

from other pens...

Wheat harvest great sight to see

What a beautiful sight it was, indeed! The wheat harvest across our area, observed on a drive from Colorado Springs last Sunday.

Colorado is beautiful, no doubt about it, but there is something about the annual harvest of our golden grain that in itself is a thing of beauty.

Watching those machines, so skillfully operated, remove the grain and then place it into a waiting truck for delivery to an elevator, is what we call "proud beauty," something you never tire of seeing.

You see people, undoubtedly from other states, pulled off to the side of the roadway, taking pictures. This year, in particular, the wheat looks so good, so golden and as a combine moves across the fields, it looks like a giant hand running its finger through the hair of a loved one.

Prices are good, up above \$5.50 per bushel last week. It's something farmers have been waiting to see for a long time.

Beauty, they say, is in the eye of the beholder. In our territory, the wheat crop is seen in this way not only by us, but also by travelers coming through on the way to or returning from states distant.

Our farmers certainly deserve a pat on the back for a job well done, and for continuing their efforts to feed people the world over.

Maybe we need to revisit our state slogan — what is the current one, anyway? — to remind everyone of every nation that, "Kansas delivers to your dinner table."

— Tom Dreiling, The Norton Telegram

where to write

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774; web address — roberts.senate.gov

U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. (202) 224-6521; web e-mail address — brownback.senate.gov/CMEmail.me

U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran, 2202 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. (202) 225-2715; Fax (202) 225-5124 e-mail address — jerry.moran@mail.house.gov

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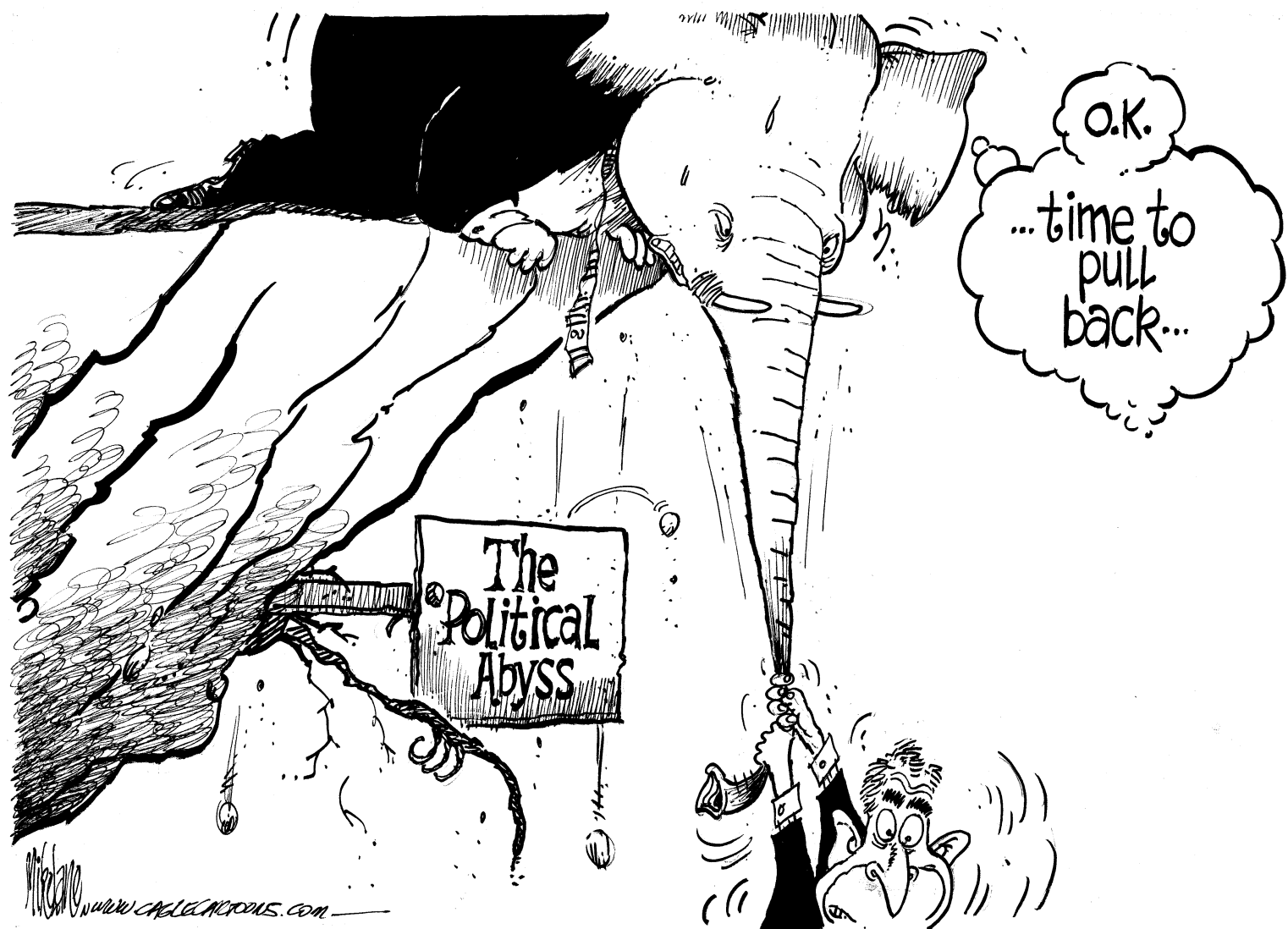
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Iran financing, arming Middle East terrorists

