

WHY THE WORLD HATES ISRAEL

Israel is a tiny nation, roughly half the size of Lake Michigan. Its population is roughly half the size of the New York metropolitan area. Despite being a Jewish state, more than twenty percent of its residents are Arab and most Jews in Israel describe themselves as secular rather than religious.

Yet if one were to read world press accounts or daily condemnations from the United Nations or the recent decision of the ICJ criticizing the construction of the fence, you might conclude that Israel is a world power intent on destabilizing Middle East affairs.

Why, it might well be postulated, does the world resent this speck of land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean?

First, Israel is a thorn in the side of the Arab world because it is a remarkable technological phantasmagoria. Almost every Israeli is engaged in a software scheme. The Jews in this arid nation have made the deserts bloom; they have converted brain power into technical marvels and consequent wealth.

By contrast every nearby Arab nation is dysfunctional. Their governments are tyrannical; the people are poor and uneducated and local officials have been unwilling to convert oil revenue into social benefits.

Resentment is the natural result of this contrast. After all, Israel has all of the geographic disadvantages of its neighbors and it doesn't have any oil fields. Yet it prospers, while others falter.

Second, it should be hastily noted that Israel is a proxy for anti-American sentiment. The misguided belief that the U.S. is an imperial power eager to put its stamp on the Middle East is demonstrated by the aid and support given to Israel. Rarely, is it noted by U.S. detractors that American assistance to Egypt is equal to aid for Israel. Moreover, American involvement in Iraq was neither precipitated by Israel (Does the tail wag the dog?) nor has this engagement influenced Israel's relations with her neighbors in any new directions.

Third, the Palestinian question has awakened emotions on the European left and in many Arab states. Yet remarkably the critique of Israel is generally quite banal. Arafat, as putative Palestinian leader, was granted 97 percent of the West Bank and some control over holy sites in the negotiation at Wye Plantation. Yet he turned down these generous Israeli terms.

In fact, there aren't any terms that serve the ambitions of Arabs eager to destroy the state of Israel, unless, of course, national suicide is a reasonable negotiating point.

Fourth, the fence has the metaphorical power of the Berlin Wall. It is used for propaganda purposes to argue that Israel is intent on "taking Arab land" and isolating itself from Palestinians.

What should be noted is that the Berlin Wall was created to keep East Germans bound to the chains of communism, while the Israeli fence is designed to prevent suicide bombers from continuing

wreaking bloodshed among Israelis.

Intifada II has resulted in at least a thousand dead Israeli citizens since 2000 and others maimed as well. It is incumbent on any leader of any nation to offer his people a modicum of security against those bent on bloodshed. If the fence reduces threats and increases security, Prime Minister Sharon should embrace it. His duty to protect his own people transcends any obligation imposed on him from multilateral organizations.

Fifth, the Palestinians have made their case to the International court of public opinion more effectively than the Israeli government. They have positioned themselves as underdogs against a mighty military force from tiny Israel. They have persuaded many of their supporters that the land Israel acquired after the '67 war is "occupied" rather than "disputed" territory. Hence, their sanguinic tactics are ignored by opinion makers normally opposed to terrorist activity.

Sixth, the Palestinians manage their news media. There isn't an opposition voice in the Palestinian territory and if an unpredictable comment is made, it is often squelched with force. Reporters Without Borders has reported numerous occasions where journalists were beaten when they challenged Hamas or Hezbollah positions in print.

Israel, as an open and free society, entertains every point of view, including anti Israel arguments. As a consequence, criticism of Israel is widespread and criticism of Palestinian activity muted.

Seventh, the United Nations is now systematically organized to criticize the United States and Israel. It is instinctive that in a statement emanating from the Secretariat's office condemning the construction of the fence, not a word was mentioned about suicide bombers who precipitated the construction.

As I see there is very little that can be done at the moment to change international opinion. Israel has an obligation to its own people to remain resolute. . . But if the Arab world wishes to enter the 21st century it will have to adopt much of Israeli life. - Herbert London, *townhall.com*, 7/18/04 (Read Matthew 27:22-25)

IS THE ARAB WORLD READY FOR FREEDOM?

In nominating Condoleezza Rice to replace Colin Powell as secretary of state, President Bush has chosen a kindred spirit. The two not only subscribe to the same religious beliefs, they also believe America has been commissioned to share its freedom with the rest of the world.

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Natan Sharansky, the former Soviet dissident and current Israeli government official, told me the president invited him to the White House a few days ago to discuss Mr. Sharansky's new book, "The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror," which he said the president had nearly finished and Miss Rice also was reading. The book is a powerful argument for spreading freedom around the world as the ultimate weapon against totalitarian societies and fundamentalist movements.

Mr. Sharansky states his premise in the introduction: "I am convinced that all people desire to be free. I am convinced that freedom anywhere will make the world safer everywhere. And I am convinced that democratic nations, led by the United States, have a critical role to play in expanding freedom around the globe." . . .

This philosophy, or faith, is what motivates Bush administration policy in Iraq, Afghanistan and throughout the Middle East and the world. It is about as noble a purpose as one can have - sharing freedom with others who do not have it. . . .

