go home or to a third country. Sure, a few may come back to haunt us. But at least they won't be able to

take advantage of Guantanamo as an engine of recruitment to enlist thousands more. I would rather have a few more bad guys roaming the world than a whole new generation.

"This is not about being for or against the war," said Michael Posner, the executive director of Human Rights First, which is closely following this issue. "It is about doing it right. If we are going to transform the Middle East, we have to be law-abiding and uphold the values we want them to embrace — otherwise it is not going to work."

The New York Times

Quotes

I believe in family values
Seminole County Florida Republican Party Chairman Jim Stelling who has filed a defamation suit against another Republican who said he'd been married six times. It was only five.

They're cliqueish, they're arrogant, they get things wrong
Ana Marie Cox, the political blogger known as Wonkette, on political blogs, arguing that some have become like the big media they criticize.

Our own worst enemy

By Georgie Anne Geyer

WASHINGTON

WE HAVE entered a new phase of the Iraq war since the optimism following the Jan. 30 elections there, and the manifestations of the changes are everywhere.

Every American general who comes out of Baghdad now speaks only in words that are hesitant, relative, depressed. Here at home, the figures emerging from even the Pentagon are frightening: The Army and the Army National Guard are likely to meet only 75 percent of their recruiting targets in the next year.

Andrew Kohut of the Pew Research Center reported this week that disillusionment is setting in with the American people over Iraq. "We are seeing more and more saying, 'Get the troops out,'" he said this week. "They are getting the continuing portrait of an insurgency that just doesn't quit. Six months ago, 65 percent of Americans were saying the war could meet its goals; now only 46 percent are saying that." London's International Institute of Strategic Studies says American troops will be needed for six more years.

Yet, despite these surface indications of trouble ahead, the administration sticks stubbornly to its underlying thesis: Suicide bombers are religious zealots who must be defeated there, lest they attack us here. The logic has not budged an inch in two years: They are crazy and brutal Islamic fundamentalists, motivated by religious beliefs that would radicalize the entire Middle East were it not for us.

The problem now is that the rationalization for all the mistakes that led us into Iraq and keep us there is quite awfully turned on its head. According to ground-shak-

'The longer American troops remain in Iraq and in the Persian Gulf in general, the greater the risk of the next Sept. 11.'

ing analyses by two brilliant, non-ideological scholars, it is *our* military presence in the Middle East that is every day *creating* the suicide bombers — and will continue to do so unless and until we change our policies.

Robert A. Pape, associate professor of political science at the University of Chicago, has also been heading the Chicago Project on Suicide Terrorism. With a team of analysts, he has studied suicide terrorist bombers from Sri Lanka, where they began, to Israel-Palestine, to Lebanon, to Iraq. He has created a database — the first ever conceived — of every suicide bombing and attack around the globe from 1980 to 2003, and his findings are unequivocal.

First, he did not find the bombers to be fanatical or essentially unusual people — "Suicide terrorists' political aims, if not their methods, are often more mainstream than observers realize," he wrote in his recent book, "Dying to Win." "They generally reflect quite common, straightforward nationalist self-determination claims of their community."

Second, contrary to the beliefs of this administration, religion plays a very small role in their motivations. "Rather," Pape pointed out to me when we met recently at the University of Chicago, "what nearly all suicide terrorist attacks have in

common is a specific secular and strategic goal: to compel modern democracies to withdraw military forces from territory that the terrorists consider to be their homeland. Religion is rarely the root cause."

Third, the president's beloved idea that "regime change" and "democratization" will decrease suicide bombings and other related violence is fatally flawed. In fact, Pape says: "An attempt to transform Muslim societies through regime change is likely to dramatically increase the threat we face. The root cause of suicide terrorism is foreign occupation and the threat that foreign military presence poses to the local community's way of life.

"The stationing of tens of thousands of American combat troops on the Arabian Peninsula from 1990 to 2001 probably made al-Qaida suicide attacks against Americans ... from five to 20 times more likely. Hence, the longer American troops remain in Iraq and in the Persian Gulf in general, the greater the risk of the next Sept. 11."

Another scholar and analyst who has done outstanding and original work on suicide bombers is Washington's Dr. Rona M. Fields, clinical psychologist and sociologist, and author of "Martyrdom: The Psychology, Theology and Politics of Self-Sacrifice." After 35 years of research on terrorism in 11 different countries, she came to exactly the same conclusions.

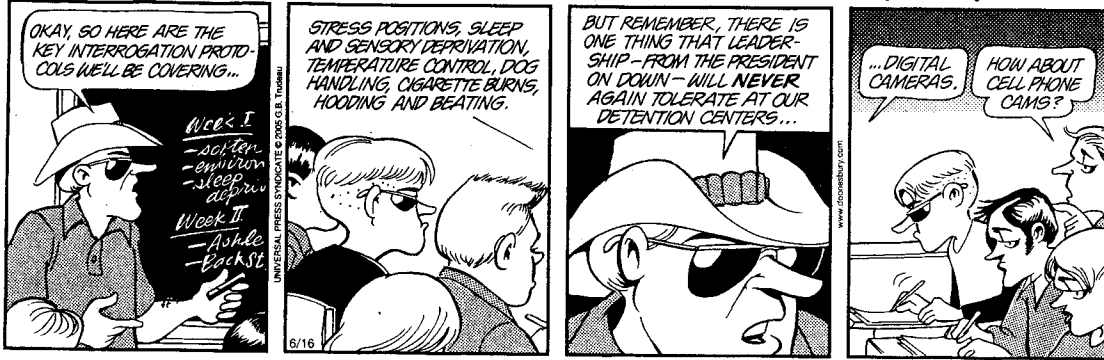
"The main thing is that terrorism is a choice people make," Fields told me. "It's not a sickness, and it's not religious as such. It's a choice they make when they feel that their group is threatened. It's a level of retributive justice; it's vendetta, not psychosis. In fact, the word 'martyrdom' was originally a Christian term, and the Muslims got the idea from intermingling with Christians."

If these findings are true — and they certainly ring true to me and to many who have worked in and covered the Middle East — then not only are we finding it treacherous going in Iraq, but every minute we stay there, perceived as invaders in a foreign land, we are perversely creating the dangerous and effective violence against us and the middle-ground Iraqis whom we depend upon. Odd, that our leaders cannot even begin to fathom this!