It all adds up to Iran, at least if you listen to people on the northeast shore of the Arabian peninsula.

Palestine. Lebanon. Iraq. Afghanistan.

Increase fighting, more deaths, more trouble.

People here see a common thread: Hezbollah fighting a war against the government in Lebanon and in Palestine; a resurgent Taliban to the east in Afghanistan, coming back to face NATO forces; insurgents under a dozen names fighting both the U.S. and the Shiite-dominated government in Iraq.

All backed, financed and armed at least partly by fundamentalist Iran.

And Iran is winning. A.U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, likely within a couple of years, would leave that war-torn nation exposed to the forces now tearing it apart.

The likely result of a precipitous withdrawal?

"Civil war," says Dr. Mustafa Alani at the Gulf Research Center, a think tank in Dubai. "In the south, a Sunni government. In the central area, around Baghdad, a Taliban-style government. In the north, a national Kurdish government."

"The Iranians have the upper hand in Iraq," he says. "It's a proxy war. They are very good at proxy war, especially with Hezbollah."

A U.S. pullout, while leaving Iraq exposed and Iraqis victims of an ugly scenario, will allow Iran to focus more on Afghanistan.

"NATO forces are in trouble in Afghanistan," Dr. Alani says. "Iran is supplying weap-



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ons. Iran has links to the political and religious leadership."

What really scares people here, with Iran just miles across the Persian Gulf, is the specter of an aggressive, dominant Iran with nuclear weapons and bent on regional hegemony.

The diplomats put in more politely.

While the region is not that stable today, says one expert in the United Arab Emirates, it faces a real possible threat from "another country with possible nuclear capability."

"The situation in the region is, in my opinion, going from bad to worse," he says, while briefing a group of American journalists. "In all parts of the region, there are wars, Iraq, Somalia, Lebanon, Palestine and Israel."

"Iraq is aspiring to hegemony in the region. The most devastating situation is in Iraq. Nobody knows how it can be resolved in the foreseeable future. Nobody has a plan."

"We don't want to see another war in the region."

Iran, he notes, is a top trade partner with the U.A.E. and the Iranian president visited recently. Still, no one wants to see Iran, with 65 million people and more than half a million men under arms, gain nuclear capacity. Iran

seized islands claimed by this tiny Arab nation a few years ago, and still holds them. Iran is a threat.

"We agree that Iran should not be allowed to acquire nuclear weapons," he said, adding that his nation favors diplomacy to block Iran's nuclear ambitions. "Iran feels threatened by the U.S., but that doesn't mean they don't have some plans (for regional domination)."

Dr. Alani is more blunt. He holds out little hope for diplomacy and believes that, in the end, given the choice of a nuclear power to the north or a military attack, the nations of the region will push the U.S. — or Israel — to eliminate the threat. He's not advocating an invasion, he makes clear, but feels bombing the Iranian plants would buy the region 10-12 years.

How to persuade an American nation tired of war in the Mideast, he's less certain.