Mr. Sharansky pays tribute to skeptics who believe in Freedom as a divine right, and questions whether that part of the world in which we are now engaged resembles Eastern Europe during Soviet domination. "While democracy has spread across the globe, the Middle East remains a sea of tyranny. There are 22 Arab states and not one of them is democratic, even by the weakest of definitions. Moreover, there has *never* been an Arab democracy and with the exception of a handful of tyrannies around the world, the world's most repressive regimes are in the Middle East. So while President Bush may 'know' that freedom is the 'future of every nation,' many others can be forgiven for disagreeing." (Italics his)

Condoleeza Rice does not disagree. While Colin Powell sees the world in more secular tones - nuanced and in shades of gray - Miss Rice and the president sing from the same hymnal. If they are right about the contagion of freedom, they may unleash a movement that can positively affect more people than the collapse of the Soviet Union did. If they are wrong - and the evidence is far heavier on this side of the argument - the consequences, to borrow a theological term with which they are familiar, could be Armageddon.

The stakes don't get any higher than this. - Cal Thomas, *Washington Times Weekly*, 11/29-12/5/04

SADDAM SMUGGLED OUT WMD

Saddam Hussein periodically removed guards on the Syrian border and replaced them with his own intelligence agents who supervised the movement of banned materials between the two countries, U.S. investigators have discovered. . . .

The Iraqi dictator moved prohibited weapons of mass destruction (WMD) into Syria before the March 2003 invasion by a U.S.-led coalition. - *WTW*, 8/23-29/04

Lt. Gen. Michael DeLong (USMC Ret.), who until last September was the No. 2 in command of the Iraq war under Gen. Tommy Franks, revealed that U.S. military intelligence had determined that weapons of mass destruction were being smuggled out of Iraq as the U.S. prepared to invade.

"I do know for a fact that some of those weapons went into Syria, Lebanon and Iran," Gen. DeLong said. . . .

"Two days before the war, on March 17 [2003], we saw through multiple intelligence channels - large caravans of people and things, including some of the top 55 [most wanted] Iraqis going to Syria," Gen. DeLong explained.

"We also know that before then, they buried some of the weapons of mass destruction," he added. - *NewsMax* 11/04

U.S. intelligence agencies have obtained satellite photographs of truck convoys that were at several weapons sites in Iraq in the weeks before U.S. military operations were launched, defense officials said on Oct. 28.

The photographs indicate that Iraq was moving arms and equipment from its known weapons sites, said officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

According to one official, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, known as NGA, "documented the movement of long convoys of trucks from various areas around Baghdad to the Syrian border." - *WTW*, 11/1-7/04

THE RUMMY HATERS

President Bush can find new secretaries for the departments of State, Justice, Energy, Health and Human Services, Commerce, Homeland Security, Veteran's Affairs, Education and Agriculture, but as long as he leaves Don Rumsfeld at the Defense Department he will not have changed his cabinet enough to satisfy the critics. No other scalp counts, so long as the hawkish Rumsfeld stays at the Pentagon.

Rumsfeld's detractors say they want his ouster only as a matter of accountability. When something in your bailiwick doesn't go well -- a war, in this case -- it stands to reason that you should get the boot. Except this logic was never applied to Secretary of State Colin Powell. Even though Bush critics argue that the first administration was a diplomatic disaster area, they always hailed its top diplomat.

The latest round of beating on Rumsfeld comes thanks to a challenging question he got in Kuwait from a National Guardsman about the lack of up-armored humvees. Regular humvees are thin-skinned and provide little protection, putting a premium on the armored version in Iraq's urban combat zone. Rumsfeld's answer has been portrayed as cold and dismissive. Maureen Dowd of *The New York Times* even compared it to Gen. Patton's infamous slap of a soldier in a hospital bed.

Rumsfeld explained what the military has been doing to make up the gap in armored humvees and said the army is "sensitive to the fact that not every vehicle has the degree of armor that would be desirable." He continued, "The goal we have is to have as many of those vehicles as is humanly possible with the appropriate level of armor available for the troops." That is hardly the back of his hand.

Rumsfeld got applause from the troops when he added: "The other day, after there was a big threat alert in Washington, D.C., in connection with the elections, as I recall, I looked outside the Pentagon and there were six or eight up-armored humvees. They're not there anymore. They're en route out here."

The controversy about humvees is typical of the debate about the conduct of the Iraq War -- there is plenty to criticize, but those doing the criticizing tend to be opportunistic and ahistorical. Wars always produce surprises and unanticipated needs. No opponent of the Iraq War ever said, "Don't you dare invade Iraq unless you have 8,000 up-armored humvees available." Instead, they warned that U.S. troops would be attacked with chemical weapons or that the Arab world would explode in anger at the United States -- neither of which happened. It turned out roadside bombs were our main threat.

The Army initially thought it would need 235 armored humvees in Iraq. When that number was exposed as absurdly off, it began to make adjustments. Practically every armored humvee available in the world was sent to Iraq. Production was radically ramped up, going from 15 a month in May 2003 to 450 a month today. Roughly three out of every four humvees in the combat areas are now armored.

