

Fixing our bad image

The United States can spend lots of money to change the rest of the world's opinion of us, but it will do very little good in the long run.

The Council on Foreign Relations' July 30 report on the dire U.S. status in global opinion corresponded with various remarks I encountered in the Mediterranean this July.

Furthermore, the emotion behind these remarks was also in keeping with the State Department's public-travel advisories read prior to the trip.

The CFR report states that the lack of American post-Cold War "public diplomacy" has left both our "closest allies" and those not so close with the opinion that the United States is "self-indulgent, self-absorbed, arrogant, hypocritical and contemptuous."

The State Department is faulted for failing to learn from the last century of wars not to let military exercise and engagement run too far ahead of careful public diplomacy (image-making).

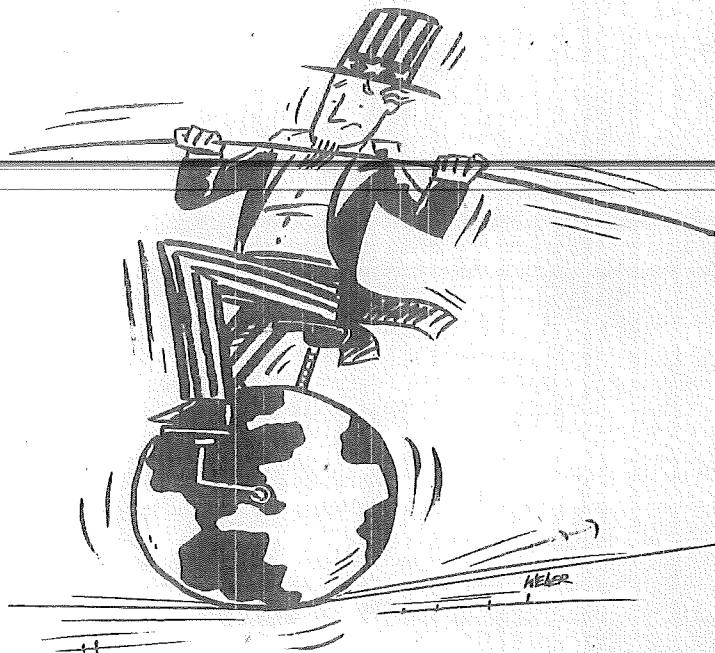
Europe, Asia and the near-East — at least — is a lot of territory, quite a chunk of mankind, whose hearts and minds U.S. "public diplomacy" has failed.

The strength of this independent task force report lies in its recognition of the scope of the U.S. image problem:

"Civilians in Arab states — front line in the U.S. war on terrorism — (are not alone in their negative view) of the U.S."

Whether these views are rational is another question.

One student, returning overland from Romania, said to me: "I don't understand the attitude you



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have. For example one of your 'smart bombs' falls 'by mistake' in the village nearby. So, some people get killed. But the cost of this one bomb's construction by far exceeds the

going market value of the real estate you just destroyed or the threat that the village posed.

"Maybe later you say, 'Sorry.' Now, you think that makes everything OK. You think everyone can just forget about this with the same ease that apparently you had to drop the bomb in the first place?"

The weakness of the CFR report, however, lies in refusing to come to grips with possible reasons the United States so miserably scrapes the bottom in global opinion polls.

Decades of grossly misguided U.S. foreign policy as possibly causative is not considered.

The report alleges that budgetary slashes to those government agencies responsible for getting the world to see things our way are to blame for today's adverse foreign temperaments toward the United States.

To Band-Aid Bush's global

public relations problem, the report advocates radically increasing the yearly \$1.1 billion spent on U.S. public relations (public diplomacy) and creating an elaborate, strategically coherent, widely coordinated and multifaceted public-relations campaign to win back the hearts and minds of the world.

For those of us who recall the Vietnam War, this response is familiar and tragic.

No propaganda initiative, however elaborate and expensive, can favorably influence the hearts and minds of those villagers subject to the assorted and horrifying afflictions of U.S. military actions. Onapalm then; cluster bombs today.

