

Al-Qaida: The world's cancer

The cure is often worse than the disease.

When cancer is discovered, the diagnosis often comes as a shock. Colon cancer is one such form of the disease. Usually, the only way it is detected is by routine colonoscopy, as there are often no symptoms associated with its onset. Surgery followed by chemotherapy is the usual treatment regime and at some point a patient may wonder if the cure isn't worse than the disease itself.

When my 17-year old son was diagnosed with a blood clot in his thigh in August, he spent 16 days in the pediatric ICU. Despite aggressive treatment with IV heparin, by the end of the first week his condition had worsened to the point where he could not walk. When he was finally discharged a week later, we drove to the airport in West Palm Beach for the flight home. By then, he was only able to limp through the terminal with a cane.

We joked that he had walked into the hospital as an apparently healthy 17-year old only to limp home in pain after more than two weeks of expensive treatment at the hands of the best pediatric specialists in the area.

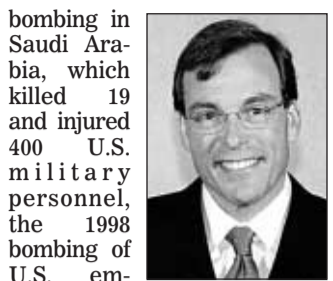
This naive assessment reminds me of Democrats' criticism of The Bush Doctrine — the defense of America against the threat of terrorism by pre-emption.

Three events have all come together recently to support this charge: Democrat's reaction to the ABC TV movie about 9/11, Bill Clinton's tirade on Chris Wallace's Sunday Morning program on Fox and the declassification of the four-page National Intelligence Estimate, "Trends in Global Terrorism, Implications for the U.S."

John Cochran, a journalist with ABC news accused "the Clintonistas" of "aiming their fire ... at ABC Entertainment for its two-part miniseries, 'The Path to 9/11,'" because it simply told the story, albeit in dramatic fashion, of events leading up to the attacks on 9/11. Among those quick to cry foul was Sandy Berger, Clinton's former national security adviser, who said the movie "flagrantly misrepresents my personal actions." Perhaps you may recall that the Justice Department investigated Berger for taking as many as 50 classified documents, in October 2003, from a National Archives reading room prior to testifying before the 9/11 Commission. Berger later testified that stuffing them into his jacket and pants was "accidental."

Just a few days after the row over the ABC movie, Bluster Bill himself literally came out of his seat to jab his big finger in Chris Wallace's chest in response to the journalist's questions regarding the former president's limp-wristed attempts to kill Bin Laden.

Defensive Democrats and Clinton's tirade provide ongoing evidence of an administration that was complacent about the threat of al-Qaida. Like cancer in its pre-diagnosed stages — one hopes those little stomach pains or that dry cough will go away in time — these rumbles were ignored: The 1995 bombing in Saudi Arabia, which killed five U.S. military personnel, the 1996 Khobar Towers



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bombing in Saudi Arabia, which killed 19 and injured 400 U.S. military personnel, the 1998 bombing of U.S. embassies in Africa, which killed 224 and injured 5,000, and the 2000 bombing of the USS Cole, which killed 17 and injured three U.S. sailors.

When George Bush became president in 2001, al-Qaida's plan to fly airliners into key targets in the U.S. was already in place.

Bush's response came only three days after the Twin Towers collapsed. He said that those responsible would hear from us. They did and they continue to do so to this day.

Under Bush's sharp scalpel, al-Qaida has been exposed as the cancer of the world. Islamofascist terrorists are a threat to the survival of mankind living under the ideals of economic, social, cultural, racial and religious freedom.

It comes as no surprise that this disease, like cancer, should rear its ugly head in its death throes. The myopic decay the cure is worse than the illness so let's stop the treatment.

The NIE characterizes the Iraq conflict as "the cause celebre for jihadists, breeding a deep resentment of U.S. involvement in the Muslim world and cultivating supporters for the global jihadist movement."

But to stop reading there, conveniently at this one quote, lifted from its context by several media outlets in the attempt to blame Bush's policy in Iraq for making terrorism worse, gives the wrong impression of the complete NIE.