Specialist Thomas Wilson, who asked the question, is being hailed

in the press for his bravery. Indeed, asking his question took guts (although it was apparently planted with him by a reporter). But make no mistake, there are much more stirring acts of courage by U.S. soldiers every day in Iraq that somehow escape the media's attention. Ask Rumsfeld a tough question, sue the military, desert or disobey orders, and you achieve fame. But if you happen to sustain a gunshot wound in the battle of Fallujah and ignore it because you so desperately want to stay with your fellow soldiers and believe so much in your mission, well then, no one will ever know your name. (Rummy haters include John McCain in preparing for 2008. - N.P.) - Rich Lowry, *townhall.com*, 12/10/04

ANNAN A SYMPTOM OF THE UN'S SICKNESS

Kofi Annan has had better weeks. On Monday, the UN secretary general woke up to a Wall Street Journal column by Glenn Harlan Reynolds, publisher of the influential InstaPundit website, urging that he be replaced by Vaclav Havel, the much-admired former president of the Czech Republic.

In The New York Times, op-ed eminence William Safire reviewed the revelations that link the massive Oil-for-Food scandal to Annan's own family: Until this year, his son Kojo was getting monthly payments from a firm that had a major Oil-for-Food contract with the UN -- even though he'd left the company in 1998. The corruption enveloping the UN will not begin to dissipate, Safire wrote, until Annan resigns, "having, through initial ineptitude and final obstructionism, brought dishonor on the Secretariat of the United Nations."

Meanwhile, the latest National Review was out, with its cover photo of Annan and the headline, in large red letters: "You're Fired!" An editorial inside insisted that "Annan should either resign, if he is honorable, or be removed, if he is not," while an essay by Nile Gardiner, a former aide to British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, explained why "Kofi's hour is up." With his record, Gardiner observed, "if Annan were the CEO of a Fortune 500 company. . . he would have been forced to resign months ago."

On Wednesday came another call for Annan's ouster, this one from the chairman of the Senate's Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, which has amassed evidence that Saddam Hussein used stolen Oil-for-Food dollars to underwrite terrorism and suborn at least one senior UN official. It is "abundantly clear" that Kofi Annan should resign, Senator Norm Coleman said. "As long as Mr. Annan remains in charge, the world will never be able to learn the full extent of the bribes, kickbacks, and under-the-table payments that took place under the UN's collective nose."

But odds are the world won't much care about getting to the bottom of the latest UN scandal. UN scandals rarely provoke lasting outrage. There was no global uproar when the brutal regime in Libya was chosen to chair the UN's Human Rights Commission. Nothing happened to the UN after its troops allowed Serbs to slaughter 8,000 Muslim men and boys in the "safe haven" of Srebrenica. Sex scandals seem to erupt wherever the UN goes -- the latest involves charges of rape, child abuse, and prostitution by UN personnel in the Congo -- but they never cause heads to roll in Turtle Bay. Annan himself became secretary general despite his failure, when he headed the UN's peacekeeping operations, to pay attention to warnings of genocide in Rwanda.

Why should anything be different this time? Oil-for-Food may be the greatest international rip-off of modern times, it may have strengthened one of the world's bloodiest dictators, it may have deprived countless Iraqis of food and medicine, but if history is any guide, the scandal headlines will fade from view long before the secretary

general does. By week's end, in fact, dozens of governments, including all the permanent members of the Security Council save the United States, had publicly rallied to Annan's support. (US has now. - N.P.) Scandal or no scandal, he will almost certainly serve out the remaining two years of his term.

Which is just as well. Annan is merely a symptom of the UN's sickness, not the cause of it. His resignation would do nothing to reform the UN into the engine of peace and liberty its founders envisioned. Better that Annan remain in place as a symbol of UN fecklessness and failure, and a spur to those who can envision something better.

The UN is a corrupt institution, one that long ago squandered whatever moral legitimacy it once had. The UN's founding documents venerate justice and human rights, but for the past 40 years, the organization has been dominated by a bloc of states -- essentially the Afro-Asian Third World -- most of whose governments routinely pervert justice and violate human rights.

Inside the United Nations, there is no difference between a dictatorship or a democracy: Each gets exactly one vote in the General Assembly. The reason the U.N. indulges vicious regimes like those in North Korea, Syria, and Cuba is that they are members in good standing, and most other governments lack the courage to cross them. The UN cannot be fixed unless that changes -- and that isn't going to change.

Cynicism, hypocrisy, bigotry -- these are the hallmarks of the modern UN. The free peoples of the world, and those yearning to breathe free, deserve better. And what would be better? (My opinion: Old John Birch saying - Get the US out of the UN and the UN out of the US. - N.P.) Jeff Jacoby, *townhall.com*, 12/6/04

EVANGELICALS: MORAL VALUES 101

Please read this as an unambiguous call for evangelical Christians to set aside all embarrassment over putting such an emphasis on issues like abortion, homosexuality, and traditional marriage. "Life is more complicated than that," say our liberal critics. "Reality is more nuanced. There are too many shades of gray to allow folks to reduce the public debate to those few issues."

"Evangelical Christians run the risk," I heard one evangelical leader say last week right after the election, "of allowing themselves to look simple-minded." *Christianity Today* devoted its main editorial during the recent electoral frenzy to a warning against "single-issue politics."

The condescending arrogance of such a caution is rooted in two giant falsehoods:

Falsehood No 1 is the assertion that abortion, homosexuality, and marriage are just not the black-and-white issues some of us would like to suggest they are. They all probably need - ahem - a good bit more discussion.

Falsehood No. 2 is the assumption that those of us who harp on abortion, homosexuality, and marriage have never given thought to issues like poverty and economic justice, to racism and minority rights, to war and international fairness, to healthcare and environmental concerns.

