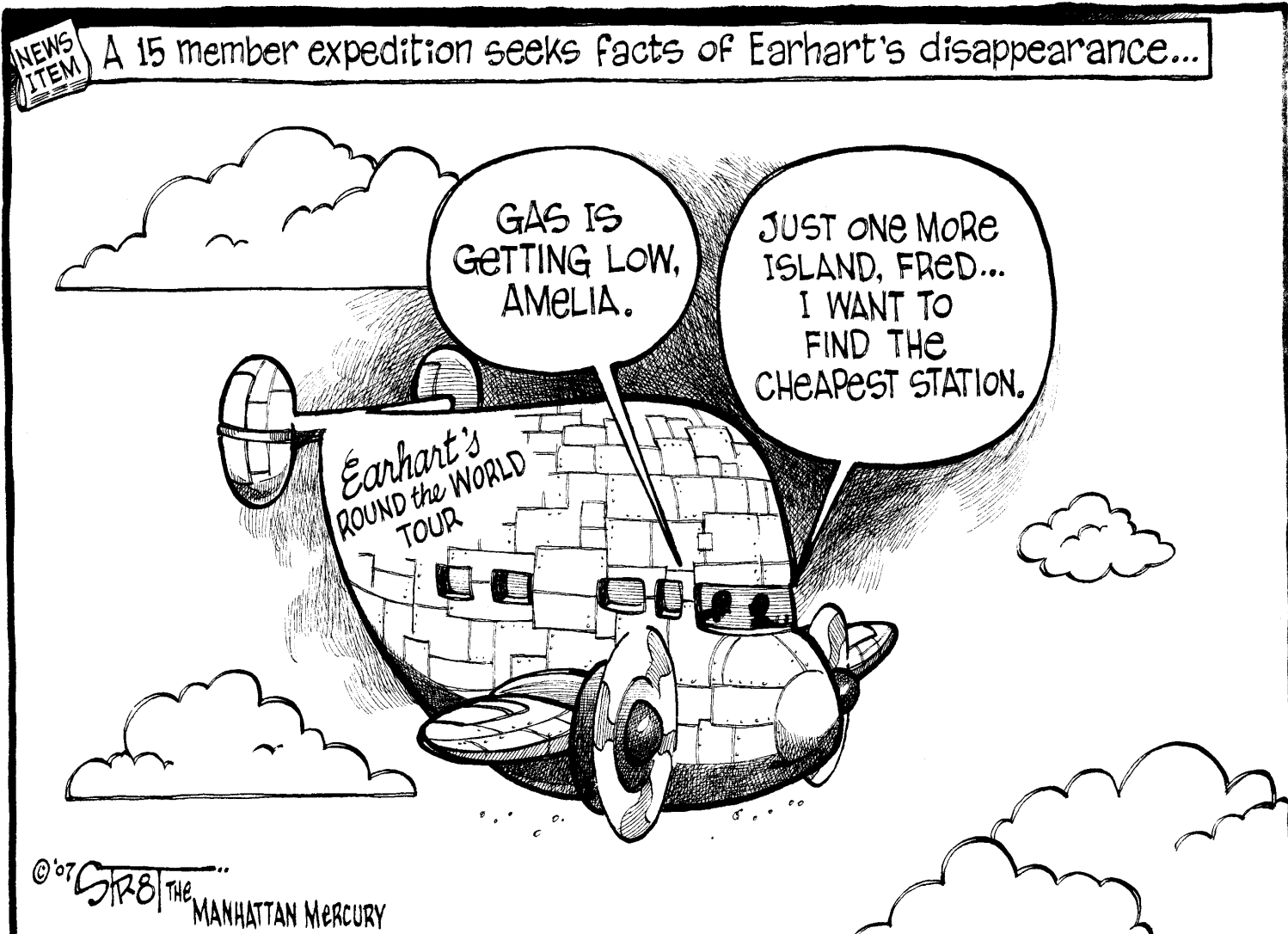


from our viewpoint...

We're stuck in Iraq; how do we get out?