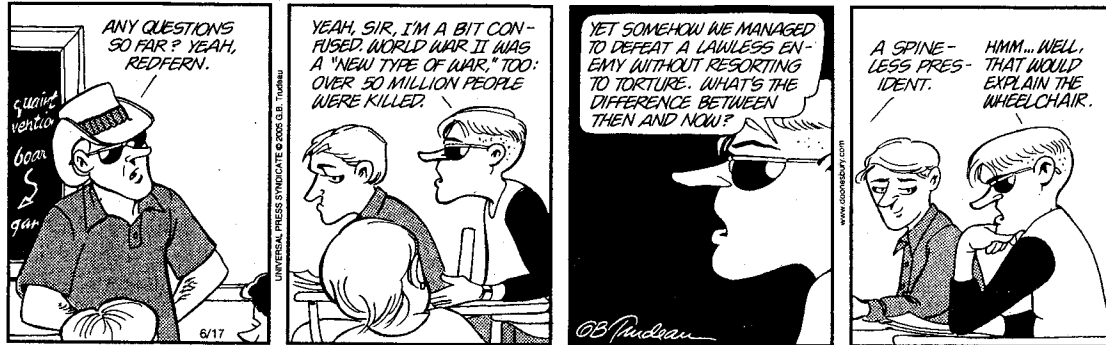
Doonesbury Flashback

By Garry Trudeau



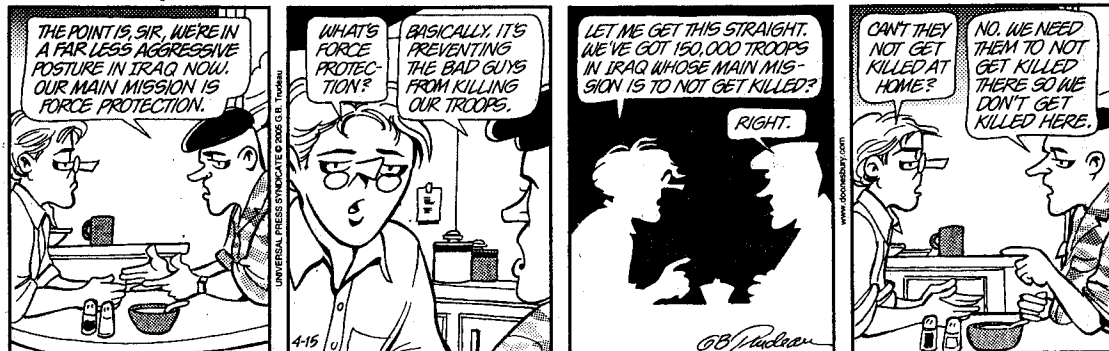
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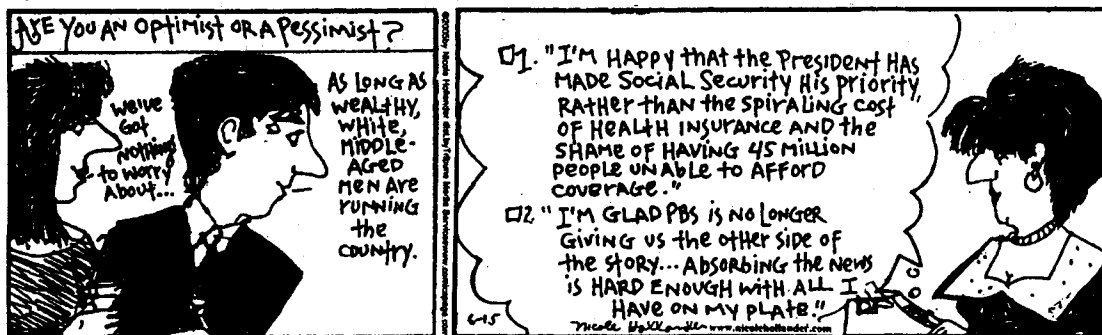
Doonesbury

By Garry Trudeau



Sylvia

By Nicole Hollander





The war president

By Paul Krugman

VIENNA
IN THIS former imperial capital, every square seems to contain a giant statue of a Habsburg on horseback, posing as a conquering hero.

America's founders knew all too well how war appeals to the vanity of rulers and their thirst for glory. That's why they took care to deny presidents the kingly privilege of making war at their own discretion.

But after 9/11 President Bush, with obvious relish, declared himself a "war president." And he kept the nation focused on martial matters by morphing the pursuit of al-Qaida into a war against Saddam Hussein.

In November 2002, Helen Thomas, the veteran White House correspondent, told an audience, "I have never covered a president who actually wanted to go to war" — but she made it clear that Bush was the exception. And she was right.

Leading the nation wrongfully into war strikes at the heart of democracy. It would have been an unprecedented abuse of power even if the war hadn't turned into a military and moral quagmire. And we won't be able to get out of that quagmire until we face up to the reality of how we got in.

Let me talk briefly about what we now know about the decision to invade Iraq, then focus on why it matters.

The administration has prevented any official inquiry into whether it hyped the case for war. But there's plenty of circumstantial evidence that it did.

And then there's the Downing Street Memo — actually the minutes of a prime minister's meeting in July 2002 — in which the chief of British overseas intelligence

Major media organizations still act as if only a small, left-wing fringe believes that we were misled into war, but that 'fringe' now comprises much if not most of the population.

briefed his colleagues about his recent trip to Washington.

"Bush wanted to remove Saddam," says the memo, "through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy." It doesn't get much clearer than that.

The U.S. news media largely ignored the memo for five weeks after it was released in The Times of London. Then some asserted that it was "old news" that Bush wanted war in the summer of 2002, and that WMD were just an excuse. No, it isn't. Media insiders may have suspected as much, but they didn't inform their readers, viewers and listeners. And they have never held Bush accountable for his repeated declarations that he viewed war as a last resort.

Still, some of my colleagues insist that we should let bygones be bygones. The question, they say, is what we do now. But they're wrong: It's crucial that those responsible for the war be held to account.

Let me explain. The United States will soon have to start reducing force levels in Iraq, or risk seeing the volunteer Army collapse. Yet the administration

and its supporters have effectively prevented any adult discussion of the need to get out.

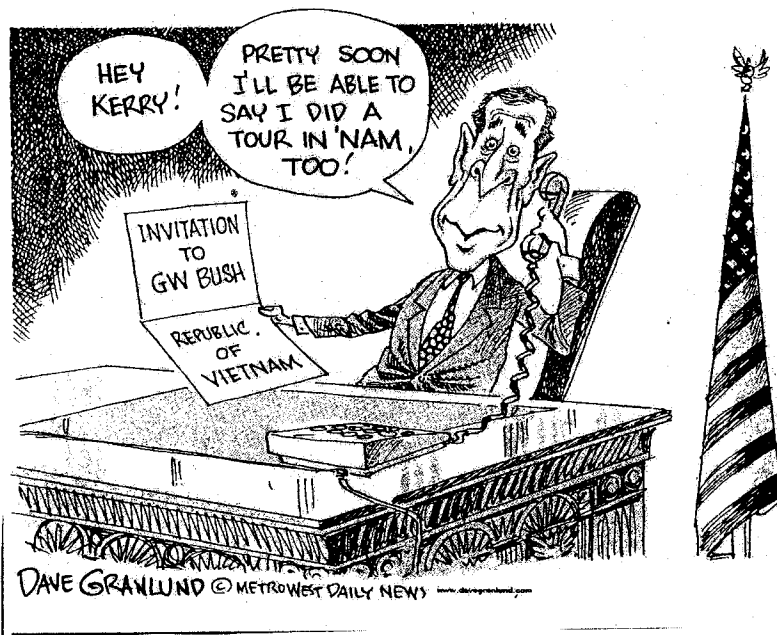
On one side, the people who sold this war, unable to face up to the fact that their fantasies of a splendid little war have led to disaster, are still peddling illusions: the insurgency is in its "last throes," says Dick Cheney. On the other, they still have moderates and even liberals intimidated: Anyone who suggests that the United States will have to settle for something that falls far short of victory is accused of being unpatriotic.

