from our viewpoint...

Federalism plan rejected by Iraqi's

A joint press conference Friday with two presidential candidates from opposite parties appeared to signal a bipartisan approach to getting American troops out of Iraq by promoting a "federalism" plan to create three semiautonomous regions in the war-torn country.

It may, however, just be a desperate bid by two candidates well down in the pecking order to jump start their campaigns. It may all be another case of U.S. back-benchers trying to impose a solution on another country.

Sen. Joe Biden, a Democrat from Delaware, and Sen. Sam Brownback, the Kansas Republican, appeared together in Des Moines to promote the plan, which won support in the Senate, 75-23, on a nonbinding resolution.

The plan calls for establishing three regions in Iraq based on the dominant religion in each area, giving each of the major players a piece of the country and hopefully reducing the violence.

"Our solution is designed to help bring life to what is already in the Iraqi constitution," Biden told the crowd in Des Moines, "...a limited central government.... The strong support we won in the United States Senate...is powerful evidence of that...."

Biden said the Bush administration has mischaracterized the Senate resolution. It is not a partitioning of Iraq, he said.

"Federalism is not a U.S. or foreign imposition on Iraq," the senator said. "Federalism is in their constitution."

Although the plan was voted on more than a year ago, it ran into opposition in the Iraqi parliament and implementation was postponed indefinitely in September 2006.

This plan is not without problems. The three states would be less powerful than a united Iraq, and this could strip away any sense of nationalism that might unite the country. The separation would make it easier for all three groups to engage in "ethnic cleansing."

It is not a plan to end the Iraqi civil war. If anything, it will draw the battle lines clearly and really give the groups something to

Another problem is who draws the lines, and what happens to the people who are living in a section, but do not share the predominant sectarian beliefs of the new government

The speaker of the Iraqi parliament said last year the plan was politically dead. Mahmoud al-Mashhadani said the country is not prepared for federalism because its government is not strong enough to provide security and services.

"The United States is a federated system and it is leading the world," he said, "but this was after a civil war. So must we go through a civil war in order to achieve federalism?"

The Biden-Brownback plan requests President Bush to put pressure on the Iraqi government to revive federalism under the Iraqi constitution.

Without support from the Iraqi people, however, it appears the United States is trying to impose a political solution. It also seems to be a way for two also-ran presidential candidates to drum up publicity for their failing campaigns in Iowa.

Violence may continue in Iraq for many years, but peace must come from the Iraqi people's solution. Americans can be proud of our federalism — and our democracy — but they cannot be force-fed to a people who are not prepared for the responsibilities they bring. — *Tom Betz*

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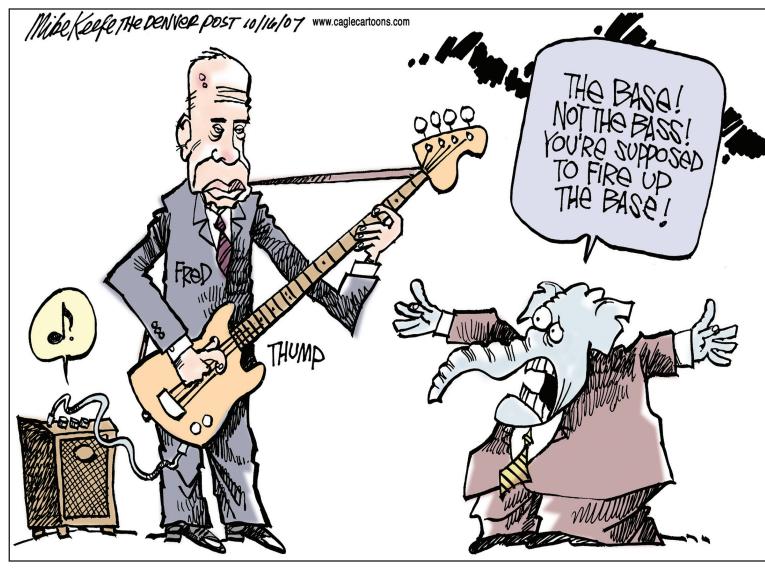
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Pity the poor bride, Cynthia always says, when nothing goes wrong at her wedding. Poor Lindsay.

She got married Saturday, and as far as I could tell, nothing went wrong.

Maybe she saw something to remember, but I doubt it. The bride is always in kinda of

But from my point of view, it was a Perfect Day. My youngest daughter made a beautiful

bride. Kansas beat Kansas State, knocking the

Wildcats out of the Top 25 and knocking KU in for the first time in nearly a decade. The Rockies finished a sweep of Philadel-

phia to take the first round in the National League playoffs. I suppose it could have been a better week.

We actually had tickets to the playoffs on Saturday. I tried to convince the bride to excuse raised their hands. us for an early flight to Denver.

No dice, Daddy.

ised he could trade for tickets to the game Anyone who knows me will understand. Sunday, which we could have made.

Had they played. Darned team had to win three in a row.

