

Are You Ready for a Third-World USA?

Don't look now, but there's a sneak attack being waged against abundance-for-the-masses in this country.

That attack masquerades as a 'logical' response to wage differentials in the world—'Americans get paid too much,' goes the mantra of the greedy.

This writer would have no objection to reducing the average American income to 10% of the original **ON THE CONDITION** that rent, food, clothing, medical costs, and profit expectations be reduced to 10%, also. Fair's fair.

It's all a numbers game: on an even playing field, you can buy the same items for 10% that you can with 100%—and the 10:1 reduction of the French Franc a number of years ago proved that.

Of course, just like here at home, some merchants over there cheated—by trying to round up the fractions created by the new, 'heavy' Franc.

The problem is less that some people cheat than that any government would turn a blind eye. The French government did not—offenders were prosecuted.

Our oversight agencies are notoriously under-funded and under-staffed. Is that meaningless? For lower taxes? Sure!

The rabid unfairness begins when business believes that it has a 'right' to profit at the expense of the under-paid

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American laborer.

No one has a 'right' to profit. Profit is—and should be acknowledged—as a *reward* for the given company's serving its own employees and purchasers well.

What's really being achieved when business is allowed to export jobs is that the one-time conditions of abundance in this country are being converted to conditions of wide poverty and scarcity, just as in the rest of the third-world.

Scarcity is the history of the world. Artificial scarcity (as in California's own electricity crisis or 'maintenance' closure of petroleum plants) is a nasty business tactic that creates windfall 'profits.'

Yet the world has the ability now to create common abundance—it's just less 'profitable' for some.

Two key inequities contribute to the

current lack of fairness in the employment market: exported jobs and illegal workers—whom the Federal government wishes to legalize. Consider:

First: Exported-jobs is an issue that's easy to control if government wills it:

If more than, say, 35% of the total employment roster of any American company is located voluntarily outside the USA, then by law that employer company shall be declared an international company and shall be treated as a foreign corporation—with its legal rights assigned to, and controlled by, The Hague, as an international court.

Any legal actions must originate there. Our customs officers would not fight counterfeiting that originated with design secrets that were voluntarily sent abroad.

Now how eager would those companies be to locate off-shore or to export jobs?

When implemented, such a law could permit a two-year grace period during which to return the jobs to the USA and regain status as an American company.

The outcome of such a law would be to return fairness to the American employment market by putting labor and employers on an equal footing in regard to the costs of living and employing. No laborers need be poor so that a few entrepreneurs can earn undeserved profits.

Second: Illegal workers provide a very easy 'out' to a business that wants to hire cheaply but *not move* out of the country—

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not that agriculture could work that trick.

Just jail the illegal employers.

If we permit an unlimited number of illegals to arrive and to be documented, then we simultaneously create a low-paid, permanent under-class of citizens. The low- or un-skilled born-American labor will never be able to compete with the countless desperate illegals.

To the excuse that low-paid jobs go begging these days, the answer is that the offering employer will not willingly pay a living wage; and Americans can and do refuse those jobs. Probably they should refuse. Remember Santa Monica's vote.

Even if agricultural products were to increase in cost, that increase would be shared essentially equally by all citizens across the country. That's reality. That's nearer fair. The burden of *low pay in order to create cheap produce* should not fall on the agricultural labor alone.

Relatively cheap food/produce costs are a uniquely American phenomenon and help to create our national political stability. So this is a political, not merely competitive, problem: keep the lid on!

The ultimate problem is not that these solutions cannot be seen, but rather that in this so-called-Christian dominated society, those many purportedly-religious persons would rather keep for themselves as much as they can, despite the Biblical injunctions that they ignore.

Doesn't the Bible say, "You are your brother's keeper?" Excepting when?

But that denial of responsibility is Christian, too. In the view of Puritans, (and early French and Dutch Protestants) wealth and poverty were the handicrafts of God; and the (greedy) 'faithful' have no obligation to try to undo God's handicraft. The English, French, and Dutch Puritans created our New England! How convenient for the greedy among us now!

Moreover, the religionists' corollary to

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handicrafts holds that if any action succeeds, no matter how egregious, that action, too, must be the will of God.

So Nixon lost God's favor together with his office for his anti-Constitutional acts. Why don't his successors learn?

If 'the meek shall inherit the earth,' why do the wealthy fight that possibility?

Consequently, we are treated to the spectacle of an Enron (and others), even from the Bible Belt's Texas.

The Preamble to our Constitution states that this government should "**provide for the common welfare,**" but this Administration seems intent on providing for the further good of the wealthy, instead.

If the current practices of the Bush

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Administration continue, this nation will become just another third-world country, a) with the rich in clear control (as was fought recently via Venezuela's Chavez, where the rich lost, 58/42%); b) with a thin, (merchant) middle class that might do well enough to buy a few stocks ('ownership class,' indeed, when stocks might trade in blocks of millions!); but c) with a huge and under-paid under-class of labor that reflects the pre-labor-union USA's conditions of sun-up to sun-down work days plus pittance pay to women plus child labor—plus the shooting of striking workers, later. Yes, it happened here. As can worse . . . much, much worse. Unthinkable?

Just think about the rapidly-widening gap between rich and poor in this country, and consider that to be a not-too-Distant Early Warning sign.

You have the right (temporarily?) to think and respond—are you doing it?