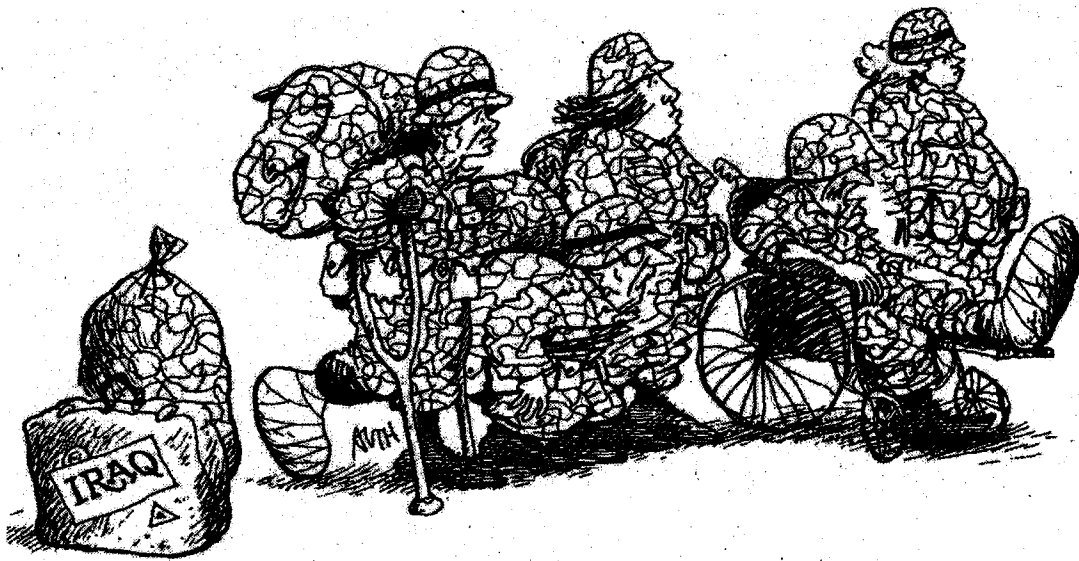
We need to deprive these people of their ability to mislead and intimidate. And the best way to do that is to make it clear that the people who led us to war on false pretenses have no credibility, and no right to lecture the rest of us about patriotism.

The good news is that the public seems ready to hear that message — readier than the media are to deliver it. Major media organizations still act as if only a small, left-wing fringe believes that we were misled into war, but that "fringe" now comprises much if not most of the population.

In a Gallup poll taken in early April — that is, before the release of the Downing Street Memo — 50 percent of those polled agreed with the proposition that the administration "deliberately misled the American public" about Iraq's WMD. In a new Rasmussen poll, 49 percent said that Bush was more responsible for the war than Saddam Hussein, versus 44 percent who blamed Saddam.

Once the media catch up with the public, we'll be able to start talking seriously about how to get out of Iraq.





THE READY-OR-NOT BRIGADE - THE BUSH RECYCLING PLAN

Not worth dying for

By Jay Bookman

ATLANTA
 LAST MONTH, Army recruiters fell 42 percent short of their goal, according to the Army Recruiting Command. They had hoped to sign up 6,600 volunteers; but despite bonuses of up to \$20,000 for those willing to report by May 30, they fell 2,779 recruits short.

Those numbers are ominous. If they continue in the months to come, as seems likely, they threaten not merely our ability to stick it out in Iraq, but also the Army's long-term ability to perform its duties worldwide. And the reason for that decline is obvious.

In April of 2003, around the first anniversary of the fall of Baghdad, 73 percent of Americans believed the war was worthwhile; only 23 percent did not, according to a CNN/Gallup poll. So recruiters had little trouble filling their quotas.

Today, though, only 41 percent of Americans believe the war was worthwhile, while 57 percent do not. And if Americans do not believe the war worthwhile, they're not likely to sign up to fight in it.

As a result, we now find ourselves in a very grim race. As former Pentagon comptroller Dov Zakheim described the situation in a recent panel discussion in Washington, "Will we become weary before the insurgents become weary?"

Or, as North Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh supposedly said:

"You will kill ten of our men, and we will kill one of yours, and in the end it will be you who will tire of it."

This is a bad situation. If we are

forced to leave Iraq before a stable government takes hold there, the consequences would be enormous, and our leaders understand that. Even now, despite the polls, it's striking that no major leader of either party has publicly suggested anything but sticking it out.

At some point, though, that's going to change. On an issue like this, the public eventually leads and the leaders will rush to follow. And if the public is growing increasingly disenchanted with this war, top-secret British documents recently leaked to the British press help explain why.

The primary document is an internal summary of a meeting held on July 23, 2002, by British Prime Minister Tony Blair and a handful of his top foreign policy, intelligence and military advisers. At that point, most Americans had no idea that a war with Iraq was even being considered, but apparently, Blair and President Bush had agreed to invade Iraq as far back as an April 2002 meeting in Crawford, Texas.

In the July meeting, Blair and his aides discussed the Americans' plan to create an international crisis around Iraq and its weapons of mass destruction. The idea was to set the stage for war by demanding that Saddam Hussein re-admit U.N. weapons inspectors; when Saddam refused, that would be the excuse to invade.

However, as British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw told Blair in that July meeting, "The case is thin. Saddam was not threatening his neighbors, and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya,

North Korea or Iran."

Blair was also told that the "most likely timing in U.S. minds for military action to begin was January, with the timeline beginning 30 days before the U.S. congressional elections."

That description is damning, indicating that the Bush administration cynically manipulated its war plans to create maximum political advantage for Republican congressional candidates.

The document's most devastating paragraph, however, summarizes a report by the head of British intelligence, known as "C." "C" has just returned from meetings in Washington, and he's telling Blair what he learned there:

"Bush wanted to remove Saddam through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD," "C" tells Blair. "But the intelligence and the facts were being fixed around the policy. ... There was little discussion in Washington of the aftermath after military action."

The intelligence was being fixed ... Little discussion of the aftermath. Amazing.

So yes, a nation can be fooled into war by its own leaders. We've learned that much. But unless that war is short and successful, there's a price to be paid.

In this case, what began as an optional war has morphed into a war of great importance. But now, when our leaders tell us that, fewer Americans believe them, and fewer still are willing to die for it.

Cox Newspapers



DANZIGER
NYTS/CWS May 20 2005 (2400)

Death followed by dishonor

By Derrick Z. Jackson

BOSTON MARY TILLMAN told The Washington Post, "If this is what happens when someone high profile dies, I can only imagine what happens with everyone else."

This was about the latest lie in the war on terrorizing the truth. The Washington Post recently reported that the Army did not tell the family of Pat Tillman that it knew for a month that Tillman was killed by friendly fire. Tillman was nationally known for exchanging the riches of the National Football League for the trenches of Afghanistan after the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

When Tillman was killed on April 22, 2004, the Pentagon first blamed enemy fire. The Army reported that Tillman "ordered his team to dismount and then maneuvered the Rangers up a hill near the enemy's location. As they crested the hill, Tillman directed his team into firing positions and personally provided suppressive fire ... Tillman's voice was heard issuing commands to take the fight to the enemy forces."