Both those falsehoods have gotten lots of ink and airtime since the discovery by the media, right after the Nov. 2 election, that "moral values" had played a big part in motivating those who voted for President Bush. Neither comprehending what this was all about, on the one hand, nor being willing, on the other hand, to concede such moral high ground to Mr. Bush's backers, many in the media and on the Democratic left have repeatedly stressed these two points, But like so many falsehoods, they sound much more plausible than they really are.

So what makes the debate about abortion, homosexuality, and traditional marriage quite different from the debate about the other is-

sues? The answer is amazingly simple -- and don't let anyone talk you out of that fact! The answer is that on the issues of abortion, homosexuality, and marriage, one side is claiming that certain behavior is just plain wrong, while the other claims it is not only right, but to be defended. On the other issues, the debate is not about right and wrong, but about extent and about appropriate methodology. . . .

Defenders of abortion, homosexual rights, and new forms of marriage are saying that the act of killing human babies is behavior that should be defended. They are saying that those committed to homosexual behavior should be encouraged to take pride in that choice. And they are saying that same-sex marriages might well be models of commitment from which heterosexuals might properly learn.

Let's quit pussyfooting. Besides claiming that all the wisdom of human history concerning such matters has been wrong, these assertions are outrages against our basic humanity. What is there to discuss about killing a baby? Or, as a friend of mine noted several years ago, anybody who's ever played with Tinkertoys knows that homosexual behavior just doesn't work. And the claim that *Heather Has Two Mommies* is preposterously false on the face of it; nobody in biological history ever had two moms or two dads. - Joel Belz, *WORLD*, 11/27/04

OK TO LEGISLATE MORALITY?

When moral Americans ask for laws to outlaw abortion, drugs, alcohol, gambling, or pornography, liberals cry: "You can't legislate morality!" But most legislation relates to morality. When we make it illegal to murder, steal, or rape, we are imposing our morality on murderers, thieves, and rapists to prevent them from imposing their immorality on their victims. The same is true for assault, fraud, prostitution, tax evasion, etc. Liberals don't want *biblical* morality legislated, but they want to legislate their secular-humanist morality instead. It is often a question of *whose* morality is being legislated. - *Calvary Contender*, 11/04

DO YOU KNOW STD'S ARE BRUTAL TEACHERS

Satan has proved as good as his word. He once said of forbidden fruit, "When you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil," and three chapters into the Bible we have all kinds of knowing we didn't have before: knowledge of misery, fear, alienation, and death.

Next up, knowledge of rapacious venereal diseases. My high school days in the 60's seem Edenic by contrast. We knew only of simple gonorrhea and syphilis (a shot of penicillin would make you right as rain) and only one out of 32 of your classmates had a sexually transmitted disease. In 1983, it jumped to one in 18; in 1996, to one in four. and with over 30 new STDs today, 30 percent of them incurable, that's a lot of polysyllables to know. (Amaze your friends by dropping words like *condyloma acuminatum*.)

But knowing is a political business in this world. Meg Meeker, in *Epidemic: How Teen Sex is Killing Our Kids*, writes that one in five Americans over the age of 12 has genital herpes. (Reread that statistic and let it hit you.) Why the silence? "I think honestly, a lot of teachers and physicians are intimidated by Hollywood and by businesses which seem to have taken over our kids and are selling sex," Dr. Meeker says. This from a woman who used to hand out Depo-Provera like Altoids at her women's college until she started seeing kids come back to her office with cervical cancer and herpes.

I checked out the 10th-grade health curriculum in our district, and page 21 of a 72-page syllabus is the entire year's coverage of all known venereal diseases. Trendy AIDS gets a page to itself (though

one in 250 Americans has AIDS, while one in five has a viral STD). But while you were all feeling sorry (or smug) over Africa's HIV woes, "More women died in 1997 in this country of cancer-related illness due to [human papillomavirus, aka HPV, aka 'genital warts'] than died of AIDS," according to Pam Stenzel, founder of Enlighten Communications, Inc., who tells teens that unwanted pregnancy isn't their biggest problem.

A post-Eden knowledge sampling: Chlamydia, a bacteria with no symptoms in 90 percent of the teens who carry it. It brings a 25 percent chance of lifelong sterility the first time you get it, a 50 percent chance on the second and a good chance of never having children on the third. . . .

Genital herpes is a virus. Read: NO CURE. . . .

As many as 20 million Americans carry the herpes virus and 40 million have the genital wart virus. . . .

I know a young lady who thinks she just had a thorough STD checkup. She didn't. Detection for HPV (the most common and most contagious of the lot, and a disease that laughs at condoms and the Clintonian notion that oral sex isn't sex) involves a very expensive blood test, and most clinics don't do it.

Thank you, Satan, for more knowledge than we ever cared to have. - Andree Seu, *WORLD*, 6/12/04

THE BLESSING OF SEXUAL ABSTINENCE

Since you won't hear this in school, here are a few survey findings from research concerning abstinence. According to 1996 data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health, lower sexual activity among adolescents is correlated with high levels of well being. In fact, sexually active girls are over three times as likely to report depressive symptoms than their abstaining counterparts and sexually active boys are over twice as likely to report depressive symptoms. Amazingly, these two groups report higher incidence of suicide attempts; boys in particular are at 8 times the risk for a suicide attempt if they are sexually active.

