

The price of war, the cost of peace: the role of the U.S.

U.S. Middle East policy lacks efficacy; plans should be reevaluated.

Last week I discussed further the victim/aggressor cycle, as well as the path to peace model and conceptualization of its strengths and weaknesses. Then I looked at how it was being implemented in the Great Britain and Northern Ireland



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conflict and discussed the measures of its success. This week, for the final installment, I will write about how this all affects the United States of America. What is our nation's role when conflict breaks out in the world? How can our nation stop perpetuating the cycle? With regard to the conflict in Israel and Palestine, there is no stopping U.S. involvement. Regardless of whether anyone believes we have a right to be involved in that conflict, we are now inexorably intertwined in the conflict itself, and hopefully the solution. The first step the U.S. can take towards stopping violence, if that

indeed is our goal, is to behave equally and equitably towards both parties involved. Dialogue needs to occur between Sharon, Arafat, and leaders of extremist groups Hamas and al-Aqsa. Before any lasting peace can be accomplished, these groups are going to have to be satisfied. If the U.S. has taken upon itself to be involved in the peace process, then its actions need to reflect that desire.

Unabashed favoritism towards Israel by the U.S. estranges Palestinian leaders from the peace talks. It was, however, a step in the right direction when President Bush condemned Sharon's tank presence surrounding Arafat's Ramallah compound.

I was very pleased to see that President Bush could identify that as being counterproductive. It is my sincere hope that the Bush administration will continue in this vein, bring Sharon and Arafat back to the table, and successfully mediate a lasting peace involving the creation of a sovereign Palestinian state. If peace is our goal, then that is what is required.

To move this concept even closer to home, let us look at the situation between the U.S. and Iraq. What can the U.S. do to prevent violence and bring about a peaceful conclusion? Warning: I am about to suggest something radical. The U.S. should get out of the Middle East and stop controlling Middle East oil.

The U.S. is on the top of the world food chain now and Middle Eastern states are weak and not unified. This, I

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am afraid, will not always be the case. Bush and his administration should be mindful of the future consequences of the current proposed actions.

As the days go on it is becoming increasingly clear that the U.S. is not thinking far enough into the future and is planning on invading Iraq. Before I continue with my comments on this issue, I want to make it perfectly clear that I believe Saddam Hussein to be very bad person, capable of horrible acts. I firmly believe that he must be relieved of his position as political leader of Iraq. However, I see neither invasion nor economic sanctions as being the best route to that end.

If we engage in war with Iraq, it is necessary for everyone in this country to understand what that will mean, both for us and for the Iraqi people. It will not be a repeat of the Gulf War. Tanks will not square off against one another across the desert.

SCUD missile sites and radar installations in the desert will not be the primary targets of our bombs. Saddam did have one same thing to say in regard to this proposition – it will be "a fierce war." Our planes will bomb cities in an effort to hit Saddam, and civilians will die by the multitude. Our

soldiers will march on towns and cities in a search for Saddam, and the blood of civilians will stain the streets. I have no doubt that our military is far superior to the military might of Iraq, but I do not see us using it in this way as being the best possible course of action.

Since the end of the Gulf War 500,000 Iraqi children under the age of 10 have died of starvation and easily curable diseases. This is the result of our economic sanctions, but Saddam still rules.

When presented with this fact and asked if she thought it was worth it, former Secretary of State Madeline Albright said, "It is a difficult choice, but I think it is worth the price." Half a million children!

To quote Will Campbell from last week's university Chapel service, "Dare we talk of terrorism?" It is therefore clear to me that economic sanctions are worthless in this case, only hurting the innocent while the guilty feast.

This type of attack will only perpetuate the victim/aggressor cycle the U.S. has created in Iraq. I am afraid of what will happen if we attack. If it is true that Saddam has weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, biological, or chemical, then what better excuse does he need to use them than an invasion?

Even if he has no delivery system capable of sending one across the Atlantic, he can deploy them against our Middle East bases and troops. If

that happens I fear the U.S. will only retaliate in kind, trading blow for blow. That must be prevented at all costs! I believe that once one nuclear weapon is let fly, the sky will be darkened with them.

The truth of the matter is that the U.S. is a great nation, but a young nation by the world's standards. To some, the U.S. right now is going through the mood swings typical of a teenage child. We cannot stay a teenage nation for much longer; we must mature and start behaving in a socially, politically and economically responsible manner. There is no better time to begin than now.

No one should ever have to believe that the death of half a million children is worth any price, any cause. No one should have to believe that life is so bad that death is preferable. No one should be so convinced that they are worthless human beings as to perform suicide bombings. These are all indications on the world's social barometer that something is grievously wrong.

