

Opinion



Free Press Viewpoint

Troop withdrawal raises questions

President Bush said he is going to bring 70,000 American troops home from various locations around the globe. This doesn't include Iraq. But it does include Korea. The announcement Monday, although in the making for quite some time, did catch many in Washington by surprise. Some approved of the measure, others didn't. But that's how everything slices anyway so nothing new in the reaction. Except...

Sen. John McCain, who has been leading President Bush around the country by the nose to garner support in those areas where McCain is strong and Bush is weak, is, let's say, upset.

He sees North Korea as a threat no less significant than Saddam Hussein was, and indirectly, still is. The North Koreans, you can bet, are just waiting for the day we pull thousands of troops out of South Korea to begin their bloody assault on the South. And Mr. Bush's announcement is in all probability being met with mile-wide smiles on the faces of that goofy leadership of North Korea.

Remember our invasion of Iraq? How we quickly moved in, dusted up, vacuumed the carpets and reset the furniture only to have unexpected company arrive and now are in a bloody exchange that has cost nearly 950 American lives? We really blew it, thanks to the planners of that war failing to pencil in some "what ifs." Now we are being haunted by that error.

Another error awaits in Korea. The North Koreans could turn ugly at the first sign of US. troop removal and begin a southerly march with their millions of brainwashed uniformed "robots" with a resulting bloodshed and possible dismantling of the South. But who are we to question? After all, these military planners are the same ones who assured us of a swift victory in Iraq.

We hope Sen. McCain can muster the "troops" on Capitol Hill necessary to bring this latest questionable administration plan to a full debate in both Houses of Congress.

We are reminded daily to be vigilant, thanks to threats being made against us by terrorists right here at home and against our people in other places around the world.

Thinning our military ranks overseas seems an odd way to maintain vigilance.

*Tom A. Dreiling
Free Press Publisher*

No 'My Turn' column today

The newspaper's publisher, Tom Dreiling, is taking a few days off to be with members of his family who are here for a few days taking in the sounds and sights of Colby, thus his regular Wednesday "My Turn" column won't appear today. The editorial above, however, was written prior to his scheduled absence. He returns to his desk on Thursday.

Where to write

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 1519 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715

State Rep. Jim Morrison, State Capitol Building Rm. 171-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: <http://www.ink.org/public/legislators/jmorrison>

State Sen. Stan Clark, State Capitol Building Rm. 449-N, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7399 e mail: sclark@ink.org

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155 W. Fifth (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
Colby, Kan. 67701
freepress@nwkanssas.com

State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout Excellence, Column Writing, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography.

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Tom (TD) Dreiling - Publisher
td@nwkanssas.com

NEWS

Patty Decker - Editor
pdecker@nwkanssas.com

Tisha Cox - General Assignment
tcoc@nwkanssas.com

ADVERTISING

Crystal Rucker - Advertising Sales/Director
crystalr@nwkanssas.com

Jeremy Blackwill - Advertising Sales
jblackwill@nwkanssas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Lea Bandy - Circulation Manager

Jeanette Applegate - Bookkeeping & Ad Building
japplegate@nwkanssas.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkanssas.com