An Army investigation quickly determined that Tillman was killed by friendly fire. Central Command's General John Abizaid was informed of the findings by April 29, according to the Post's examination of 2,000 pages of reports.

Yet, on April 30, Abizaid gave a press briefing where he said, "While I was in Afghanistan yesterday I had the opportunity to talk to First Lieutenant Dave Hutman ... He was the platoon leader of Pat Tillman. I asked him

yesterday how operations were going. I asked him about Pat Tillman. He said, 'Pat Tillman was a great Ranger and a great soldier, and what more can I say about him?' ... I also probably bear some understanding that [the] lieutenant I was talking to ... was still nursing a large number of wounds that he sustained in that firefight where Pat Tillman lost his life."

On May 3, a memorial service was held for Tillman while the story was still that he was killed in an ambush.

Even allowing the possibility that Abizaid did not know the details exactly by April 29 (a possibility hard to believe given the Bush administration's war of mass deceit in that other war in Iraq), the Army said nothing until, ironically, May 29, on Memorial Day weekend. At that time, the commanding general of U.S. Army Special Operations, Philip Kensing, insisted, "The results of this investigation in no way diminish the bravery and sacrifice displayed by Corporal Tillman."

The bravery of the Army was another matter at a time when it needed no more bad news, with the prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib staining the United States. It turned out that once U.S. soldiers realized they accidentally had killed Tillman, some of them burned his uniform and body armor. Army investigator Brigadier General Gary Jones said that was destruction of evidence. The Post quoted soldiers in the documents as saying they weren't going to lie about the incident. "We knew at the time, based on taking the pictures and walking around, it

was a fratricide," a soldier said. "We knew in our hearts what had happened."

In the early weeks after their son's death, Tillman's parents, Mary and Patrick Sr., accepted the Army's explanations with a stiff upper lip. By the winter, as the story kept changing bit by bit, from friendly fire blamed on an enemy ambush to just botched, unprovoked friendly fire, the parents began to boil over. Patrick Tillman told the Post in December, "The investigation is a lie."

With the revelation that the Army knew almost immediately that their son died from friendly fire, the parents exploded in full fury this week in the Post. Mary Tillman said, "Pat had high ideals about the country. That's why he did what he did. The military let him down. The administration let him down. It was a sign of disrespect. The fact that he was the ultimate team player and he watched his own men kill him is absolutely heartbreaking and tragic. The fact that they lied about it afterward is disgusting."

Patrick Sr., said, "Maybe lying's not a big deal anymore." He also told the Post, "All the people in positions of authority went out of their way to script this. They purposely interfered with the investigation. They covered it up. I think they thought they could control it and they realized their recruiting efforts were going to hell in a handbasket if the truth about his death got out. They blew up their poster boy."

And the truth.

The Boston Globe

Time to get out of Iraq

By Paul Krugman

NEW YORK

IS THERE any point, now that November's election is behind us, in revisiting the history of the Iraq war? Yes: Any path out of the quagmire will be blocked by people who call their opponents weak on national security, and portray themselves as tough guys who will keep America safe. So it's important to understand how the tough guys made America weak.

There has been notably little U.S. coverage of the "Downing Street memo" — actually the minutes of a British prime minister's meeting on July 23, 2002, during which officials reported on talks with the Bush administration about Iraq. But the memo, which was leaked to *The Times* of London during the British election campaign, confirms what apologists for the war have always denied: The Bush administration cooked up a case for a war it wanted.

Here's a sample: "Military action was now seen as inevitable. Bush wanted to remove Saddam, through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy."

(You can read the whole thing at www.downingstreetmemo.com.)

Why did the administration want to invade Iraq, when, as the memo noted, "the case was thin" and Saddam's "WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea, or Iran"? Iraq was perceived as a soft target; a quick victory there, its domestic political advantages aside, could serve as a demonstration of American military might, one that would shock and awe the world.

But the Iraq war has, instead, demonstrated the limits of Amer-

The administration has declared victory in Iraq at least four times. January's election, it seems, was yet another turning point that wasn't.

ican power, and emboldened our potential enemies. Why should Kim Jong Il fear us, when we can't even secure the road from Baghdad to the airport?

At this point, the echoes of Vietnam are unmistakable. Reports from the recent offensive near the Syrian border sound just like those from a 1960s search-and-destroy mission, body count and all. Stories filed by reporters actually with the troops suggest that the insurgents, forewarned, mostly melted away, accepting battle only where and when they chose.

Meanwhile, America's strategic position is steadily deteriorating.

Next year, reports *Jane's Defense Industry*, the United States will spend as much on defense as the rest of the world combined. Yet the Pentagon now admits that our military is having severe trouble attracting recruits, and would have difficulty dealing with potential foes — those that, unlike Saddam's Iraq, might pose a real threat.

In other words, the people who got us into Iraq have done exactly what they falsely accused Bill Clinton of doing: They have stripped America of its capacity to respond to real threats.

So what's the plan?

The people who sold us this war

continue to insist that success is just around the corner, and that things would be fine if the media would just stop reporting bad news. But the administration has declared victory in Iraq at least four times. January's election, it seems, was yet another turning point that wasn't.

Yet it's very hard to discuss getting out. Even most of those who vehemently opposed the war say that we have to stay on in Iraq now that we're there.

In effect, America has been taken hostage. Nobody wants to take responsibility for the terrible scenes that will surely unfold if we leave (even though terrible scenes are unfolding while we're there). Nobody wants to tell the grieving parents of American soldiers that their children died in vain. And nobody wants to be accused, by an administration always ready to impugn other people's patriotism, of stabbing the troops in the back.

But the American military isn't just bogged down in Iraq; it's deteriorating under the strain. We may already be in real danger: What threats, exactly, can we make against the North Koreans? That John Bolton will yell at them? And every year that the war goes on, our military gets weaker.

So we need to get beyond the clichés — please, no more "pottery barn principles" or "staying the course." I'm not advocating an immediate pullout, but we have to tell the Iraqi government that our stay is time-limited, and that it has to find a way to take care of itself. The point is that something has to give. We either need a much bigger army — which means a draft — or we need to find a way out of Iraq.

The New York Times

Looking in on a parallel universe

By Robert Kuttner

BOSTON

SOMEWHERE, IN a parallel universe, real leaders in a country very much like our own are dealing with real problems. Imagine what America might be like if our top officials were addressing the genuine challenges that confront us.

Domestically, the president might have responded to the 9/11 attacks by calling for equality of sacrifice, as presidents have done in every other wartime emergency. Instead, our president pushed through a succession of upscale tax cuts and urged people to go out and shop.

In the parallel universe, the American leader is serious about securing our country. Here, it fell to the opposition party to demand that something as basic as airline security not be left to private, minimum-wage contractors. Nearly three years after 9/11, America's ports and other vital infrastructure are still sitting ducks.

