

# Opinion

## Free Press Viewpoint

by Tom (TD) Dreiling  
Publisher

### War is ugly and Bush must paint it that way

We must all listen closely to President George W. Bush's *State of the Union* address Tuesday night. It will be one of the most important such addresses in a number of years.

The Commander-in-Chief is expected to dwell to some degree on the pending invasion of Iraq. Americans have waited for some time to hear, formally, from the President on this issue. Hopefully he will lay out in clear language what he knows that is pointing him toward an invasion. We have been dancing around the tulips far too long. Americans have been looking for a so-called "smoking gun" but none has surfaced. Perhaps the President has held that bit of information close to the vest and will unveil it Tuesday night.

This country and all countries standing with us in the wake of a war with "insane" Hussein need to know what he knows so a fair judgment can be made by all factions prior to cranking up the war machinery. Protests against the possible Iraqi war dominated the headlines a week ago. Those people have every right to publicly display their fears and concerns of such an action. Those in support of a possible war with Iraq have every right to also rally for their cause. The justification for doing so lies in one word — *democracy*.

The President must also be up front in his assessment of American lives that could end on the battlefields of Iraq. He must also address the possibility of this war provoking hell and fire never before seen on this planet. If, in fact, we don't know what kind of weapons of mass destruction Saddam Hussein has in his arsenal, or what the consequences might be for our own safety in our own country, President Bush will need to talk about the scarier aspects of the pending war. So-called paid television network experts — retired military personnel — continue to tell us that a war with Iraq will be over in weeks, perhaps only a few short months. They assure us that the Iraqis cannot compete with our technology. It will be, they say, a one-sided show.

The President probably knows the day and the hour he will issue the command that begins the war. That will probably come very, very soon after he delivers the State of the Union address Tuesday night. There seems to be no turning back. The buildup continues, hundreds of thousands of American troops are in the region, or on their way to the region.

War is ugly. And President Bush must paint it that way.

#### Addresses of elected officials:

- U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts**, 302 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-4774
- U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback**, 303 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. 202/224-6521
- U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran**, 1519 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515. 202/225-2715
- State Rep. Jim Morrison**, State Capitol Building Rm. 174-W, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7676 e mail: jmorriso@ink.org web: http://www.idir.net/~jmorriso/
- State Sen. Stan Clark**, State Capitol Building Rm. 449-N, Topeka 66612. 785/296-7399 e mail:

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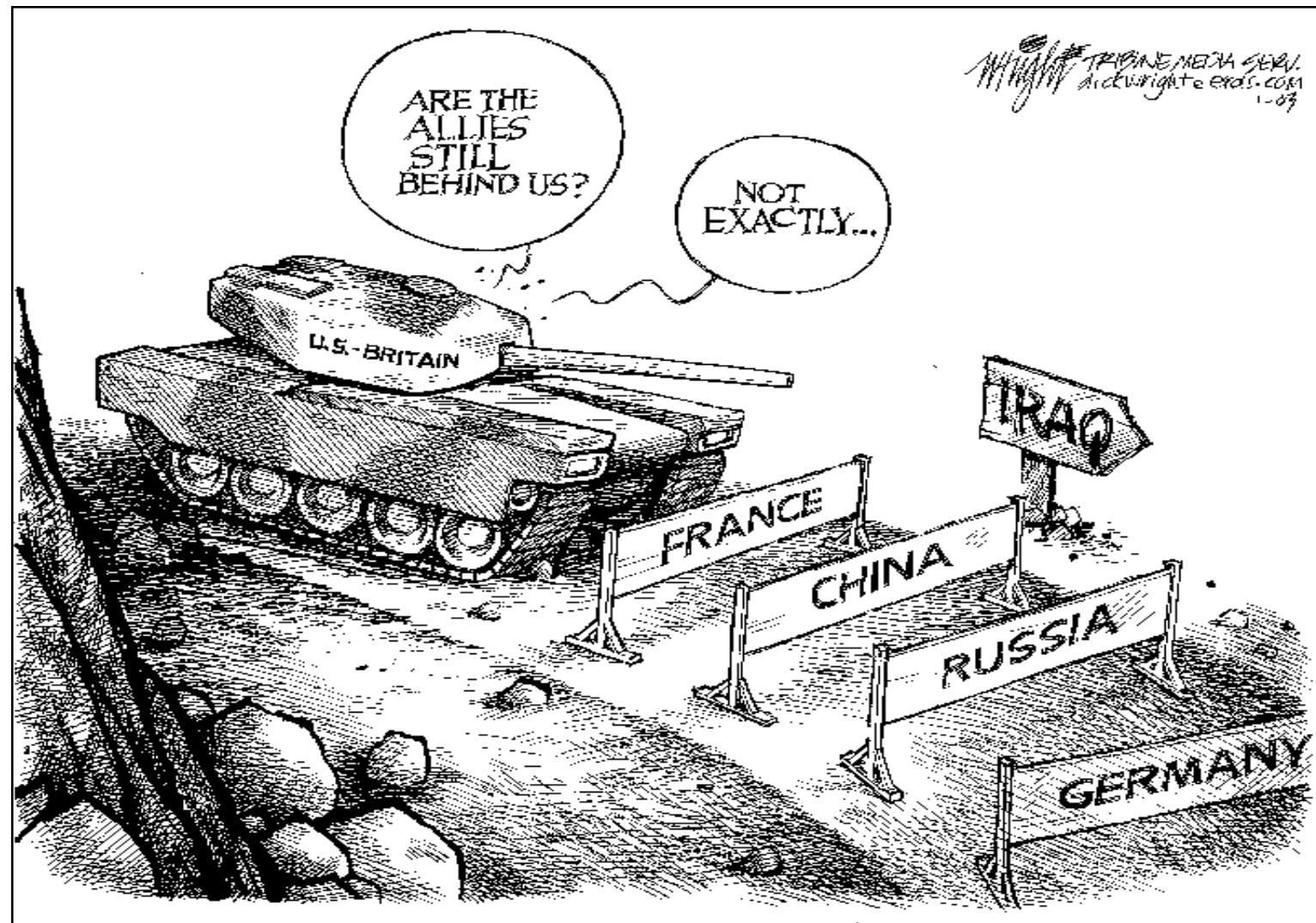
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### A look at some of the issues