Richard Cavalier

Mind Set Publication
ROME ALREADY HAD OUR
PROBLEM;
ROME FELL! --AND RELATED
LESSONS
by Richard Cavalier

What's really behind the push, by this Admin's economic gurus, to obtain amnesty for all illegal immigrants?

That's a relatively new question. But don't say *charity* or *concern* or *pity*. That basic question was already answered back in 1971 by Professor P.A. Brunt (at Oxford University) in his book *Social Conflict in the Roman Republic* (Norton):

"In general, slave competition must have caused severe unemployment or chronic under-employment among the free poor. What were they to do? It has been supposed that many emigrated."

Also: "The profits of empire enabled the upper classes to import hundreds of thousands

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of slaves, whole cargoes of Greek art, luxuries of every kind, and to buy up lands, stock them with cattle or turn them into the orchards Varro admired.

"If there is no justice," wrote St. Augustine (*City of God*, IV,4), "what are kingdoms but robbery on a large scale?" Religious Right: Take note of a religious man's writing--favorable to your cause or not.

Now, read *illegal immigrant* and *guest worker* for the word *slave*, and you can understand the thrust of today's push to marginalize the US-born working poor. Then you can understand that there is no shortage of ready workers--only those Americans who refuse to do grunt work for less than a living wage. If employers pay a living wage, and if consumers each pay slightly more, then the burden will not fall only at the bottom.

The underlying problem is greed on the part of employers who don't want to pay more than slaves or guest workers or illegal immigrants will ask. They are aided and abetted by selfish consumers who want the cheapest for themselves, no matter who pays dearly. Is this religious morality in operation?

Brunt, "... Plato has said that in his day, the fourth century [BC], every city was divided into the city of the rich and the city of the poor, just as Disraeli said that in nineteenth century England there were 'two nations.' *What distinguished Rome was neither economic inequality nor exploitation but the enormity in the scale of both.*"

[Cavalier's emphasis: all quotes are from Section 2 of Brunt.]

We're at a decision point. In his recent book, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (Viking), Professor Jared Diamond (UCLA) offers a parallel with many failed societies of history: because of our societal memory of open frontier and plenty, we refuse to acknowledge, understand, and adjust to changes in this world's circumstances.

Okay, we're not (officially) a kingdom or empire, even though it's argued that we often operate that way. But the growing gap in income levels suggests that Brunt's observation on the enormity of Roman inequality and exploitation is here again, now. At home.

It's also clear that to be able to export jobs or to obtain and employ countless illegal immigrants with impunity (and to pay low wages to persons who are afraid to complain) is as near as we can come today to historical

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slavery. Illegals, go home!

Exported jobs, come home!

Otherwise, abandon the offending run-away multi-national companies to the International Court at the Hague. Taxpayers as individuals pay court costs here when run-away (and even stay-at-home) companies don't.

It's time to challenge the burgeoning system of rewards-for-greed that afflicts the nation. It's time to admit that it's extremely difficult for corporations to make huge profits in an honest fashion unless privy to a major new and needed advance or, for individuals, a major new, appreciated talent.

Then we can begin to recover some of the basic ideals of sharing that were implicit in the New Deal. . . but are being lost to rabid promoters of business interests above all else. Is greed a 'family value'?

It is also a conundrum that in the geographical and psychic Bible Belt that dominates our politics today, so many supposedly-Godly persons can ignore their Biblical injunctions to be charitable.

No surprise: Their forebears found Biblical authority for slave-holding, too.

If giving food and water to illegals in the desert today is being charitable, so, then, must be paying low wages without Social Security benefits to desperate people, as at least one GOP Federal Cabinet nominee did. In other such cases, lip service must be the most charitable of all inactions! Just make pretty phrases! Taxpayers can pay it all--those Sillies who pay.

Example: the fiction that the holders of a few stock shares are on a par with the owners of multi-millions of shares in multiple firms: Call it 'Ownership Society,' and the most-gullible will swallow it whole while becoming

minnows in the stock market's sea of sharks.

Recent studies have found that fewer than 10,000 millionaires own about 80% of the productive wealth of the nation (Theodore Lundberg: About 500 clan-families). All you non-millionaire stockholders *together* share about 20%--controlling nothing.

This Administration's policies toward illegal immigrants are broken. . . and not likely without full knowledge of the benefits to the owner-classes. Brunt and Rome tell us why!

Why won't the Congress act? Are too many owner-class persons among them? Or are the others beholden to those owner-classes? Many of our national policies and attitudes are broken. The time to fix them is

also now.

The pretext of Homeland Security as a diversion for mass media and citizens' personal attention is no substitute for economic justice for all born-Americans and our legal immigrants!

It's time for *people who themselves really want to be moral* to begin to address the world's inequities:

Don't buy from el-cheapo merchandisers who deal in sweat-shop items.

Avoid those manufacturers who ship their jobs out of the country.

Retire those politicians who refuse to take a stand on the major issues of today! **MS**

Thoughts in Passing

by Richard Cavalier

Having traveled in more than forty other countries, I've often witnessed events and seen circumstances that are significantly different from the inventive and official State Department versions that are unthinkingly parroted by the US press.

As a result, I have different viewpoints on some of the current international events that are now being peddled to the US public.