A new global communications initiative on steroids will not resolve the current global crises in the U.S. public image.

The United States is now reaping the long-term consequences of profit-driven foreign policies that have nothing to do with the well-being of those whose resources the powerful feel are theirs to exploit by whatever means.

Only changes in U.S. foreign behavior will change widespread foreign attitudes about U.S. interventionism.

Perry Keidel is a member of the Gainesville chapter of the Veterans For Peace.

SPEAKING OUT

What's behind 'defense'?

U.S. media have failed to report key points in national defense system, space-based lasers.

Bush's May Day speech promoting a multilayered missile "defense" program leaves out many key issues that the corporate-controlled media, as usual, have no interest in examining critically.

European, Russian, Chinese and the rest of the world's objections to the United States abandoning the 1972 anti-ballistic missile treaty are grounded, in part, in their recognition of the offensive capacities of space-based laser systems, not in the media-hyped



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fantasies of a national missile defense.

In addition to the \$100 billion-plus that already was sunk into the Star Wars development, \$30 billion was recently approved for NASA to develop space-based lasers. The Reagan-Bush-Clinton-Bush development of global, integrated space-based military technologies include a constellation of 20 to 30 orbiting nuclear reactors. Within a decade, any target on earth or in orbit is vulnerable to the direct-energy-strike capacities of these orbiting lasers.

Donald Rumsfeld's recent Space Commission report calls for the United States to "control space" in order to "dominate" the earth below by "power projection

in, from and through space," which will protect U.S. corporate investment and thereby ensure future U.S. global economic hegemony.

The U.S. Space Command "Vision for 2020" calls for 1) "integrating Space Forces into war-fighting capabilities across the full spectrum of conflict," in order to 2) "maintain control" as 3) armed conflicts multiply due to the widening regional disparities between "the haves and the have-nots," due to the 4) "globalization of the world economy."

Never mind that Clinton's treasonous gift to China of privileged U.S. missile technologies and computer science gave China (and all her friends) much more than the know-how to foil any "missile shield" imaginable.

And this is without regard to the yet unresolved questions of:

- Is such a shield affordable?
- Is it technically feasible?
- Is it worth placing global stability at risk?

Never mind that rogue delivery of any nuclear, biological or chemical weapon of mass destruction onto U.S. soil is much cheaper, certain and untraceable in a suitcase or shipping container than by any intercontinental

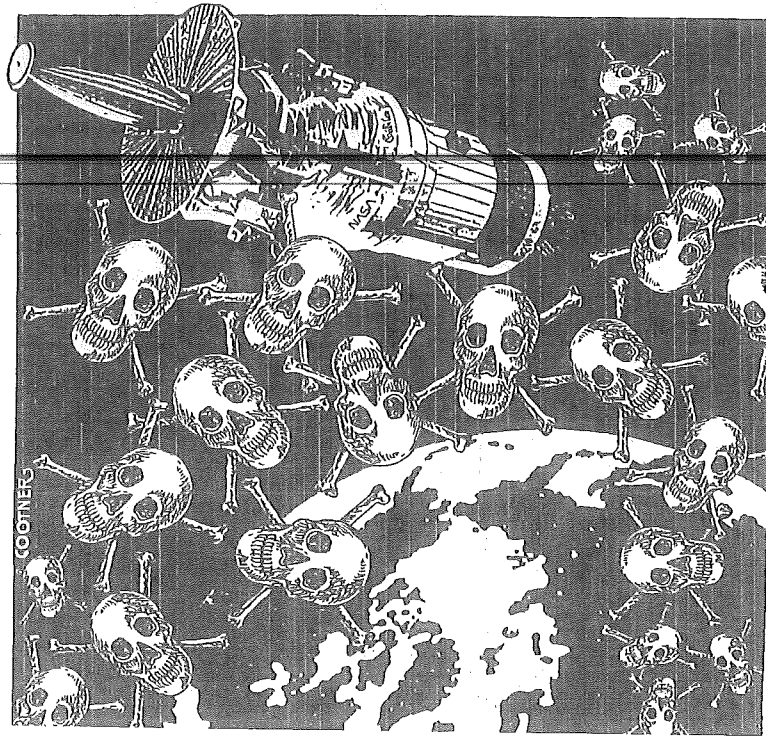
missile.

