

US gets involved in Israel violence

Even as the violence in Israel seemed to intensify, thoughts in this country turned to how the United States should involve itself.

The latest news on Wednesday included a bus bombing in Tel Aviv and Israeli air strikes against tunnels and bridges in Gaza, the Palestinian region within Israel that has been the focus of so much conflict over the years. But about mid-day in the U.S., the news came that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had helped broker a cease-fire agreement.

Was this the right thing for the United States, that staunch ally of Israel, to do? Or should we have put troops on the ground to support Israel.

Given the state of the world today, the United States' course seems clear. We should continue to support Israel, but we should do so through diplomatic efforts aimed at both stopping the current violence, such as the cease-fire agreement, and preventing a wider conflict.

If the Muslim nations surrounding Israel, namely Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq, were united and unfettered by internal disputes, they could overwhelm Israel. Thankfully, they are not. Syria is in the midst of a horrific civil war; Iraq is busy trying to establish itself post-U.S. occupation; Egypt is still reeling from the change in government from the Arab Spring. And if Israel, as is widely believed, has nuclear weapons, it would be inclined to use them if it was facing a massive invasion.

That is still the danger, though. That any violence inside Israel could widen and draw in its neighbors and turn into a war between nations. Israel often shows no compunction about undertaking covert and overt strikes into neighboring countries if it feels threatened, as they demonstrated recently with air strikes in Syria. If the surrounding Muslim countries start talking about coming to the aid of their brethren inside Israel, we could very well see a real war begin. We can be assured that none of the countries involved would hesitate to strike first.

We should take several lessons from Egypt. The new Egyptian president, Mohamed Morsy, has been attempting to act as a broker to try and end the conflict. This is certainly a good thing, as it would be better to have a solution paid for by people in the region. However, Morsy's government is very friendly with Hamas, the militant group that controls Gaza and in his statements over the past week he has been noticeably anti-Israel. If the United States hopes to help negotiate a ceasefire, we should engage Morsy and help him to take a more neutral tone. For a supposed peace-broker to condemn one side or the other only hinders efforts.

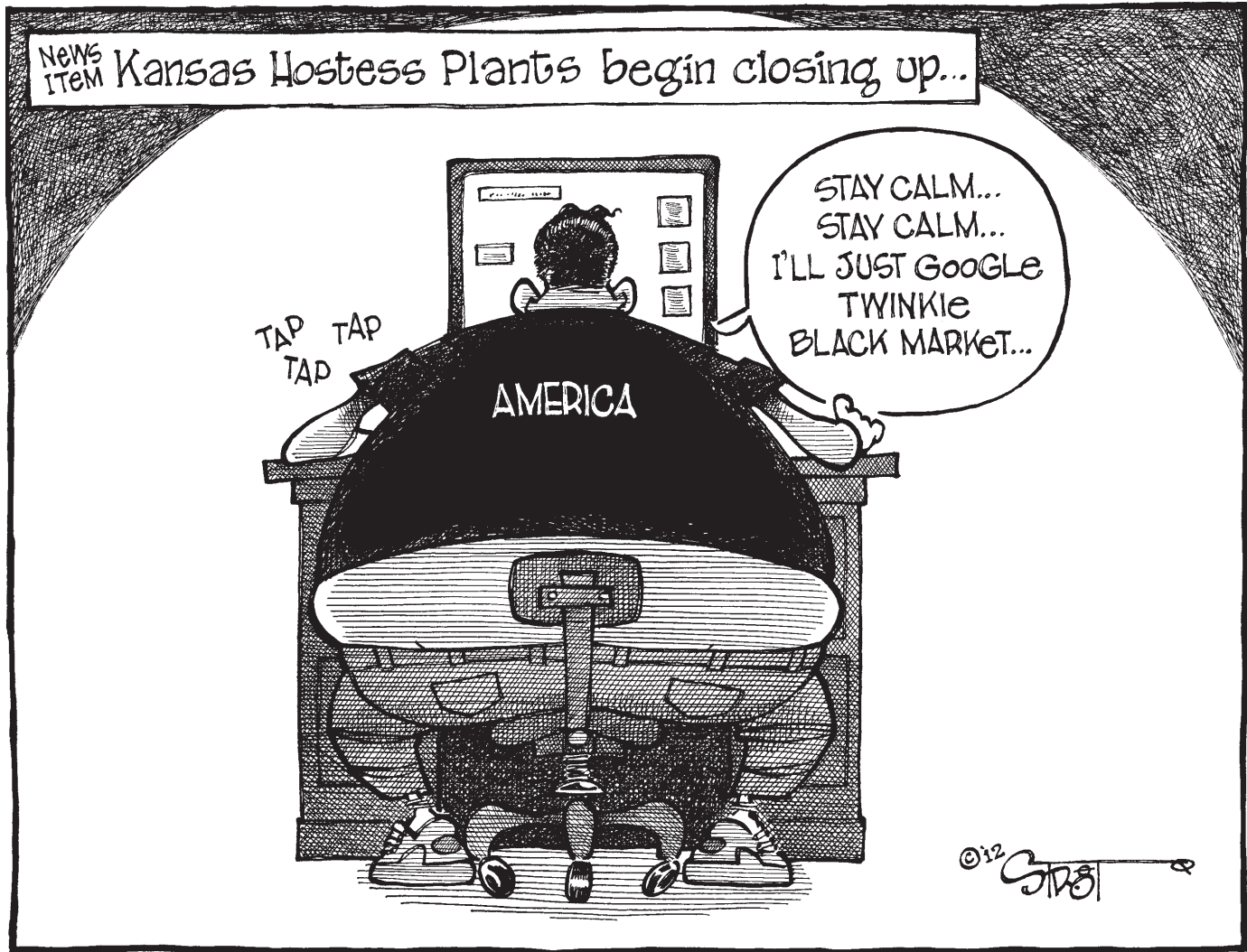
The Israelis and the United Nations have both praised Morsy's efforts, however, so we hope he is helping make progress.

