

Sometimes a threat is worse than the deed

During a tournament one day, Latvian chess master Aron Nimzowitsch complained his opponent had laid an unlit cigar on the table beside the board. The tournament director pointed out the man was not in fact smoking. "Yes," replied Nimzowitsch, "but he is threatening to smoke, and any fool knows the threat is more powerful than the execution"

President George Bush on NBC's *Meet the Press* Sunday talked with Tim Russert about his decision to go to war in Iraq.

"I and my team took the intelligence that was available to us and we analyzed it, and it clearly said Saddam Hussein was a threat to America.

"He had used weapons. He had manufactured weapons. He had funded suicide bombers into Israel. He had terrorist connections. In other words, all of those ingredients said to me: Threat.

"The fundamental question is: Do you deal with the threat once you see it? ... I dealt with the threat by taking the case to the world and said, 'Let's deal with this. We must deal with it now.'

"...I strongly believe inaction in Iraq would have emboldened Saddam Hussein. He could have developed a nuclear weapon over time. I'm not saying immediately, but over time, which would then have put us in what position? We would have been in a position of blackmail.

"In other words, you can't rely upon a madman, and he was a madman. You can't rely upon him making rational decisions when it comes to war and peace, and it's too late, in my judgment, when a madman who has got terrorist connections is able to act."

It seems clear now the intelligence made available back then was aimed more at giving the president what he wanted, and that was a way to invade Iraq.

No one will disagree Saddam was a danger to the world. The problem is how Bush used the fear of weapons of mass destruction as the central point of his campaign to invade Iraq. Now, he seems willing to admit it was not as accurate as he thought, but like the chess player, he wants us to remember the threat.

On Friday, President Bush appointed a seven-member panel to investigate and review the intelligence system and how it came up with the information used to sway the world to support the invasion of Iraq.

Bush gave the panel until March next year to report its findings, which will give them until five months after the election. He said that is to give them enough time to search for answers and to make recommendations so the next president won't face such a decision without better information.

Hindsight is clearer than what we saw at the time, but how would it have been for Bush to approach the United Nations and the American people saying, "we need to invade Iraq to finish the job my father started."