Young women are particularly vulnerable. According to the sex survey Social Organization of Sexuality, by Edward Laumann and colleagues, "young women often go along with intercourse the first time, finding little physical pleasure in it. . ." The report notes that there are "dramatic costs for young women" which are "increasing as young women have intercourse earlier in the life course." (p. 347). Sounds like delaying sexual involvement is a good thing both emotionally and sexually.

Concerning marital sex, the same report indicates that "a monogamous sexual partnership embedded in a formal marriage evidently produces the greatest satisfaction and pleasure." (p. 364). Further, religious women are more likely to report being sexually satisfied than non-religious counterparts. These are the women who are more likely to have waited until they can follow the teachings of their faith about being "embedded in a formal marriage" before they have sex. However, presumably abstaining works for those of all faiths and those with none.

Why don't health educators want kids to know these things? Good question. Ask it sometime at a school board meeting.

Instead religious people and those who favor abstinence until marriage are usually portrayed as prudish, repressed folks afraid to talk about sex, let alone practice it. Rather it appears those smiles may be more than religious euphoria.

Given the positive health and mental health benefits of abstinence, it looks to me like these research findings should be prominently featured in sex education curricula. - Dr. Warren Throckmorton, *townhall.com*, 12/10/04

ACLU'S UGLY NATURE

"A Christian law firm has filed a brief in a case involving government officials, the American Civil Liberties Union, and judges who are accused of trying to undermine the state's laws defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman." (Agape Press, 10/25/04). It is a sad commentary on any government to have officials who would side with such a liberal law firm as the ACLU. They will defend abortionists, challenge the teaching of Christianity and prayer in public schools. They bestowed their National Civil Liberties Award on Mel White, homosexual Methodist preacher. They also support the legalization of drugs, child pornography, and prostitution. It supports tax exemption for satanists, mandatory sex education, and the right of homosexuals to become Big Brothers and scout masters. Nothing about this law firm is American, nor is it Civil, it produces no Liberty, it is not in the business of blending the Union. They have all the attributes of the wicked one. (2 Thes. 2:9,10) "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." (My name for them has been American Communist Legal Union. That is pretty accurate. - N.P.) - *Plains Baptist Challenger*, 11/04

SPIES & DIPLOMATS: SHUT UP & DO THE JOB

The professionals at the *CIA* and the *State Department* are dedicated, hard-working, committed, patriotic, brave, clean and reverent. Now that I've said that plainly, can we talk candidly about all that is glaringly dysfunctional at these agencies?

Start with the *CIA* which in the 1970s and '80s didn't foresee the Khomeini revolution in Iran, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, or the collapse of the Soviet Union. The *CIA* didn't know that Saddam Hussein was close to developing nuclear weapons -- a fact discovered only as an unintended consequence of the first Gulf War. The agency underestimated the threat posed by a growing radical Islamist movement in the 1990s. Its Directorate of Intelligence didn't grasp how menacing al Qaeda was becoming, and its Directorate of Operations did nothing about the Afghan training camps that were graduating thousands of terrorists.

Astonishingly, its analysts never imagined terrorists using hijacked passenger planes as guided missiles. If they had, surely they would at least have recommended reinforcing cockpit doors, arming pilots, more effective passenger screening -- something.

The *CIA* failed to track Saddam's Weapons of Mass Destruction -- weapons he once had but, apparently, destroyed secretly at some point before the American-led invasion.

That's only a fraction of what the *CIA* didn't accomplish. Yet the organization had plenty of time this year to leak information intended to damage President Bush's re-election chances.

In addition, the *CIA* permitted one of the most senior analysts to write, publish and promote a book called "Imperial Hubris" -- an undisguised attack on the policies of the Bush White House. Whether you agree or disagree with Anonymous is beside the point (I disagree, but that's for another day). The *CIA* is supposed to provide intelligence to policy makers. The *CIA* is not supposed to make policy for policy makers, nor tell the President how they think he should do his job.

Shockingly, the *CIA* leadership not only permitted this -- they let taxpayers finance it. Anonymous didn't even take a leave of absence from his day job.

And what can one say about the use of the pen name "Anonymous?" Only that it was intended to mislead the public into thinking

the writer was some kind of undercover operative when, in fact, it's no secret that Anonymous is Michael Scheuer, a desk-bound analyst at Langley, who had long been making these arguments around town (including, at one dinner, to me and a few other select guests).

So now, President Bush has given the *CIA* new leadership. **Porter Goss**, a former *CIA* operative himself, resigned from the House where he had chaired the intelligence oversight committee to take on the enormous challenge of whipping the *CIA* back into shape.

Such transformations are never easy. The Los Angeles Times reported this week that two senior *CIA* officials quit because of confrontations with Goss's new chief of staff, Patrick Murray, "who many accuse of having a brusque manner."

What kind of spy quits because his boss is "brusque?" And what does this suggest about the *CIA*'s descent from the world's toughest espionage agency to another sclerotic Washington bureaucracy?

Meanwhile, over at Foggy Bottom, **Condoleezza Rice** also has her work cut out for her.

The career employees at the State Department and in the Foreign Service are mostly liberal Democrats who have been as susceptible as other readers of the New York Review of Books to the widening of the ideological and partisan divides.