Instead of ignoring those signs and perpetuating their cause, the U.S. should behave like the great nation it is and seek peace, not war. The price of war has been too terrible. It is now time to invest in peace.

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Greed for wins leads to big spending in baseball season

Collective-bargaining agreement to curb expenses a good first step, but falls short.

Money, no problems. Anyone who doesn't buy into that philosophy needs to look no further than the current playoff situation in Major League Baseball for proof that money spent does not equal rings won. The New York Yankees, barons of the

Like all good things though, regular season wins do not equal playoff performance ...

Getting to the playoffs is the hard part: staying there is relatively easy. You pay big dollars to get your team into the post-season and then hope their dynamic is right to keep them going.

keep them going. The difference between this Yankee team and the Yankees of the late '90s was that those Yankees spent the big money to keep the dynamic together for the post-season; these Yankees spend the big money to get to the post-season.

That's why low-budget teams like the Twins and the Angels are still playing baseball and the big-budget Yankees are at home watching baseball.

Does this mean that we're going to see a radical change in the way that teams will be put together under the new collective bargaining agreement? Early indications point to no.

Right now it looks like the average payroll is going to stay the same next season with most teams staying in their respective spending bracket. This isn't because teams fear the next luxury tax and increased revenue sharing, but because revenue was down last season.

In fact, it doesn't appear that the new collective bargaining agreement is going to have any effect on small-market teams; most low-budget owners plan on pocketing the money instead of putting it back into the team.

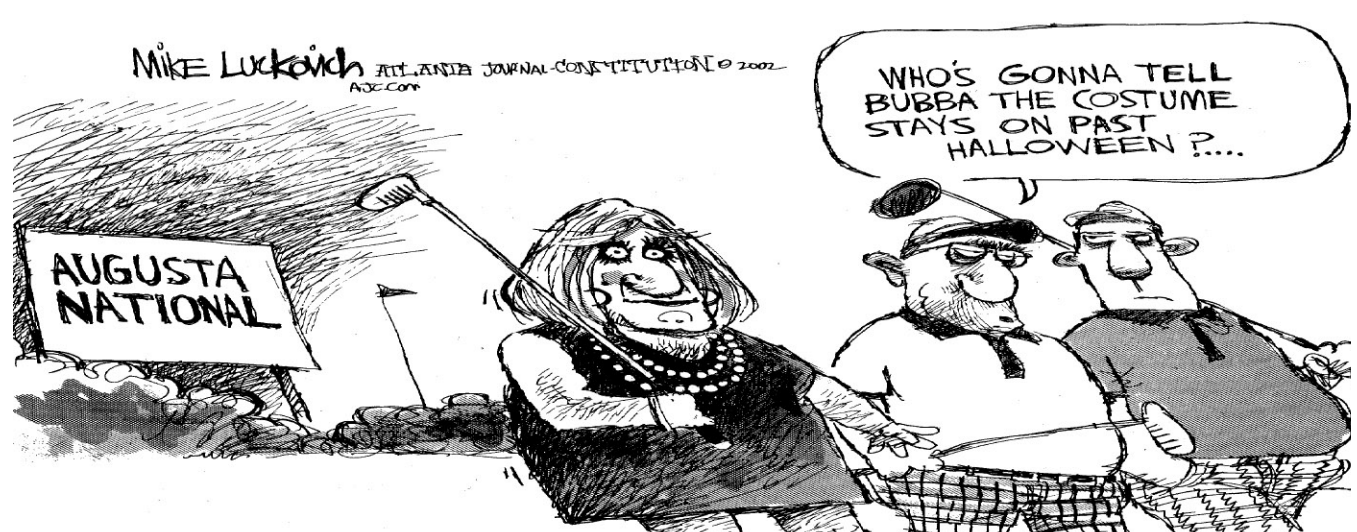
That's where the new agreement falls short. Without a mandatory "minimum spending" clause there's no reason for an owner of a low-budget team to spend more money.

Similarly, the increased luxury tax is a possible bust next season – with only three teams predicted to pay a tax and only an estimated \$10 million to be collected and distributed, there's little chance that teams will slow down their spending ways. If a team goes over the tax barrier with a free agent signing or a trade, they simply have to pay the league a little bit extra; it is a slap on the wrist. This tax is then distributed among the lower-spending teams, but owners still don't have any incentive to spend.

The bargaining agreement reached Aug. 30 was monumental in how it signaled that baseball's owners and players were closer than ever, as well as more committed to fixing baseball's problems. The real test will arise in 2006, when this latest agreement expires and a new agreement will be needed.