The missile "defense" system is only rational from the standpoint of massive and long-term corporate welfare. Modern U.S. presidents are in the pockets of the corporations whose capital largess put him in office for their behest. Just examine who writes the script for Bush.

For example: Is it not significant that Bruce Jackson, vice president of Lockheed's Corporate Strategy and Development, is also the author of the Republican Party Foreign Policy Platform? Lockheed is one of many "defense" contractors whose corporate profits from the Star Wars development will be in the billions.

Why are news services in Canada and Europe doing a better job covering the realities and destabilizing implications of the U.S. militarization of space than any of the major U.S. (corporate) media outlets? Since Reagan first proposed his fanciful "gee whiz" Star Wars vision, the press and entertainment industry have fawned over Star Wars fantasies and pretense.

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pay a penny in estate tax if we own less than a \$1 million estate.

(By the way, the very rich already pay more than their "fair share" of income taxes, earning 17 percent of the nation's income but paying 34 percent of the nation's income tax, as compared to the bottom 45 percent of wage earners who pay no income tax at all.)

Denton seems to subscribe to the belief of the left that any money you or I earn is actually the government's, and we should be grateful for whatever amount the Feds let us keep.

She calls repealing the estate tax "giving the super-wealthy a costly gift," as if there is no difference between letting a worker keep the fruits of her labors and giving that worker an unearned gift at someone else's expense.

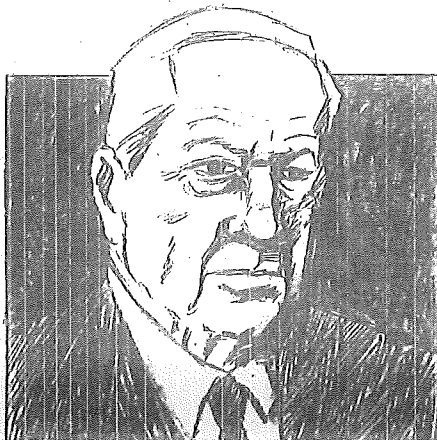
Denton contradicts herself when she suggests exempting farmers and small business owners from the estate tax. Up to that point she was arguing that the wealthy are our class enemies, greedily trying to pass on their estates to their children, thus burdening the rest of us who want a cut.

If that's the case, what difference does it make if their filthy fortunes come from farming or from banking, from small or large business? Are the rich evil, or aren't they?

I'm a middle-income taxpayer, and I doubt that the estate tax will ever affect me. But anyone who owes it has already been taxed many times, in the form of yearly income taxes, capital gains and corporate taxes, property taxes, and so on.

After taxing the income that makes up an estate dozens of times over, should the government be entitled to elbow the grieving family aside for yet one more slice?

Martin Simpson,
Gainesville



Gainesville

Bush has 'unfinished business'

George Bush has been clear about his intentions in regards to Iraq since his presidential campaign. And so his signature on the recent CIA "finding" comes as no surprise: that, in his words, the United States will initiate offensive measures anywhere in "the dark corners of the globe where evil lurks."

This "finding" is mysteriously termed "defensive measures." Iraq figures in this context most pre-eminently: Iraq is unfinished family business.

Saddam Hussein is certainly no character one would wish for a neighbor. He is no honey. However, he is Iraq's honey. His local popularity rises with every U.S. assault. And it is the Iraqis who have most suffered from the U.S.-imposed sanctions and periodic bombings over the last decade, not their leader.

So when the U.S. military is employed to "take out Saddam" (another Bush euphemism for state-sponsored assassination) and thereby secure Iraq's oil reserves for Western consumption, the protracted U.S. war on terrorism will likely ratchet up a notch.