Early in the Bush administration, a retired Foreign Service officer who continued to maintain close ties with the department told me that many employees at State were simply refusing to put energy into furthering Bush policies of which they disapproved. She asked one why he didn't resign as a matter of principle. "Easy for you to say," came the reply. "You don't have kids to put through college."

Others referred to Bush and his foreign policy team as "the Christmas help," meaning they were confident this President would soon be gone and then they'd be able to get back to business as usual.

The few Bush loyalists -- and those who don't believe they're entitled to veto the decisions of a sitting President -- were referred to as "the American interests section."

Can such a state of affairs continue? Unfortunately, it can. But it shouldn't, certainly not now, in this critical era.

Intelligence and foreign policy professionals need to stop being defensive about past mistakes. What's done is done and there's plenty of blame to go around -- to past administrations, Republican and Democratic alike, to Congress, and to the media.

Now is the time for these public servants to return to doing the jobs the public pays them to do. The intelligence agencies must find better ways to ferret out useful information and supply it to the White House -- whose occupant has been re-elected by a majority of Americans. Diplomats need to implement and defend the policies of the President they serve -- whether or not they voted for that President.

Sure, these professionals should be encouraged to advise, question and offer alternative approaches. But when the President says, "Here's what I've decided," the only responses are "Yes, sir," or "I quit."

It is the task of Porter Goss and Condi Rice to communicate this dramatically changed reality to the people who work for them. Doing so won't make them popular. But they owe it to this President -- and to future presidents as well. - Clifford D. May, *townhall.com*, 11/21/04

FREE HEALTH CARE

Let's start out by not quibbling with America's socialistic false claim that health-care service is a human right that people should have regardless of whether they can pay for it or not and that it should be free. Before we buy into this socialist agenda, we might check out just what happens when health-care services are "free." Let's look at our neighbor to the north -- Canada.

The Fraser Institute, a Vancouver, B.C.-based think tank, has done yeoman's work keeping track of Canada's socialized health-care system. It has just come out with its 13th annual waiting-list survey. It shows that the average time a patient waited between referral from a general practitioner to treatment rose from 16.5 weeks in 2001-02 to 17.7 weeks in 2003. Saskatchewan had the longest average waiting time of nearly 30 weeks, while Ontario had the shortest, 14 weeks.

Waiting lists also exist for diagnostic procedures such as computer tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and ultrasound. Depending on what province and the particular diagnostic procedure, the waiting times can range from two to 24 weeks.

As reported in a December 2003 story by Kerri Houston for the Frontiers of Freedom Institute titled "Access Denied: Canada's Healthcare System Turns Patients Into Victims," in some instances, patients die on the waiting list because they become too sick to tolerate a procedure. Houston says that hip-replacement patients often end up non-ambulatory while waiting an average of 20 weeks for the procedure and that's after having waited 13 weeks just to see the specialist. The wait to get diagnostic scans followed by the wait for the radiologist to read them just might explain why Cleveland, Ohio has become Canada's hip-replacement center.

Adding to Canada's medical problems is the exodus of doctors. According to a March 2003 story in Canada News (www.canoe.ca), about 10,000 doctors left Canada during the 1990s. Compounding the exodus of doctors is the drop in medical school graduates. According to Houston, Ontario has chosen to turn to nurses to replace its bolting doctors. It's "creating" 369 new positions for nurse practitioners to take up the slack for the doctor shortage. . . .

Health care can have a zero price to the user, but that doesn't mean it's free or has a zero cost. The problem with a good or service having a zero price is that demand is going to exceed supply. When price isn't allowed to make demand equal supply, other measures must be taken. One way to distribute the demand over a given supply is through queuing -- making people wait. Another way is to have a medical czar who decides who is eligible, under what conditions, for a particular procedure -- for example, no hip replacement or renal dialysis for people over 70 or no heart transplants for smokers.

I'm wondering just how many Americans would like Canada's long waiting lists, medical czars deciding what treatments we get and an exodus of doctors. - Walter Williams, *townhall.com*, 7/21/04

BEWARE OF BIBLE DIETS

My friends, the Bible does not command any certain diet and there is no such thing as one special diet that Christians should follow.

Yet George Malkmus has his "Hallelujah Diet," and Don Colbert has the "What Would Jesus Eat" diet, and now Jordan Rubin has "The Maker's Diet," all boasting to be Bible-based. Rubin claims that "God gave me this health message" ("New Diet Plans Take Cue from the Bible," *USA Today*, June 10).

In fact, there is no Bible diet plan.

From the days of Adam to the flood of Noah, it appears that men were vegetarians, stemming from God's command in Gen. 1:29-30. After the flood, men were instructed to eat meat as well as vegetables (Gen. 9:3). Under the Law of Moses, the nation Israel continued to eat meat, but some animals were designated clean and others, unclean. The Lord Jesus Christ was a Jew and lived under the law and therefore followed the Mosaic dietary system.

When the church was established, all former restrictions were done away. The New Testament condemns those who teach that men should "abstain from meats," labeling them dangerous false teachers (I

Tim. 4:1-2), and plainly states, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."

Thus, as there is no divine command in regard to dieting, diet is a personal and individual matter.

Each person is different, with his own metabolism, taste, culture, lifestyle and occupation, and health, and diet must be determined on this basis and not on some plan purporting to be from the Bible.