For instance:

a) If Jerusalem is not to be considered a prize of conquest, then it should be shared--but not only with the Palestinians, who want some of it, but also with the entire religious community of the world: make Jerusalem an international city (like Tangier between 1923-56; now Moroccan but still a free port). It can be governed by a commission composed of an equal number of representatives from each of the religions whose sacred place it is, using neutral professional managers.

b) If Israel wishes to be safe from artillery placed atop the Golan Heights (which is not an unreasonable want), nevertheless that does not justify the additional settlements that are now being made on the West Bank. Is this a subtle attempt to scuttle the peace process? Why should the UN and world not expect that every square inch of disputed West Bank territory be replaced by at least a compensating square inch of territory? Even if only one elevated or sub-way rail line wide, all disputed West Bank territory could be traded for a safe link for Palestinians with the Gaza Strip, which is now their distant island. Unless the Israeli idea is actually to give back a lot less than was promised, then a contiguous link for the Palestinians with all their territory should be a very welcome exchange that circumvents military needs.

c) Taiwan (formerly China's province of Formosa) was 'liberated' by Chiang Kai Shek when he retreated from the communist

control by Mao. But Chiang was an in-law of Sun, who exchanged peasant gold for gov't paper. Chiang was equally disliked by the Chinese, because he fought the Chinese communists, not Japanese invaders. He also raided US supply lines. To fight communists was our goal, but we bet on the wrong horse. Chiang's retreat does not alone justify the loss of China's province in civil war. It is not justified for the US to try to 'guarantee' the safety of the Taiwanese as a break-away province. Would we give away Florida if a Latin country intervenes?

d) North Korea continues to be a major problem and will be for as long as we demand that they conform to our ideas. That's not the best way to let them *save face*. The problem is that both the South Korean and the naive American people have been fed a steady diet of half truths and lies for five decades, and only the truth might diminish the crescendo of atomic events.

Syngman Rhee was not a democratic person or President of South Korea. He had already been removed for corruption as the first President of the First Provisional Korean Government in Exile in Shanghai before he was appointed (by Genl Douglas MacArthur) to be the interim President of Korea, in the pre-UN-election period of occupation. But Rhee had previously refused to surrender his seal of office to the First Provisional Government and so could possibly have presented invalid credentials to MacArthur. Or, if the ruse was known... well, State Dept has supported numerous useful tyrants.

We were conned--but we won't admit it!

North Korea's Kim (the father) was wise and correct to challenge Rhee, although war was not the best way to start. Kim (the son) will not acknowledge that his father was an unreasoning war-monger and will continue to fight his father's battle. Logical?

The US will not admit publicly that we intervened in the Korean conflict to prevent the spread of Chinese (and possibly even Japanese) communism. . . we had long before

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granted to Japan its hegemony over Korea. So we had little interest in Korea's freedom *per se* or in Rhee's continued corruption, so long as he let us fight communism. Finding those communists under every cabbage leaf (ala Richard Nixon) was Rhee's tool for justifying dictatorship and destroying his political enemies. The result of political brutality since the 1910 Japanese invasion, remains an aspect of Korean life even today, when official courtesy to Koreans is scarce.

Enough distortions of history in order to avoid admitting grievous error: admit that the attempt to remove Rhee as an illegally-sitting, dictatorial President was an ill-considered but justified act. Invite the son to be proud of his father's action, however distasteful it was to the South Koreans.

By facing the truth, South Korea and even the US might be able to convince Kim (the son) to cooperate. It's not guaranteed.

But we've tried bullying--and that isn't working. Why not try truth and reason?

Editor's note: Cavalier's ideas are based in part on his soldiering year in Korea and also on a newspaper series of four articles regarding Korea that were printed in 1959 and subsequently proved to be accurate. Those articles are reprinted at the back of Cavalier's novel, *Young Song*, a not-quite-love story of Reconstruction Era Korea. To order: keyword www.AuthorHouse.com. (now FirstBooks.com) MS



"I don't have the time."
"I don't want to know."
"It can't happen to me."
"I can't afford it."

A Fool or a wise person may hide his head in a hole in the ground, but the world will remember this person by the part they see.

So we can say the wise person will find it better to face his problem rather than show his rear.

Maceo Lott

Our Fearless Press vs Govt & FCC: Business or Constitutional Obligation?

You heard it right. In mid-November, 65 affiliates of a national broadcasting system refused to air a particular (gory) war movie because the 65 feared the FCC's reaction

Despite over 8,000 wounded and about 1,000 American deaths, strangely, no caskets are returning from Iraq

In an Administration that refuses to let the press photograph returning caskets and the abundant wounded, FCC threats are hardly surprising. But it is bald censorship, nevertheless, why isn't the press rebelling?

Now some TV stations have refused to broadcast a message from a Christian church regarding inclusivity (read *gay*). The excuse is that the message *can be seen* as critical of other churches. Do the other, presumably exclusive, churches deserve criticism?

By these actions and many other sad inactions, has the vaunted *free press* of the nation become a bunch of pussy cats and lap dogs for the current Administration?

Which brings up an important question:

In protecting the rights of the press (now described as the Fourth Estate), did the framers of the Constitution intend to establish one profit-oriented business with special protections and privileges beyond all other businesses, or did those framers (and does that Constitution today) expect the press to repay its privileged position with an effort to discover and print the truth, whatever it might be?