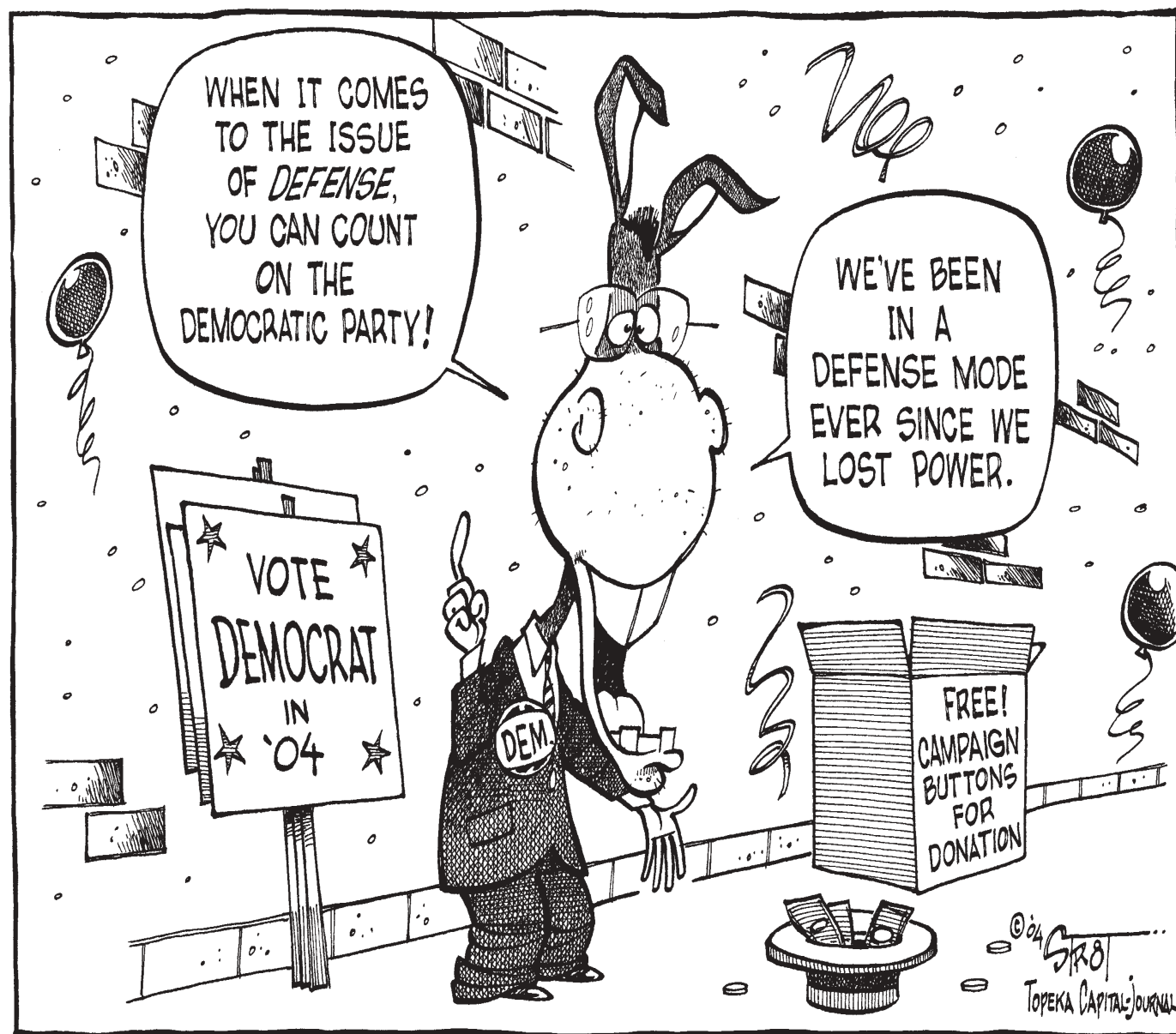
Maybe it was easier to get us to go along on the fear of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction rather than saying we needed to topple a despot.

Politically, this question will continue to be bandied about by the Democrats. To many, Bush is somewhat vulnerable because of the lack of evidence of a nuclear weapons program in Iraq.

No matter how we got there, we will continue to support our American troops in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

What makes this a great nation is the ability to look at ourselves and criticize while at the same time continuing the fight against terrorism around the world.

— Tom Betz



Oh, isn't it romantic, love is in the air

Valentine's Day, romance, gifts, little tokens of affection — this year it seems like everyone at our house is in love.

One of the daughters says I am never to write about her, but her boyfriend says I can write whatever I want about him. Oh, the temptation.

Another says I can write about her boyfriend, but I haven't heard his opinion.

The third daughter says I can write about how wonderful and talented she is anytime. Prompting another family member to ask, "Isn't this stuff supposed to be true?"

I haven't met her fellow so I can't write about him anyway except to say that he is a computer engineer.

The electrical engineer says computer engineers are bigger geeks than electrical engineers. Causing me to ponder, "Is that even possible?"

Seriously, I usually like all the fellows. I think I am nicer to them than the girls are — at least I am not as fickle.

A few years ago we attended a wedding and the matron of honor, the bride's younger sister, told us during the toast she was a romantic.

When they were teenagers she would look to her older sister for advice. And she had asked her if she believed there was

Back Home
Nancy Hagman



one special person that you were destined for, that you should wait for.

Her sister had replied, "No, there is not one special person you are destined for and I am not waiting for that mythical person. I am going to marry whoever is lucky enough to be dating me when I decide to get married."

I turned to my husband and asked, "I wonder how the groom feels about that?" He replied, "I bet he feels lucky."

So it is with love.