#### Health Midwest Issue

On January 23, 2003, the Kansas Legislature heard testimony from Attorney General Phill Kline regarding the control of proceeds from the sale of Health Midwest (a not-for-profit organization worth an estimated \$700 million NET) to Hospital Corporation of America, or HCA.

Kansas and Missouri both filed suit to ensure the proceeds from the sale went to charitable foundations in each state to provide health care for the needy. Health Midwest and Missouri settled their suit in a late night deal Tuesday (21st) that gives Missouri control of 90 percent of the proceeds, with the remaining 10 percent to be used in Kansas despite the fact that 15-25 percent of the assets belong to Kansas.

Effectively, Kansas has been excluded from any control of the proceeds through this deal. Kansas Attorney General Phill Kline sought and received a temporary restraining order on the proceeds from Kansas assets. To assist him in gaining control of our assets the House and the Senate passed legislation (SB 44) Thursday and the Governor signed on Friday "emergency legislation."

The legislation creates a foundation to administer proceeds from the sale of Health Midwest to HCA. Furthermore, it provides for a board of 18, serving 3-year terms, all being residents of the area that is served by the charitable hospital. Five are appointed by the Governor, 5 by the Attorney General, 3 by the Senate President, 3 by the Speaker, and 1 each by the Minority Leader of both the Senate and the House. This foundation is intended to finance charitable healthcare in Wyandotte, Johnson, and Allen counties.

#### Broadband Deregulation

According to SBC (Southwest Bell Telephone), their willingness to deploy high-speed Internet services across the state depends on the



**Jim Morrison**

#### Capitol Review

fate of HB 2019. The President of SBC feels that price regulation proposed by the KCC would discourage the company from extending its broadband service to smaller communities. According to opponents of HB 2019 (many local and national telecommunications companies), SBC could still provide service while being regulated. In effect, HB 2019 would remove the KCC from any oversight, thus allowing SBC market control over DSL service. With or without the bill, cable can continue to compete in this market.

Currently, SBC has to share their voice network with other phone companies. The KCC ruled that they have to share data also. Passage of HB 2019 would remove the requirement to share.

#### Drivers Licenses for Illegal Aliens

The Judiciary Committee will be having hearings on HB 2039, a possibly controversial piece of legislation. Passage would allow undocumented immigrants (who pass required tests) to obtain a driver's license using federal tax id numbers.

#### Fiscal Year 2003 Budget Recision

The Appropriations Committee passed Gov. Sebelius' recision bill (HB 2026) for Fiscal Year 2003 on Friday morning. The House of Representatives should debate the bill on Wednesday or Thursday of this week. The bill cuts spending

in the current fiscal year ending June 30, 2003. It also restores some budget cuts by Governor Graves to education and social services.

#### Other items:

- Corrections and Juvenile Justice: Will be reviewing Sentencing Guidelines. Possible alternative sentencing for drug offenses could be a controversial issue this year.
- Education:

Legislation has been introduced to reform teacher tenure by eliminating the hearing officer and going straight to District Court. Also, it considers allowing districts to renegotiate contracts for teachers and administrators when their budgets are cut.