If the latter, we are entitled to **criticize the press for dereliction of its duty** under shelter of the Constitution's protections.

Inability to confront any problem is only one aspect of that dereliction. The press often pretends to confront obliquely, by simply quoting opponents (with no attempt

at evaluation and little investigative effort to establish the truth of claims), gossip value.

Truth squads during the recent election were an exception, but they were largely limited and ignored by persons who wanted their own prior views to be reinforced.

Excuse for future inaction? Or just a logical reader/viewer reaction from having been continually lulled by entertaining 'news'?

Another aspect is best illustrated by the over-dependence on public polls as a major source of ersatz 'news.' In other words, the fact of the polls was made to be just as important as the legitimate issues. . . and polls were a cheap and easy substitute for conscientious investigation of those issues.

So, because of press dereliction, we have had a concentration on Dan Rather's factual errors regarding the alleged Bush failure to fulfill his duty to the National Guard, rather than an examination of whether it's true.

Why did only one network special investigate *in Viet Nam* and establish the bogus nature of charges against a decorated presidential candidate? Can we lie our way to respect? Or are the political spoils just too great to be sacrificed for mere truth?

We had pre-election emphasis on the reported *fact* that Condoleezza Rice was *still* *proclaiming* that Saddam Hussein was involved in the Towers disaster, rather than on the fact that, knowing all the facts by then, she was *most likely lying*.

But there are a myriad of failures:

If so many news reporters now claim to be aware of the lack of vehicle armor in Iraq, why didn't they write it sooner? Just aware that this war is about oil, not blood? Or that it's an illegal war, never declared by our Congress? Or that the Constitution is

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suddenly expendable, just like truth?

Is it for fear of a retaliation by this Administration, as a string of civil servants has discovered? They had the temerity to report the facts, which were unpopular with a war-mongering Administration.

Two minor reporters are facing jail sentences for incidental writing about the outing of a woman CIA agent. But Robert Novak, the very Conservative reporter who actually outted her is not yet subpoenaed, if ever. When power attacks power, what? At least, fear on the part of the press.

Why does the Ohio election fraud appear on page A-28 in the LA Times for 12/12/04, rather than being trumpeted as a potential second scam attempt for the same politician?

Well, a couple of answers might fit:

First, Americans like easy, pat answers, especially when we can blame someone else. . . it hardly matters whether justly or not. Kill the messenger--ignore the message.

Second, the press (especially TV) still depends on curiosity value--not news--to win attention (numbers) and earn profits.

Anyone can be curious at any time about anything--usually briefly. Genuine news affects the lives of at least some of the readers and viewers. News matters! But car chases in place of news? For vidiots!

Because major press/news executives can't be unaware of the difference, we can conclude fairly that money is valued over the Constitution, but only by the greedy.

Our freedoms were hard-won by an apparently-hardier generation. Now we're soft and selfish and superficial--witness the last election, in which religious hypocrisy, combined with greed and pious misdirection, trumped facts and issues.

"Beware of what you wish for, because

you might get it." Old adage. Watch out!

Life can be very comfortable when there's nothing to think about except your own real or imagined needs and sorrows--and that comfort might stay with you all the way to the poor farm, as the money changers convince you that American workers earn too much. Is it okay if a lower income and poverty affect only other people?

Is it okay if retirement money is lost in the stock market as long as the brokers get their cut early? The Bush family fortune is based on stock brokering. Bias?

Is the press likely to bring the real issues to the general public honestly?

Don't count on it. Even if reporters are liberal, the owners of the press are members of the wealthy elite; and privilege and power are not being widely distributed these days.

If you don't believe it, just evaluate the pap and Pablum that are on your TV and in most newspapers and magazines today.

It's all trying to pass as responsible journalism. Is it succeeding with you? If so, don't complain when you lose your liberties. If not, why do you buy junk journalism? MS

Guest editorial by Richard Cavalier

Are Omission-Sins Also Sins? Is Religion a Political Sham?

When this writer was young enough to be sent to church, we children were taught that there were sins of comission and also sins of ommission. All bases are thoroughly covered: no wiggle room.

That matters much today because you have been reading about the terrible results of 'poor, failed intelligence' from the CIA, which failures 'contributed' to the war in Iraq. The CIA is taking the fall for this Administration's tragic goofs.

Well, we're not saying that such intelligence was necessarily of the best and highest kind...because failures of American intelligence and policies are

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strewn throughout our history.

Consider the fall of the Berlin Wall and Russian Empire, for instance. Did we really not know in advance, or was it more important for the Administration to get funding for the Star Wars program?

Did we really encourage the hapless Hungarians to rebel against Russia in the 60s—and then not aid them?

Did we really promise aid to the Cuban exiles and then not deliver it to the Bay of Pigs?

Did we really encourage the Shiites to rebel against Saddam and then not help?

This is a matter of covert action vs official policy: war between Departments.

Could something else be at work, too?
Two things are happening together

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with the latest story of how flawed is/was our intelligence regarding Iraq:

1) President Duh-bya is absolving himself from all responsibility for his having taken us into war by *his* choice. The military is on record as having objected in various ways, in advance.

2) And even the 'flawed intelligence' contained caveats about its incompleteness. When ignored, these caveats (as sins of omission) became lies about the 'need' for war.