The "cycle of violence" will escalate, and the United States will find itself even more alone, more "unilateralist," on this world stage.

More of the world will be angry at the United States, and more areas will be unsafe for travel by U.S. citizens. More of the disaffected will be lining up to carry out terrorist assaults on U.S. properties and interests.

"End the cycle of violence" is a term frequently employed by both this administration and the previous one in regards to conflicts on the African continent, Ireland, Israel and elsewhere.

Why is not the paradigm of "End the cycle of violence," with its associated dialogue and thinking, employed by the State Department in regards to Iraq and, more generally, to the larger U.S. war on global terrorism?

Why is our children's future being sacrificed by the current thinking that finds acceptable the notion of "war without end" with its unchartable human and economic costs?

Perry Keidel,
Veterans for Peace,
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Give us your opinion

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Capital gains and foreign policy

President Bush should work on stopping the use of U.S. military forces in Iraq for corporate profit-gaining interests.

Wherever the U.S. military is employed for economic reasons (not for reasons of true U.S. defense), U.S. foreign policy runs amok.

Former President Bill Clinton's most recent foreign blunder in this regard was his 11th-hour proposal for thousands of tons of humanitarian relief to be delivered to Iraq by domestic opponents of Saddam Hussein. If we are to believe State Department claims of Hussein's evil nature and the grip he has on that ravaged society, no Iraqi citizen who cared to live for another day would become involved in generally distributing care packages of U.S. origin — a political, and not humanitarian, act given its inane design to turn sentiment against Saddam Hussein.



PERRY KEIDEL

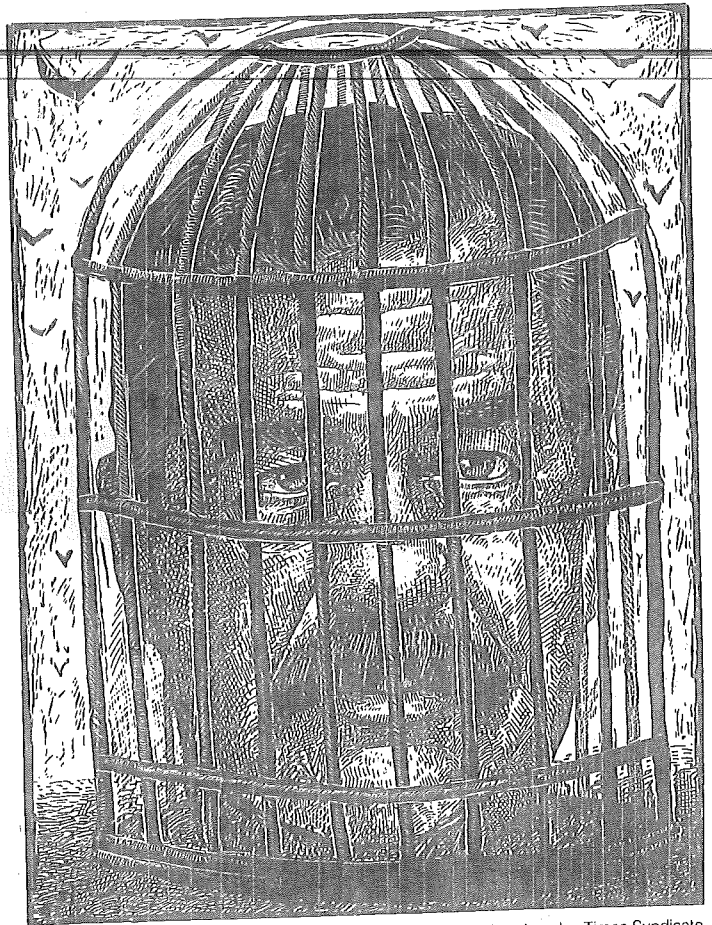
The issue is not whether the Iraqi society needs relief. Emptying U.S. stores of humanitarian relief, including food, medicine and spare parts to repair the U.S.-destroyed civilian clean-water and sanitation systems does not address the reason this formerly developed and well-functioning society is now in shambles.