#### Ethics and Election:

Considering a bill to tighten recall petition standards for school board members. Association of Broadcasters has requested a review of the Open Meetings Act in light of Governor Sebelius' transition meetings.

#### Higher Education:

Receiving briefings from Regents Institutions, Vocational Technical Schools and Community Colleges.

#### Insurance:

The most controversial issue for the year will be credit scoring for insurance rates. Currently the committee is considering foreign language insurance contracts, mandates for contraceptives and mandates for coverage of care during clinical trials.

This session is looking to be a good one. We are getting our work done quickly and cooperatively. I hope things will continue rapidly, efficiently and in a way that improves the future for all of Kansas. Please contact me with your concerns and questions. Email me ([jmorriso@ink.org](mailto:jmorriso@ink.org)) if you wish to be added to a mailing list that I will be using in a week or so.

### Confronting the reality

**James McCarthy**  
**Paul Epstein**

#### Another Viewpoint

Over a century ago scientists contemplated the effect of the growing use of fossil fuels on the composition of Earth's atmosphere and climate. They predicted Earth's temperature would rise if atmospheric carbon dioxide increased substantially.

During the 20th century consumption of coal, oil and gas soared, CO2 increased and Earth's temperature rose, culminating in the 1990s with the warmest decade on record.

In 2001 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) summarized what is known so far. The world's experts concluded that, while Earth's temperature variations over the last half-century were due to the combined effects of solar variation, volcanic activity, and the human release of greenhouse gases, "most of the warming is attributable to anthropogenic activity." Following release of the IPCC reports, a National Academy of Sciences (NAS) review, requested by the Bush Administration, agreed with the IPCC conclusions.

Articulate people, who, without the benefit of any new research, cast doubt on the scientific consensus, can have enormous appeal. To the nonscientist such "skeptical" views offer seductive comfort.

More over, when scientific understanding implies a need to change established business practices, the voice of the skeptic is often powerfully amplified. No matter how strong the scientific case in the 1960s that phosphates in detergents were altering river and lake ecosystems, or that smoking damaged human health, there were always people with scholarly credentials willing to publicly say that something might be wrong with the scientific consensus.

Those who disagreed with the scientific consensus on climate change in 1990 argued that any change in Earth's temperature merely reflected a phase of a natural cycle. Five years later they argued the increase was small and unlikely to make much difference. Then they suggested that natural and human systems would, on average, do better with warming. Now they argue that, despite the dangers of climate instability, the

costs of prevention are too great.

Patterns in extreme weather events have changed over the past half-century. In the last five years there have been numerous record-setting hot, dry and wet weather events have created social and economic upheaval, with tragic losses of lives, livelihoods and infrastructure, especially in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Recent European floods will cost tens of billions of dollars. The 2001 flooding in Houston was the most costly precipitation disaster in U.S. history.

Along the Eastern U.S. seaboard, recent drought has caused more widespread damage to trees than any other weather phenomenon in the last century.

While no single unusual weather event can be attributed directly to greenhouse warming, these trends in extreme events are expected with atmospheric and ocean warming. Simply put, in one human generation the old odds for fifty or hundred year storms have changed.

Despite U.S. rejection of the Kyoto Protocol, recent commitments for ratification by Japan, Canada and Russia will assure its taking force. Importantly, some major corporations that previously doubted the science are now convinced the threat is real. In 1998 British Petroleum, for example, pledged to meet a Kyoto-like emissions target — a 10 percent reduction from 1990 baseline levels in their worldwide operations by the year 2010. They succeeded, 8 years ahead of schedule, at no net cost.

Those who argue that it is better to wait and see what the future holds, or that more research is necessary before we can act, or that the investment required to shift from fossil fuels would be

better spent on directly alleviating poverty and disease, make several fundamental errors.

First, they fail to recognize that the climatic effects on plant distribution, animals, ice and snow are now documented on all continents, and disruptions in natural systems are already evident, as many species — including some of economic value or are human disease carriers — move into new territories.

Second, they ignore projections that surprises and abrupt changes are, as detailed in another NAS report, "inevitable."

Third, they fail to acknowledge the inertia in the climate system. While reducing fossil fuel consumption today will not bring immediate relief from damages due to climate change, action is needed now to reduce the potential for more severe harm in coming decades.

Fourth, they fail to acknowledge that the world's most disadvantaged people will be the most affected by a more variable climate.

Finally, they fail to understand that widespread development of renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies would create new jobs and enterprises, especially in poor nations, adding wealth to the global economy.

As we reflect upon tensions in the world today that are linked to oil resources, the increasing concern about unsustainable development in both developed and developing countries, and the realization that global climate change is upon us, a convergent future direction becomes clear: a clean energy transition — given the proper financial incentives — can become the engine of growth for the global economy and lead us towards a healthier, more equitable and more secure world in this 21st Century.

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