These diplomatic efforts will continue to be difficult. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is so entrenched that we may never see a real resolution in our lifetime. But at the very least we should keep trying to help end the fighting.

At the end of the day, it is far easier to prevent a war than to stop one already in progress. We should remain friends with Israel, as we always have, and a good friend knows when to pull someone back from a fight. —Kevin Bottrell

Simple tricks and nonsense

Kevin Bottrell



Actions speak louder than words

It's all in the name or so one would think. Watching TV this week, the ad for Christian Mingle prompted much thought. How many times is the word 'Christian' merely a marketing ploy? <http://Christianmingle.com> claims over 7 million members. I imagined this website was the brainchild of a lonely Christian, male or female, with the desire to meet like minded individuals, hence Christian Mingle.

I was curious then to find how many so called Christian websites there are. For instance, did you know you can subscribe to the Christian Gun Owners website (<http://christiangunowner.com>) created by licensed minister, Mark Rogers?

He says, "When it comes to Christianity, get in or get out. But don't make the rest of the world puke by your foul representation of Christ."

According to the [http://lords-prayer-](http://lords-prayer-words.com)

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



words.com, the first way to tell if a website is authentic is to read the site's "statement of faith" or "articles of faith." According to them, this is the best way to see if it is "rooted in mainstream Christianity" or is a "cult based faith."

Gospel Garments (<http://gospelgarments.com>), a Christian based, family run business, states, "You may be the only Bible your neighbor will ever read." They offer Christian hoodies, t-shirts and headwear... Christian headwear.

We all tend to gravitate towards those with similar values, perhaps more than beliefs. Beliefs we can discuss, values are more inherent to our being, I think. How often do you meet someone and are more interested in what they say than their actions? As the saying goes, "Actions speak louder than words."

Just so you know, ChristianMingle is a part of Spark Network, one of the world's largest providers for online dating. They claim a database of over 47 million registered users. Because of the success of their predecessor, JDate, now the number one Jewish singles personal website, they went on to establish various groups, specifically "religious and ethnic groups," including <http://LDSMingle.com> and Asian Singles. One word says it all? Mailto:mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

Thanksgiving is a time to count your blessings

Several of my Facebook friends are posting something they are thankful for each day in November.

Reading the posts has been inspiring, uplifting, fun. I thought about doing it myself but I didn't realize what was going on until three days in---

It seemed overwhelming to try to catch up with three insightful things; way too much pressure.

For the life of me I do not know why it would be hard! Maybe because I make it hard trying to be insightful, inspiring and uplifting. Who am I trying to please, myself, my friends or God?

Have you ever been at a Thanksgiving meal where someone suggests each person tell what they are thankful for? Why does it end up awkward?

Someone gave us a little plaque that says: Count your many Blessings. I display it because I love the giver of the gift; the sentiment not so much.

I'm trying to figure that out. It may have something to do with the fact that I hate being told what to do. The Facebook exercise is good because people participate freely. You can be all in or opt out.

"Count Your Blessings" is a hymn beloved by my husband's German Lutheran family. It's hard to find a group more certain of their position or practical. It is hardly surprising to

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



find them admonishing "Count your blessings there missy!!!!" And it is only natural that they count them!!! It stresses me out. Is one enough? Fifteen too many?

I am a thankful person though at times I may confuse thankfulness with good manners.

I find myself thanking people when I should be saying, "Oh dear, no!" Like when I get the bad news that I owe extra because the price that was originally quoted did not include some ridiculous surcharge or something. I'll say, "Oh, okay, thanks!"

If the doctor gets called away and I have to reschedule an appointment, no matter how inconvenient it may be for me I say, "Thanks!" I'd probably thank a doctor if he told me I was going to die tomorrow!

I thank the tenth Boy Scout that asks me to buy popcorn; I don't even buy Boy Scout popcorn. Girls Scouts cookies are another deal entirely!

I thank clerks in the grocery store

when they give me my receipt! I thank food servers and sales associates when they give great service and when they are far from helpful!

I don't do it begrudging. But I don't always do it sincerely. It's a reflex. However I think it is a reflex worth cultivating.

When pressed to come up with things I am thankful for I search for things I have in abundance, or something grand.

In Proverbs it says, "In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths." One of the definitions my dictionary offers of acknowledge is: to express appreciation or make known that one has received (a favor, service, gift or message).

True thankfulness should not be a test or a chore or an item to check off a to-do list. Thankfulness is acknowledging God's power.

Have you ever run the water too long while brushing your teeth or peeling potatoes and realized the exquisite gift of water? We pump our water out of the ground. Clean and pure! In abundance! Not everyone is as fortunate. How blessed I am!

There now, why did I think it was so hard! Thank You, God. I acknowledge!

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Thumbs up to the local police, sheriff and fire department and many others who helped respond to the fire alarm at the Norton Housing Authority last Friday. Brought in.

Remember there is no charge for rendering a Thumbs Up. Thumbs Up are meant to give recognition for a positive person or event in the community. Also remember all Letters to the Editor must be signed.