I am not saying that all diets are equally healthy; I am merely saying that there is no one diet that is required by the Bible. - *O Timothy*, 7/04

MORE EVOLUTIONARY NONSENSE

The front page of the Sydney Morning Herald for October 29 featured "an artist's impression" of "a previously unknown species of miniature human barely a metre tall." The drawing depicts a small man walking erect with a slightly ape-like head. . . . Evolutionists claim this is a different "species" and they are calling it "homo floresiensis." The remains were discovered in a cave on the remote Indonesian island of Flores. An accompanying photo from Nature magazine shows the small skull of "homo floresiensis" alongside that of a "modern man." The skulls have identical characteristics; the only difference is the size. If not viewed through the thick glasses of evolution, it is a simple matter to understand that "homo floresiensis" was not another species at all, but was a tribe of small people who became isolated on Flores. There are small people alive today. - David Cloud, *Christian News*, 11/8/04

THE BEST SOCIAL SECURITY: WORK

Could we raise as soon as possible the typical age for beginning to draw Social Security to 70, with charitable exception for those who need immediate help?

President Bush was right to say last Saturday, "If we do not act soon, Social Security will not be there for our children and grandchildren." I prefer his proposal, particularly the semi-privatizing part, to raising payroll taxes. But it still spills red ink as far as the eye can see.

That doesn't have to happen if we understand how much has changed since Social Security came into being almost 70 years ago. Life expectancy was lower, the physical expectations of most jobs higher, and the wear and tear on most individuals greater.

A Social Security stipend for those who made it to 65 was a present and sometimes a lifesaver for those worn out by factory work. Today, though, with improved health care, most people make it to 65 (or 66, scheduled to be the vesting age for most baby boomers) fit as only a slightly dented fiddle.

It's likely that the average person at 70 today is healthier than the average person at 65 back then, so raising the age to 70 would not be an undue hardship. The harder question, though, is whether such a change would be cheating people out of retirement.

In considering this question, we should realize that retirement is not a happy time for millions of individuals. Too many people who retire feel useless. Some exacerbate the problem by deliberately moving far away from children and grandchildren into elderly-only apartments and condominiums.

Ask yourself about the happiness of the people between 65 and 70 that you know: Are those who are working, perhaps on a part-time basis, perhaps in a different career, less happy than those who wonder how to fill up their days? And if you believe in God, ask whether it's right for a healthy person to stop using the occupational talents God has bestowed on him.

I think of Testsunao (Ted) Yamamori, born in 1937 in Japan and the head of the relief organization Food for the Hungry since 1981. Over the next 20 years, he grew the organization enormously until he "retired" in 2001. Since then, he has written two books on China and co-authored or edited three more. He consults widely and will be a guest professor at three seminaries or universities in 2005 and 2006. He says, "There is no retirement for a Christian worker."

Not everyone can be a world traveler like Ted. But I also think of Bea Crow, who was food service director at Alpine Camp in Mentone, Ala., for 69 years, starting when she was 17. When she turned 65, she stayed on and enjoyed it so much that she stayed on past 70 and past 80.

A doctor decreed a year ago that at age 86 Mrs. Crow could no longer face the stress of feeding 350 hungry people three times a day. She reluctantly left the camp kitchen, but as if to show that the doctor was at least part wrong, she went out and planted the largest vegetable garden in the county.

We should remember that the tragedy described in chapter three of Genesis ("the fall of man") made working conditions much harder than they would otherwise have been, but the opportunity for productive labor is a blessing from God, who commands us to labor on six-sevenths of the days.

Those who believe in the importance of serving others should lead the way by fighting against the temptation we all have, and maybe especially as we age, to close in upon ourselves. Maybe the rest of the country will then follow, and Social Security will focus on those who really need it. - Marvin Olasky, *townhall.com*, 12/16/04

(I retired on my 75th birthday after pastoring the same church for over 43 years. My health is good. Since I did not retire from serving God and preaching His Word, I am still doing both and am often available for preaching, teaching, counseling and whatever else a church might need.

Most of my income is from Social Security which I paid into for over 60 years. I am grateful to God for the strength and opportunities to still be in the ministry He called me into in 1951. This Sunday (Dec. 19), I will teach Sunday School, Monday preach in the Clayton County Jail, Tuesday preach at Atlanta City Baptist Rescue Mission and teach at a Nursing Home on the 30th. I am glad for these open doors and praying for others as the Lord leads.

If I can be of help in my home church or any other, I will do my best by the grace of God. - N.P.)

MENTAL ATROPHY

Andrew Solomon has written an article in the *New York Times*, *The Closing of the American Book*, which speaks of the frightening shift toward "mental atrophy," citing surveys showing how few people read for pleasure any more, and this among every group: old and young, wealthy and poor, educated and uneducated, men and women." There is a basic social divide between those who read and those who don't, since readers discover life is an accrual of fresh experience and knowledge."

Among those who don't read, most of their knowledge comes from the electronic media, "[Reading] requires effort, concentration, attention," says Solomon. It is stimulating to thought. Most people use television as a means of turning their minds off, not on. For those for whom television replaces reading, the consequences are far-reaching.

Explaining why depression is on the rise, the author speaks of the loneliness that comes from spending the day with a TV or a computer or video screen. Successful people read. Hear an excellent

preacher, and you're listening to a man who reads!