If he had been willing to start a war, Jimmy Carter would likely have won a second term. But he was a *truly* Christian man, and so any war was anathema.

All members of our government are busy pretending that all fault is that of the intelligence services. . .so that they

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and the Administration need not admit that accurate 'intelligence' is never wanted in Washington.

Our foreign policies are driven by preconceived ideas about actions that should be taken in virtually all instances.

Remember Brinkmanship, Cold War, Dollar Diplomacy, etc? These slogans (not facts) determined policy. Accurate intelligence was pointedly discouraged.

Essentially, such preconceived ideas are simply Dollar Diplomacy in disguise.

Because of preconceived ideas, the US opposed Allende in Chile, who was attempting to take back his country from the American copper interests that dominated virtually every aspect of economic life there. We got Pinochet as a

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(desired?), dictatorial substitute!

Yes, Allende was accused of being a communist (or at least a socialist) for wanting to nationalize copper and probably telephones. But if our nation has been able to live with the socialists of Europe—France and Italy especially—why couldn't we accommodate Allende? Our copper and telephone interests *owned* Chile. Religious morality or greed?

'Communist' and 'socialist' are code words for the Pollyanna Press of the US, which won't think for itself when free press handouts are available from the government. Free handouts equal 'spin'—but that's too complex a concept for most of the *'pack journalists'* (Republican term that *excuses* unthinking support).

It does not take marvelous intelligence activity to show us that we have been treating the Arabs unevenly ever since Israel was created, at the time of Harry Truman. Iraqi insurgency is payback time.

Obviously, those preconceived ideas are not working. . . witness Iraq!

How does it happen?

State Dept sends verbatim 'reports' to its foreign embassies and requires that those exact 'reports' be returned *with signatures* to Washington. In that way, all information 'received' is perfectly compatible with whatever ideas that Washington is promoting at that time.

Our so-called 'intelligence' is bent to serve those 'reports.' Ergo, Iraq, etc., etc.

Then, if ever criticized, the State Dept can 'prove' that 'poor intelligence' was received in the 'reports' . . . and can also 'prove' that policy was consistent with the 'reports.' Foolproof, if you believe it.

Can State show strenuous opposing

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opinions that would disprove our own interpretation of circumstances?

That interpretation alone can explain our many failures of policy around the world: Dollar Diplomacy has never died. Now it's called 'failure of intelligence.'

Why are we fighting in Iraq?

Good question, especially because (once we have blamed the intelligence of the CIA), we are asked to ignore the fact that caveats were delivered along with the acceptable information—but the caveats were ignored, because they did not support the preconceived ideas.

Yes, this was an elective war. Duh-by-a chose to conduct it. He owns it!

To protect the honor of the UN? If the UN is so important to the US, then why haven't we paid our dues on time?

'Protecting the honor of the UN' was only one more pretext in the web of lies and sins (of these 'religious' zealots).

More likely reasons?

—Are we fighting Israel's battle?

—Are we fighting this war not only to control oil, but also because Saddam Hussein had demanded that oil be paid in Euros, no longer in dollars?

The Euros would threaten our banking system. That system is very privately owned—it is not a US government entity. That's why our Presidents can 'appoint' a Federal Reserve Chairman, who's still free to do exactly as he chooses.

It's true that Duh-by-a didn't invent the problems in Washington. He simply took advantage of all of them for the benefit of family, the family's partners (named Bin Laden), and oil interests, plus a little something for Veep's Halliburton.

Enough sham and hypocrisy in our foreign policies—now and forever! To

claim moral virtues here is grotesque!

We're stuck in Iraq. We created the circumstances that engendered the problems that the 'new government' is having. And we're not buying the excuse that those problems are no longer ours!

So, yes, we need to stay and clean up the mess that poor planning and oil interests created. . .but let's not lose sight of the fact that we didn't belong there alone—only under UN auspices, if at all.

If the Iraqi people would not depose Saddam, it was not our place to do it. Which *foreign* country *started* our War for Independence over 200 years ago?

But Duh-by-a says we're "safer now." That's not true, as his office discovered. That claim was the fault of others, too. He has stated publicly that he *can't think of any* mistakes that he might have made.

The fact that Iraq's once-dictator is deposed is irrelevant to the central fact of our lack of right or responsibility.

The inescapable conclusion is that we have been lied into a war that need not have happened but was calculated to return treasures to its sponsors.

Well, the treasures are not accumulating here, but our nation is now hemorrhaging monies that are better

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spent on education and medicine and other social betterments at home.

Big spending projects like this war and Star Wars and Mars-shots yield enormous profits while not raising pay scales through significantly higher employment.

In fact, this war can be seen as just one more grand scheme that spends billions of dollars and makes bushels of profits for some without benefitting the unwitting payees—the over-worked and under-served middle class.

Certainly, the dead and wounded haven't benefitted. Who has? Have you?

It's nearly election time. **Vote!**

Guest editorial by Richard Cavalier

Feeling Sorry for Airlines? They Did It to Themselves!

The news is full of sob stories these days that ask us to grieve for the sorry bottom lines that most airlines are enjoying lately.

Yes, a small part of the problem was due to 9/11, but the truth is that most major airlines were in sorry shape before that time because they insisted on doing business according to the precepts of their bean counters, rather than their customers.

