

from our viewpoint...

State might house terrorist prisoners

Leavenworth as Gitmo West?
What about Oberlin?

With increasing pressure on the administration to close the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay, on a U.S. Naval reserve in Cuba, speculation arose that all or some of the prisoners from the "War on Terror" might wind up at the U.S. Disciplinary Barracks, a military prison outside of Leavenworth.

It's not been a popular idea in a state that usually welcomes new government jobs. Both Kansas senators spoke up against the plan, though the military never really proposed it.

Sen. Pat Roberts said the barracks lack the space and security features needed for high-risk inmates.

"We'd be placing Americans in harm's way," he said. "It would be a logistical nightmare, costing the taxpayer hundreds of million dollars to make Fort Leavenworth even partially compliant with standards at Guantanamo."

And, basically, that's true. The military basically built a new prison at the remote naval base, where escape would be next to impossible and visiting terrorists would stick out like a sore thumb.

The administration is in a bind, though, since the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the prisoners, classified as "illegal enemy combatants," not as prisoners of war, can appeal to federal courts on their status.

As a practical matter, that means they'd have to be flown to a U.S. District Court on the mainland for hearings, or a judge would have to fly there. Either presents logistical problems, plus the Guantanamo base sits in the middle of a hostile foreign country.

Both presidential candidates have promised to close the Cuban location, so relocation for at least some of the prisoners is only a matter of time.

But what to do with them?

Only one has gone to trial. That man, a former driver for Osama bin Laden, got a five-year sentence, after which he'd presumably be released to go home. But many nations do not want these accused terrorists back, closing off one option. And American law might bar sending them anywhere they'd face torture or abuse, which includes most of the countries they come from.

If they are to be held in the U.S., they'd either have to be integrated into the regular prison system or the military system. But because of the possibility their friends might try to spring them, they pose a huge security risk.

And Leavenworth is the only maximum security site in the military prison system.

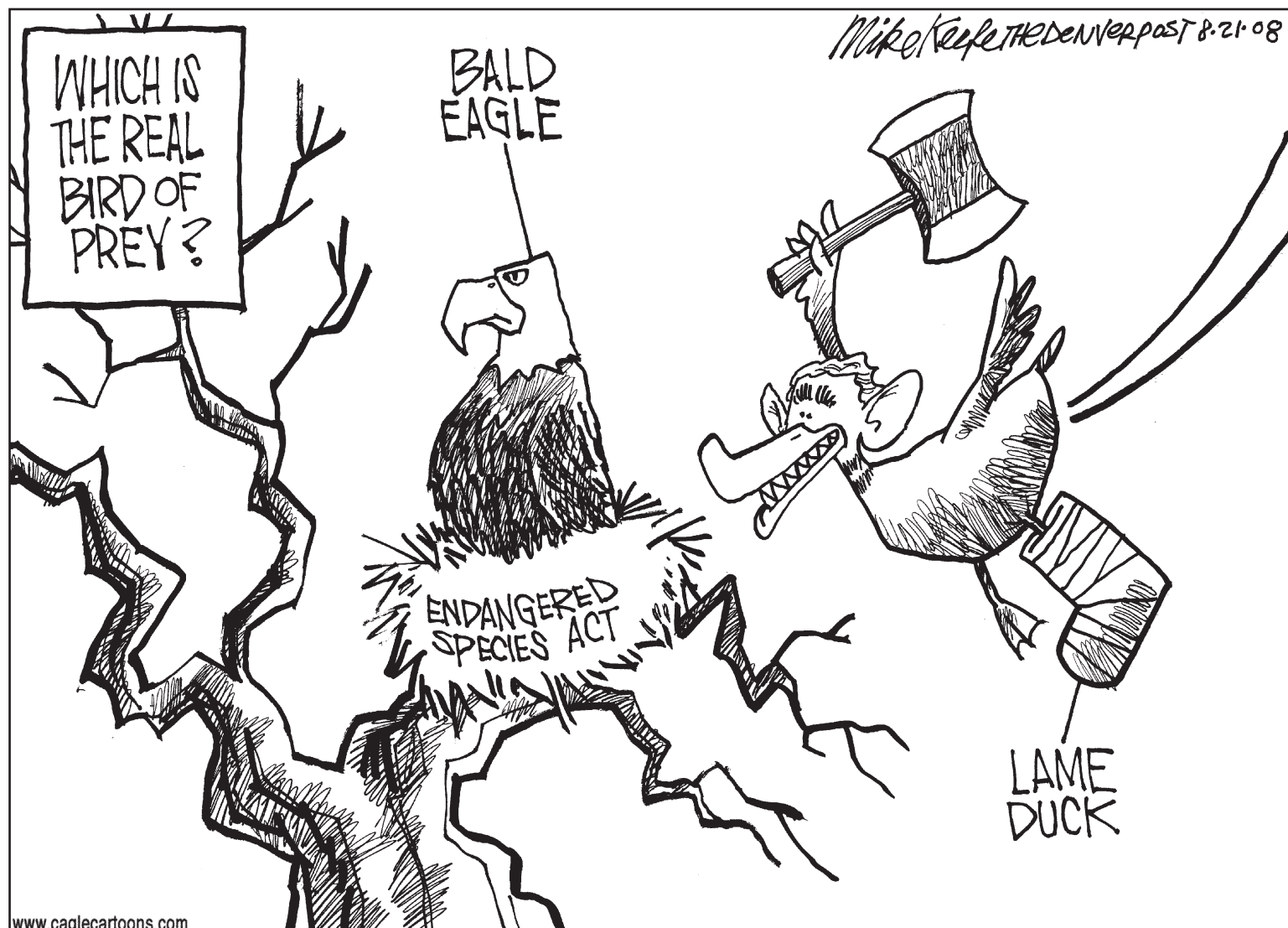
Which leaves the possibility of building a whole new prison somewhere to house these detainees, at least the ones convicted and sentenced to fixed terms.