The rest of the sentence reads, "Should jihadists leaving Iraq perceive themselves, and be perceived, to have failed, we judge fewer fighters will be inspired to carry on the fight."

Failure! If terrorists fail in Iraq, there will be fewer, not more terrorists in the world.

The NIE warns a paragraph earlier: "Perceived jihadist success (in Iraq) would inspire more fighters to continue the struggle elsewhere."

Bill Clinton claims he took the threat of al-Qaida seriously during his administration, that he "tried" to get Bin Laden and that he came closer to getting him than George Bush did.

I'm sorry if memory fails me, but during Clinton's years in the White House, I wasn't worried about al-Qaida as a terrorist threat to the free world, were you? Had you even heard mention of the group?

Like that dry cough, the symptoms were ignored in the hopes that it would just go away. And now that the diagnosis has been made, and the treatment uncomfortable, some want to return to that place where ignorance was bliss; clearly a case of political malpractice and nothing more.

To read the NIE, visit CIA.gov and click on "Director of National Intelligence."

Gregory J. Rummo is a syndicated columnist.

The 'unfortunate' Foley story

The Reverend Elmer Gantry was reading an illustrated pink periodical devoted to prize-fighters and chorus girls in his room at Elizabeth J. Schmutz Hall late of an afternoon when two large men walked in without knocking.

"Why, good evening, Brother Bains — Brother Naylor! This is a pleasant surprise. I was, uh — Did you ever see this horrible rag? ... I was thinking of denouncing it next Sunday. I hope you never read it."

Sinclair Lewis, "Elmer Gantry"

WASHINGTON — In life as in literature, Elmer Gantry is a recurring American figure. He is making yet another appearance in the matter of former Rep. Mark Foley.

Sinclair Lewis' "Elmer Gantry," like most of his novels, is dreadful as literature but splendid as a symptom. Published in 1927, the year Charles Lindbergh flew the Atlantic and Babe Ruth hit 60 home runs and the American craft of ballyhoo was being perfected, the novel was a cartoonish blast of contempt for tub-thumping evangelists who were doing well for themselves while pretending to do good works to redeem this naughty world. Gantry succumbed to temptations of the flesh and the real estate market. The modern twist to the fall of Foley — public protector and private predator of

children — is the warp speed with which it moved from expose to therapy: Foley, who has entered alcohol rehab, says he takes "responsibility" for what he has become as a result of abusive priests, and demon rum.

Having so quickly exhausted the Oprah approach, the Foley story moved on to who knew what, and when. That drove Speaker Dennis Hastert to the un-Oprah broadcasting couch on which Republicans recline when getting in touch with their feelings. To Rush Limbaugh's 20 million receptive listeners, Hastert, referring to Republicans as "we," said:

"We have a story to tell, and the Democrats have — in my view have — put this thing forward to try to block us from telling the story. They're trying to put us on defense."

It is difficult to read that as other than an accusation: He seems to be not just confessing a cover-up, but also complaining that a cover-up was undone by bad manners. Were it not for Democrats' un-sportsmanlike conduct in putting "this thing" forward, it would not be known and would not be disrupting Republicans' storytelling.

Their story, of late, has been that theirs is the lonely burden of defending all that is wholesome. But the problem with claiming to have cornered the market on virtue is that people will get snippy when they spot vice in your ranks.

This is one awkward aspect of what is supposed to have been the happy fusion between, but which involves unresolved tensions between, two flavors of conservatism — Western and Southern.



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The former is largely libertarian, holding that pruning big government will allow civil society — and virtues nourished by it and by the responsibilities of freedom — to flourish. The Southern, essentially religious, strand of conservatism, is explained by Ryan Sager in his new book "The Elephant in the Room: Evangelicals, Libertarians, and the Battle to Control the Republican Party":

"Whereas conservative Christian parents once thought it was inappropriate for public schools to teach their kids about sex, now they want the schools to preach abstinence to children. Whereas conservative Christians used to be unhappy with evolution being taught in public schools, now they want Intelligent Design taught instead (or at least in addition). Whereas conservative Christians used to want the federal government to leave them alone, now they demand that more and more

federal funds be directed to local churches and religious groups through Bush's faith-based initiatives program."