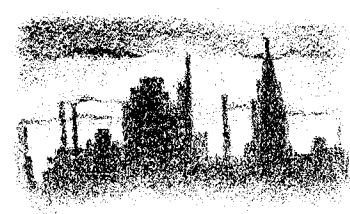
While the Department of Homeland Security played Keystone Kops with color-coded alerts that seemed suspiciously timed to alarm the public in an election year, the different agencies that were merged into the DHS are still working on how to communicate with each other.

In that other universe, the American president surely would have enlisted America's allies to combat terrorism. Had war between America and Iraq come, it would have come with the full participation of the world community, so that Iraq's reconstruction and the burden of keeping it secure would have been broadly shared, instead of falling upon American taxpayers and American G.I.'s.

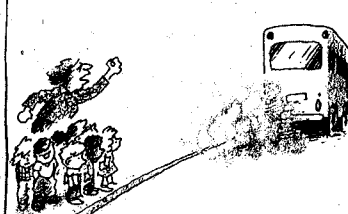
One can imagine a whole to-do

Robert Kuttner is co-editor of The American Prospect.

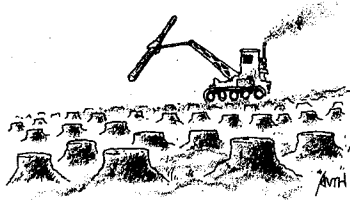
5-4-05 THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, AMERICAN PRESS ARCHIVE



CLEAR SKIES



NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND



HEALTHY FORESTS



PROGRESSIVE INDEXING

list that would be the president's national priorities.

* **Repairing American democracy.** American citizens still have no assurances that their votes will be accurately counted. Big money is crowding out citizen participation in politics more grotesquely than ever. More ominously, our ability to decide to rise up and throw the rascals out is being eroded by partisan trickery.

* **Fixing our retirement system.** Corporate pension funds have been allowed to become dangerously under-funded. The public Social Security system will need an overhaul to match it to longer life-spans. In our parallel universe, both parties would work together to make the necessary, fairly minor, adjustments. In this universe, the ideological goal of privatizing the system blocks fixing it.

* **Keeping America healthy.** Our present system, which wastes at least 25 percent of all premium dollars on paper-shuffling, claims processing, and profit, hurts doc-

tors and patients, the insured and the uninsured alike. An administration of grown-ups would get serious about getting everyone covered, preserving free choice of doctor and hospital, and getting rid of parasitic middlemen.

* **Dealing with global climate change.** With serious people running the country, nothing would be a higher priority, because global warming will irrevocably change the planet for the worse. In that parallel universe, leaders are investing seriously in clean, carbon-free energy. Here, our leaders and their oil company brethren are in drill-deeper denial.

* **Saving the economy.** In our imaginary parallel universe, leaders are reversing the huge dependence of the United States on foreign borrowing, and the endless public deficits that are starving public services. Here, starving public services is a deliberate ideological strategy. Leaders make dire threats against China one moment, and gratefully accept its loans the next. Meanwhile, Amer-

In a decade, historians will ponder how the American people could have re-elected a president who lives in a fantasy world, and who is doing such damage to the real world.

ica jobs continue to flow outward to nations with peon wages, while the administration's corporate allies cheer.

* **Using science to the fullest.** In a generation, scientific advances could prevent or cure most of the scourges that ravage Africa, as well as diseases amenable to stem-cell breakthroughs, such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, ALS; and viral plagues such as AIDS. In that parallel America, leaders are providing the funding for public research, being generous with help to Africa, and wrestling with genuine ethical dilemmas such as the limits of cloning. In this universe, while real menaces like Avian Flu are on our doorstep, religious fundamentalists and drug companies are dictating science policy.

In a decade, historians will ponder how the American people could possibly have re-elected a president who lives in a fantasy world, and who is doing such damage to the real world.

The poet e. e. cummings wrote, at end of a fine poem lamenting the condition of humankind, "Listen, there's a hell of a good universe next door. Let's go."

We, alas, don't have that option. We have to bring sanity to the nightmare world we are living in.

US Dead in Iraq Toll Over 1600



Breaking the Army

By Paul Krugman

NEW YORK ONE OF the more bizarre aspects of the Iraq war has been President Bush's repeated insistence that his generals tell him they have enough troops. Even more bizarrely, it may be true — I mean, that his generals tell him that they have enough troops, not that they actually have enough. An article in Sunday's Baltimore Sun explains why.

The article tells the tale of John Riggs, a former Army commander, who "publicly contradicted Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld by arguing that the Army was overstretched in Iraq and Afghanistan" — then abruptly found himself forced into retirement at a reduced rank, which normally only happens as a result of a major scandal.

The truth, of course, is that there aren't nearly enough troops. "Basically, we've got all the toys, but not enough boys," a Marine major in Anbar Province told The Los Angeles Times.

Yet it's also true, in a different sense, that we have too many troops in Iraq.

Back in September 2003 a report by the Congressional Budget Office concluded that the size of the U.S. force in Iraq would have to start shrinking rapidly in the

spring of 2004 if the Army wanted to "maintain training and readiness levels, limit family separation and involuntary mobilization, and retain high-quality personnel."

Let me put that in plainer English: Our all-volunteer military is based on an implicit promise that those who serve their country in times of danger will also be able to get on with their lives. Full-time soldiers expect to spend enough time at home base to keep their marriages alive and see their children growing up. Reservists expect to be called up infrequently enough, and for short enough tours of duty, that they can hold on to their civilian jobs.

To keep that promise, the Army has learned that it needs to follow certain rules, such as not deploying more than a third of the full-time forces overseas except during emergencies. The budget office analysis was based on those rules.

But the Bush administration, which was ready neither to look for a way out of Iraq nor to admit that staying there would require a much bigger Army, simply threw out the rulebook.

Two things make the burden of repeated deployments even harder to bear. One is the intensity of the conflict. In Slate, Phillip Carter and Owen West, who adjusted casualty

figures to take account of force size and improvements in battlefield medicine (which allow more of the severely wounded to survive), concluded that "infantry duty in Iraq circa 2004 comes out just as intense as infantry duty in Vietnam circa 1966."

The other is the way in which the administration cuts corners when it comes to supporting the troops. From their foot-dragging on armoring Humvees to their apparent policy of denying long-term disability payments to as many of the wounded as possible, officials seem almost pathologically determined to nickel-and-dime those who put their lives on the line for their country.

Reporting has focused on the problems of recruiting, which has fallen far short of goals over the past few months. Serious as it is, however, the recruiting shortfall could be only a temporary problem. Much more serious, because it would be irreversible, would be a mass exodus of mid-career military professionals.

For a generation Americans have depended on a superb volunteer Army to keep us safe — both from our enemies, and from the prospect of a draft. What will we do once that Army is broken?

The New York Times

This Lively World

White House's business is everyone's business

By Milton Bass

RICHMOND
MY WIFE celebrated the 50th reunion of her graduation from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, last week with a gaggle of her fellow alumni and me. The committee asked her to co-chair a seminar on "The Media: Too Much, Too Little, or Just Right." Her co-chair was a woman with whom she attended Columbia Journalism School, a veteran editorial writer and columnist for the Portland Press-Herald. The session drew about 75 of their classmates and spouses and was lively from beginning to end.