Owners and players had great foresight to see that baseball needed some kind of damage control, but that's really all this bargaining agreement is: a bandage over the wound. Now the question is, will that bandage hold for four years, and will they be ready to fix things by then?

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O'Flaherty was more than a scholar

O'Flaherty, professor emeritus, remembered as mentor and friend.

It must have been the spring of 1987, my second year at Wake Forest. I was sitting in Professor Will Sanders' office listening to the wisdom of time, eyeing the books that stretched across the length of

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the room and up to the ceiling. It was then – in one of those moments that the Greeks referred to as *kairos* – that I noticed a curious article about the wise men coming to Bethlehem.

The article was written in English, apparently for an international journal, but it referred to something written in German several centuries ago. The author's name was James C. O'Flaherty, and the subject of the article was a minor work by Johann Georg Hamann. I will never be able to dissociate these names.

The one introduced me to the other. Little did I know at the time that James O'Flaherty was a prominent Hamann scholar who published the first full translation of one of Hamann's principal works, *The Socratic Memorabilia*. Little did I know that he single-handedly started the Wake Forest German department years ago. And little did I know that he lived just around the corner on Faculty Drive.

He had retired some years before, I was told, and was now a professor emeritus. But he needed someone to help him put together a bibliography of his personal Hamann library, his *Hamanniana*, as he happily referred to it; and for some reason, through some obscure providence, I volunteered. It was a pleasant walk, even if a short one, past the wood behind Luter Residence Hall to Faculty Drive. There was also something of an adventure in it. Not an adventure by today's standards, perhaps, but still an adventure –

It really didn't matter what we talked about, even if I was always eager to talk about Hamann. The point was to see the man, whom I greatly admired and whom I had grown to love.

something like entering one of C. S. Lewis' portals. I had to wait a few minutes after ringing the bell, but it made the greeting better. For it's not every day that one meets a gentleman. And so it was every afternoon that I would go to 2164 Faculty Drive to work and to visit.

Before long, my task was completed. I had indexed the famed collection of *Hamanniana*, the envy even of European scholars. There were also the occasional thrills of copying letters from Isaiah Berlin, Bertrand Russell and Werner Heisenberg – people with whom O'Flaherty corresponded. But I scarcely remember that now.

What I remember is the man around whom this great world turned. Perhaps there's something of fancy in my recollection, and certainly there is admiration. But, after all, it's not every day that you get to talk to a man of learning, who knows the history of ideas and who looks up into the air before he speaks. That was when he theorized, especially about the nature of reason and what he liked to call its "intuitive" and "discursive" modes.

In the end, it always came back to the subject of unity and language in Hamann, which was the subject of his dissertation at the University of Chicago. By this he meant the unity of subject and object which language at once naturally and miraculously achieves.

And so we spoke of abstractions and "mere relations," of metaphors and "monosyllabic lightning" – a term from Hamann that he often quoted and that signals the wonder of poetic language. Of course, we didn't always speak of academic matters. In fact, we more often talked about his theology professors at Chicago and their endless disputations, the *rabies*

theologorum as he liked to call it. Or about his years as a scholar in Heidelberg in the 1930s and academic life in Germany at that time; or about the German scientific community and the extent of its resistance to National Socialism.

It really didn't matter what we talked about, even if I was always eager to talk about Hamann. The point was to see the man, whom I greatly admired and whom I had grown to love. I was also lucky to have met his wife Lucy before she passed away several years ago. I knew that she was an artist from the portraits that hung in the living room, but I had never known the extent of her work.

Then, this past spring during a visit, which would be one of my last, another portal opened, this time onto the porch I had never seen: there in the afternoon light stood the old *Hamanniana*, like a monument, surrounded by countless paintings and sketches. The scene now stands sketched in my memory – a metaphor for a man and a world I was privileged to know and will sorely miss.

It is an odd thing how entire worlds can pass unnoticed. In the case of this man, however, this man of letters, this passing is especially hard to bear. Anyone who has known James O'Flaherty must know that Wake Forest recently lost one of its greatest scholars and gentlemen – a scholar of the old world, who had a sublime disregard for, almost an innocence of, academic disputes and who therefore spoke in the tradition of Longinus, that is, sublimely.

Wake Forest will go on, and Faculty Drive will continue in its shadows. But for me Wake Forest will never be quite the same: there will no longer be an enchanted wood between Luter and the O'Flaherty home; there will no longer be any cherished conversations about Hamann and so much else; and there will be no final word, except to say – with Christian hope and expectation – *conversatio nostra est in caelo*.

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