For instance, the bean counters assured the national airlines that the least expensive method of servicing their fleets was to adopt a hub-and-spokes arrangement. That would minimize the maintenance operational needs

That would also let passengers fly from here to elsewhere before their destination.

That would also alienate the airlines' own customers, who were, understandably, not enchanted with the idea of taking a delaying tour of miscellaneous airports on the way to their chosen destinations.

So the little start-up airlines began doing what the big boys today refer to as 'point-to-point' operations. Those start-ups became highly successful and profitable. Pssst. Airline travel was always point to point for customers--except that the bean counters didn't seem to understand that.

Moreover, ticket prices were kept high, and airlines competed with menus, nice uniforms, lounges, and other irrelevancies.

When the Concorde was flying, the cost of mach-speed was about triple the cost of snail-paced 500 mph. Wouldn't you gladly pay triple fare in order to start your vacation a few hours sooner, even if the entire dream-vacation wouldn't cost as much as the new Concorde flight alone? Bean counters, again. Good-bye, Concorde. Nice to know you.

Now we're confronted with the international choice between the super-huge new European consortium's cozy 555 seating capacity, which happens to be competing with Boeing's newly designed 250 seating

The bean counters are calculating all the corporate savings that can be had if 800 people can be induced to consider a herd of 800 jostlers to be anything worth paying for.

Pardon me, but I remember the French Caravelle. It carried about 75 passengers and was a joy to board (quick, simple) and to fly (quiet, smooth). I flew it at every opportunity. Apparently the bean-counters decided that it wasn't paying its own way. Gas price.

Sadly, the Caravelle didn't last long. Nor did the British version, which advertized 'cart before the horse'--which is what made both planes quiet and smooth.

Bean counters opted for gigantic planes that were a problem to load, an inconvenience to ride in, and a headache at the baggage claim if you hoped to get to the front of the baggage-discharge rack before your case went around multiple times and offered itself to thieves.

Board a plane with 550 of my closest friends? You can't give me a freebie ticket. But let me praise Boeing. 'By going smaller, you're going in the right direction.' That's only according to customers, of course.

If Boeing brass can fight off the bean counters, it might even have a winner in the service sweepstakes. That might rehabilitate the US aviation market, which sags these days under this Administration's purchase of foreign-made helicopters for the President.

Out-sourcing is so helpful to the unemployment situation at home, isn't it? And easy movement for money across national borders is so much more desirable, isn't it?

Shucks--that's what it takes to create an Ownership Society. Nice slogans are all it takes these days, when few think, isn't it?

MS

POLITICS and OTHER MAGIC SHOWS

Q: What's the main difference between the current administration and any other magician's slick performance?

A: With a magician, you expect in advance to be fooled.

All magic acts proceed from clever distraction of your attentions from the trick-hand to the watched, but distracting, cover-action. Look at how smoothly you've been fooled by such sleight-of-hand:

—Weapons of Mass Destruction: there weren't any. So now the distraction is "Aren't you glad to be rid of Saddam Hussein?"

But if the US was not directly threatened by Saddam, and if there are no WMDs found, then war with Saddam was an elective war by a selected (not elected) President.

Yes, we're pleased that Saddam is gone, as all dictators should be. On the other hand, this man was not

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America's personal or immediate problem. The UN should have taken action. . .and could have. But Saddam was already contained.

But such international action will challenge the once-primacy of kings, which position is now sought by multi-national corporations.

If the UN had previously been so important to the US, then why have our membership payments been in arrears for so many years?

So an under-funded UN can be effectively hamstrung? What a coincidence! Just like magic.

Besides, the US has supported dictators in other countries for decades simply by terming them 'strongmen.' It's all a matter of whose side the dictators are on.

—Diversionary tactics: The Bush family and the Bin Laden family are business partners in oil. Some Bin Ladens happened to be in the US on 9/11; about 20 persons were permitted to depart two days later. Reason? Never given.

Now, we can't seem to locate the son of that family, who master-minded the 9/11 horror. He had no truck with Saddam, as far as anyone can tell. Is war with Saddam only a diversionary action taken so that the son of family partners need not be found? Loyalty is so nice!

—Stay the course: how strong and movie-macho! Just like John Wayne—who also was never really in the military. More magic shows!

—Bring freedom to Iraq and the Muslim world: nice idea—but who are we to determine what someone's government *should* be?

If we're on a toboggan run and headed for a tree, should we steer a

different course immediately or hope that the tree will leap out of our way as we steer the chosen course with stubborn (admirable?) determination? Iraq hasn't leaped.

Recently, a Republican member of Congress (who defended Duhbya) stated that we should achieve a "modicum" of freedom in Iraq.

Are we losing nearly 1,000 lives and more than 4,500 injuries in order to gain a "modicum" of our type of freedom for persons who might not want it? Or wouldn't fight for it themselves?

Some financial people believe that Saddam's real threat to us came with his switch from the Dollar to the Euro as their accepted method of payment for oil. That switch can threaten the preeminence of our privately-owned banking system, not the American people. The rest of the world has dealt with various currencies for all recorded history.

But this nation has been highly successful during the last century in confusing capitalism (a monetary system) with freedom (a condition), rather than with capitalism's other system-challenger, socialism.

Stalin and later-Mao's dictatorial regimes were simply that: Stalinism and Maoism. Lack of freedom was not a tenet of socialism.