Both speakers gave brief, accurate rundowns on the state of the media in this country, and the questions and answers were informative on the state of mind of the nation and the problems we are facing now and in the future. This was obviously a group of seniors who were well-educated to begin with and who have kept themselves informed about the state of the nation and what might happen to their children and grandchildren in the future.

One man, however, stood apart from the discussions that were

Milton Bass is a regular Eagle contributor.

One hundred and thirty-eight of our troops had been killed when President Bush said that major combat operations were over on May 1, 2003. We now have 1,701 dead as of June 13, 2005, and no real end in sight.

occurring about him, and stood up more than once to vent his spleen about the treasonable actions of the "liberal press." He was especially disturbed about the reporting of the Washington Post, which was the paper of record for the area in which he lives. He felt their reporting was disloyal to the nation.

"Every time a U.S. soldier is killed or wounded," he stated, "the Washington Post reports it. This is bad for the morale of the troops who are fighting the war and gives comfort to the enemy." There was a pause of several seconds in the proceedings as the assemblage

tried to digest his remarks and figure out his point of view.

Did this man mean that casualty figures should be kept secret, we wondered. Did this man want us to be kept in complete ignorance about the true state of conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan and to hear only what the government chooses to tell us? Did this man have such faith in his president and the Pentagon that he wanted to be kept in a state of blissful ignorance until they told him how the whole thing worked out? The silence was awkward for a few moments and then the two speakers subtly switched the topics to other areas as other questions were forthcoming.

I sat there looking at the man for the rest of the seminar, gazing intently at his face as if there might be some telltale sign that would indicate to me how his mind worked. The Bush administration decided early on in the Afghanistan and Iraq interventions that casualties would be downplayed to the ultimate degree. Bodies would be returned to this country in the dead of night and there would be no pictures of mass transfers for individual internment in various parts of our country. Even though

the mission had a long way to go, perhaps indefinitely, "Mission Accomplished" had been proclaimed and the world was officially declared better off than it had been before.

When the seminar finished, I almost went over to the man to ask him to explain his theory of a costless war. He had obviously voted for George Bush and Dick Cheney and believes what they tell him. Bush has stated that we have won the war and now our forces are dealing with soreheads. Cheney says that the havoc they are raising is "the last throes" and proves that we have won the so-called war.

Remember the old joke about the manager in the corner telling his fighter that they are winning the fight and the opponent is not even getting a glove on him. "Then you better check on that referee," said the fighter, "because someone is beating the hell out of me." One hundred and thirty-eight of our troops had been killed when President Bush said that major combat operations were over on May 1, 2003. We now have 1,701 dead as of June 13, 2005, and no real end in sight. We have also had 12,000 soldiers seriously wounded. We reportedly have

killed something like 100,000 Iraqi citizens since the start of the war, and the insurgents have killed 12,000 Iraqis in the past 18 months.

And last week a few conservative Republican congressmen started calling for a deadline to pull our troops from Iraq. They have been reading the polls in which 60 percent of Americans have a negative view of the war and only 14 percent have a positive view. The president has three more years in office no matter what, but congressmen have to run for their jobs every two years and they are not optimistic about this country's present state of mind.

It is one thing for the leaders of this country to talk so tough and declare we don't need allies to accomplish what we want and that things are going just fine in the first place. It is quite another to face the realities of death and disabilities and the fact that our international "friends" don't pick up the phone when the I.D. gizmo tells them who is calling.

I wish the Washington Post would mind its own business. On second thought, that's exactly what it's doing.

Time to go from neocon to geo-green

By Thomas L. Friedman

DAVOS, Switzerland

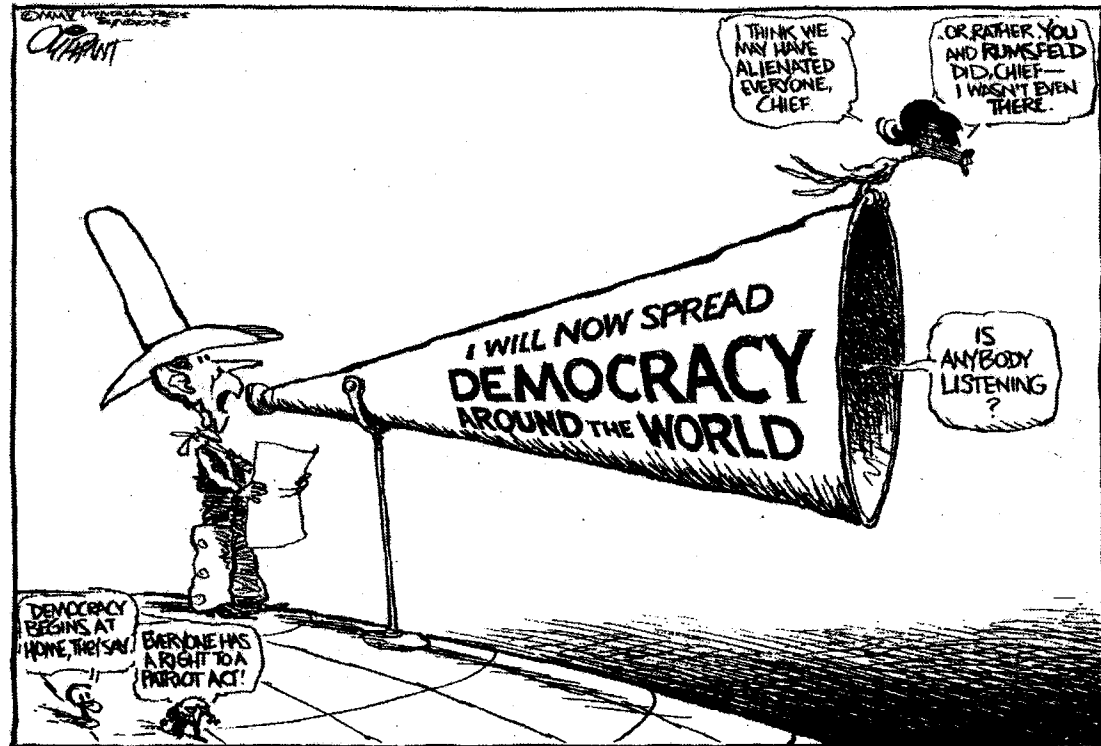
ONE OF the most striking things I've found in Europe these past two weeks is the absolute conviction that the Bush team is just itching to invade Iran to prevent it from developing nuclear weapons. Psssssst. Come over here. A little closer. Now listen: Don't tell the Iranians this, but the Bush team isn't going to be invading anybody. We don't have enough troops to finish the job in Iraq. Our military budget is completely maxed out. We couldn't invade Grenada today. If Iran is to forgo developing nuclear weapons, it will only be because the Europeans' diplomatic approach manages to persuade Tehran to do so.

For two years the Europeans have been telling the Bush administration that its use of force to prevent states from developing nuclear weapons has been a failure in Iraq and that the Europeans have a better way — multilateral diplomacy using carrots and sticks. Well, Europe, as we say in American baseball, "You're up."

"I think this is an absolute test case for Europe's ability to lay out its own idea for a joint agenda with the United States to deal with a problem like Iran," said the Oxford historian Timothy Garton Ash, author of "Free World: America, Europe and the Surprising Future of the West." "OK, we think bombing Iran is a bad idea. What is a good idea?"