Will it be OK if we just pull out of Iraq?
No one in the Middle East thinks so, though nearly everyone there agrees we should get out.
It's hard to find anyone who thinks the U.S. invasion was well advised, well planned or even necessary, not here, not in Europe, not in the Arab lands.
Harder still is finding someone with a good plan for getting us out without leaving the Iraqis to civil war or worse.
The administration really doesn't have a plan, probably never did.
The Democrats don't have one, other than trying to cut off money for the war.
And we're not getting much solid advice from Europe, from our allies or elsewhere.
Meantime, the threat of radical Muslim terrorism looms even larger. That's the shame of it; with all the expense, bother and pain, we don't seem to have bought more than a respite from al-Qaida.
The latest video threat from that corner features a weary Osama bin Laden praising martyrdom, though still not volunteering himself. His organization is on the rebound.
This is not a pretty picture. An American pullout, regional experts say, would leave Iraq in turmoil.
A Taliban-style government likely would dominate in the central area around Baghdad, exposing citizens there to the horrors of intolerance and despotism.
In the north, Kurds would form their own state, immediately drawing the ire — maybe worse — of Turkey. That'd be a threat the Turks, long beset by problems with minority Kurds on their side of the border, would have trouble ignoring.
A Turkish invasion of northern Iraq would be more than likely, and that could set off a regional war involving many countries. It's not hard to envision the entire Middle East in flames, from Gaza and Lebanon to Afghanistan, all fueled by Iranian oil, money and arms.
In any scenario, the religious government in Thera might emerge as the predominant, nuclear-armed influence in the entire region. That is not a good omen for freedom-loving people nearby.
American is damned if we do, damned if we don't.
There's no future for us to stay in Iraq, yet the consequences of leaving could be great.
Careful planning and great unity are required, but the Democrats, having tasted blood in the last election, just want us out.
The situation calls for a return to the days when "politics stopped at the water's edge," but that's not likely, making a good outcome even more remote.
It's true, eventually we just left Vietnam and today, it seems to matter little that our troops were ever there.
Just don't say that to our former allies there, what's left of them, or to the millions who lost something in that God-forsaken Asian land.
Yet we face another such catastrophe. — *Steve Haynes*



Be careful crossing Kennedy's bridge

Even though poor Sen. Harry Reid insists on calling the Senate's latest attempt to inundate the nation with hordes of suddenly legalized illegal immigrants the president's bill, it is really Sen. Kennedy's monstrosity.
The president, desperate to get any kind of amnesty measure through Congress while he's still in the White House, has embraced the Kennedy bill, but that doesn't change the fact that it's Kennedy's illegitimate offspring. Mr. Bush has simply become the kid's Godfather.
He's not alone. Some Republicans, oblivious of the fact that their backing of the bill is nothing less than a suicide pact for GOP chances of ever staging a comeback, are going all-out to convince the nation of the absurdity that granting amnesty to millions of immigrants now here illegally is the best way to stem the tide of illegal immigrants flooding across our borders.
Saner minds, more concerned with the almost-total collapse of border security than with the longstanding issue of the 12, 15 or 20 million illegals now here, caution that we had best solve the problem of our all-but-open southern borders before even thinking about dealing with those illegals now here. Stopping more of them adding to their numbers is the first priority.
Instead of signing onto Teddy Kennedy's bill and attacking the majority of Americans who demand that our borders be secured. George Bush should be attacking the problem where its roots lie — in Mexico.
Mr. Bush needs to hold Mexico responsible for all of these people sneaking across the bor-



michael reagan

● making sense

der, and I'd be one of them if I were a citizen of a country run by corrupt government officials who are more dictatorial drug lords than public servants.
The only way to clean up the border problem is to use every power in our means to force the Mexicans to clean their own house, get rid of corrupt officials, shut down the narcotics traffic, and create an economy based on the country's vast and largely untapped resources to provide jobs and opportunities for Mexico's struggling people whose only way out now is a furtive trip across the border.
The average Mexican has no rights, there is no middle class because the government won't allow one to exist, the drug cartels have taken over the whole country and jobs are almost non-existent. The drug cartels have a bigger army and a bigger military than the government. There are constant incursions across the border by these people, and the administration doesn't even complain.
Today's Mexico is a drug-sodden, crime-ridden nation and our own government refuses to condemn what is happening down there — and what is happening down there is what is responsible for all of the illegal immigration. Who can live or raise a family in such a hellhole? No wonder they are heading north.