I know girls like to speculate "Is he The One?" I know how important romance is. But consider how important is luck? How important is it to just decide and then forge ahead everyday with that decision. My husband and I are not very romantic I guess. But recently he told me he has never been mad at me.

Never! What a gift. Psychologists might say he denies his feelings. Cynics might say it was just a

line. But I choose to believe him. It might be the most romantic thing he's ever said to me. And unlike candlelight dinners, cards, flowers and chocolates, I am keeping that moment forever.

But, how was I lucky enough to decide he was "The One" at the tender age of 19? As my eldest child has pointed out to me, "Mom you guys were pretty young and foolish when you got married."

Although we were young when we got married we waited awhile to have kids, causing youngest child to have a different view. She wants to get married and have her family young because she always wished her parents were young and cool.

I inquired, "Cool like whose parents?" She couldn't think of any parents who are cool. I refrained from pointing out that nobody ever thinks their parents are cool, particularly if they are doing their job.

I hope my daughters have at least one great romance. I hope they treat love with the reverence and awe it deserves because it is not easy to find or to keep.

There are many reasons why love doesn't work out. But one reason it does is pretty simple; two people just decide that it will, no matter what.

What a tremendous leap of faith. How romantic.

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In the 'back when', things weren't so...

On the front page of *The Telegram* last week was a picture of the fifth grade Knowledge Master Open Team. The first place team in Kansas and ninth, yes, ninth in the nation out of 272 teams! Very impressive!

I couldn't help but think, and I'm guilty of it also, how many times we say, "Well when we were kids..."

When I was a kid, there wasn't a Knowledge Bowl Team and even though I wouldn't have been eligible, I had many friends who would have been. What I notice about school today is how truly much more equal it is. Not just equal in terms of sexes, but in terms of abilities. These fifth graders had a wonderful win, but they also had wonderful interaction, via computer, with children around the country. They have a sense of who they are in terms of

Phase II
Mary Kay Woodyard



the bigger picture.

"Back when" there was really nothing that acknowledged the mental gifts in elementary school. There wasn't a place for the student who really knew what they were doing in school in the first place.

"Back when" there were no girls sports in high school. Last week the above mentioned *Telegram* featured two stories about girls basketball alongside articles about the boys wrestling teams.

Fortunately, by the time I was in school, it was acceptable for the boys to take part in music and their talents were applauded by all and a source of pride for the individual.

I can't help but feel we are educating a much better rounded student than in years past. We are thrilled to have a football team place second in the state, hoopsters and matmen on their way to state meets, but we also want those same individuals to be musicians, artists, and scholars.

And while I'm on it, I also think we are raising youngsters awareness of the community in which they live. Some school events ask for canned food for the community food bank, God's Pantry.

If education is about raising the total person, then congratulations, Norton, you've got it right!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Dear Editor,
We thought that Kansas residents should be aware of some recent changes in the U.S. Senate affecting communications with our offices.

As you may know, on February 2, ricin, a potent poison, was found in the mail room of Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist's office. As part of the police investigation into this matter, our offices were closed for several days and all mail stopped. Police also collected mail that recently had been received in our offices. If you mailed a letter to our Washing-

ton offices after January 10, please assume that we have not received it, and may not in the near future until the ricin investigation is completed. Currently, the Senate is not distributing new mail, and we do not know when mail distribution in Washington will resume.

Despite the inconvenience, we hope we will still hear from you. The best options are to contact us by phone (in Washington or any of our state offices), by fax or by e-mail.

To contact Sen. Pat Roberts' Washington office, call (202) 224-4774, fax to

(202) 224-3514, and e-mail to <http://roberts.senate.gov/e-mail/pat.html>. To contact Sen. Sam Brownback's office, call (202) 224-6521, fax to (202) 228-1265, and e-mail to <http://brownback.senate.gov/CMEmailMe.htm>. You can also contact any of our state offices which can be located on our web-sites at <http://roberts.senate.gov> and <http://brownback.senate.gov>.

We always like to hear from you and encourage you to contact us.

Senator Pat Roberts
Senator Sam Brownback