If the wedding was fun, the rehearsal the night before was funner.

steve haynes

along the sappa

The kids were loose and enjoying themselves. Lindsay was surprisingly calm, even when the preacher (a coworker of groom) came to the part about, "If any man here knows of any cause why these two should not be joined, let him speak now or forever hold his peace."

At the dry run, at home the night before, I'd raised my hand. Cynthia told me not to

"She's too expensive to keep," mother

Brad's eyes were boring in on me, but I was good. The entire wedding party, however,

I was just glad to be off the hook. A train had whistled through town as we walked toward I e-mailed those seats to a friend who promthe aisle, and I told the bride I'd be right back.

She grabbed my arm all the tighter, clenched her teeth and whispered: "Daddy, that's not really a train. It's just your imagination.'

Good things had happened all week. South Carolina beat Kentucky, making the kids

happy since they have season tickets in Columbia. The Rockies beat San Diego in an amazing 13-inning tiebreaker game for the wildcard playoff slot.

The day of the wedding, we set up chairs, hauled supplies and listened to radio updates on KU and K-State all afternoon. And pretty much the entire family, except for a few diehard Royals fans (and there are a few of those) headed for the bar to watch the Rockies win Well, Lindsay and Brad disappeared. They

left Sunday for the honeymoon, and she still didn't know where she was going. The deal was she got to plan the wedding and Brad got to plan the trip. We kidded her all week about garden spots of the Balkans. Sunday, with mixed emotions, we dragged

our feet into Denver, knowing there would be no seats behind home for us that night and not entirely sure, given the passing showers and 43-degree temperature, that we were sorry. There'll always be another playoff, right?

And Kansas will be in a bowl this fall. A pretty sweet day, a pretty sweet week.

My phone rang.

"Daddy, this plane is going to Rome."

I tried to tell her that was where you change planes for Albania, but she wasn't buying it.

Tough love - remembering my Mom

We buried my mother, Jane Wyman, today and as I stood at her grave the words of Abraham Lincoln came back to me: "All I am or ever hope to be I owe to my angel mother."

Everybody talks about my dad Ronald Reagan, and what he did for America, and many people think that because he set such a great example for his fellow citizens in so many ways, he was also responsible for making me who I am today.

While that may be true in some ways, if anybody really wants to know who and what I am, you have to go back to my mother. All that's decent and praiseworthy that I am, or ever hope to be, I owe to her.

When my parents broke up, like many children of that day and age whose parents were divorced, I lived with my mother. It was Jane Wyman, a single mom, who was in charge of raising me. I spent weekends with my dad, but it was my mother who raised me.

I could have been one of those spoiled Beverly Hills brats, but thankfully I had a mother who wouldn't allow it. As my sister Maureen and I learned, there would be no brats in her house.

Back in the 1950s, spoiled Beverly Hills brats could go to their parents and extort money from them because they felt guilt because they couldn't spend time with their kids. They would get their parents to assuage their guilt by buying them things, such as the brand new 10-speed Schwinn bicycles that were then

All my friends were getting their parents to buy one — it was the newest bike of the day and every kid, including me, wanted one. I had even picked out the brand new blue 10-speed Schwinn bike I wanted.

I went to my mom and told her I would love her forever if she'd just buy it for me. "How badly do you want it?" she asked.

When I said, "More than anything else," she said, "Do you want it badly enough to get a job?" I protested that I was only 10 years old and couldn't get a job, but she said that with a bike I could get a paper route. She said, "I will lend you the money and you can pay me back."

I asked her why she was doing this — none of my friends had to work to get a bike. Their parents simply gave them their bikes and ev-



michael reagan

making sense

erything else they wanted.

She said, "If I give you everything you want, and I can afford to do that, you'll grow up to be a 40-year-old child. I build men, not boys. I want you to grow up to be a 40-year-old man."

I bought the bike with the money she lent me, and every Sunday I'd ride my bike to Good Shepherd church, sell papers there, and then pay my mother back out of my earnings.

That's called "tough love," and over the years nothing changed. When I got my national radio show back in 1992, I was driving 262 miles a day between San Diego and Los Angeles to do my show, and I wasn't making

I began to feel sorry for myself, even crying in the car one day. I didn't know what to do,

so I called my mom, probably looking for a handout.

I asked her what I could do, that I was driving 262 miles a day and not making any money, my kids were in school, Colleen was at work trying to take care of the family, and my mom said, "I can tell you what to do." And I asked "what?" and she said, "Who said you don't have to pay your dues? You need to pay your dues like everybody else. Shut up and keep driving." And she hung up

That was 16 years ago. I kept driving. And it all worked out.

Who I am today politically is because of Ronald Reagan. But if you really want to learn what made me the man I am, you have to look to Jane Wyman. She made award winning films — she also made a man.

Thank you, Mom.

Mike Reagan, the eldest son of the late President Ronald Reagan, is heard on talk radio stations nationally. E-mail comments to Reagan@caglecartoons.com.