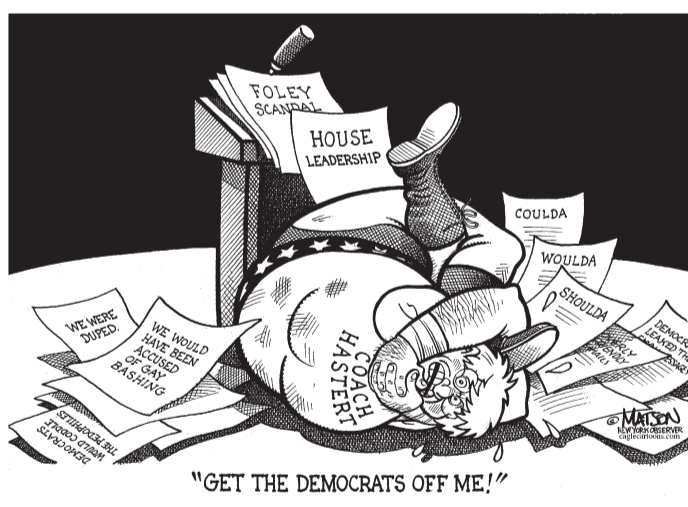
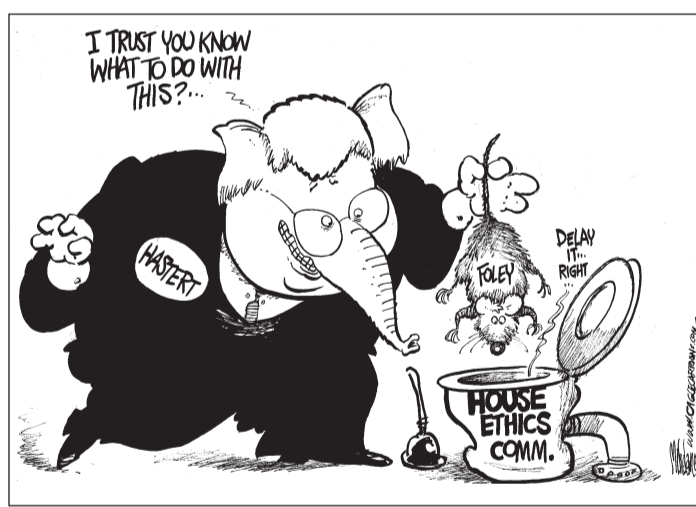
To a Republican Party increasingly defined by the ascendancy of the religious right, the Foley episode is doubly deadly. His behavior was disgusting, and some Republican reactions to it seem more calculating than indignant.

Foley's name remains on the ballot in Florida's 16th Congressional District, which means that Democrats, who needed 15 seats to capture the House, now need just 14. Thirteen, actually: In Arizona's 8th, where Republican Rep. Jim Kolbe is retiring, Republicans used the primary to vent, nominating a probably unelectable firebreather on the immigration issue.

After the 1936 election, in which President Franklin Roosevelt shellacked the Republican nominee in all but two states, a humorist wrote: "If the outcome of this election hasn't taught you Republicans not to meddle in politics, I don't know what will." If after the Foley episode — a maraschino cherry atop the Democrats' delectable sundae of Republican miseries — the Democrats cannot gain 13 seats, they should go into another line of work.

George Will is a syndicated columnist.

WEEKEND GALLERY



Voices

Continued from Page C4

Chandler, Hal Rogers, Ed Whitfield, John Hostettler.

This vote produced a justified tirade of criticism from New York's Republican mayor, Michael Bloomberg, who pointed out that Congress was making it easier to track the origins of tainted spinach than to trace a cache of illegal firearms.

... The Senate should stop the bill, which would, just as he said, "shield rogue gun dealers and hinder access to gun trace data and enforcement action by federal and local law enforcement against dealers."

There's a reason it was opposed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major Cities Chiefs (including Louisville's Robert White), the International Brotherhood of Police Officers and former officials of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tax and Firearms:

An outlaw 1.2 percent of licensed gun dealers are responsible for more than 57 percent of the weapons found at crime scenes. Yet those are precisely the bad actors whom this bill would protect. ...