Another government minister takes issue with his prediction, saying the U.S. and its allies need to put more pressure on Iran. He sees no need for an attack.

"The posture of a powerful nation is more important than the use of power," he says.

He also makes it clear his nation prefers the shelter of American power to the unpredictable and often hostile presence of its neighbor. Much of the Mideast still sees America as the bulwark against Iran and its allies.

"We are the allies of the U.S.," he said. "I think the future relations will be excellent. It all depends on how the U.S. will handle its policies."

A thank you to our volunteer firemen

To the Editor:

I want to thank the members of the Goodland Fire Department who answered the call to my house at 609 Main at 2:15 a.m. on Monday, June 11.

Their quick response and action, I am certain, prevented a much more serious situation.

I feel fortunate to live in a community where civic-minded citizens volunteer their time to provide a vital service.

I hope I never have occasion to call on them again, but I am most reassured that if I do, they



from our readers

• to the editor

will be there to respond.

Marlyn Mangus

Goodland

To the Editor:

Paris Hilton pays for George Bush's sins

Poor, poor Paris. Okay. Admittedly, she's as likable as fingernails on a blackboard. Fingernails that have never been chipped in the normal pursuit of an actual day's work AND brandishing an exclusive not-for-sale Chanel sparkle enamel sheathing a recent and impeccable French manicure. But holy moley. People have jumped on the Kick Paris When She's Down train like there were free stacks of 100-dollar bills secreted in the seatback pockets.

Oh sure, I get the whole schadenfreude as a spectator sport. Our fascination with the train wreck of supercilious celebrity. Build them up to tear them down. It was cumulative. Year after year of exposure to her pirouetting down the runways of the world, collecting obscene amounts of cash for supplying a face to smug. Perfecting the art of being famous for being famous. My theory is part of this gleeful piling on can be traced to our built-up frustration with Dubyah. We've got blue balls for accountability and are kicking this poor poodle of a person as a presidential proxy.

Last September she blew the illegal minimum of .08 after being caught driving erratically on what she described as a midnight burger run. Yeah. Right. Burger run. Redeeming her maxed-out frequent burger card at the Fatburger on La Cienega, I'm sure. She was fined fifteen hundred bucks, given 36 months probation and had her license suspended. Then



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in January, she was caught driving on that suspended license... twice. The second time clocked doing 70 in a 35. Should have been enough right there.

The 26-year-old wannabee pop star or spoiled heiress or fledgling actress or whatever the hell she is pleaded ignorance about the whole driving with a suspended license being illegal, apparently unfamiliar with the definition of suspension; or, like Leona Helmsley, convinced the law only applies to the little people. Either she wasn't a good enough actress to sell the stupidity defense, or ran into a judge who just didn't like her attitude. Probably not the first time, but quite possibly the first time anybody was in a position to do something about it.

Forty-five days in prison. Reduced to 23 days, which she surrendered to serve, but then the sheriff released her after three days due to an undisclosed medical condition. Which remains undisclosed. General consensus is she suffers from an allergy to icky coupled with a

severe aversion to yuck. Whereupon all kinds of Hollywood hell broke out. The judge flipped out. Sent her back to jail. And much doubling over with undisguised merriment ensued. News anchors couldn't hide their delight: "Ha ha, rich girl. Welcome to the real world." Which they are familiar with how? Oh that's right; by regularly reading stories based in it.

We're guilty as well, of pasting George Bush's face onto her emaciated frame. He is the Paris Hilton of presidents. The two of them share the smirk and the obliviousness and the trust-funders' undying belief in their eternal immunity from culpability. If you were asked who better fit the definition... "clueless, upper-class twit marinated in an overwhelming sense of entitlement and never held accountable for a single thing they ever did," would you pick Paris or George or both? Payback is a bitch. Especially proxy payback. Pardon Scooter Libby? Hell with that, Bush should pardon Paris. After all, she's paying for his sins.

Comic, writer, actor, former radio talk-show host and clown shill, Will Durst, wonders if jail will alter her trademarked "I'm so bored, it's an effort to keep my right eye open" look.

Will Durst is a political comedian who has performed around the radio. He is a familiar pundit on television and world. E-mail Will at durst@caglecartoons.com.