NOR'WEST PRESS

Jim Bowker - General Manager

Richard Westfahl, Lana Westfahl, Ron VanLoenen, Judy McKnight

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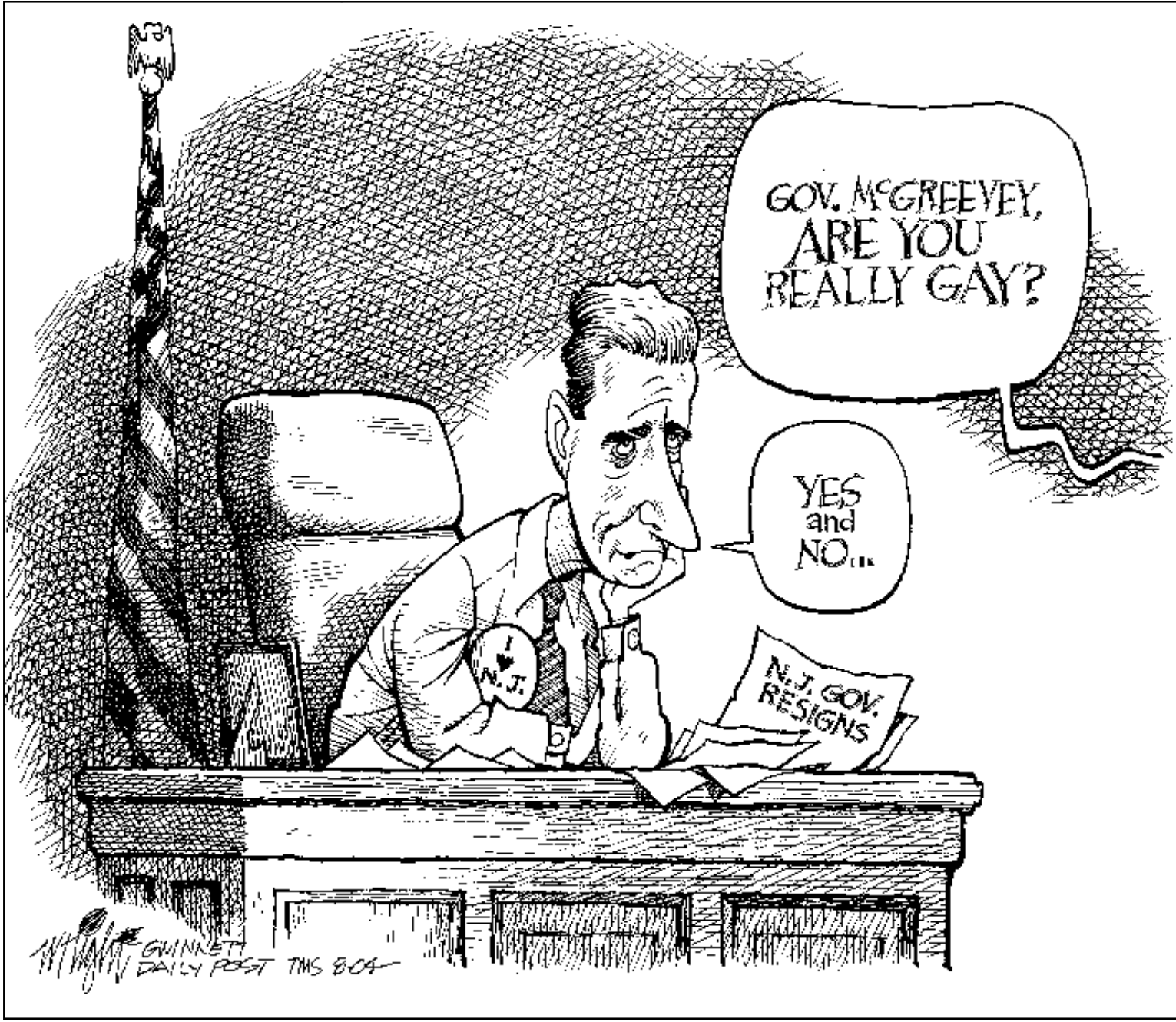
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Media isn't the problem

There has been a lot of hype about media bias and the general mistrust of journalism lately, but most of the folks screaming loudest probably actually have the least to say on this issue.

It is not simply conservatives who think the media has a liberal bias by the way. The percentage of people who think the media has a conservative bias is way up as well.

Some might point to the number of left-leaning members of the press, but look at any college educated group in our society today and, almost without exception, those who think more along the liberal lines will outnumber those who think along traditionally conservative lines.

The real problem, however, is not bias. It is the two-headed monster of greed and laziness. If you really want a biased media, go back about 150 years when candidates used contributions to support their favorite newspapers and editors offered their literary services to the highest bidder.

The biggest problem is greed. Ignorance can be a problem, but the ignorant can be educated. As the number of independent news providers dwindles, the bottom line becomes increasingly important and glorified talk shows and tabloid reporting are cheaper than putting reporters in the field.

Some of our most prestigious national newspapers now have only 4-5 reporters covering Washington, D.C. Pray tell, how does one develop any sort of story lines when those few are trying to cover everything going on?



Jay Kelley ● Speaking MyMind

While there has always been the pride of getting the story first, the need to scoop other services now stems from sheer economic survival. There is simply no time to get the whole story if you want to survive in the business.

Television is even worse. Only the sensational is going to get our attention and the definition of sensational must be expanded as we become bored with last week's offerings.

Second, both the press and the public are ignorant and some of us are militantly so. I was impressed with a couple of the newspapers I read lately in that they ran stories that were more than half a page.