The Iraqis perceive 10 years of routine U.S. bombing and U.S.-enforced economic sanctions — not Saddam Hussein — as the cause of their suffering. Plenty of future terrorists who can do nothing but hate the United States are coming up in the current Iraqi "X generation" — young people who have known nothing but lives of sickness, poverty, death and hopelessness that they believe were unjustly inflicted by the United States.

Indeed, Saddam Hussein is not a fly in the ointment of U.S. Gulf policy. He is "our" man; another of a hundred U.S.-generated "third-world" tin-pot dictators created to serve the interests of corporate capital, not democracy.

Hussein was groomed by the Reagan and Bush administrations for his current role as the Hitler of Baghdad during the Iran-Iraq conflict in the years prior to 1990's Desert Storm. And his military then was supplied in every way by the United States. Prior to receiving a U.S. ambassadorial invitation to invade Kuwait, Hussein received from U.S. and European companies key ingredients and technologies for Baghdad to develop its own nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and delivery systems.

If Saddam Hussein was not the darling of State Department Gulf objectives, Bush Sr. would not have stopped Norman



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Schwarzkopf from completing his drive to take Baghdad. If overthrowing Hussein was Bush's objective, he would have followed through with strategic-material aid after tens of thousands of Iraqi dissidents north and south of Baghdad followed his call to revolt. We would not instead have witnessed Hussein's wholesale slaughter of opposition that followed Desert Storm.

The current Iraq-U.S. military stalemate designed by Bush Sr. effectively keeps the massive resources of Iraqi crude off the market until their requisition is deemed in our national interests. The higher oil prices that are now a consequence also happen to maximize corporate oil profits.

President George W. Bush has variously stated his opposition to employing the U.S. military for "humanitarian" reasons. W. should add to his list this: opposition to prostituting the U.S. military to the interests of corporate profiteering.

Perry Keidel is a member of the Gainesville chapter of Veterans for Peace.

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Troops deal with reality of war's consequences

This is in response to Jessica Nguyen's letter (April 19) in which she said she was horrified at seeing an article about the war in Iraq which contained a "horrific, graphic description of the death of an 8-month-old baby" and a graphic picture of an injured child. She said the picture and description showed a lack of respect and were unnecessary.

In my opinion, it is the fact of the dead and injured children that is horrific, not the published information. And making the information available is necessary.

In order to have an informed opinion everyone needs to be aware of all of the aspects of this war, regardless of their opinion of the war. This includes awareness (and horror) that babies and children are among those who are being injured and killed.

It would be disrespectful to the victims and families to ignore their suffering and disrespectful to Americans to omit this consequence of the war. This information is as important as is more palatable subject matter, such as the pictures and descriptions of the Iraqis cheering the coalition forces.

It is important to have some awareness of what those who are fighting in Iraq are experiencing, and the consequences of their experiences. An article in The Sun on the same day Nguyen's letter was printed ("Some Iraqi veterans struggle to cope with killing") describes the reactions of those who face the reality of having to kill a fellow human being and seeing the results.

According to the article, mental health counselors estimate that one-third of combat soldiers will return

Iranian troops."

Much is made of France's threat to veto the final U.S.-sponsored U.N. resolution to forcibly disarm Iraq. But between 1972 and 2002, the United States vetoed more than 200 U.N. resolutions; including more than a dozen prohibiting the development or proliferation of the same indiscriminate weapons of mass destruction.

The United States vetoed nearly two dozen resolutions affirming the right of every people to choose their own economic and social system. In 1987, it vetoed a measure to prevent international terrorism and objected to the convening of an international conference to address the underlying political and economic causes of terrorism.