For the Europeans to be successful, though, Ash said, they can't just be offering carrots. They have to credibly convey to Iran that they will wield their own stick. They have to credibly convey that they will refer Iran to the U.N. Security Council for real sanctions, if it is unwilling to strike a deal involving nuclear inspections in return for normalized economic relations with the West.

"Very often there is the notion that Europe is the soft cop and the U.S. is the hard cop," Ash said. "Here it must be the other way around. Europe has to talk as credibly about using economic sanctions as some in Washington have



talked about using military force."

The United States has to help. The carrot the Iranians want for abandoning their nuclear program is not just unfettered trade with the West, but some kind of assurances that if they give up their nuclear research programs, the United States will agree to some kind of nonaggression accord. The Bush team has been reluctant to do this, because it wants regime change in Iran. (This is a mistake; we need to concentrate for now on changing the behavior of the Iranian regime and strengthening the reformers, and letting them handle the regime change.)

If multilateral diplomacy is to work to defuse the brewing Iran nuclear crisis, "the Europeans have to offer a more credible stick and the Americans need to offer a more credible carrot," Ash said. But the Europeans are not good at credibly threatening force.

That's why this is a serious moment. If Britain, France and Germany, which are spearheading Europe's negotiations with Iran, fail, and if the U.S. use of force in Iraq (even if it succeeds) proves

The Bush team isn't going to invade Iran. We don't have enough troops to finish the job in Iraq. Our military budget is maxed out. We couldn't invade Grenada.

way too messy, expensive and dangerous to be repeated anytime soon, where are we? Is there any other way the West can promote real reform in the Arab-Muslim world?

Yes, there is an alternative to the Euro-wimps and the neocons, and it is the "geo-greens." I am a geo-green. The geo-greens believe that, going forward, if we put all our focus on reducing the price of oil — by conservation, by developing renewable and alternative energies and by expanding nuclear power — we will force more reform than by any other strategy.

You give me \$18-a-barrel oil and I will give you political and economic reform from Algeria to Iran. All these regimes have huge population bubbles and too few jobs. They make up the gap with oil revenues. Shrink the oil revenue and they will have to open up their economies and their schools and liberate their women so that their people can compete. It is that simple.

By refusing to rein in U.S. energy consumption, the Bush team is not only depriving itself of the most effective lever for promoting internally driven reform in the Middle East, it is also depriving itself of any military option. As Richard Haass, president of the Council on Foreign Relations, points out, given today's tight oil market and current U.S. consumption patterns, any kind of U.S. strike on Iran, one of the world's major oil producers, would send the price of oil through the roof, causing real problems for our economy. "Our own energy policy has tied our hands," Haass said.

The Bush team's laudable desire to promote sustained reform in the Middle East will never succeed unless it moves from neocon to geo-green.



Are lifetime incomes growing more unequal? Looking at new evidence on family income mobility

By Katharine Bradbury and Jane Katz

THE UNITED STATES HAS ALWAYS taken great pride in its reputation as a land of opportunity, a place where people have a chance to move up instead of being trapped where they start. But is this really the case? Can families who start at the bottom move up, or are most of them mired at the lower end of the income scale? Is the only way to reach the top to start there? These questions go to the heart of our identity as a nation as well as to our social and economic health.

Whether we still deserve our reputation has been called into question in light of the fact that over the last thirty years, Americans' household incomes have become increasingly unequal (see chart). In the early 1970s, the change was small; but by the late 1970s, the growing disparity between rich and poor was clearly evident. The difference grew even larger in the 1980s and continued to increase into the 1990s. In 1969, the richest one-fifth of households had about 10 times as much income, on average, as the poorest households; by 1998, the figure was almost 14 times. This increasing disparity was a significant reversal of the U.S. experience between 1950 and 1970, when rapid economic growth occurred along with a decrease in the difference between the incomes of the rich and poor. Moreover, the pattern stands virtually undisputed among researchers. No matter what data are used, whether looking at individuals or families, incomes in the United States have become increasingly unequal over the past quarter-century.

SHOULD WE CARE?

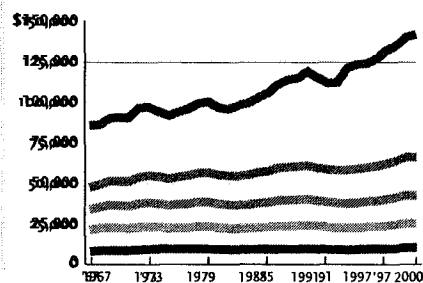
Is growing inequality a significant problem? Should the government support policies to do anything about it? These are bigger questions that provoke far greater debate. That debate centers on whether the increased inequality of year-by-year incomes tells us anything about the distribution of success and opportunity over longer time periods.

To see why, imagine two economies. Both show the pattern of increasing inequality noted above, but they differ in how that inequality falls on individual families over time.

In the first economy, the range of incomes is wide every year simply due to luck. Some people might have unexpected medical problems and lose paid time at work, while others win the lottery. Or perhaps one part of the country has unusually bad weather causing local crops to fail, while another enjoys ideal growing conditions for local produce. In any case, this random luck causes a number of families to experience unusually low or high incomes that year. Next year, other people or regions will have the good and bad luck and receive high or low incomes; the rest return to the *status quo*. Although incomes may be quite unequal in any given year, families in this economy will experience a fair amount of mobility year to year as their incomes bounce

A dramatic rise in inequality . . .

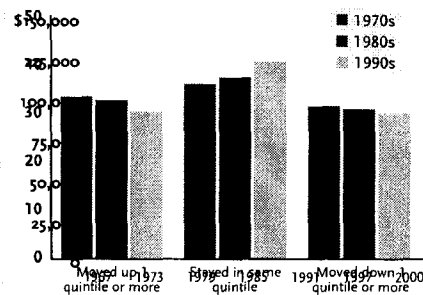
MEAN REAL INCOME FOR EACH QUINTILE OF U.S. HOUSEHOLDS



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau

. . . has not been offset by an increase in mobility

PERCENT OF ALL FAMILIES



SOURCE: Authors' calculations from data collected by the Panel Study of Income Dynamics

up and down along with the good and bad luck. Even if inequality is increasing over time, families at the bottom still have a shot at the middle and top each year as their luck changes. Over the long haul, the good and bad years for any particular family tend to cancel out, and all families have roughly equal lifetime incomes.

The second economy also has a wide spread of incomes; however, rather than being distributed randomly every year, the differences in incomes are persistent. Families at the top stay at the top, those in the middle stay in the middle, and those at the bottom stay at the bottom. That is, families experience no mobility relative to other families. This might occur because society enforces a class or caste system or because certain families or groups are discriminated against. Or it might be that individuals differ along some key dimensions that help to determine their family income—talent, willingness to work hard, access to a high-quality education or a good job—and those differences tend

to persist. In this economy, if inequality is increasing over time, families at the top will enjoy both large and growing advantages over those at the bottom, and those at the bottom will be increasingly worse off and have no prospect of moving up.