We have been able to deal with other nations which have joined capitalism with socialism, such as France, Italy, Germany, Sweden, etc. Human considerations benefit.

Why shouldn't we be able to say those words without being accused of blindly favoring them? Mind control? Magic shows!

As usual, doesn't it depend on

whose ox is gored? .

—Our man in Havana: we pushed Castro into the arms of Stalin when we refused him aid after his early visit to Washington. "Always a communist?" Right. But when you need money, you can't always state the conditions under which you'll accept it, can you?

We also pushed Mao into Stalin's arms when we refused to aid Mao. He was extremely popular with the Chinese people originally. . .but we preferred Chiang, Kai Shek, who fought the communists, not the Japanese invader of China.

Now we're in the position of treating Taiwan almost as if it's an independent nation, although Taiwan was previously the Chinese province of Formosa. Chiang had retreated there and "occupied" a chunk of his own nation.

We also helped to create the nasty situation in Iran when we foolishly supported a bloody dictator, the Shah Pahlavi, who was hated by his people. But he was pro-US and a capitalist who spent a lot of money in the West. What really counts?

—Chalabi, once lionized as "the next President of Iraq:" Well, any dummy should have known that a

man with much to gain personally from our war might be less than cricket, even if he's not disliked.

But things are much worse: our history confirms that expatriates are not always welcome back, even if we insist for our reasons:

Rhee was our dictator in Korea. His henchmen killed two of his challengers before two subsequent elections. The Koreans knowingly elected the dead man in one of those elections. Students deposed Rhee!

Did we change? No. After all, our State Dept never makes mistakes. That's why an elective war in Iraq is wonderful. Magic!

—Prison sex scandals? Just a few soldiers at the bottom! Right. Safe answer, too: "Those dumb kids!"

In short, it's obvious in history that today's elective war in Iraq is an event preconceived according to the preferred (false) information and theory offered by the Dept of Defense through its Secretary and also his Deputy, Paul Wolfowitz.

Similarly, serious repercussions have occurred from other theories, (such as Balance of Power, Manifest Destiny, Dominos Theory, Brinkmanship)—because neat theory

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didn't reflect crude reality. But State Dept doesn't make mistakes.

Like magical shots to Mars, any war demands huge budgets that generate huge profits for a few without raising the standard of living at home.

Higher expectations would tend to encourage higher wages, were those profits won in a more traditional fashion. So wages are contained—just like magic!

And if we continue to ignore the festering situation with Israel and the Palestinians, we need to ask the question, "Whose war are we really fighting?" And why?

Ben Franklin has already said it: "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary

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safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Do you feel that we're not buying safety from terrorism? Only spending lots of money on a game of magic that convinces us that the worst is not really happening?

You know the drill: tell all your legislators to stop the magic show—we're not being fooled!

Guest editorial

Richard Cavalier

Pity Poor Judy: She Got Caught!

Surely you've heard: Judith Miller sat in jail for nearly 90 days because she refused to divulge the name of her source (who "outed" the CIA operative whose husband offended Bush & Company's war-making effort).

Sitting in jail for the principle of protection of sources is not a bad thing, considering that the freedom of the press is predicated upon that press' doing independent labor to keep any administration and its government honest. But we suspect Judith's motives.

She knew that she had been co-opted by VP Cheney during the WMD battles as a run-up to war, and she knew that she had also knowingly protected Libby's identity with an old, then/now-misleading descriptive title. So she was also going to jail in order to get sympathy and maybe a pass for her several transgressions. Which her publisher sort of defends, but many of her co-workers do not . . . very vocally do not. She knew that she could lose her job. She did. She brought it on self. That's not so sympathetic after all.

While it's not uncommon for the guilty to wrap themselves in the flag, neither is it unusual for the probably-guilty to give heart-wrenching motives for their most suspect behaviors.

The old adage is "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." Including Pres Bush, who is warning us that it is "deeply irresponsible to rewrite" the events. What he means is that we shouldn't try to rewrite his own rewrites of that run-up to an unnecessary and unjustified war.

Apparently, in his view, it is not irresponsible to start a war under false pretenses.

As the facts establish—and as Tim Russert stated on his 11/13 program—the facts indicate that this Admin "cherry picked the intelligence" reports so as to collect favorable complaints and to ignore criticisms. Criticisms were much stronger than the Congress ever knew, according to the *Washington Post*. Lies?

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Well, "deliberately misleading," said Colin Powell more than a year after he was used.

To what degree was Judith *used* and to what degree was she actually *complicit*?

Sadly, nearly 2,100+ military persons have already died and more will die because of this President's half-truths and hidden facts.

Even one of Tony Blair's diplomatic associates of that time is now challenging the fairy-tale versions of the run-up to war-causing events.

Saddam was not the terrorist involved in the massacre of 9/11/01. Bin Laden (a member of the family of Bush partners) was. But he can't be found today. Besides, the American press is predisposed to overlook transgressions of our Constitution that aid Israel, as war with Iraq certainly does.

In short, although *protection of sources* is an admirable ethical concept, not all sources are ethical enough to deserve protection.

It seems that the concept would benefit from some very practical limitation, such as: the protection is really needed by whistle-blowers, not those involved in criminal activity. So write the limitations to serve that distinction.

Next, let the protection be terminated automatically in every instance in which the protected person is involved in a crime—even if only corporate white collar crime, which usually gets only a slap on the wrist.