Hum. Maybe Oberlin could offer the old youth ranch out at Sappa Park?

Or, remembering the problem with escapes the ranch used to have, maybe not.

Another suggestion was the Federal Penitentiary at Florence, Colo., near Cañon City, known as "Supermax."

Maybe this time we should let Colorado have a few jobs. — Steve Haynes



Chinese hot dogs



tom purcell

• commentary

If you're headed to Beijing for the Summer Olympics, I've got bad news: no dog meat for you.

According to The New York Times, the Beijing Catering Trade Association has ordered 112 designated Olympic restaurants to take dog off the menu.

As it goes, dogs have been raised for grub in China for thousands of years. The communists running the joint are afraid their gastronomic preferences might offend foreigners.

Boy, they got that right. Nothing is more offensive to Americans than the thought of having man's best friend for supper. (Medium-rare roverhouse? Buffalo paws?)

Which got me to thinking about the cleverness of our friends in China. They're pulling out all the stops to portray China in the best possible light.

Sure, they're among the biggest polluters in the world — no environmental regulations are slowing down their economic growth — so they're firing anti-smog pellets into the air.

Sure, they're among the most repressive nations in the world — they monitor and censure citizens and a fellow will end up in the clink if he dares criticize his government — but Internet access appears to be widely available in the hotels where foreigners are staying.

Sure, they've modernized Beijing with upscale shops and Starbucks, but then we learn the cabs are equipped with hidden microphones so Big Brother can listen in on the conversations of visitors.

The party leaders are stumbling a little as they try to mask the ugliness of communism

— the torture, the jailing of dissidents and religious leaders, the lack of basic rights that Americans take entirely for granted — but by and large they'll probably pull it off.

They'll pull it off because many Americans will let them. Rather than see communism as an evil ideology — one that has exterminated more than 100 million people — some Americans feel we have no right to criticize it.

Some Americans believe communism is just another form of government. Who are we to impose our ideas on other cultures that may see things differently?

What's worse: Some Americans think America is the real evildoer in the world.

Some are so forgetful of where our freedom came from — or that freedom is the engine that unleashed the economic miracles that produced the most productive, prosperous nation in the history of mankind — that they think socialism or communism are just as good and maybe even better.

I think the fellows running China are on to all of this — they know we've gone soft.

These fellows are hungry — they have a fire in the belly that is driving them to regain their greatness. Whereas their history dates back 5,000 years, they view America as a temporary

upstart.

They know how hard it is to attain wealth and power. And while they are clawing their way upward — they aren't troubled by global warming or disturbing the habitat of the double-billed blue duck — they know many Americans have no idea how hard wealth and power are to keep.