Approximately 70 (35 percent) of these U.S.-vetoed resolutions condemned Israel for variously terrorizing or oppressing the Palestinians or her neighbors. U.S. support of apartheid in Israel correlated to the dozen U.S.-vetoed resolutions that condemned apartheid in South Africa.

If regime change brings Iraq genuine self-rule, U.S. political credibility may begin to recover. If the U.S. conquest of Iraq becomes the springboard for other military adventures, Bush will be courting the next world war.

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civilian dead. I have that answer: much less than under Hussein and much less than if Hussein was left in power. He should be rejoicing that the Iraqis will now be free and not oppressed.

John Moss,
Archer

Leaders didn't stop looting

The United States has failed to prevent looting and destruction of museums, hospitals and public health facilities in Iraq.

The destruction of the Iraqi Museum in Baghdad, which contained 7,000-year old artifacts of human history from the cradle of civilization, was disturbing. The vacant expressions of patients in a destroyed mental hospital, where other patients lay covered in flies, were tragic. And the story about the looted public health laboratory, which contained biological samples of polio and the plague, was downright scary.

Our troops had been warned that such facilities might be looted. Where were they? Guarding the Oil Ministry and the oil wells.

A little-known international agreement called the Roerich Pact, signed by representatives of the United States in the presence of then-President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1935, creates the precedent that "the historic monuments, museums, scientific, artistic, educational and cultural institutions shall be considered as neutral and as such respected and protected by belligerents."

More than 250 people recently signed an "Urgent Petition of International Scholars of Mesopotamia and the Near East to the United Nations and UNESCO for the Safeguarding of Iraqi Cultural Heritage." Oops, sorry, I



emotionally wounded. A portion will
develop disabilities

forgot — the United Nations is now
irrelevant. I guess 7,000 years of
human history must be irrelevant too

LE SUN **EDITORIALS/LETTERS** SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2003

ACCORDING TO JAKE



Making a deadly gamble

Launching the plutonium-laden Cassini probe could be devastating to millions upon millions.

The writer is a member of the Gainesville chapter of the Veterans For Peace.

By PERRY KEIDEL

Special to The Sun

A mournful chorus from ultra-right religious conservatives across the country has bemoaned for years how far our country has slid into "secular humanism." However the level of uncritical, knee-jerk NASA adulation, supported by more than half a century of massive doses of pro-space news and entertainment suggest ours is one of the most religious societies in the world.

The religion is called "Unquestioning Faith in American Superiority and Technology." It is the dominance of this religion in the minds of Americans across this country that has led us to the point that we are now about to embark upon an ambitious, high-stakes program of plutonium launching without public knowledge, public debate or public accountability.

Whether one's religion is faith in an obscure theology, or an unwavering faith in American space science and technology, skeptics most frequently criticize religious people of historical suspension.

Historical suspension is an avoidance mechanism for many believers who feel they can not personally afford to give up their belief system. They studiously ignore key historical and material facts that can threaten the belief system.

Many believers are so unreservedly committed to their belief system they are incapable of honest self-doubt, incapable of entertaining for a moment the possibility that their behaviors might be flawed.

In 1915, Silvanus P. Thompson, a Quaker, observed that the very precision of the intellectual process of scientific endeavor and its inevitable monument of garnered results may tend to cramp or warp the perception of those so engaged to other kinds of truth. Perceptual balance may be lost after so long and relentless a commitment to the narrow, reductive processes of the laboratory.

In other words, very educated people, such as NASA scientists, can be so consumed in their "heavenly" pursuits they may become out of touch with, indeed calloused to, the rest of us and our more earthly concerns.

Blind faith in scientific enterprise parallel; in many ways unwavering faith in religious authority. I am as skeptical of the high priests of science, NASA scientists, as I am of the clerical hierarchy because there are too many similarities in the interdependent-dependent relationship between the leaders and followers.

The zeal and single-minded adulation of lay and professional devotees to NASA's unbridled, highly imaginative and capital intensive space ambitions puts to shame the intensity of most religious adherents today. And as with past confrontations between skeptics and the church, today's high priests of American technology, NASA scientists and bureaucrats, are also accused of elitism and dishonesty.