Now, I'm all for hanging in there in Iraq — our national security demands it. If, however, we can send 130,000 Americans to fight in a land all the way across the globe and spend billions doing it, why can't we do what must be done to protect our national security where it is threatened by the very country next door?
Illegal immigrants have broken our healthcare system, they have broken our education system, they have broken our jail system, they have broken our criminal justice system, and Washington just doesn't get it.
Why? Because those idiots in their little bubble in Washington have a perfect healthcare system, a prefect educational system, a perfect jail system, and a perfect criminal justice system. Unlike the majority of the American people, they are never inconvenienced by hordes of illegals penetrating our borders every day.
As a result, when the problem demands immediate action, our government refuses to hold the Mexican government accountable for the huge part it is playing in encouraging their citizens to flee to the U.S., to escape misery and starvation in the hell their country has become.
And, slowly but surely, the U.S. begins to look more and more like Mexico every day.
Beware of crossing Teddy Kennedy's immigration bridge with him, Mr. President. Remember what happened to the last passenger Teddy drove across a bridge.
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If Washington crossed the Delaware today

"Let me get this straight, Gen. Washington: You want us, the representatives of the Second Continental Congress, to fund a sneak attack on British troops starting on Christmas?"
"That is correct, sir. After we declared our independence from King George, he was most unhappy. He ordered his army to attack us. The Brits have made tremendous gains on our homeland."
"Gains, Washington?"
"Sir, whereas our Continental Army is something of a motley crew, the Brits are well-trained and well-funded. Their forces include Hessian mercenaries, professional fighters who are most skilled at the art of war."
"Your point, Washington?"
"The Brits beat us badly in Long Island, sir, forcing us to retreat to Manhattan. They beat us in Manhattan, causing us to retreat across the Hudson River into New Jersey. They beat us in New Jersey, forcing us to retreat across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania. It is there where my men are now encamped, sir. Our situation is desperate."
"What do you mean desperate, Washington?"
"We are on the verge of losing to the Brits, sir. The noble ideas and truths that our Declaration of Independence has advanced — that



tom purcell

● commentary

all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, including Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness — are in danger."
"And the best you can come up with is a sneak attack?"
"Sir, the Hessians are known to drink and be merry on Christmas. We expect them to lay down their arms to partake in great merriment. By attacking them when they least expect it, we hope to beat them in New Jersey and turn the tides of this war in our favor."
"What exactly do you want from us, Washington?"
"Sir, my men are starving. Some are without shoes on their feet. The snow is falling and the temperature is unbearably cold. Yet all I ask is that you provide the additional resources we need to pull off the impossible."
"I see, Washington. It's government funding you're after. We'll consider providing such funding if you agree with our terms."
"Terms, sir?"
"You said your troops are comprised of men? Do you mean to tell us there are no women among your troops? That you are unaware of government diversity mandates, Washington!"
"Sir, I was barely able to assemble our rag-tag group of soldiers as it was and I..."
"And you say you're encamped along the Delaware River? I assume your men are cutting down trees and burning fires. Don't you care what your men are doing to the landscape, Washington? Do you have any idea what your carbon footprint is?"
"Carbon footprint?"
"And you're also ignorant of the Fair Labor

Standards Act, Washington? Your men, employees of the government, are being worked well beyond the 40-hour work week. You pay them no overtime and now you want them to invade New Jersey on an official government holiday? Can you say 'lawsuits, Washington?'
"Lawsuits, sir?"
"What's worse is that you intend to transport your troops across the Delaware on a series of boats! How could you not know that stretch of river is home to the purple-bellied snorkel fish? And that the hibernation of this endangered species will be disturbed by your crossing?"
"The snorkel what, sir?"
"Look, Washington, I'm sure I speak on behalf of most of the representatives of this Congress and most Americans when I say this: Your war strategy has been prosecuted with great incompetence. We don't think we want to fund your lofty ideas anymore. We think it's time to bring the troops home."
"But we're at war, sir. This is no time for partisan politics. These are the times that try men's souls."
"Souls, Washington? Now you're trying to bring religion into it. You've lost your mind, Washington. You've gone bloody mad."
Tom Purcell is a nationally syndicated humor columnist. For comments email him at Purcell@caglecartoons.com.

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