Consider: Some 70 percent of our energy comes from foreign sources — a great vulnerability. Despite the fact that oil prices are wreaking havoc on our economy — or that a major disruption to the world's oil supply could cripple us — many in Congress STILL want to restrict drilling.

They want us to properly inflate our tires and conserve. And I think the fellows running China are onto this. I think they know us better than we know them.

They know Americans will be far more troubled that the Chinese are eating dog than we will be about the really nasty stuff they are up to or the troubling fact that their economy is growing a lot faster than ours.

While the world hopes that China's growth leads to a free, open, modern society, I'm guessing communist party leaders have a different notion.

I'll bet they're dreaming of the day that fortunes reverse entirely — the day when waiters around the world say, "You want fries with your Labrador burger?"

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Good participation at planning session

To the Editor:

I'd like to thank all the participants who attended the Sherman County Economic Development strategic planning session on Thursday night.

It was a great meeting with lots of conversation, and ended with several goals to work on.

Special thanks to Dan Steffen, Project Manager of Business Development for the Northwest Regional Office of the Kansas Department of Commerce from Hays for guiding



from our readers

• to the editor

us through the evening, and to James Foster with the Office of Rural Opportunity from Colby for assisting him.

A big thank you to the Northwest Kansas Technical College for allowing us to use the fa-

cility, and to The Goodland-Star News, KLOE, S&T Communications, and Eagle Cable for announcing the event.

If anyone would like a copy of the results when they are compiled, please send your e-mail address to shermancoecdev@goodland-net.com, or call (785) 890-3743.

Helen Dobbs
Sherman County Economic Development Office Manager
Goodland

The Chinese Olympics



will durst

• raging moderate

By now, if you are not in the early stages of tertiary overdose from cloyingly mawkish Up Close and Personal previews emanating out of that quadrennial athletic meet going down in Beijing, you should consider yourself as lucky as a John McCain handler at a canceled photo op in a grocery store.

As they say up in Maine, "The sap is running." I swear that if I hear the word "dream" uttered one more time, somebody at NBC is going to have chopsticks sticking out of parts of their body that chopsticks don't normally stick out of.

They call it the games of the XXIX Olympiad, even though this is only the 26th time that games are actually being played. Don't ask. It's a math thing. A couple of assemblies back in the early 20th Century got called on account of Germans. As opposed to a couple of assemblies in the late 20th Century which should have been called on account of Germans playing fast and loose with the laws of gender. But I digress.

I realize what I'm doing here might be misconstrued as ambushing the Olympic Torch with a Supersoaker full of wet-blanket juice; so I implore the Chinese secret police to leave my e-mail alone, because this asstance glance will be tossed offhandedly aside with more than a modicum of taste and the barest minimum of

cheap shots. Not to mention my own personal guarantee that no MSG will be added in the writing or the printing of this purported humor column. Never had it. Never will.

Here's the shape of the bone stuck in my craw. China? What the hell?

You got the world's premier sporting event embedded for three weeks at a location where breathing itself is considered a competitive sport. Where javelins are in danger of finding a sticking place before they hit the ground. Where the term "hot dog" isn't just a menu item, it doubles as an ingredient listing. And where the designated free-speech zones are located next to mental asylums because history has shown that anybody who would publicly protest in China is crazy.

The trade-off to awarding these games to a country whose treatment of dissidents makes Guantanamo Bay look like a Nathan Lane Musical Comedy Summer Camp was supposed to be a pledge by the Chinese leaders that they

would implement human rights reforms. But that promise was treated with the same regard that the Bush administration might have for an unpopular U.S. Supreme Court decision. Look. Laugh. Toss. 2 points.

Here's the tricky part. Mix all the above random vitriol with the little-known fact that every Olympics host country gets to include its own event, bake at 250 for an hour forty, and the resulting repast is the real reason for this rambling rhetoric.

A little something I like to call Will Durst's Top Ten List of Possible New Events the Chinese Might Want to Include in the XXIX Olympiad.

10. Synchronized Waterboarding.
9. The Barbed-Wire High Hurdles.
8. The Tibetan Monk Toss.
7. Starving Doberman Obstacle Relay.
6. Speed Wheezing.
5. The Re-Education Spiky Bamboo Pit Leap.
4. The Beach Border Minefield Crawl.
3. The Twelve-Year-Old Factory Worker Pee Hold Marathon.
2. Rhythmic Baton.
1. The Baby-Girl Bayonet Stack.

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