Scheduling family dinner

The Hutchinson (Kan.) News

When we have to create a special day to eat dinner as a family, we have to wonder what we have become.

Maybe we are late to take notice, but some family advocacy groups now have an annual day when they say we should have dinner with our children. As if we don't rest the rest of time — or at least not often.

They might be right about that. If so, we do have problems as a society.

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University in New York has marked the fourth Monday in September as "Family Day." That means you should have had dinner with your kids.

CASA's research has found that the more often children eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use drugs.

... We should not think of this as prevention of youth substance abuse nor of having it be just one day in the year. Every day should be family day in a healthy family.

That should go without saying, but as long as we have a need formally to designate a Family Day in this country, we better keep reminding ourselves. Today might not be Family Day, but every night is a good night to sit down at the table together as a family.

Where there's war, there's Kissinger

AUSTIN, Texas — The Old War Criminal is back. I try not to hold grudges, but I must admit I have never lost one ounce of rancor toward Henry Kissinger, that cynical, slithery, self-absorbed pathological liar. He has all the loyalty and principle of Charles Talleyrand, whom Napoleon described as "a piece of dung in a silk stocking."

Come to think of it, Talleyrand looks pretty good compared to Kissinger, who always aspired to be Metternich (a 19th century Austrian diplomat). Just count the number of Americans and Vietnamese who died between 1969 and 1973, and see if you can find any indication he ever gave a damn.

As for Kissinger's getting the Nobel Peace Prize, it is a thing so wrong it has come to define wrongness — as in, "As weird as the time Henry Kissinger got the Nobel Peace Prize."

Tom Lehrer, who was a lovely political satirist, gave up satire after that blow.

The War Criminal's return is the only piece of news I have yet found in Bob Woodward's new

book, and what amazes me is the reaction to the work. Gosh, gosh, imagine, Woodward says the war's a disaster!

People who know a lot more than Bob Woodward have been saying the war's a disaster for years — because war is self-evidently a disaster. Why this is greeted as an announcement from on high just because Woodward, the world's most establishment reporter, now says so is a mystery to me.

I have read snippets here and there suggesting the self-important chattering class of Washington is massively resistant to admitting they were wrong about Iraq, and that you only have credibility as a critic of the war if you were for it in the first place. I missed a logical link there. I know how vain the chattering classes are, but the majority of the American people has since come to conclude they were wrong about the war — and they say so without feeling disgraced.

What's wrong with the Washington press corps? Speaking of people who have trouble with the truth, here's a recent George W. line from two

weeks ago I particularly prize: "There's kind of an urban myth here in Washington about how this administration hasn't stayed focused on Osama bin Laden. Forget it. It's convenient throwaway lines when people say that."

How do these urban myths get started? Perhaps with GWB on March 13, 2002: "I don't know where bin Laden is. ... You know ... I just don't spend that much time on him. ... I'll repeat what I said. I truly am not that concerned about him."

Or as Gen. Richard Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said on April 6, 2002: "The goal (in Afghanistan) has never been to get bin Laden. ... The goal there was never (to go) after specific individuals." Donald Rumsfeld: Bin Laden has been "neutralized." And Vice President Cheney: "Bin Laden himself is not that big a threat."

Etc., etc. We got two straight years of quotes from officials all across the Bush administration pushing the idea that Osama bin Laden is just a minor player, we're not hunting him, the war on terror is a much larger deal, and so on and so forth. You know, it's one thing to tell a whopper yourself — it's adding insult to injury to call the people who point this out liars themselves.

A half-hour documentary about Granny D (Doris Haddock) will be playing throughout October on various PBS channels around the country. Granny D, the crusader for campaign finance reform, who hiked across the country at age 90, is now 96, and the documentary of her work is inspiring.

She's such an adorably "sweet old lady" that one forgets how tough she has been and how consistent she has been. You want to know where to get the strength, courage and optimism to keep fighting for change? Listen to Granny D. More at www.grannyd.com.

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