To prove their point, NASA skeptics periodically put forward lists of "NASA lies," articles of faith that NASA

depends upon for you to embrace without question.

A very few of these NASA articles of faith are:

- You and I know all we need to know about launching 400,000 curies of radioactivity over our heads. We don't need to worry about it. (The Cassini launch, on or about October 13, 1997). And 750 watts of power (not much) for instrumentation requires the unprecedented 72.3 pounds of plutonium 238.
- Cassini is the last plutonium mission
- Plutonium if inhaled or ingested won't really hurt you.
- Like the Titanic, the plutonium generators are indestructible.
- Solar power won't work in deep space, in spite of recent advances in deep-space solar technology both in Europe, and now in California.
- The training of Department of Energy radiological teams and hospitals near Cape Canaveral is only done in order to reassure the public that all is well.
- There is no link between NASA and DOE's push to put nuclear power into space and plans by the Air Force to use nuclear power in space for weapons power generation.
- They are not planning to launch nuclear power into space as a nuclear waste disposal plan.

While parents hold bake sales to support their children's educations, U.S. taxpayers spend billions yearly in support of this state religion — from its promotion to its hubric plutonium-launching gamble.

Forgetting the archetypal lessons of Faust, Prometheus, and The Tower of Babel, we have a monster in this plutonium-launching foolishness that cannot imagine its own fall. Great and long-lasting will be the devastating consequences of that fall.

Science benefits us the most when its larger agenda relates to serving human need. If the present amount of state sponsored scientific endeavor were instead engaged in resolving clear and present threats to the long-term viability of life on Earth, I wouldn't be as worried about my kids and their kids.

Science means most, not to the person who thinks it means everything, but to those who are most keenly aware of the role of science in serving human need and in revealing the beauty, interrelatedness and fragility of life.

Honor our soldiers with your flags

Flags flew at half-mast to commemorate the death of a much-loved president. President Reagan died in the comfort of his home, under the best of care, surrounded by loving family.

But U.S. flags should remain at half-mast. Today U.S. service men and women are being daily slaughtered far from home and under arduous conditions. Their deaths and their sacrifice deserve no less a persistent contemplation regardless of the desperate views of Bush's war in Iraq at home.

Elected representatives on all sides now question the wisdom of Bush's foreign policy, and retired Pentagon, intelligence and diplomatic officials with careers in the foreign service behind them line up to call into question all aspects of Bush's war doctrines.

But entertaining the "big-picture" questions of political accountability, projection of empire, fossil-fuel dependency or unilateralism is an unlikely casual luxury under fire and constant threat.

In respect for their difficult to impossible circumstances, in commemoration for past, present and future deaths from their ranks, flags flying half-mast may be appropriate.

Perry Keidel,
Archer

Hi !

Sometime within the next decade
I would like to have you & Monica over
for dinner

Glenn

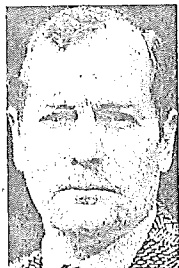
Readers' Page

SPEAKING OUT

Assault on Serbs: the real motive

The American media continue to ignore the true reasons behind U.S. aggression against the Serbs.

Several parallels between U.S. military aggressions against Iraq and Serbia beg for consideration in the public discourse. But they go largely unexamined in U.S. "news" services, both in the homogenized U.S. commercial (corporate-controlled) media and in the so-called "public" broadcasting media.



PERRY KEIDEL

Chronic U.S. foreign interventionism on a global scale directly benefits the capital interests of the major defense contractors and several large corporations and banks whose yearly turnover dwarfs the GNP of most countries.

2. Both U.S. aggressions against Iraq and, more recently, Serbia violate article 1

section 8 of the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits U.S. war-faring without a congressional declaration of war.