Because it's politically popular to destroy the reputations of opposition, let any false accusations made by the 'protected' person be no-longer protected once facts argue to the contrary, even without a trial first.

Then acknowledge that the *fact* of the press is not synonymous with freedom of expression—it's a printed microphone for magnified speech.

Magnification and *freedom* are different.

That magnification principle applies equally to advertising of political ideas, but the press can't endorse the principle because advertising revenue is always at stake.

That's press-owner greed, not principle.

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Where does it say in the Constitution that the fact of ownership of a printing press itself constitutes protection of profits of a single industry while imposing little or no obligation to perform a public duty? Where are all the GOP's strict Constitutional constructionists now?

Where are the statesmen in Congress now and whenever we still need them?

If we can impeach a sitting President for lying about his sexscapades, can we not also impeach another for lying us into war? **MS**

Is Our US Gravy Train Now Losing Its Engine?

Back when this publisher was a boy (which he'll admit was more than a couple of seasons ago) he was taught that every country should try to have a favorable balance of payments.

Of course, every country cannot have a favorable balance, because the term 'favorable' itself suggests the opposite condition—unfavorable to someone else. Who 'should' lose?

Yet the favorable-balance concept itself was right on the money in a different sense: new money must be brought into the economy regularly in order to create the wealth that permits the home country to act with largesse both at home and abroad: that's the money engine. It's essential.

In the past, American manufacturing was that engine. The whole world was willing to pay in order to have goods and services that we created here.

But recently, those factory jobs have been fleeing the country as American companies, as well as just ordinary citizens, have been buying 'cheaper,' wherever it originates. We

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just buy more problems.

Now we're beginning to realize that those cheaper goods have all been purchased at the expense of our own American jobs. We're exporting jobs whenever we buy certain things only because something is 'cheaper.'

These days, the Administration defends its policies by showing that about 300,000 jobs have been created in each of the last two months. That's probably fact. But what is also fact is that the vast majority of those jobs have been in dead-end occupations, most of which pay only minimum-wage, and so, help to create more working-poor. We don't need more of those kinds of jobs!

What no one in the Administration seems willing to acknowledge is that there is basically no real difference between a job created in the 'service sector' or an old-time, barter-economy subsistence life. Both the service economies and the barter economies simply switch the available valuables from one hand to another in the local community—but neither does anything significant to bring new money into an otherwise closed economic system.

Now take a good look at what's really happening to the American economy:

Service in the form of software-thinkers is booming for Bill Gates, who now personally controls wealth that's counted in the billions—yes, B. But how has that affected our local economy?

Service is booming for Halliburton, as it oversees construction in various countries around the world, including Iraq. Some jobs for executives and supervisors and highly-paid overseas workers (plus poorly-paid soldiers). How has that contributed to our town?

South Central is not booming, nor has Inglewood and its neighbors been upper-middle-class since the days in which they

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were the bedroom communities for Hughes Aircraft and other coastal firms that became major players in the aircraft industry. But those days have gone forever. How has that affected our town?

Lots of longshoremen's jobs down at Long Beach. But do you want your children to be dependent on manual labor at a time when the government is trying to make illegals 'legal' in order to bring in cheaper labor to replace your higher-paid children, if necessary? Cheaper pay does not automatically translate into cheaper food or rent or transportation. Fair?

Of course there are plenty of local merchants who need to make-do with what confronts them—but only if they must do the job alone. They can't.

You can help! You can Buy-American! Yes, it costs a little more.

You can also let your Congress-persons and Senators and State legislators know that you understand that the system still seems to be playing favorites with the big-money people and that it's time to stop.

If the currently-elected officials can't manage to change things, then it might be necessary to change the elected officials.

Changing officials in order to get what we want seems to be something that the electorate has forgotten of late. But if you don't vote, do you really think that you *do* have a right to complain?

Or, as Lilly Tomlin's little-girl character often said, "It's going to get worse before it

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gets worse."

The point is that we shouldn't just sit around and endure that 'worse.' We need to begin planning now to take the steps that are necessary to turn the situation around.

The first of those steps might be to create a new legal category for any company among those that are eager to operate in the world via exported jobs and exported company headquarters. Call them 'international companies' and cut them loose from the benefits that they now enjoy as 'American' firms—they deserve and should get *no* legal status as Americans in the American courts.

If those companies choose to become 'international' by their own actions (such as by placing more than, say, 20% of their jobs offshore or by establishing headquarters offshore), then their future legal recourse shall be via the International Court of The Hague, in the Netherlands.

Similarly, there should be no automatic or free police service at the borders to detect fraudulent patented goods if the American owner-firm has voluntarily sent the blueprints, patterns or software, etc, to a

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foreign country for current manufacture. In that case, rip-off is too easy, and the possibility is known in advance.

Those actions will also solve the new problem of the many international firms that now are clogging our courts with cases that can be brought here only because the foreign product or service might be sold here.

We Americans do not need to be tools of the international cartels.

Now, if and when they're deprived of the benefits of being US companies and employing US citizens and paying US taxes, we'll see whether they really enjoy being 'international.' Or was that only a ploy to escape taxes and other social and ethical responsibilities here at home?

If you get the drift, get on the web or horn (or send this editorial) to your own legislators—today!

M.L.