This exercise suggests that how much attention inequality deserves from voters and policymakers depends, in part, upon whether inequality reflects short-run difficulties that families will get through or longer-term hardships that trap some at the bottom. And that determination depends, in turn, upon how much mobility—year-to-year shifts in position along the income scale—is also occurring. If increasing inequality, such as that experienced in the United States since the early 1970s, is not accompanied by increasing mobility, the short-run dispersion in incomes will tend to accumulate and lifetime incomes will grow increasing unequal. Some argue that a growing gap between the top and bottom is not a problem so long as everyone's income is rising in real terms. But to the extent that we judge our well-being by comparison with others, then the widening inequality of lifetime incomes may indeed threaten our standing as a "land of opportunity."

HAS MOBILITY INCREASED?

To answer this question, we need to know how individual families' incomes change over time; the Panel Study of Income Dynamics collects such information. Using their data on working-age households, we find no evidence of an increase in family income mobility since the 1970s. Consistent with earlier studies, we find that mobility held more or less constant from the 1970s to the 1980s. Based on newly available data from the 1990s, we estimate that mobility *decreased* slightly in the 1990s.

Looking at the 1970s, the movement of families up and down the income ladder seems unlikely to have been produced by chance. If we rank families from poorest to richest and divide them into five equal-sized groups (quintiles), we find that about half of all families in the poorest quintile at the beginning of the decade were still in the poorest quintile 10 years later; only about one-quarter of these families made it past the bottom two quintiles (see tables). Rich families also tended to stay put—about half of families that started in the top quintile ended there.

Mobility patterns during the 1980s appear very similar to the 1970s. About 33 percent of all families moved up one quin-

Measures of mobility

Income mobility can be measured only by following the same families over time. Income inequality is measured using a different sample each year.

Mobility can be defined in either absolute or relative terms. Tracking the movement of families across a fixed threshold (updated for inflation) measures absolute mobility. Absolute mobility measures do not change with changes in the shape of the income distribution. Thus, they furnish an absolute target against which we can measure progress—for example when evaluating policies that seek to raise income or consumption above some purchasing-power level such as the federal poverty line.

Tracking the location of families across quintiles (or any percentile) measures relative mobility since it follows the movement of each family up or down the income ladder relative to other families. This is useful since most people judge their well-being relative to others and because participation in society depends partly on having access to the goods and services that others have. Relative measures also tell us about the degree to which each family's place in the income distribution is permanent or transitory.

Up and down the income ladder

tile or more between 1969 and 1979; during the 1980s, the figure is 32 percent (see bar chart). Downward mobility was about the same in both decades. Although mobility would need to *increase* over time to offset the impact of increasing inequality on lifetime incomes, our calculations suggest that mobility was about the same.

In the 1990s, however, mobility declined noticeably. About 53 percent of families that began the decade in the poorest quintile were still there ten years later (see lower table), several percentage points higher than before. Families in the richest quintile were also more likely to remain there than previously.

Overall, about 40 percent of families ended the 1990s where they began, as compared with 36 and 37 percent in the 1970s and 1980s, respectively. While some hoped that increased mobility had offset the increased inequality in the 1980s and 1990s, these data provide no evidence of such an offsetting role. Rather, we find a slight decrease in mobility, which suggests that the lifetime incomes of rich and poor families have indeed grown more unequal.

SHRINKING OPPORTUNITY?

These findings suggest that those who are concerned about the future for families at the lower rungs of the income ladder may have cause to worry. Compared to 30 years ago, families at the bottom are poorer relative to families at the top and also a bit more stuck there. Mobility alone has not and is not likely to counteract the hardships caused by increasing inequality. Instead, we might want to look more seriously at policies to even up and improve the possibilities for those at the bottom in order to maintain our standing as a land of opportunity. *

THE AUTHORS' ARTICLE, "WOMEN'S LABOR MARKET INVOLVEMENT AND FAMILY INCOME MOBILITY WHEN MARRIAGES END," APPEARS IN THE *NEW ENGLAND ECONOMIC REVIEW*, Q4 2002.

Mobility tables are a way of displaying where families start and end in the income distribution over a period of time. The upper table, for example, which displays outcomes for the 1970s, reveals that 49 percent (upper left corner) of all families who had incomes in the lowest 20 percent—or lowest quintile—at the beginning of the decade were still in the lowest quintile 10 years later, while only 3 percent (upper right corner) made it to the richest quintile.

1969-79 DECADE

WHERE FAMILIES STARTED IN 1969, BY QUINTILE	WHERE FAMILIES ENDED UP IN 1979, BY QUINTILE				
	POOREST	SECOND	THIRD	FOURTH	RICHEST
Poorest	49.4	24.5	13.8	9.1	3.3
Second	23.2	27.8	25.2	16.2	7.7
Third	10.2	23.4	24.8	23.0	18.7
Fourth	9.9	15.0	24.1	27.4	23.7
Richest	5.0	9.0	13.2	23.7	49.1

Percentages sum to 100 across rows

made it to the richest quintile.

The lower table shows that in the 1990s the same figures were 53 percent and 4 percent, respectively. Note that if mobility outcomes were determined solely by chance, every cell would have an entry of 20—indicating that 20 percent of families that began the decade in a given quintile would land in each of the five ending quintiles 10 years later.

Several things are worth keeping in mind when interpreting the tables. First, some movements from lower to higher quintiles are simply the result of higher earnings that come with age and experience. Second, counting as mobility any family's crossing of a quintile dividing line (or any other threshold) means that some very small changes can be included, such as when a family right above or below the dividing line experiences a small decline or increase in income. For the same reason, the measure may miss some changes that are quite large, such as when a family starts at the bottom of one

quintile but doesn't gain quite enough to move up into the next. This issue is particularly relevant at the extremes, since families can't drop lower than the poorest quintile nor rise higher than the

1988-98 DECADE

WHERE FAMILIES STARTED IN 1988, BY QUINTILE	WHERE FAMILIES ENDED UP IN 1998, BY QUINTILE				
	POOREST	SECOND	THIRD	FOURTH	RICHEST
Poorest	53.3	23.6	12.4	6.4	4.3
Second	25.7	36.3	22.6	11.0	4.3
Third	10.9	20.7	28.3	27.5	12.6
Fourth	6.5	12.9	23.7	31.1	25.8
Richest	3.0	5.7	14.9	23.2	53.2

Percentages sum to 100 across rows

top, although they can become much poorer or richer, and shift positions, within these quintiles. Third, the range between the upper and lower boundaries of each quintile can vary across quintiles and over time. Indeed, growing inequality pushes quintile boundaries farther apart; this has made moving up or down a quintile a higher hurdle in the 1990s than in the 1980s or 1970s.

NOTE: Data are from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID). Income is in constant 2000 dollars and is adjusted using the PSID measure of needs, which takes into account family size and composition. One-person families (persons living alone or with nonrelatives) are included. Families in which there are no adults below retirement age are excluded.
SOURCE: Katharine Bradbury and Jane Katz, "Women's Labor Market Involvement and Family Income Mobility When Marriages End," *New England Economic Review* Q4 2002, Appendix Table A1 (which also includes the mobility table for the 1980s)