To allow a reporter time to develop a long story, then be willing to use that print space for the story is indeed rare in our modern era. It is rare for a good reason, too. The general public will not read a long story.

We have become a society of sound-bites and pictures. We no longer have the patience to read a complex story and many of our journalists do

not have the patience to do the work it requires to develop a story like that.

We are also a society that prizes training over education, or the ability to perform over the ability to think. I have heard supposedly well-educated people rail against the bias of a columnist on the opinion page. That is why it is called the *opinion* page.

Ultimately, it is not media bias that is destroying us. It is our unwillingness to think critically and educate ourselves and our increasing reliance on character assassination as a means to challenge any who disagree with us.

It is easy to blame a biased media when something with which we disagree is printed. It is much harder to convince others that it is wrong. It is far less strenuous to make up a bogey-man than to actually confront the problem.

It is much harder to muster the discipline to actually know the facts. For one thing, it takes a willingness to be educated instead of trained and that means knowing things in which we may not be interested.

Yes, it is much easier when we are not confronted with things about which we would rather not know or have to think.

After all, the Soviet Union got along fine that way for more than 70 years.

Jay Kelley is a local minister and writer who speaks his mind from time to time. His e-mail is jkelly@nwkanssas.com.

Give this some thought

Being a Democrat in the State of Kansas and a separatist (Church & State) leaves me feeling like a 'voice in the wilderness.'

The argument that we should or can legislate morality just doesn't hold water. The individual legislators' morals and ethics most certainly should have an influence on how they vote. However, we seem to have a number of legislators who do not live what they preach. We have religious leaders who don't live the morals and standards they preach. They like writing the commandments on their forehead and memorizing them so they can quote them at the appropriate times. The only way to read what is printed on your forehead is to look in a mirror. Did you ever try reading with a mirror? Quote scriptures for our neighbor's benefit while we ignore them in our own lives? Jesus had something to say about that.

And, it wasn't very complimentary. Didn't He have something to say about washing and polishing the outside of the cup and leaving the inside dirty? All the white wash in the world will not cover up the blackness of the heart.

We legislate restrictions on actions to protect society. The law and punishment regarding murder is to prevent murder. We do not need religious canon to justify that law. The laws and punishment for rape, stalking, sexual harassment, cheating, lying, thievery, destruction of other's property, etc. do not need religious canon or doctrine to validate their justification. Almost every religion and government in the world will have incorporated those rules in their canon. All religions or governments, however, do not en-

Ken Poland

● Ken's World

force those rules without prejudice. Man seems to have a tendency to provide for and protect his own at the expense of someone else.

Reread those last two sentences and tell me I'm wrong. I don't think I am!

All the sanctimonious hype about our laws proving we are a Christian nation is just that, HYPE. Passing more laws will not make us a Christian nation. Obedience or attempted obedience to God's ten commandments does not make me Christian. We don't all agree on what is required to be a Christian. We don't all agree on the things we can't do and be a Christian. How, then, can we legislate Christianity?

Civil government has the responsibility of protecting society from those who commit cruel and unjust actions. Civil government is charged with regulating society because individuals cannot or will not unilaterally regulate themselves. Civil government is not responsible for identifying sin and enacting measures to prevent me from sinning.

Our relationship with a higher power than ourselves will help determine our actions, morals and ethics. That higher power may be: God

as revealed in Holy Scriptures; Allah as revealed in the Koran; Mother Nature; Pagan Gods; or it might be the guy down the street who is tougher than ourselves, or, maybe even the guy who controls the most oil.

I will personally recommend The God of the Holy Scriptures. But, a Democratic Republic that guarantees freedom of religion will not allow me to force you to acknowledge or worship my God.

Our government is founded on the premise that the majority will protect the rights of the minority as well as the majority. It might be well to note (that) we are all a minority of one. Every religious organization in our United States is a minority. When we put all who profess and really practice Christianity together, we will find we are still a minority in society. And, yes, we all need protection of our rights to express and practice our religion.

The balance of power between the legislature, the administration and the courts has worked very well. I don't think separation of Church and State has hindered either religion or the State. It might be beneficial if we could all review the system and keep it working. A few folks in our society must have been snoozing during history and government class. Protecting my minority rights should not be accomplished by trampling on the rights of another minority individual or group.

Ken Poland is a Gem farmer and frequent contributor to this page. He can be e-mailed at rcwinc@cheerful.com

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