Columnist George Will writes of the new perils that open up through the decline in reading. Only 56.9 percent of Americans say they read a book of any kind within the past year. Only 46.7 percent of adults read any literature for pleasure. The Bible says to "give attendance to reading" (I Tim. 4:13). - Dr. Hugh Pyle, *Sword of the Lord*, 8/27/04

THE DA VINCI CODE BY DAN BROWN

(I am not recommending that you read this book, but that you be aware of its existence and influence and false teaching. - N.P.)

The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown has sold more than 7 million copies in a little over a year. That sets a record for sales within a one-year period, so that its publisher can claim that the book is the biggest-selling adult novel of all time.

The book is indeed a thriller, hard to put down, with its exciting action, twists and turns, and unfolding puzzles. But this work of fiction puts forward certain ideas as true, and a good number of readers are accepting them as true: Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene, and their bloodline continues to this day. His true teachings had to do with the worship of "the sacred feminine." The church suppressed his message with its patriarchal institutions and dogmatic theology, twisting the teachings of Jesus into an oppressive life-denying system of harsh moral rules, the subjugation of women, the repression of sexual freedom, and sinister conspiracies to control society. Traces of the true Christian goddess worship can be found throughout the history of Western art, literature, and architecture, because the true faith has been preserved by an elite secret society.

All of these assertions are just false. They are ably refuted in works like *Cracking the Da Vinci Code* by James L. Garlon and Peter Jones and *Breaking the Da Vinci Code* by Darrell L. Bock. Even secular historians know these claims are nonsense. (No, Jesus did not get married; His bride is the Church. No, there were not 80 other gospels written earlier than those that made it into the New Testament. No, the Emperor Constantine did not compile the Bible. No, the Priory of Zion is not an ancient society; it was started in the 1800s. You can say a confident "no" to just about every claim made by Mr. Brown.)

But this novel, with its enormous popularity, is just one attempt, in the words of postmodernist jargon, to deconstruct Christianity and to reconstruct it into a completely different religion. - Gene Edward Veith, *WORLD*, 7/3/04

MARRIAGE

The National Marriage Project has released its report on American marriage for the year 2004. Among the statistics presented in the document, entitled, "The State of Our Unions," are these:

- The divorce rate is double what it was in 1960, though it is slightly lower than it was at its high point in 1980. "For the average couple marrying in recent years, the lifetime probability of divorce or separation remains close to 50 percent."
- "Over half of all first marriages are now preceded by living together, compared to virtually none 50 years ago."
- Nearly 10 million unmarried adults are living with a heterosexual partner.
- Forty percent fewer people got married in 2002 as compared to 1970.
- Almost one in three children live in single-parent families. - *What In The World*, Vol. 37, #11

LOSS OF CHARACTER IN SPORTS EVENTS

Two recent events in the world of professional sports offer important insights into American life today.

The NFL story concerns an ad ABC TV showed before Monday Night Football to promote its hit show, "Desperate Housewives." . . . ABC and the NFL have apologized.

The NBA story concerns the worst American sports riot in memory. At the Detroit arena, members of the Indiana Pacers ran into the stands and fought with fans after fighting with Detroit Pistons players. . . .

This is an example of how deep the values divide in America is that liberal commentators overwhelmingly ridiculed concern with ABC showing the raunchy promo right before televising the widely watched Monday Night Football game. From The New York Times sports pages to USA Today's editorial page, there was annoyance with those who objected to the promo, not with the promo itself. . . .

Liberal opinion makers tend to have little regard for an issue that deeply concerns most conservatives -- how high or low the decency level of public life is. That is why liberals are more likely to be apathetic toward public cursing as well as to public displays of sexual behavior. Indeed, they consider it the height of conservative hypocrisy for Republicans to order an R-rated movie in their hotel rooms, or curse privately and then object to such behaviors when done publicly.

Yet the difference (which is lost on some conservatives as well) is enormous, aside from what children will see. For those -- conservative or liberal -- who do not see the difference between public and private behavior, I cite the simple example of a man relieving himself.

In private it is perfectly appropriate; in public it is highly inappropriate.

In all liberal societies, people are losing a sense of what is appropriate. For most liberals today, the issue of appropriate behavior pales in comparison to prescription drug prices and other economic concerns. That is why Janet Jackson's breast baring at the NFL Super Bowl and the ABC promo are no big deal to most liberals. Yet, to most social conservatives, they represent a society in decline. If you wanted a clear values difference, that is about as clear as it gets.

Regarding the fan-inspired riot in Detroit, it is widely believed that alcohol played a major role in the fans' behavior -- such as screaming obscenities at players and throwing objects at them. The availability of alcohol at sporting events despite the fact that fan behavior obviously deteriorates as games progress and self-control weakens is another example of big business putting profits above everything.

But there is a deeper lesson.

From the beginning of the crusade against tobacco I have argued that the war against tobacco was a sign of a morally confused, if not morally lost, generation. That this generation chose to make war on smoking (which is dangerous to one's health but leads to no evil) rather than on alcohol (which accompanies most child abuse, spousal beatings, acquaintance rape and other violent crimes) was almost all one needed to know about the elite's changed moral priorities since the last crusade against a vice (Prohibition). - Dennis Prager, t.h.com, 11/23

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