The 1973 War Powers Act clearly mandates, furthermore, that the U.S. withdraw its military from hostilities within 60 days lacking a resolution of support from Congress. By ignoring both the U.S. Constitution and this federal law, Clinton violated his oath of office.

3. The systematic U.S. bombing of Iraqi and Serbian life-supporting civilian infrastructure (water/sewage treatment and health-care facilities, chemical, manufacturing and agricultural industries, etc.) was cowardly state terrorism that violated international law and the Geneva Conventions.

4. Serbian and Iraqi citizens still live and labor in territories destroyed and contaminated by U.S.-made radioactive U238 munitions. The U.S. media has ignored the U.S. use of Depleted Uranium (DU) in both blanket bombing (cluster bombs) and "surgical" bombing (guided missiles).

Oxidized, pulverized, toxic, radioactive DU lingers around the target area long

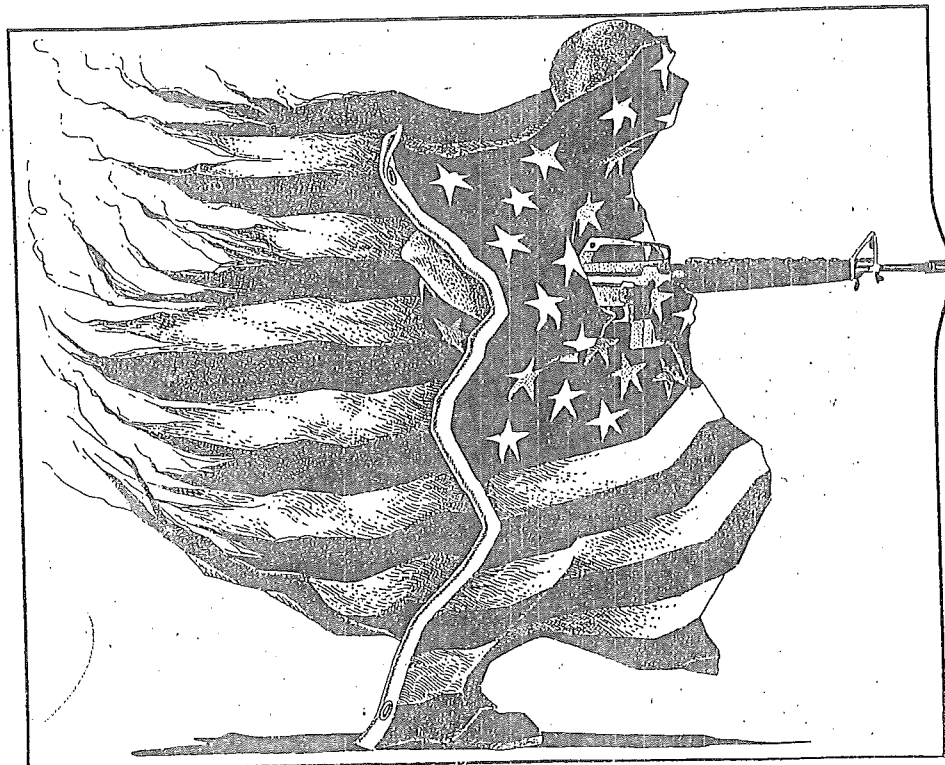
after its fiery impact. DU poisons the soil and aquifers and causes birth-defects and various diseases in the affected population, civilians and soldiers on all sides (see the 1998 WHO study on DU in Iraq).

Ethnic Serbian and Iraqi soldiers and civilians (men, women and children) were the recipients of cluster bombs, satellite-guided U238 munitions, generalized hardship and death from massive infrastructure destruction and economic embargos (the practical equivalent of weapons of mass destruction).

As usual, and in perfect concert with the State Department/corporate objectives, the profit-oriented corporate media dutifully and fervently pressed upon the American mind to believe that Iraq and Serbia deserved abusive U.S. military pounding.

In the end, the innocent suffer for past and current U.S. crimes against humanity and are dutifully ignored in the American press.

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